



# ***Fostering Innovation, Not Forcing It: An Innovate to Win Story***

A Comprehensive Performance Support Portfolio

NPS 22nd Annual Acquisition Research Symposium and Innovation Summit  
Dr. Jonathan Barkand & Lolita Horne  
May 7, 2025

# Making Innovation Measurable

—  
**Innovate to Win**



# Know Where You Stand, Grow Where You Can

- Available DoD-wide
  - Requires CSOD/Virtual Campus access
- Licensing allows for up to 10,000 completions

## DAU Innovation Competencies & Skills Model – The Big Picture



### Innovation Competencies & Skills Model



Thinking



Collaborating



Cultivating

#### Innovation Domains of Practice

Leveraging academic research, industry practice, and acquisition workforce insights, three domains of innovation practice have been defined to frame this Innovation Competency Model: Thinking, Communicating, and Cultivating

#### DoD Innovation Competencies

An initial set of 14 innovation competencies has been defined by triangulating academic research, industry practice and acquisition workforce insights. Each competency is defined by up to 6 skill descriptors which describe the behavior for each competency.

**Innovation mindset:** the belief that abilities, intelligence, and skills can be developed and leveraged for the creation of new and better ideas and practices that add value to the organization.

01

### Innovation Competencies & Skills

#### Thinking

1. Growth Mindset
2. Risk Taking
3. Creativity
4. Critical Thinking
5. Futures Thinking

#### Collaborating

6. Collaboration
7. Networking
8. Communication

#### Cultivating

9. Observing
10. Experimenting
11. Holistic Approach
12. Driving Change
13. Integrating
14. Lifelong Learning

02

### Self-Assessment

- Self-administered
- 30-45 Likert scale statements accessed online
- Aligned to Innovation Competencies & Skills



- Based on research-backed models
- Can be completed in less than 10 minutes

03

### Curated Learning Pathways

Thinking

Collaborating

Cultivating

- Aligned to Innovation Competencies & Skills
- Mapped to Bloom's Taxonomy
- Personalized, curated learning experiences
- Offering Continued Learning Points (CLPs)
- Curated articles, videos, activities, and courses

Version 1.0 | updated 02/27/2025

# Turning Insight Into Action

- **Stand-alone or Add-on:** Can be used with the Self-Assessment Innovation Competencies & Skills Task or as a stand-alone tool.
- **Tailorable:** Use all seven plays or select those that suit the needs of the leader/team the most.
- **Workshop It:** Works best when application is facilitated by a DAU faculty member familiar with the content and the tenets for innovation.



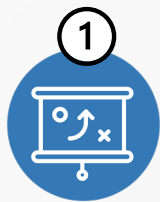
YOUR 7-PLAY JOURNEY  
TO MOTIVATE AND CULTIVATE INNOVATION  
IN THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE



**DAU**

# Creating a Culture of Innovation

## The Plays



**1**  
Define a  
Compelling  
Vision and  
Goals



**2**  
Provide  
Top  
Cover



**3**  
Collaborate  
and  
Communicate



**4**  
Embrace Risk



**5**  
Foster  
Curiosity

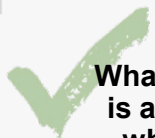


**6**  
Cultivate a  
Learning  
Culture

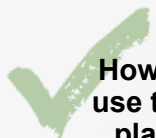


**7**  
Recognize and  
Reward  
Innovators

### Each Play includes:



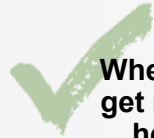
What this play  
is about and  
why use it



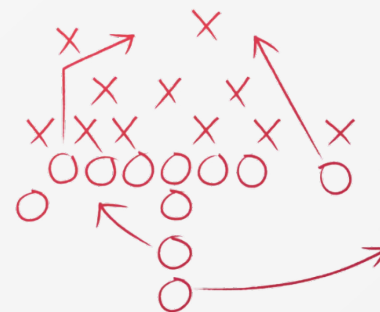
How to  
use this  
play



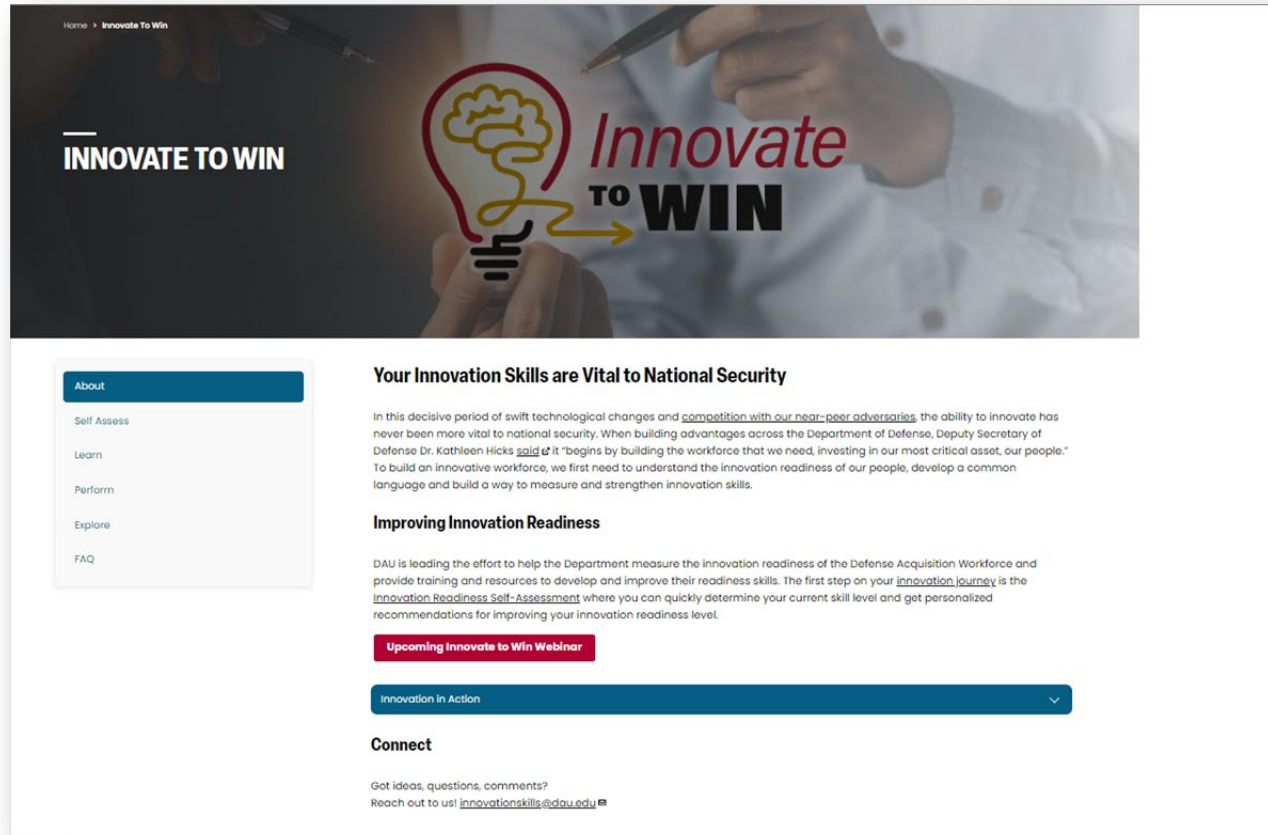
How to  
measure the  
play's success



Where to  
get more  
help



# Innovate to Win on the Web – [www.dau.edu/innovatetowin](http://www.dau.edu/innovatetowin)



Home > Innovate To Win

## INNOVATE TO WIN

### Your Innovation Skills are Vital to National Security

In this decisive period of swift technological changes and [competition with our near-peer adversaries](#), the ability to innovate has never been more vital to national security. When building advantages across the Department of Defense, Deputy Secretary of Defense Dr. Kathleen Hicks [said](#) it “begins by building the workforce that we need, investing in our most critical asset, our people.” To build an innovative workforce, we first need to understand the innovation readiness of our people, develop a common language and build a way to measure and strengthen innovation skills.

#### Improving Innovation Readiness

DAU is leading the effort to help the Department measure the innovation readiness of the Defense Acquisition Workforce and provide training and resources to develop and improve their readiness skills. The first step on your [innovation journey](#) is the [Innovation Readiness Self-Assessment](#) where you can quickly determine your current skill level and get personalized recommendations for improving your innovation readiness level.

[Upcoming Innovate to Win Webinar](#)

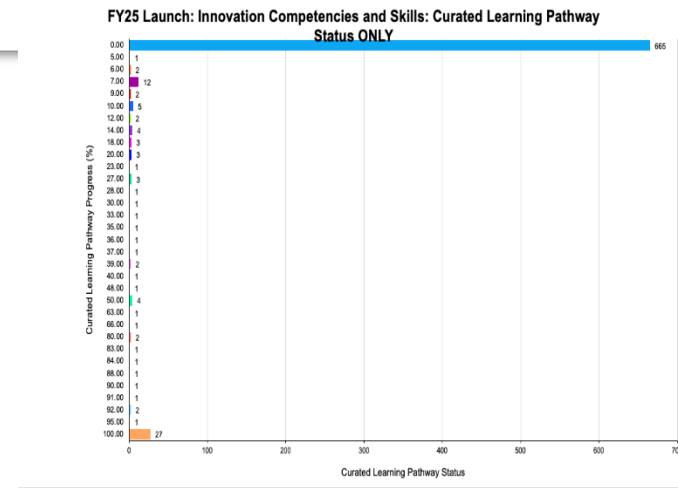
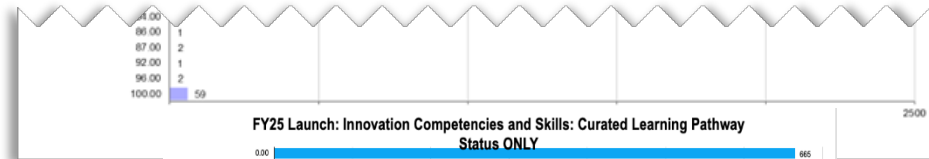
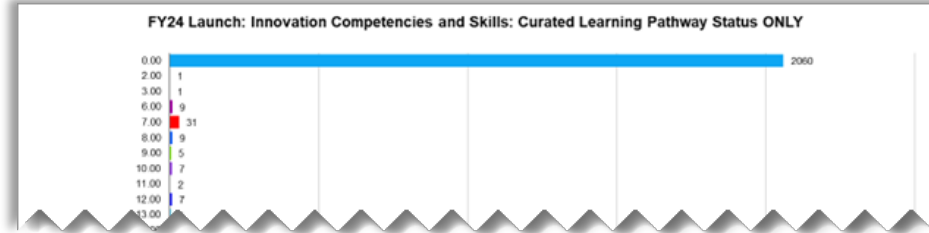
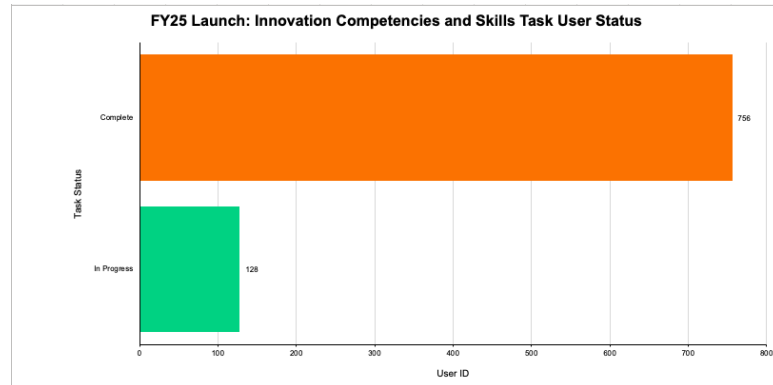
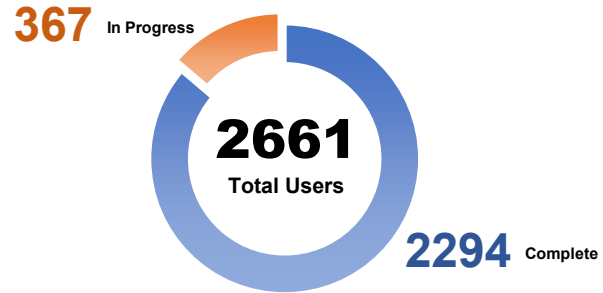
[Innovation in Action](#)

#### Connect

Got ideas, questions, comments?  
Reach out to us! [innovationskills@dau.edu](mailto:innovationskills@dau.edu)

# FY24-25 Task and Learning Pathway Status

FY24 Launch: Innovation Competencies and Skills Task User Status



# Analysis of Results - Overall

Domain and Competency	Average Score
<b>Collaborating</b>	<b>3.96</b>
Allyship	4.04
Collaboration	4.30
Communication	3.97
Networking	3.55
<b>Cultivating</b>	<b>4.04</b>
Driving Change	3.98
Experimenting	3.86
Holistic Approach	4.04
Integrating	3.85
Lifelong Learning	4.32
Observing	4.19
<b>Thinking</b>	<b>4.11</b>
Creativity	3.88
Critical Thinking	4.21
Futures Thinking	4.06
Growth Mindset	4.34
Risk Taking	4.08
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4.05</b>



# Analysis of Results – By Component

Component	Total Number Question Responses	Defense Acquisition Workforce (Yes/No)	% DAW
4 <sup>th</sup> Estate	19707	14415	73%
Air Force	11389	8318	73%
Army	13247	8891	67%
Navy	11997	8965	75%

Component	Collaborating	Cultivating	Thinking
4 <sup>th</sup> Estate	4.0	4.1	4.2
Air Force	4.0	4.1	4.1
Army	3.9	4.0	4.1
Navy	3.9	4.0	4.1

# *What barriers have you encountered when trying to be innovative (new process, new idea) in your organization?*

## **Resistance to Change:**

- ❑ Many respondents highlighted a status quo mentality and a fear of failure as significant barriers. This included a reluctance to support new ideas and a preference for entrenched old-school methods.
- ❑ There is also a notable leadership reluctance to change, with some leaders being complacent or procrastinating.

## **Resource Constraints**

- ❑ A common theme is the lack of funding, equipment, and other resources. Respondents referenced limited manpower and time, as well as overly burdensome processes that focus more on compliance than mission accomplishment.
- ❑ Information technology infrastructure issues and difficulty in finding historical information and understanding current systems were also noted.

## **Organizational Culture**

- ❑ Hierarchical barriers and a lack of procedural knowledge among leadership were frequently stated.
- ❑ Groupthink, process paralysis, and biases related to gender and rank also hinder innovation.
- ❑ There is a lack of learning culture and a fear of the unknown, which makes employees unwilling to take risks.

## **Communication and Support**

- ❑ Poor communication and collaboration, along with a lack of buy-in from leadership and team members, were significant barriers.
- ❑ Delays in review and approval processes and non-responsiveness from principals were also highlighted.

# *What incentives or other resources does your organization devote to innovation?*

## **Recognition and Awards**

- ☐ Respondents shared various forms of recognition, including cash awards, time-off awards, and certificates.
- ☐ Public and private acknowledgment of achievements and on-the-spot awards for innovative efforts were noted.

## **Training and Development**

- ☐ Opportunities for training and professional development were highlighted, including Digital Development Fridays and Lean Six Sigma belts for process improvement projects.

## **Supportive Programs:**

- ☐ Some organizations have innovation programs that allow employees to work on new ideas, internal investment projects, and innovation cells.
- ☐ Results Accelerators and working groups were also mentioned.

## **Leadership and Organizational Support:**

- ☐ Encouragement from senior leaders and platforms for sharing ideas and feedback were noted as important resources.
- ☐ Flexibility and a focus on end results rather than strict processes were also highlighted.

## **Limited or No Incentives:**

- ☐ Some respondents reported no incentives or resources devoted to innovation, indicating a lack of clear incentives and support from the organization.



# What is your innovation readiness level?



DoD Workforce members now have access to an innovation self-assessment tool to better understand innovation strengths and areas for growth.



Scan or [Click](#)

Get started today. Visit [www.DAU.edu/innovatetowin](http://www.DAU.edu/innovatetowin) to learn more.