Language and Culture in the Department of Defense: Synergizing Complementary Instruction and Building LREC Competency

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Author's Note: The views of the author beyond the reporting on the pilot course offered in this manuscript are strictly those of the author and do not represent any official view of the DoD or organizations that might in any way be connected to language and culture programs nor does it represent any DoD official existing or future policy or strategy. Portions of this manuscript were presented to the 2012 LEARN Workshop: Training and Empowering the Adult Learner and Language Professional; Methodology, Technology, and Resources, University of Texas, Austin, TX and the November 2012 Interagency Language Roundtable’s Culture Committee Meeting, Foreign Service Institute, Arlington, VA.

Abstract: The subject of language and culture is currently a topic that engenders much conversation and discussion among policy writers, strategic thinkers, educators/trainers and even operators in the Department of Defense. In fact, in this journal alone, there have been numerous publications on this subject, two specifically in the last year or so. Joint and individual services, as do policy writers, recognize the importance of educating/training to language and culture. An ongoing debate is just how much language and how much culture is necessary and how to measure/assess it. This paper represents the next step in this conversation, promoting an Language, Regional Expertise and Culture (LREC) competency and proficiency and building a synchronized language and culture learning program that when delivered together (language, cross-cultural competence (3C), culture-general and region (culture) – specific) enhances, and can even accelerate performance in each competency and across the LREC spectrum. An LREC pilot course was conducted just recently at Joint Base Lewis/McChord and preliminary results indicate advanced learning occurred. A suggested future course of action is presented with a focus on providing this learning to help promote language and culture needs to Regionally-Aligned Forces (RAF).

Introduction[1]

The concept of language, regional expertise and culture (LREC) represent efforts within the Department of Defense (DoD) to develop research and learning programs that can promote the development of language instruction/proficiency as well provide necessary instruction in regional expertise and cultural capability. Language instruction has had a rich history and time to develop within the DoD, but has primarily focused on the Intelligence and Special Forces communities. Though this has resulted in fairly robust training and assessment mechanisms for language second language acquisition (SLA) continues to
be priority of research and instructional development. Proficiency testing through the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) does not currently seem to have much applicability to populations outside of professional military linguists and specialist populations such as Foreign Area Officers (FAO). Language programs have not adequately addressed regional expertise and cultural capabilities in their curriculum or instruction to the General Purpose Forces (GPF), or other specialist populations engaged in non-traditional missions even though recent publications suggest that combined language and culture learning programs can enhance learning outcomes for LREC. [2]

The need for LREC training in the wake of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom and the continuation of Irregular Warfare (IW) missions – counterinsurgency (COIN), Security Force Assistance (SFA), Humanitarian and Disaster Relief (HDR), etc. – has become more evident as the focus shifts to other regions of the world. The importance of this shift is seen in the emphasis in SOF on missions that engage a population-centric mission set[3] and the move to the US Army’s Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF).[4] Efforts that consider regional expertise and culture lack proficiency guidelines, let alone consensus within the DoD on what knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) are necessary to achieve proficiency and even what KSAs makeup designations such as regional expertise and culture. Concepts such as regional expertise and cultural capabilities are featured in policy/strategy documents across the Services and other Office of Secretary of Defense (OSD) organizations.[5] To add to this conceptual and operational landscape, LREC components exist in distinct learning programs (education vs. training), can be located in a myriad of institutional placements and are funded in separate resource streams; no unified command structure or fixed home – classic problem.

The language training models used in the past are being re-envisioned to adapt to changes in learner populations and include the possibility of integrating a more clearly defined region and cultural component. This paper suggests that LREC-specific learning events can fit within the existing effort that is common across the Department of Defense (DoD) language learning programs. A pilot LREC Basic Korean Course was offered at Joint Base Lewis/McChord Regional Language and Culture Center in late 2012 that combined language, cross-cultural competence (3C), culture general (C/G) and culture-specific knowledge. The assessment of the outcomes of that course are offered in this paper and an initial analysis provided on its effectiveness as a learning event covering mission critical language and cultural knowledge, skills and abilities. This paper suggests success at meeting individual LREC component and synergistic learning outcomes can result from an integration of concept intent, curricular content and blended learning processes. Based on the results and experience of the pilot course, an LREC Version 2.0 would continue to offer breadth of LREC instruction as well as provide synergy in promoting the development of knowledge, skills and abilities across the DoD language and culture education and training effort. Due to the variety of instructional levels, purpose, student location and course duration, LREC version 2.0 can be offered through a variety of distributed learning modes and a customized menu of 3C and C/R G and specific modules and instruction for such use as training RAF.

Need

There is no doubt that our recent military experience in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom have made it clear that understanding human behavior and communicating with foreign cultures is critical for success. There is as well growing awareness, through speeches and articles by DoD leaders, that 21st century military missions will resemble less and less the conventional missions a cold war military prepared and trained for prior to 9/11. A recent speech by SecDef highlights a military mission that will result in a smaller more adaptable force. An overriding goal of this new force will continue to be combating al-Qaeda and terrorism and “….will largely take place outside declared combat zones, using a small footprint approach that includes precision operations, partnered activities with foreign Special
Forces operations, and capacity building so that partner countries can be more effective in combating terrorism on their own.”[6] With troop reductions pending for Afghanistan in 2014, the DoD faces a strategic and operational future where promoting our national security will most certainly involve partnering with allies, partner nations and less unstable nation-states, non-state actors and cultural groups (ethnic and tribal associations) to help construct stable governments responsive to their population’s human security needs.[7] Stability fends off the creep of terrorism and minimizes the threat of destabilizing insurgency.

USSOCOM Commander, Admiral McRaven testified before Congress in 2012 and might have been speaking to a more general DoD future when he outlined two distinct operational approaches, a direct approach characterizing small unit laser-focused lethality buoyed by nuanced intelligence and partnered with interagency cooperation “on a digitally-networked battlefield” and an indirect approach that “…includes empowering host nation forces, providing appropriate assistance to humanitarian agencies, and engaging key populations. These long-term efforts increase partner capabilities to generate sufficient security and rule of law, address local needs, and advance ideas that discredit and defeat the appeal of violent extremism.”[8] In addition, the projected increase in operational tempo in Army Special Forces and the desire of leadership to return to key competencies in unconventional warfare (as opposed to Direct Action) needs consideration, although there will be more than occasional future situations represented by Mali that will require a lower “profile”.

No matter the characterization of the future, it is certain that specialized populations within DoD will bear more of the operational responsibility, either kinetically delivered or offered through COIN-like population-centric operations. These populations will consist of specialists who can help train foreign national militaries, and intelligence professionals who will need to be more aware of linguistic and sociocultural knowledge of cultures and localities to support and anticipate future behavior of movements and groups that may pose threats to our efforts. The Army’s move to Regionally-Aligned Forces (RAF) characterizes this overall thrust of the DoD elaborated in the 2012 Strategic Guidance. It is certain that specially trained members of the GPF will need varying levels of regional and cultural knowledge, language proficiency and interpersonal skills and abilities to learn about and communicate with a tapestry of cultures and cultural groups. Said GEN Odierno, “we have learned many lessons over the last 10 years, but one of the most compelling is that – whether you are working among the citizens of a country, or working with their government or Armed Forces – nothing is as important to your long term success as understanding the prevailing culture and values.”[9]

LREC has surfaced as a convenient label to bring together institutionally-disparate programs that are funded through separate streams. Distance in terms of geography and organizational structure for LREC components creates stovepipes of learning and poses institutional and pedagogical barriers to capitalizing on learning synergies that might result from indirect or even active articulation of LREC learning goals and objectives. Regional programs are generally found in regional studies departments in Service academies, schools and colleges and have an international relations flavor. Culture programs have found homes in Service Centers specifically that cater to culture-general and culture-specific knowledge for pre-deployment as well as several who also instruct on cross-cultural competence. Language instruction is delivered through foreign language departments, language-tech learning programs, such as Rosetta Stone and Transparent Language, and through the flagship Defense Language Institute (DLI) in residence at Monterey and Washington, DC campuses. Language instruction is also delivered through mobile training teams of language instructors and recently developed University Flagship Centers, Language Training Centers overseen by Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO) and Language Training Detachments (LTD) managed by the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC).[10]
Promoting language and culture together through at least programmatic synergy if not instructional partnership can yield greater efficiency of instruction (with regard to potentially dwindling human and financial resources), if not a more culturally and regionally nuanced language proficiency. Developing a language and culture learning program suggests there could be learning initiatives put forward that collectively meet the individual learning goals and objectives of language and culture and provide a more synergistic and complimentary curriculum that cumulatively meets and may even enhance learning outcomes of each while promoting a combined LREC competence (see discussion of this competence later in paper). This synergistic LREC competence could lead to the right training fitting the right population; would promote a fiscal and resource case for developing coordinated and/or integrated curriculum; would make use of a more flexible distributed learning platform and could be modularly constructed to meet service/organization specific need.

This manuscript will report on a pilot effort to produce and deliver a prototypical LREC course that combined instruction on language, cross-cultural competence and culture-general knowledge. A true distributed learning process was utilized featuring residential language instruction, culture-general distance learning modules with a discussion/blogging component and weekly discussion sessions that probed the application of 3C competencies and culture-general/culture-specific examples.

The Pilot

JBLM Foreign Language and Culture Center was approached by leadership to construct a pilot eight-week Basic Korean Language course designed for soldiers assigned to Korea. While constructing learning outlines, goals/objectives and Point of Instruction (POI), a decision was made to incorporate instruction on cross-cultural competence (3C) and foundations and principles of culture (culture general/CG) in the eight-week course. Classroom instruction on 3C and CG is not common in Department of Defense region and culture programs and both are not typically offered in conjunction with language training in LREC learning programs. The intent of the pilot was to utilize an extended 8-week course to offer proof of concept of an LREC-based learning experience and:

- Provide language instruction from familiarity to the 0+ level on the DLPT
- Introduce important culture general concepts that would provide an appropriate frame of reference to understand universal cultural domains and provide and introduction to universal sets of rules that guide how cultural systems operate
- Provide a conceptual bridge between culture-general and regional (culture-specific) knowledge
- Introduce and set the learning stage to develop key interpersonal skill-based competencies – cultural learning, perspective-taking, cultural self-awareness, sensemaking, intercultural interaction – that promote effective cross-cultural interaction and aid in forecasting future behavior. Engaging in these competencies that includes acquiring and applying cultural knowledge through appropriate lenses is instrumental in preparing for present and future mission sets. This combination of skills and knowledge is understood as cross-cultural competence (3C). There is a burgeoning and well-developed sense within the Defense Department and Intelligence Community of 3C viability and validity from research, through the introduction of 3C in learning and training programs, and specified consideration of 3C in existing DoD policy.

The 3C and CG learning objectives would be facilitated by separate learning components: in class language instruction, student-centered completion of CG modules (including assessment) and a weekly discussion period that will engage knowledge concepts and skills in an experiential environment (to include as well a written assignment). Given the opportunity to develop a course to meet current mission rhythm, the course would feature an already existing language curriculum. The 3C and CG curriculum would be considered additive, however, much initial coordination of inserting objectives and goals with
language instructors would be promoted.

The hypothesis offered here is that delivering a blended instructional program integrating LREC components will facilitate deeper and enhanced learning and provide a critical stage for “performance” when deployed.[14]

**Course Features:**

- Language instruction/POI for 8-week Korean Basic language
- LMS: Moodle
- Three-hour residential introduction on 3C
- Six CG DL modules on selected domains/systems with embedded knowledge checks, videos, assigned readings and discussion prompts: a) what is culture, b) American culture, c) social and cultural boundaries, d) religion, e) family, and f) cross-cultural communication. These modules are two to three student contact hours and will be completed out of class during the assigned week. The modules are extracted from two distance learning introductory culture courses developed for USAF and Special Forces
- Six introductory videos to the CG modules
- Weekly end-of-week two-hour facilitated classroom discussions on culture general modules and reinforcing 3C
- Opportunistic reinforcement of 3C and CG concepts through daily language instruction featuring culture-specific examples
- Weekly staff telecons featuring learning/development team
- Accessible weekly blog to students for 3C and culture general questions/concerns
- Pre and post course test to measure knowledge transfer of 3C and CG
- Six graded weekly quizzes (knowledge check) on culture general modules to provide assessment of individual student learning comprehension
- Brief written assignment following each weekly discussion
- End of course student survey

**Course Narrative**

The course launched 1 October 2012 at JBLM Language and Region Training Center and concluded with graduation on 30 November 2012. There were 22 students of varying enlisted ranks and deployment experience enrolled in this course. The students were divided up into three sections of approximately seven students per each section and sections were combined for weekly two-hour 3C and CG guided discussion. Students participated in language instruction for six hours a day and CG and 3C instruction outside of class through distance-learning modules, student blogs and residential discussion sessions. In the month prior to course launch, after finalization of language curriculum, the integration of a 3C presentation, culture-general course modules, and course assessment was coordinated. On the first day of class, students were administered a pre-test and students and instructors/learning team were provided a three hour presentation on 3C (see attached course outline).

The course utilized the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS). Students were responsible for viewing the intro video and completing that week’s CG module, assigned readings, knowledge check, and preparation for weekly discussion. Students completed the knowledge checks for each module on Moodle prior to that week’s forum discussion. Discussion/assignment prompts for each class forum were posted to Moodle for students to access on indicated dates. 3C/CG facilitators and language instructors moderated the two hour class discussions. Following the discussion, each student posted
comments/answers to the topics/questions provided during discussion in an accessible student blog format. The learning team met through a weekly telecom which served as sounding board for issues/concerns/comments over the last week of class and preparation for the first class discussion.

3C/CG Assessment: Given the limited time for development, this initial course fell short of a truly integrated educational experience, but there were assessment opportunities to provide preliminary indication of course success as it relates to the initial hypothesis. Following Mackenzie and Wallace’s study on enhancing military virtual education[15], promoting an effective learning environment (quality of the course) is essential to the student achieving learning outcomes. Aspects that feature into the quality of the course are

- Ability of students to apply course material
- Student grades
- Retention rate
- Student self-reported assessment of quality

Due to this course being a pilot, there was not an earlier course iteration to use as a baseline for comparison of assessment variables. We also did not have the opportunity to create a control group that received no 3C/CG instruction – this could have provided us a more accurate reflection of how much or little did the CG and 3C instruction impact language development. We were able to begin to evaluate the efficacy of the course in terms of knowledge gain for 3C/CG, student motivation through participation and grades in the various course assignments, impact of the additive 3C/CG material and assignments on distribution of student performance in the overall course results, and student feedback. The 3C/CG component was 10% of the final overall grade. The following are those course components and their measures that were utilized to evaluate the pilot:

- Pre and post-test gave cohort knowledge gain in 3C and CG
- Weekly quizzes provided a measure of student comprehension of CG concepts and principles
- Participation rates of students in brief weekly written assignments and the weekly discussion sessions provided a measure of student learning/skill development of 3C[16] and CG
- Post-course student survey provided student feedback on the course’s 3C/CG

Results and Discussion

Discussion

There was a significant gain in CG and 3C knowledge both in pre to post test and in knowledge check scores. Final overall course grades reflected a distribution curve that clustered above 80%. Knowledge gain was not tied directly to the language assignments and tests assessment, however, this gain with participation rates and overall cohort final grades indicates that knowledge transfer was successful, that the additional course material and assignments did not seem to negatively impact the final course grades, and students fully participated in all aspects of the course. Language instructors noted the frequency and depth of student discussion pertaining to inquiry on Korean cultural behavior and institutions and also on discussion during language instruction on subjects previously discussed during weekly CG/3C periods. CG/3C facilitators noted in weekly summaries the same depth of discussion centering on not only CG concepts but as well providing student and instructor experiences that explored skill-based competencies such as perspective taking and cultural self-awareness.

It is certain that assessment, course experience and student surveys indicate that student performance
centered on individual LREC components of language, CG and 3C was demonstrated. It is not clear that the individual performance in each of the components acted to increase performance in the other two components. In other words, did providing instruction in all three areas simultaneously (during the 8-week instruction and juxtaposed during weekly and daily instruction) promote better performance in each? It is also clear that featuring instruction on these components during the course - in each of the instruction periods, through blended platforms and in assignments – offered ad hoc opportunities to advance CG knowledge, to increase Korean culture-specific knowledge, and to promote skill-based competency development as well as providing context and situation to language instruction. Featuring traditional instructional classroom, as well as student-centered discussion sections, and online blogging provided a variety of learning environments and opportunity for interactive and experiential learning events. Recent instructional and neurobiological research has indicated that traditional language learning, “drill to kill” may not facilitate the best approach for performance and for reaching different learners. Experiential and interactive learning may hold the key to language acquisition while effective learning needs to be tailored around cognitive capabilities.\cite{17} Furthermore, the success of language and culture training has been suggested to include learner’s motivation, learning environment, and the instructor’s ability to coordinate the bridging between the two components in a learnable and engaging way – preparing the instructors in all aspects of course components is critical for the success of a future LREC course.\cite{18}

A Note on Competency and Assessment

Earlier, this paper suggested that the pilot course represented an effort to instruct and develop toward an LREC competency, a means to develop a meaningful learning program that promotes a more inclusive consideration of linked capabilities of language, region and culture. This marriage of components represents one that is more than convenience – of forcing programs that exist in singularly resourced stovepipes in a variety of organizational and institutional hierarchies and found in both PME and training programs into a synchronized learning program. The DoD will assume more and more missions in the future that will depend on all LREC components for success and the ability to communicate, navigate and make sense of behaviors across cultural barriers. In many populations (not all) across the DoD, considering mission and LREC needs, collapsing the individual components learning programs into an integrated learning program would make sense as it would provide one training event, not several, the chance to promote a robust learning environment, the ability to create learning scenarios that promote a more realistic conception of the natural environment when deployed or assigned, a more accurate determination of performance as applied across the LREC components and through a more rigorous assessment as it applies to all LREC KSAs, could produce a more inclusive notion of a combined LREC competency. In this sense, developing this metacompetency could produce a more nuanced capability and a more accurate picture of all KSAs involved in successful cross-cultural interactions.

Much has been done in language to identify competencies and requisite knowledge and skills, however little has been done in regional expertise and culture to identify competencies and skills that could prove to be as informative of performance as found in language programs.\cite{19} DLNSEO is currently completing a multi-year project that is producing a Regional Proficiency Assessment Tool (RPAT) that features language, regional expertise and cultural capabilities identified across five weighted dimensions (or clusters).\cite{20} An algorithm is applied to the features resident in the clusters to produce a measure that is tied to region and represents a measure of that individual’s LREC proficiency. The RPAT is cast as a means to capture the readiness of the General Purpose as it applies to its regional proficiency, however, the RPAT, or a measure like it, can also play a role in helping define critical requirements, sustain LREC KSAs in learning programs and provide a means to identifying gaps in KSAs to promote professional development. The suggestion here is that moving toward an LREC competency and proficiency may
allow the application of some useful measure and assessment for REC.

Next Steps

The development of a coordinated LREC learning program offers several potential developmental avenues and benefits. Language instruction is a sequenced program offering a graduated development of skill and proficiency. Language instruction depends on extended instruction, either through residential or distributed learning events. Instruction includes “refresher” opportunities of varying lengths and delivery methods to either promote further skill or maintain existing skill levels. Although not yet formalized in a similar sequence or development, 3C and a more developed CG/ regional knowledge learning program can be developed that utilizes the design, curriculum, and delivery of language instruction. This integration of culture-specific knowledge of an LREC learning program exists in language instruction already[21] culture-specific knowledge cannot help but be transferred given the use of exercises and scenarios utilized in curriculum as well as vocabulary development. However, promoting a more extensive LREC integration (as modeled initially in the current pilot and based on sound instructional design and utilizing standardized learning goals and objectives) should be the goal; utilizing an array of knowledge, skills and abilities that track across DoD language and culture programs should produce a learning synergy.

This LREC Pilot as indicated previously lacks a coordinated course development and instructional design effort to fully integrate the various language and culture goals that were discussed in the beginning of this document. Given time and mission constraint, an initial effort has produced some integration. It is suggested a follow-on effort be initiated to construct a 2.0 LREC course to be used for anticipated mission need as well as model for future LREC development. For a future course version, it is highly suggested that regional knowledge be considered, at an appropriate level, as an overall learning goal along with the culture general and region/culture-specific knowledge. In addition, developing a greater emphasis on cross (inter) cultural communication to align more with the language instruction is suggested. Studies have indicated the importance of considering extra-linguistic communication elements in performance (preparation of student to perform in cross-cultural communication events in natural social intercourse). The 2.0 version course could fold the recent ILR Skill Descriptor Levels Intercultural Communication as curriculum guidelines.[22]

Version 2.0 – An LREC Example for RAF: Culture Orientation and Language Training (COLT)[23] : One size can fit all

Linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity is extensive in Africa, There are literally thousands of languages and dialects spoken. Religious diversity considers not only the Great Religions, but also behavior inspired by traditional indigenous belief systems that include animism, ancestor worship, and witchcraft/sorcery as well as folk mythologies. Likely mission sets would engage this diversity front and center to include collaborative training and field exercises with a host of African countries, both individual and joint.

There exist now no codified LREC requirements for RAF, however the plan is to “…create brigades better equipped to operate in specific regions by establishing language and cultural proficiency programs in their assigned territory.”[24] Other publications have indicated language and culture training as a potential issue to success for RAF.[25] As of January 2013, troops destined for Africa are being trained at Ft. Riley. It seems that culture awareness is an important element of their training, “The training will be tailored to the needs and requests of nations hosting U.S. troops…. to become more culturally adept during its time in Africa.”[26] However, it is also likely there is little or no language, formalized 3C or culture general training and cultural proficiency may lack measures or guidelines that are useful to educators/trainers, curriculum developers, instructional designers or Combatant Command planners.
Into this breach of ethnic and cultural diversity, the knowledge, skills and abilities that will be the most useful and transferable across that diverse cultural landscape are the skill-based competencies that facilitate successful and enduring cross-cultural relationships and more important enduring partnerships, the foundational knowledge that explores and explains how cultural systems operate and provides understanding of key cultural domains, such as religion and kinship, and some initial language familiarization to the more dominant language tied to the cultural/ethnic groups involved in the mission. Research suggests the importance of promoting relationships and education/training exists in 3C and culture general, much of what was featured in the pilot Korean course came from that existing curriculum. The pilot experience discussed in this paper is an example of how this training could be operationalized. A sample COLT could consist of a synchronized curriculum based on the Korean pilot featuring assessed culture-general declarative knowledge instruction (via distance learning) prior to arriving for the residential portion of the training, which would include 3C procedural knowledge instruction, introductory skill enhancement, and language familiarity. The residential segment would feature an integrated and synchronized curriculum that would explore the skill-based 3C competencies while also introducing language familiarity. A variety of COLTs could be developed with standardized number of student learning hours to meet commander’s needs and driven by planners’ requirements. An RPAT-like proficiency could be developed to first “measure” the training received and second to allow a standardized language and cultural capability measure to be utilized for human resourcing down range. The student/soldier would leave with an RPAT proficiency, both in knowledge and skill development, as well as an actual measure to be tracked and enhanced as their RAF experience develops.

Similar Learning Programs and college credit

DLI/FLC offers a variety of residential and web-based language and culture instruction. The primary goal of DLIFLC’s learning program is to “…teach the target language as a vehicle of active communication….the language is always taught within the cultural, political, socioeconomic, and military contexts of the country where the target language is spoken.”[27] Residential language learning is extensive and their web-based resources offer several region and culture products that provide country and culture orientations. However, DLI-based instruction does not offer 3C or CG instruction in their courses or featured in products on their web page. Providing college credit for extended training in culture and language has been offered through partnerships with DoD PME and academic institutions[28], the training discussed in this manuscript could easily be tailored to meet academic rigor and provide college credit for the students.

Conclusion

A pilot Basic Korean Course was offered at Joint Base Lewis/McChord Regional Language and Culture Center that combined most but not all of the components identified in an LREC program. Results from this course indicate a more standardized model of LREC instruction, LREC Version 2.0, can be constructed that would offers breadth of LREC instruction as well as provide synergy in promoting the development of knowledge, skills and abilities across the DoD language and culture education and training effort. Due to the variety of course instructional levels, purpose, student location and course duration, LREC version 2.0 can be offered through a variety of distributed learning modes and a customized menu of 3C and C/R G and specific modules and instruction. One such learning program, COLT was introduced as a means to provide LREC training to RAF.

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way be connected to language and culture programs nor does it represent any DoD official existing or future policy or strategy. Portions of this manuscript were presented to the 2012 LEARN Workshop; Training and Empowering the Adult Learner and Language Professional: Methodology, Technology, and Resources, University of Texas, Austin, TX and the November 2012 Interagency Language Roundtable’s Culture Committee Meeting, Foreign Service Institute, Arlington, VA. The author would like to thank the following individuals that reviewed this manuscript and provided comments, Ms. Yvonne Pawelek, Mr. Pieter DeVissar, Dr. Allison Greene-Sands, Dr. Aimee Vieira, Dr. Catherine Ingold, Dr. Rick Jackson, and Dr. Scott McGinnis.


[4] The USN is considering an Asia-Hands region program that would have regional expertise as one of the primary knowledge needs while USMC features an online region and culture-directed (Region Culture and Language Program (RCLF) for its officers.

[5] See Building Language Skills and Cultural Competencies in the Military: Bridging the Gap (2010), US House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation, DoD Language Skills, Regional Expertise and Cultural Capabilities Strategic Plan, Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 5160.70 and Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 5160.41E.


Culture-specific (similar to regional) knowledge is more commonly applied to specific information about a particular culture that covers a range of subjects, from holidays, food preferences, business etiquette, religious rituals to currency, transportation, education and health care systems, the branches of the military, and more. Regional knowledge offers an added perspective of conceptualizing this knowledge through context and of “space and place.” Culture-general knowledge rests on the notion that a people or culture/cultural group is more accurately understood through their system of shared beliefs and values – expressed through domains of activities. Culture is more or less an organizing concept or process that generates and sustains human behavior. Cultural knowledge helps to understand the ‘contextual’ why behind a group’s behavior by discerning the formation and sustainment of those beliefs and values. Cultural knowledge provides the basic understanding of the common aspects and domains based on shared meaning of behavior that offers broadly-applicable general principles and helps serve as a framework to establish a group’s identity. Included in cultural knowledge is the understanding of how cultural systems are integrated and how those systems operate across time and space.


Mackenzie and Wallace (n.d.).

3C features procedural knowledge of skills as well as development of the skills and abilities. Both blogs and class discussions promoted knowledge gain and application of skills through discussion and facilitator/student experience.

http://www.carla.umn.edu/culture/resources/litreview.pdf

[19] Several efforts are now ongoing in DoD to identify a common set of skill-based competencies for 3C and one project to produce an assessment program for 3C. Army Research Institute (ARI) have several current and planned research projects that involve 3C. Specifically, see Reid, P. A., Kaloydis, F., Sudduth, M., & Greene-Sands, A. (2012B). Executive Summary: A Framework for understanding cross-cultural competence in the Department of Defense. (Tech. Rep. No. 15-12) Melbourne, FL: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute


[21] Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO) currently funds several language training centers and flagship language centers that feature curriculum in regional/cultural studies, however these programs offer no distance learning capability and are aimed at specific populations with limited throughput of students.


[23] P. DeVissar, DLI Liaison, JBLM LTD.


[28] For example, Air University and Community College of the Air Force offers an Introduction to Culture and Cross-Cultural Communication courses in partial fulfillment of general education requirements. The author teaches culture and region courses in the Norwich University’s Department of Continuing Studies College of Graduate and Continuing Studies that caters to US Army Special Forces.

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Robert R. Greene Sands is currently a consultant supporting the development of a Language and Culture program for Defense Intelligence Agency. From 2008 to 2011, Sands was Culture Chair then Chair of the Cross-Cultural Competence Department and Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) and Air University at Maxwell AFB. He received his Ph.D from the University of Illinois, M.A. from Iowa State University, and his B.A from Illinois State University, all in anthropology. Sands teaches in Norwich University’s College of Continuing and Graduate Studies. He is the author of six books, and numerous chapters and articles on topics such as environmental security, building partnerships and sustainability, sport and culture, ethnographic theory, and the cognitive origins of religion. He currently is co-editing a seminal volume on 3C in the military.


Links:
[27] http://smallwarsjournal.com/node/add/article#_ftn26