

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) Feb 2013		2. REPORT TYPE Briefing		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) Dec 2011 – Feb 2013	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (LREC) Needs Assessment				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER H92222-10-D-0017 / 0007 J7 SOFLO	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) SWA Consulting Inc.				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) SWA Consulting Inc. 311 S Harrington Street Suite 200 Raleigh, NC 27603 SWA was a subcontractor to CACI, Inc. on Contract # H92222-10-D-0017 / 0007 J7 SOFLO				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER 2013011202	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Special Operations Forces Language Office HQ USSOCOM Attn: SOKL-J7—SOFLO 7701 Tampa Point Blvd MacDill AFB, FL 33621-5323				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) SOFLO	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT A. Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT The Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) conducted a comprehensive needs assessment to identify, specify, and analyze language, regional expertise, and culture (LREC) mission needs across specified units and occupations in AFSOC to (1) inform the development of LREC training requirements and specifications, (2) determine who needs LREC instruction, and (3) compare REC training needs with current REC instruction provided to AFSOC personnel. The presentation was delivered to the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Culture Committee on 22 FEB 2013. The focus of this presentation was how the REC knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) requirements were defined. The REC KSAs were informed by multiple resources, including the Air Force Culture and Language Center's LREC Force Development Levels, Defense Regional and Cultural Capabilities Assessment Working Group (RACCA WG), and the ILR Skill Level Descriptors for Competence in Intercultural Communication.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS AFSOC, SOF, operators, needs assessment, language, regional expertise, culture, LREC					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 36	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Surface, Eric A.
a. REPORT U	b. ABSTRACT U	c. THIS PAGE			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) 919-480-2751



Surface, E. A., Bienkowski, S. C., Spurling, A., & Roske, M. (2013, February). *Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) language, regional expertise, and culture (LREC) needs assessment*. Presented to the Interagency Language Roundtable Culture Committee, Foreign Service Institute, Arlington, VA.

Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (LREC) Needs Assessment



FEBRUARY 2013

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SPONSORED BY: SOFLO, USSOCOM

RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY: SWA CONSULTING INC.

AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Air Commandos – Quiet Professionals

AFSOC LREC Needs Assessment

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22 February 2013

AFSOC LREC Needs Assessment

- **Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) conducted a comprehensive needs assessment to identify, specify, and analyze language, regional expertise, and culture (LREC) mission needs across specified units and occupations in AFSOC to:**
 - **Inform the development of LREC training requirements and specifications**
 - **Determine who needs LREC instruction**
 - **Compare REC training needs with current REC instruction provided to AFSOC personnel at United States Air Force Special Operations School (USAFSOS)**

AFSOC Community's Need for Culture



- **Air Commandos deploy to positions requiring high degree of foreign interaction. Our success depends upon an ability to apply knowledge and analyze environments dominated by diverse cultures as we struggle to gain subtle influence over relevant populations. Culture skills allow us to devise solutions to complex tactical and operational situations with strategic implications**
 - **Irregular Warfare (IW), Building Partner Capacity (BPC), Security Force Assistance (SFA), Medical Stability Operations (MSO), Village Stability Operations (VSO), Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET)**



AFSOC Community's Need for Culture



- **USAFSOS offers Theater Engagement courses to familiarize personnel with the geopolitical, social, environmental, and economic issues in the country/region of assignment. They also offer the Intercultural Competencies for SOF (ICSOF) course as a general orientation to dealing with cultures different than our own. Limited advanced, tailored pre-deployment training events including GO/SES-level programs are also available**

Constraints

- Teaching SOF Airmen a specific language and then assigning the Airmen to maximize use of that language capability operationally is a challenge. CAA and ST Airmen have high PERSTEMPO rates and are in short supply which often leads to their deployment to areas where their trained language and region is not relevant
- All but two AFSOC SOF operators AFSC's are assigned to AFSOC for career (SOWT and CCT)
- CAA is not a career field. Generally 4 year tours
- Battlefield Airman units are not “regionally aligned” and personnel tend to move from one unit to another (i.e. Hurlburt to Cannon to Kadena to Mildenhall) or completely out of SOF

AFSOC LREC Needs Assessment

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

General Needs Assessment Process



- **Aligning learning, capability, performance and context to achieve organizational and mission objectives and outcomes**
 - 1) **Identify whether there is a learning or performance gap by comparing current and desired states**
 - **Are current capabilities aligned with mission requirements?**
 - 2) **If there is a gap, specify the nature of the gap to understand how to best close the gap**
 - **Evaluate potential solutions (e.g., recruiting, selection, training)**
 - **Determine best solution(s)**
 - 3) **If training is best solution to close the gap, a training needs assessment is required to support training development**

Training Needs Assessment



- **Training Needs Assessment (TNA)**
 - Uses multiple techniques and subject matter experts (SMEs) to identify and specify training requirements
 - Training requirements will guide course standards, curriculum, materials and assessment development
 - TNA's goal is to align capability exiting training with performance requirements
- **SWA perspective on LREC needs assessment**
- **Phases of LREC TNA**
 - Mission/task analysis: Operational SMEs
 - Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Other Characteristics (KSAO) analysis: Operational and LREC SMEs
 - Develop training requirements

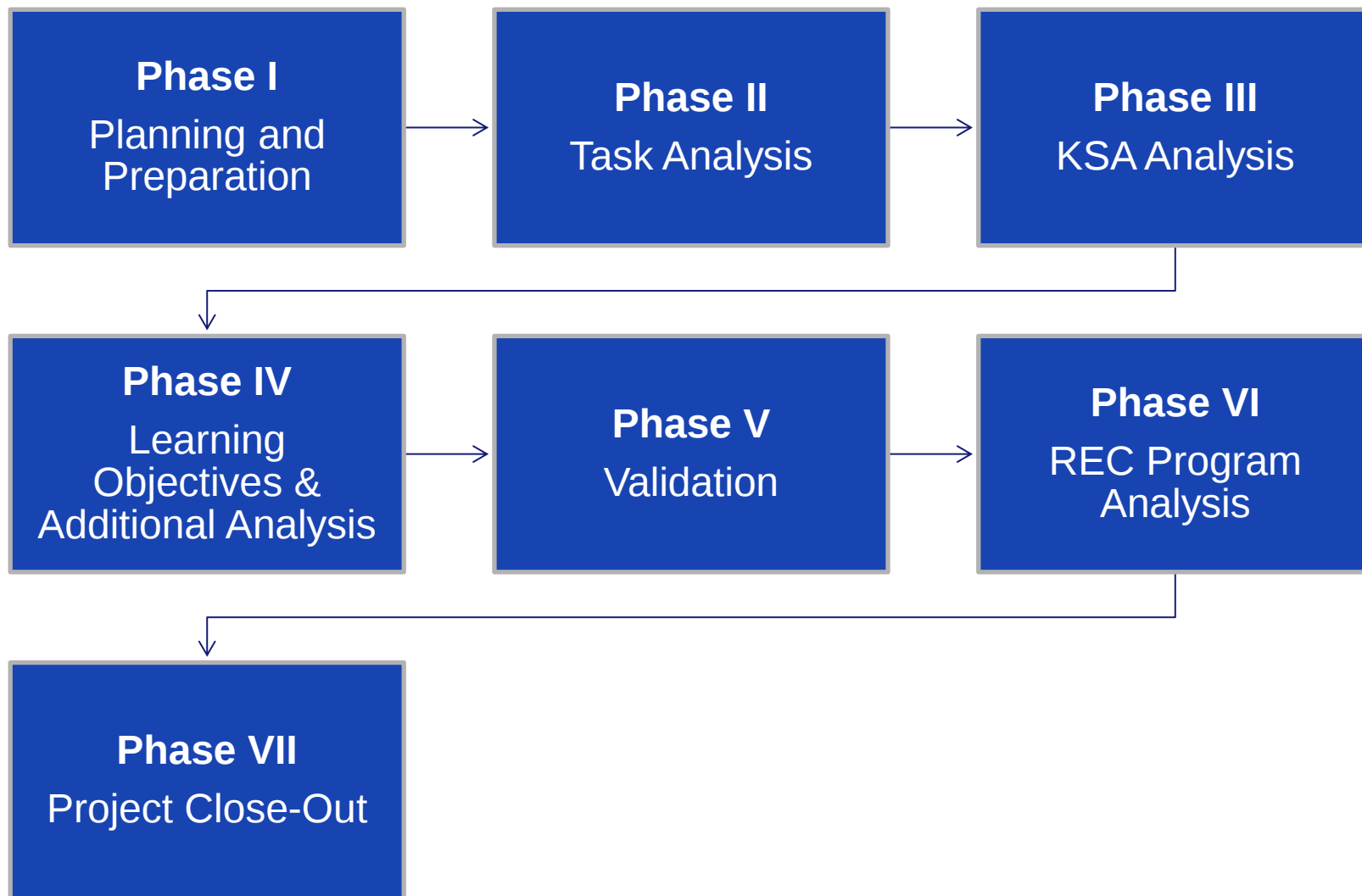
Historical Perspective

- **2005 SOF Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project**
- **2009 SOF Language & Culture Needs Assessment (LCNA)**
- **2010 Naval Special Warfare (NSW) Advanced Training Command (ATC) Language & Culture Training Needs Assessment**
- **2012 Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (LREC) Needs Assessment**
- **2013 United States Army Special Forces Command (USASFC) Language Needs Assessment**
- **2013 Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC) LREC Needs Assessment**

AFSOC LREC Needs Assessment

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Overview



Methodology

- **Mission Task Analysis**
 - **Goal: Identify mission tasks that require LREC to perform, train others, plan/prepare, or live in the area of operations (AO)**
- **KSA Analysis**
 - **Goal: Identify LREC skills and capabilities needed to successfully complete mission tasks identified in focus groups**
- **Learning Outcome Objective Development**
 - **Goal: To develop learning outcome objectives (LOs) for 40 hours of REC instruction; to develop job-specific language LOs**
- **REC Comparison**
 - **Goal: To compare operationally-focused LOs with current USAFSOS course LOs**

AFSOC LREC Needs Assessment

CULTURE FRAMEWORKS CONSULTED FOR KSA PHASE

Culture Definitions & Frameworks Consulted

Documents included:

- **Dr. Allison Greene-Sands & Mr. Marc Robere Hill DoD brief at ILR meeting (May, 2011)**
- **Applied research in military contexts (e.g., DEOMI)**
- **Previous SWA Consulting cultural knowledge studies with Special Operations Forces (SOF) community**
- **Air Force Culture and Language Center's (AFCLC) LREC Force Development Levels**
 - **Air Force Region/Culture Action Panel**
- **Defense Regional and Cultural Capabilities Assessment Working Group (RACCA WG)**
- **ILR Skill Level Descriptors for Competence in Intercultural Communication**

ILR Skill Level Descriptors

- **Intercultural communication incorporates both cross-cultural expertise and language skills**
 - **Refers to content and form of communication, both verbal and nonverbal, among people of different cultures**
- **Descriptions include linguistic and extralinguistic elements at each skill level**
 - **Values, beliefs, customs, etc.**

ILR Skill Level Descriptors

Level	Description Summary
Level 0 (No competence)	Unable to adjust when faced with cultural differences and shows little to no awareness that such exist
Level 0+ (Memorized competence)	Able to use rehearsed behavior and memorized utterances to engage in a few routine interactions serving basic survival needs
Level 1 (Elementary competence)	Able to participate in some everyday interactions, though not always acceptably; may understand the need to manage own reactions to cultural surprises, but is often unable to do so appropriately

ILR Skill Level Descriptors (cont.)

Level	Description Summary
Level 2 (Limited working competence)	Able to participate acceptably in many everyday social and work-related interactions; understands dissonance, and is usually able to do so
Level 3 (Professional competence)	Able to participate successfully in most social, practical, and professional interactions, including those that may require a range of formal/informal language and behavior
Level 4 (Advanced professional competence)	Able to participate fully in virtually all social, professional, and official interactions, including where leadership is required
Level 5 (Superior professional competence)	Individual has mastered and controls virtually all forms of intercultural communication; Can deal skillfully with a very extensive range of circumstances, including high-stress situations

AFCLC's LREC Force Development Levels



■ **C1**

- **Limited understanding of core culture-general and culture-specific concepts;**
- **can identify basic cultural categories;**
- **require substantial assistance with perspective-taking and projecting second/third order effects of own/others' behavior;**
- **have superficial awareness of cultural differences in verbal/nonverbal communication;**
- **have some awareness of basic concepts of cross-cultural relations and negotiation.**

AFCLC's LREC Force Development Levels (cont.)



■ **C2**

- **Have a solid understanding of core cultural concepts, are able to elaborate on the domains of culture (culture-general and culture-specific) and anticipate their implications on the mission;**
- **with minimal guidance, can take the perspective of others and project the second/third order effects of own/others' behavior;**
- **can describe how culture is manifested and how cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings and conflict;**
- **with minimal guidance, can apply basic skills of cross-cultural relations and negotiation at levels of application (tactical, operational, strategic) appropriate to their rank.**

AFCLC's LREC Force Development Levels (cont.)



■ **C3**

- **Able to articulate a thorough understanding of the core concepts and domains of culture (culture-general and culture-specific); can take the perspective of others and project second/third order effects of own/others' behavior;**
- **can describe and formulate complex questions about how culture is manifested;**
- **able to communicate effectively (inter-personally, intra-organizationally, and inter-organizationally) across cultures;**
- **able to apply skills in planning, managing cross-cultural conflicts and establishing, maintaining, and utilizing relationships with culturally diverse counterparts at levels of application appropriate to their rank**

KSA Rating Sheet



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AFSOC LREC Needs Assessment Culture KSA Rating Sheet

Rater Initials: _____

Task: _____

Context [Select one]: ☐ Perform ☐ Train ☐ Plan/Prepare ☐ Live in AO

For this task and context level, please select the level of knowledge, understanding, application, or internalization that is likely to be required for the relevant cultural content areas to successfully complete the task.

	Know	Understand	Apply in Predictable Situations	Apply in Unpredictable Situations/ New Situations	Internalize	N/A
Social Relations (e.g., Family/Kinship)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Economics & Resources	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Political Relations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
History & Myth	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Aesthetics & Recreation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Values & Norms	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sex & Gender	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Religion & Spirituality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Levels of Learning

- **Know:**
 - Individual can repeat back/mirror/imitate basic differences between one's own culture and target culture, but does not understand why these differences exist.
- **Understand:**
 - Individual not only knows that there are differences, but understands why differences exist between one's own culture and the target culture and can generalize beyond only routine/predictable contexts.
- **Apply in Predictable Situations:**
 - Individual can apply cultural knowledge and understanding to predictable and routine situations in which a finite number of events can occur. Cultural faux pas or mistakes are likely to occur if the individual is met with an unpredictable situation.

Levels of Learning (cont.)



- **Apply in Unpredictable Situations/New Situations:**
 - Individual can apply cultural knowledge and understanding to unpredictable situations or new situations in which a variety of events can occur. Cultural faux pas are less likely to occur at this level.
- **Internalize:**
 - Individual handles cultural interactions that are more complex and unpredictable because he or she has internalized understanding of the culture. There will be few if any mistakes/faux pas that cannot be easily corrected. This category condenses the “creating” and “evaluating” categories from Bloom’s taxonomy (revised) to represent higher level competency.

AFSOC LREC Needs Assessment

RESULTS: CULTURE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Cultural Content Areas

- Social environment
- Values and social norms
- Communication issues
- Military and other government organizations
- Political environment
- Media issues
- Physical environment
- Economic and technology issues
- History (operationally relevant) and folklore
- Religion and spirituality
- Sex and gender issues
- Recreational activities
- Aesthetics

Culture Content Area Examples

- **Social environment** (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity, kinship)
- **Values and social norms** (e.g., beliefs, customs, perception of time)
- **Communication issues** (e.g., language, nonverbal behavior, rules of politeness)
- **Military and other government organizations** (e.g., protocols, rank/status, work attitudes)
- **Political environment** (e.g., concepts of leadership, power)
- **Media issues** (e.g., types of media, media influence)
- **Physical environment** (e.g., resources, seasonal cycles)
- **Economic and technology issues** (e.g., infrastructure, tools, application)
- **History (operationally relevant) and folklore** (e.g., myth and legend, rituals)
- **Religion and spirituality** (e.g., beliefs, practices, behavior)
- **Sex and gender issues** (e.g., sexual expectations, gender roles)
- **Recreational activities** (e.g., leisure activities, sports)
- **Aesthetics** (e.g., concepts of beauty, dress/adornments, art)

Example Learning Outcome Objective and Recommended Level of Culture Proficiency



- Learning objective
 - In order to **accomplish** AFSOC mission tasks, the AFSOC personnel will **apply in unpredictable or new situations** knowledge of the **social environment** as demonstrated by appropriate formative and summative assessments.
- Recommended level of culture proficiency
 - C3: Individual is able to articulate a thorough understanding of the core concepts and domains of culture (culture-general and culture-specific) and anticipate their implications and mission effectiveness; can take the perspective of others and project second/third order effects of own / others' behavior; can describe and formulate complex questions about how culture is manifested; able to communicate effectively inter-personally, intra-organizationally and inter-organizationally (across cultures); able to apply skills in planning, managing cross cultural conflict and establishing, maintaining and utilizing relationships with culturally diverse counterparts at levels of application.

Uses for Learning Outcome Objectives



- Learning design objectives can be derived from learning outcome objectives and a curriculum plan can be scoped and sequenced with these design objectives
- Learning outcome objectives developed as part of the needs assessment can be used to compare with existing culture training learning objectives
- Learning outcome objectives can be aggregated up to define requirements of the job, mission, unit, etc.
 - Doesn't work in the opposite direction
- Can be used to develop test specifications to fit with curriculum or requirements

Comparing to Existing Curricula

- Compared learning objectives developed as part of this project to learning objectives of current inter-cultural competence course offered to AFSOC personnel
- For each learning objective, compared (1) content area and (2) level of learning
- Example of a match:
 - *ICSOF course objective:* Each student will comprehend how religion and culture mutually influence each other.
 - *Needs assessment learning objective:* In order to accomplish AFSOC mission tasks, the AFSOC personnel will understand the religion and spirituality as demonstrated by appropriate formative and summative assessments.

Lessons Learned

- **Work analysis approach for culture can vary from the work analysis approach for language**
 - **ILR levels can be used in different ways, depending on project objectives**
- **Multiple culture frameworks can be integrated**
- **KSA rating form improvements**
 - **Form evolved during the project based on the input of the culture experts**
- **Results of this project reinforced the importance of :**
 - **Importance of identifying the characteristics and format of existing learning objectives to ensure a proper comparison**
 - **Collecting information at the task level allows you the flexibility to stay specific or aggregate up**
 - **Leveraging culture experts to improve metrics**

AFSOC LREC Needs Assessment

INSIGHTS FROM CULTURE EXPERTS

AFSOC LREC Needs Assessment

NEXT STEPS

Next Steps for AFSOC

- Air Commandos conducting or planning Irregular Warfare (IW), Building Partner Capacity (BPC), Security Force Assistance (SFA), Medical Stability Operations (MSO), Village Stability Operations (VSO), Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) mission, and/or any mission that involve foreign personnel are required to take this course within 6 months of assuming position.
 - Note: This is currently in coordination at AFSOC level
- Curriculum development that meets operators' need
 - relevant and responsive pre-deployment
 - Intel Analyst trained in Intercultural Competence
 - Creates efficiencies for “just-in-time” pre-mission training

Acknowledgements

- **Developers of the ILR Skill Level Descriptors for Competence in Intercultural Communication**
- **American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)**
 - Mrs. Toni Cowles
 - Dr. Mildred Rivera-Martinez
 - Dr. Bob Tehrani
- **AFSOC LREC NA Culture Team**
 - Ms. LeeEllen Friedland
 - Ms. Monique Roske
 - Dr. Janna Schaeffer
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