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14. ABSTRACT This presentation, which was delivered to the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Testing Committee on 21 MAR 2014, described how a rigorous needs assessment process can provide a foundation for developing mission-focused, capability-based language curricula and assessments. The purpose of a training needs assessment is to guide the design of activities to close “gaps” in underlying knowledge, skills, abilities or competencies related to performance deficiencies. The presenter used models of performance (i.e., Borman, 1991; Campbell, 1999) and theories of human behavior to demonstrate that performance is determined by individual and environmental factors. The presenter described how conducting a needs assessment that fits the purpose and context, can produce information at the level of detailed needed to construct language curricula and assessments.					
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Using Needs Assessment to Align Learning and Assessment with the Capability Needed to Perform a Specific Mission



MARCH 2014

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Using Needs Assessment to Align Learning and Assessment with the Capability Needed to Perform a Specific Mission

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Sponsored by:

SOFLO, USSOCOM

3/21/2014

Slide 1

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Surface, E. A., & Harman, R. P. (in progress). Needs assessment. *Cambridge Handbook of Workplace Training and Employee Development*.

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Surface, E. A., Harman, R. P., & Federe, M. (2012, April). Aligning learning and capability with strategy: A TNA case study. In K. Kraiger (Chair), *By land, air, and sea: Applications in training needs assessment*. Symposium presented at the 27th annual meeting of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, San Diego, CA.

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Dierdorff, E. C., Surface, E. A., & Donnelly, J. (2006, May). *Assessing training needs: Do raters' work experience and capability matter?* Paper presented at the 21st annual meeting of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Dallas, TX.



- Organizational Level Needs Assessments
 - 2004 Language Needs Assessment
 - 2009 Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture Needs Assessment
- Training Needs Assessments
 - Naval Special Warfare (2010)
 - Air Force Special Operations Command (2012)
 - Special Forces (2013)
 - Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (2013)

Focus: Mission Requirements



Assignment

Mission Requirements

Testing



Training

Incentives



- Organizations must ensure they have capability to perform the activities and tasks that support their missions and objectives.
 - How do organizations identify and define these capability requirements?
 - How do organizations ensure they have this needed capability?
 - How do organizations identify and closer their capability gaps?
- Work analysis techniques, such as training needs assessment, help to align organizational processes and capability with organizational objectives. The more alignment between learning, testing, policy, capability, and performance created throughout the system, the more likely individual, team, and organizational outcomes will be achieved (Surface, 2012).

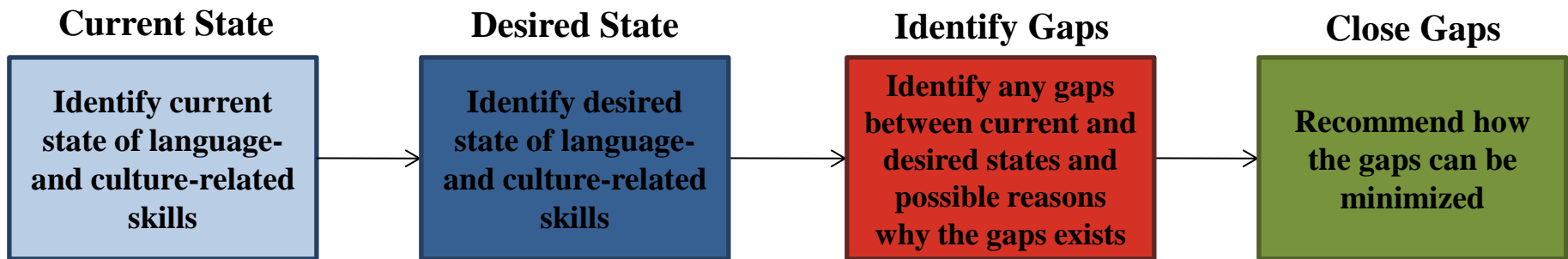
Organizational Needs Assessment



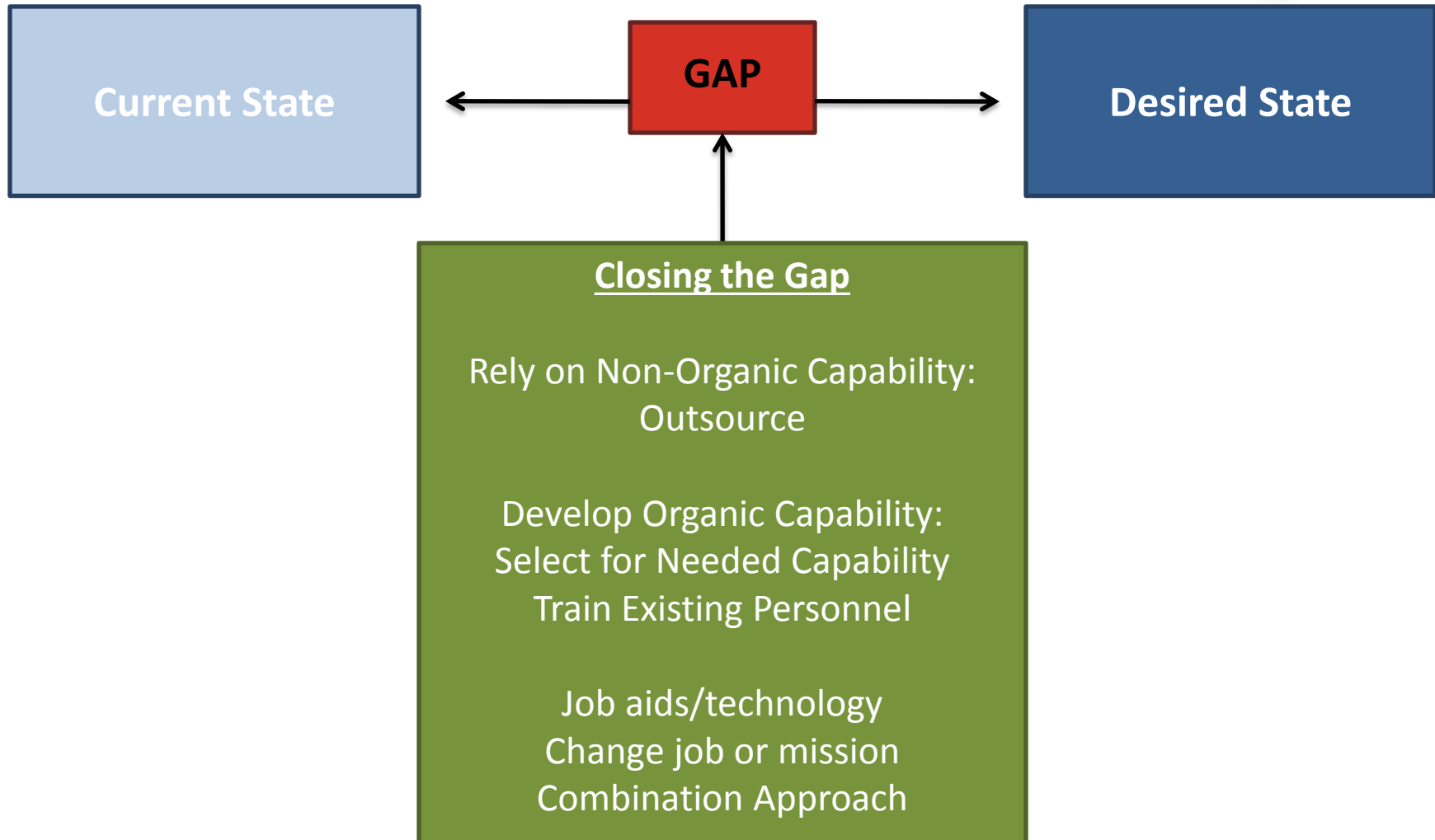
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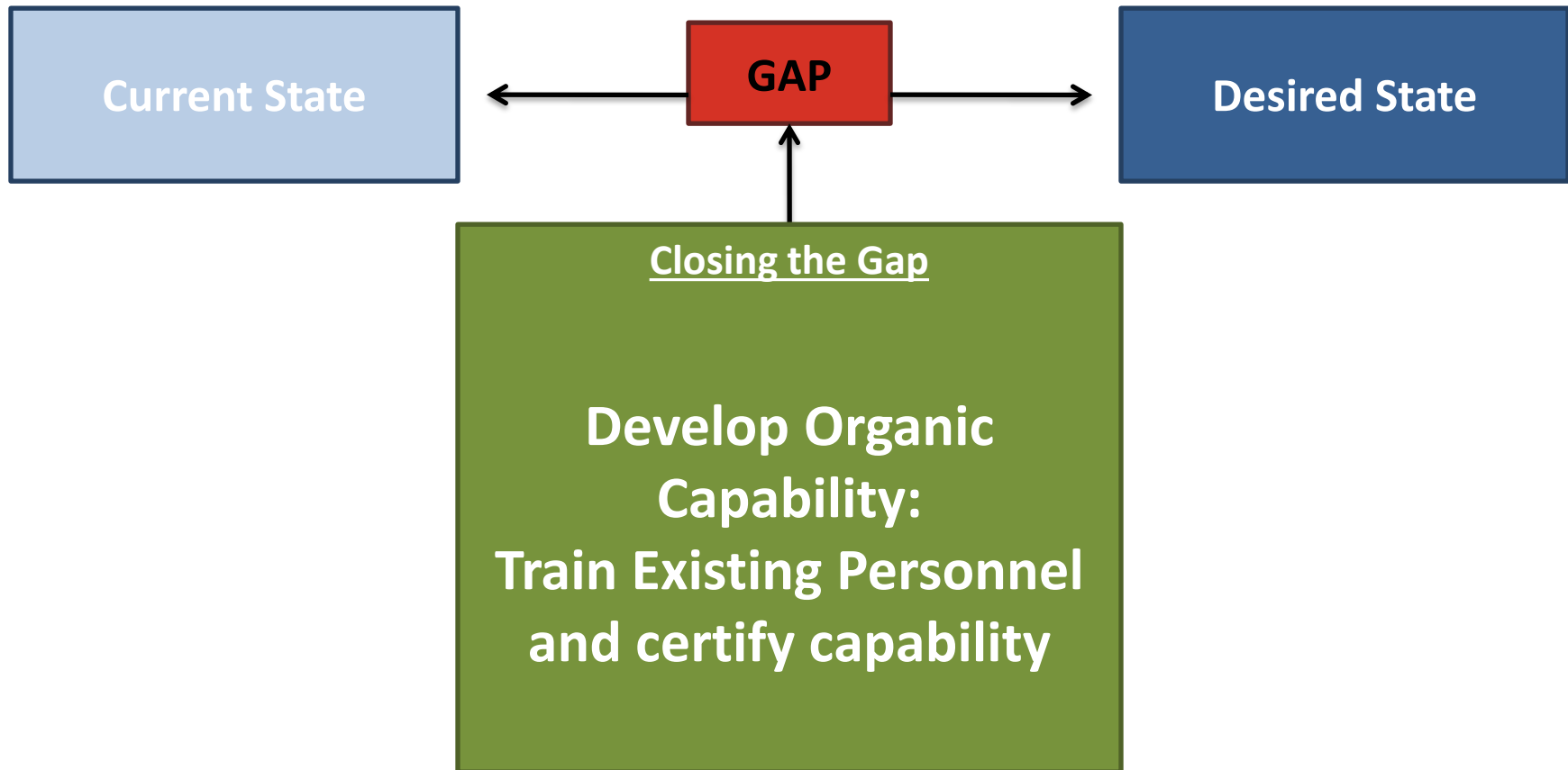
- A process which identifies gaps between current and desired states and makes recommendations about how these gaps can be closed in order to align organizational capabilities with mission and organizational requirements (Surface, 2012)



There is a GAP



Closing the GAP





“...I don't need to be able to send a letter at the post office or ask how to open a savings account at a bank. I need to be able to say ambush, grenade, fire your weapon, align your sights properly, etc...”

-Leader of a Deployed SO Unit

“A lot of those military terms basically you can learn just as easily as anything else. So maybe instead of ‘see Spot run’ you could have ‘see Pedro dodge bullets’ or something.”

-NSW Interviewee



- Surveys, focus groups, and interviews with SOF personnel identified the need for mission-relevant training and assessment.

“The instructors are told to teach for the test the Soldiers will take, so the Soldier knows how to ask for a blue dress but cannot teach rifle marksmanship.”

-5th SFG Operator

- How do we make training mission-relevant?
 - Needs Assessment: What does the mission require?
 - Align learning activities and **assessment** with mission requirements
 - **“Wash back” effect of assessment and assessment policy**

Training Needs Assessment (TNA)



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- A process which provides a mechanism for aligning organizational objectives and capability through specifying focused, relevant training requirements and objectives which drive training design and measurement (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001; Surface, 2012)
- Needs Assessment to create mission/job-related test specifications is very similar; both require specific information about desired performance

Training Needs Assessment (TNA)



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- **Definition:**

- Systematic process
- Applies work analysis techniques and procedures
- Identifies and specifies training requirements that have been linked to deficiencies in individual, team, or organizational performance
- Develop learning objectives to address deficiencies

- **Purpose:**

- Guide design (or selection), delivery and evaluation of learning activities to close the “gaps” in underlying KSAOs or competencies related to deficiencies in the performance of critical tasks in context

Training Needs Assessment (TNA)



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TNA Value:

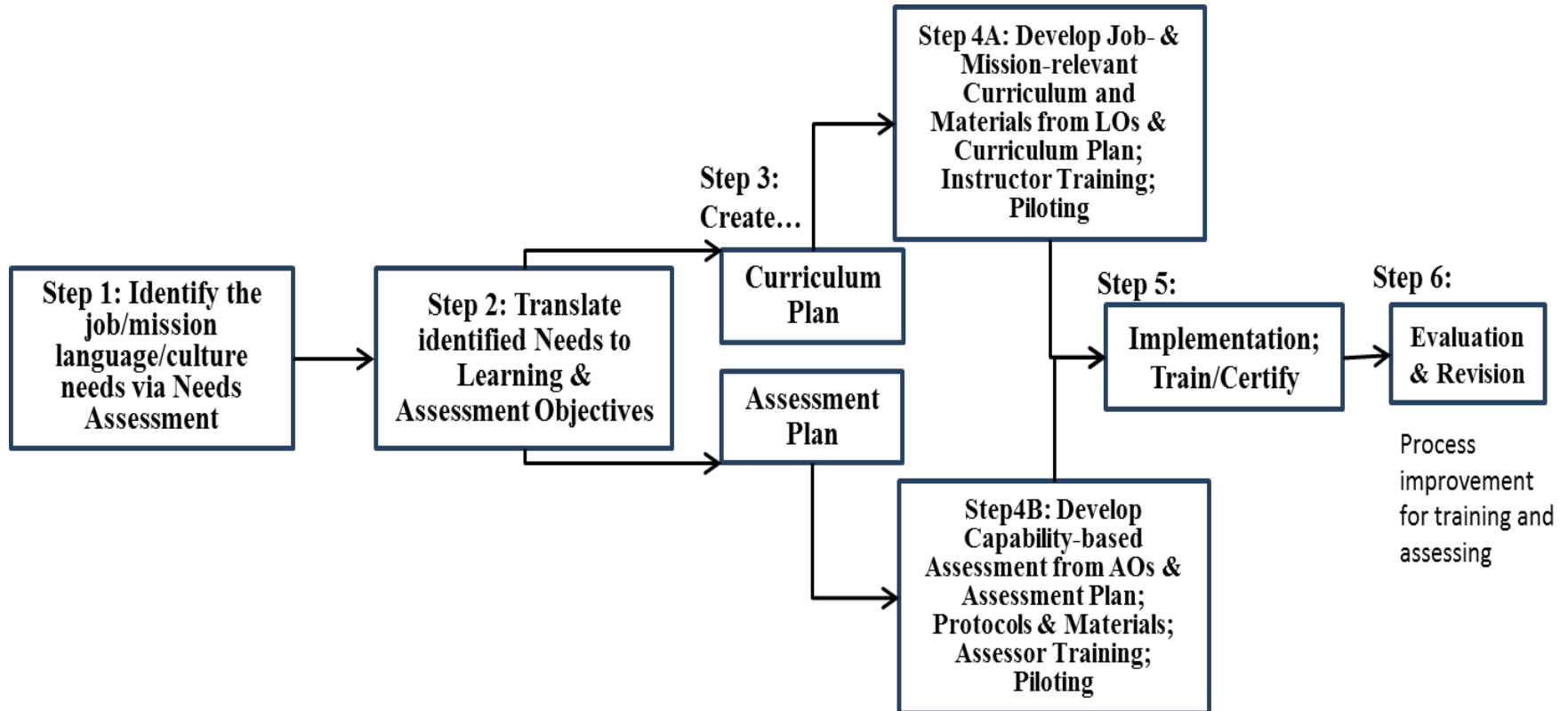
- Mechanism for aligning organizational capability with performance requirements to meet organizational objectives
- Specifies focused, relevant training/assessment requirements and objectives which drive design, delivery and measurement
- Facilitates transfer of learning to the work environment
- Increases efficiency and effectiveness of learning enterprise
- Increases organizational effectiveness (NZ study)

However, unfortunately, just doing a “needs assessment” is not enough; the needs assessment must fit the purpose and context, produce useful information at an appropriate level of detail, and be used.

NA as Part of a Systematic Approach



Developing Mission-focused LREC Capability



This model was originally presented at the 2013 United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) Command Language Program Manager (CLPM) Advanced Competencies Course in a presentation titled, *The Language Needs Assessment Process and Resulting Products*.

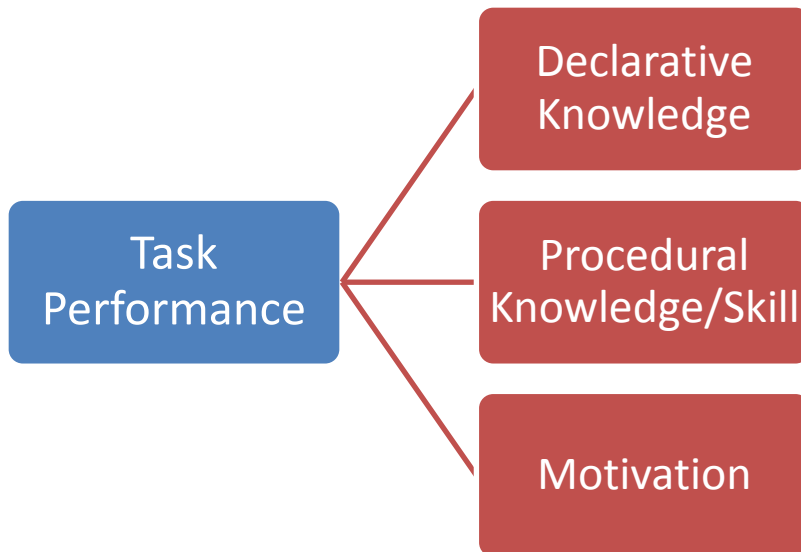


- *Behavior* (action), *performance* (action that contributes to organizational goals) and *effectiveness* (outcome) (Borman, 1991).
- “Performance is not the outcome or the consequence of behavior; it is the behavior itself” (Campbell et al, 1993).
- **Campbell (1999): [Work, job, mission] “performance is defined as behavior or action that is relevant for the organization’s goals and that can scaled (measured) in terms of the level of proficiency (or contribution to goals) that is represented by a particular action or set of actions.”**
- Performance happens in context and is defined in part by the context.
- ***Lewin: $B=f[I,E]$ so $P=f[I,E]$***

P=f[Individual, E]



Performance models have performance determinants...



- Campbell's Determinants: DK, PK/S, M
- Knowing facts, knowing how, practiced acts, and choice behaviors
- Individual differences
- Determinants are not performance but performance is a "joint function" of individual difference on DK, PK/S, M
- Determinants can be in general and specific domains
- Assessment and learning can be *determinant deficient*
- *KSAO analysis: KSAOs must be relevant and tied to performance*

P=f[I, Environment]



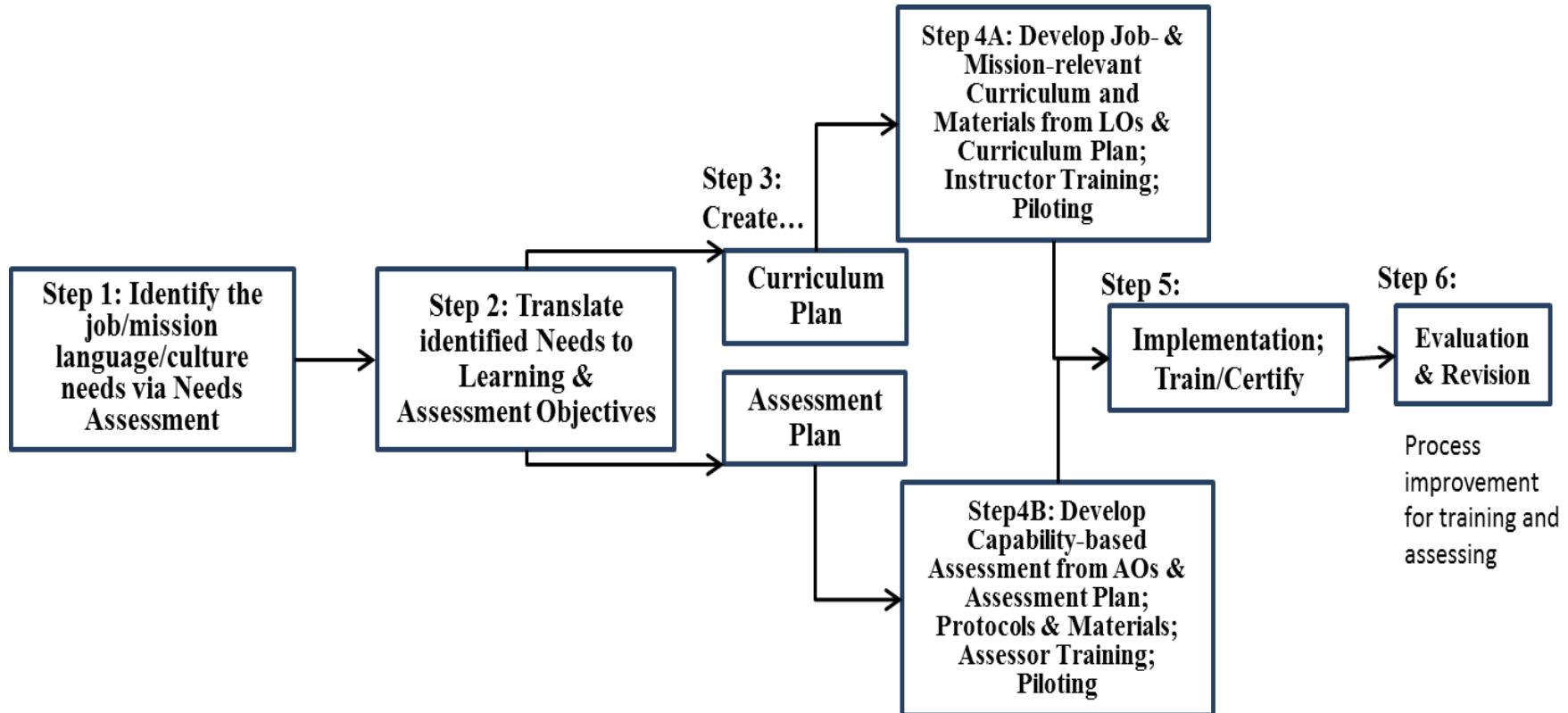
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- All behavior happens in context
- Johns (2006)
 - Discrete (Physical, Task, Social)
 - Omnibus
 - Context changes relationships/requirements
- Each activity, task or incident happens in a 'situation'
- Situation/contextual characteristics influence task and activities and KSAO requirements
- Recognize cues for performance
- Situation strength, KSAO relevance and activation

Aligning with Job/Mission Requirements

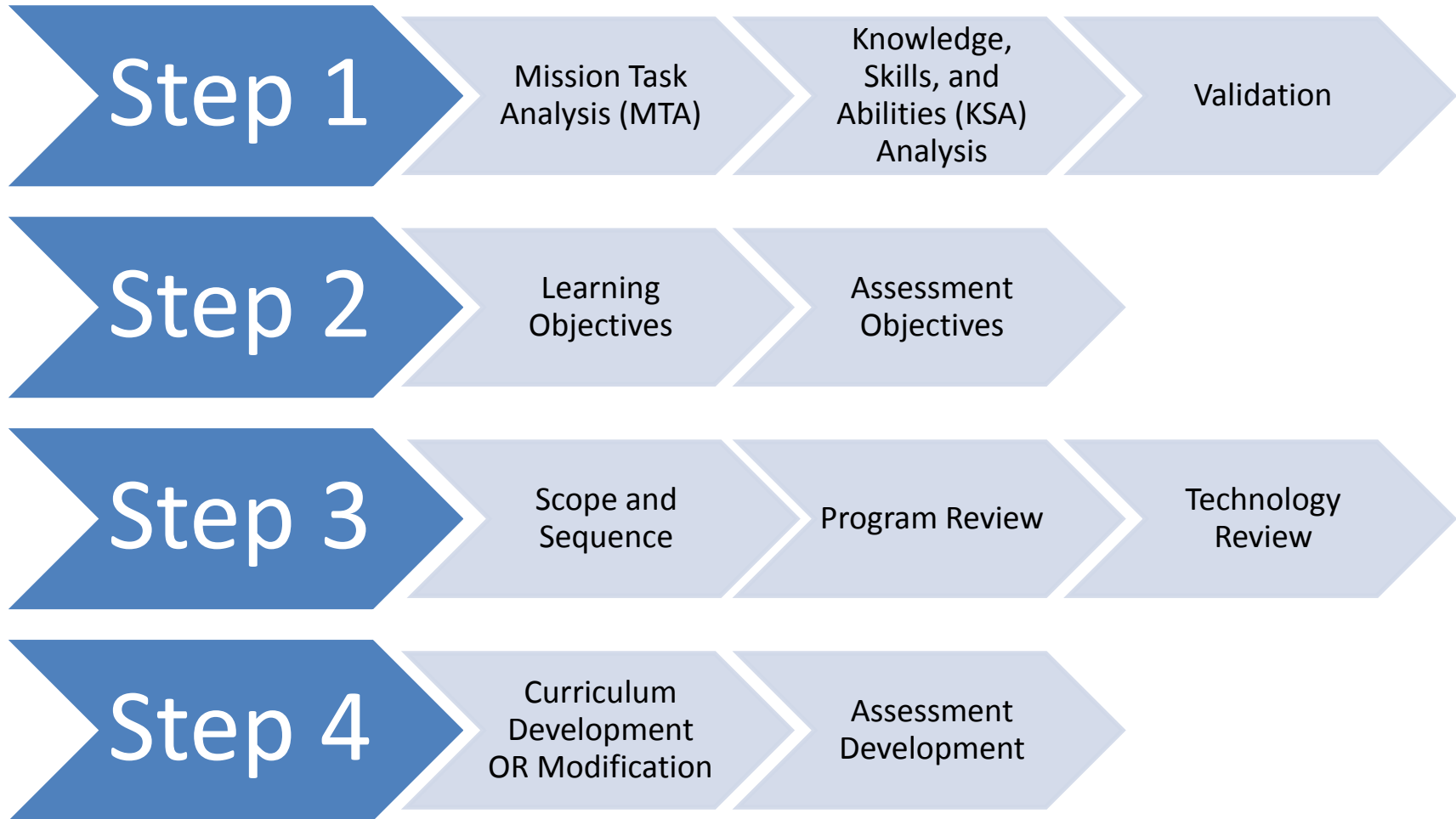


Developing Mission-focused LREC Capability

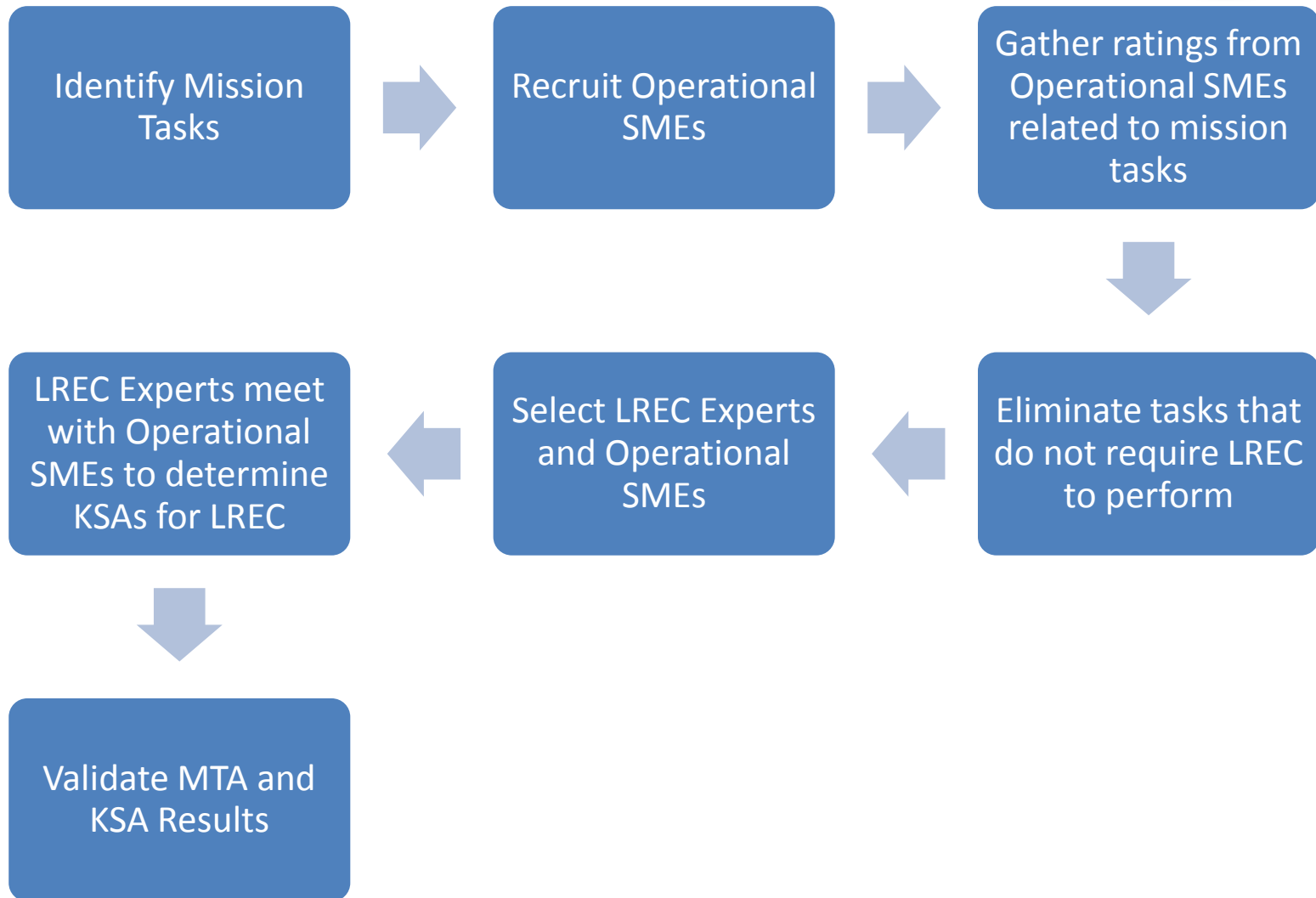


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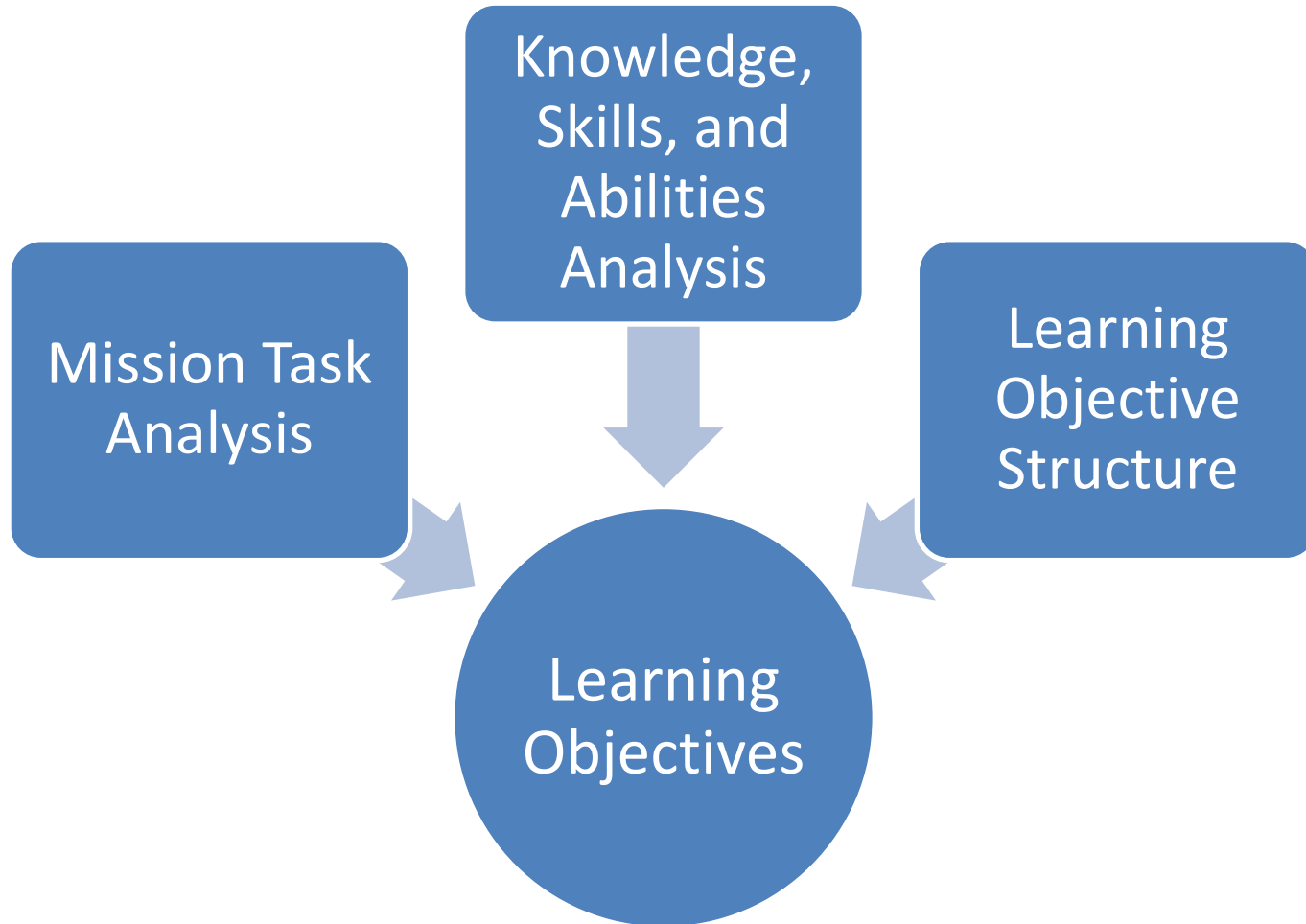
USSOCOM LREC Process



Step 1: MTA and KSA Analysis



Step 2: Develop Objectives



Steps 4, 5, and 6



Step 4: **Develop**
Curriculum/
Assessment

Step 5:
Implementation

Step 6: Evaluation
and Revision



Step 4: **Modify**
Existing Curriculum/
Assessment

Step 5:
Implementation

Step 6: Evaluation
and Revision

Typical Learning Objectives



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8 Identify family relationships

ELO: Identify family members

ELO: Talk about your family

ELO: Ask about other family members

ELO: Talk about family events

ELO: Identify family relationships in the TR

9 Express quantities up to 20

ELO: Count from 0 to 20

ELO: Number the objects in the classroom

ELO: Count currency

ELO: Identify your license plate

11 Express cardinal numbers

ELO: Provide your home address

ELO: Provide the age of your family members

ELO: Request the price of merchandise

ELO: Buy merchandise

Typical Learning Objectives (cont.)



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33. Engage Targets with an M-4

ELO: Zero an M-4

ELO: Load an M-4

ELO: Unload an M-4

ELO: Maintain an M-4

ELO: Perform Function Check on an M4

ELO: Correct Malfunction on an M-4

34. Engage Targets with an M-9

ELO: Load an M-9

ELO: Unload an M-9

ELO: Maintain an M-9

ELO: Correct Malfunction on an M-9

35. Detainees

ELO: Search an Individual

ELO: Search a Detainee

ELO: Guard Detainees

ELO: Search a vehicle in a tactical environment

Example NSW Learning Objective



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TAG: CB-02-02-145-13-01-01-02-02

The NSW SEAL/SWCC personnel will **give commands** in order to **train others to accomplish small arms qualifications** as part of **NSW Range Safety Operations** at the **tactical level of conflict** and **within a level 1 socio-cultural context** and to an **emerging** standard of performance in relation to the targeted proficiency level **ILR level 1** as measured by appropriate formative and summative assessments.

Example: Civil Affairs LNA (2001)



- Each task was reviewed and a proficiency level for each language modality was assigned.



Table 1A. Distribution of Language Requirements for All 87 Tasks

Language Skill	ILR Proficiency Level Requirements									Total
	NONE	0+	1	1+	2	2+	3	3+	4	
LIST				2	48	3	27	5	2	87
SPKG				2	47	4	27	5	2	87
RDG	2	2	11	6	43	2	16	2	3	87
WRTG	3	16	18	31	8	2	8		1	87



- Result: Absolute minimum profile in L/S/R/W is 2+/2+/2/1+. The safest profile is 3/3/2/1+.

How we assign ILR levels to tasks



NSW Tactical Communications Tasks, Train Others Context, Tactical LOC

ILR experts were asked to identify the minimum level of proficiency required for a person with correct, contextualized, specific training to be able to fully perform each task.

Tactical Communications Tasks	Interpersonal Speaking Proficiency			
	ILR 1	ILR 1+	ILR 2	Above ILR 2
Conduct full spectrum non-verbal communication (e.g., loss of comms, hand/arm signals, pop flares, signal devices)	Limited	Full	Full	Full
Operate communication systems	Unsustained	Limited	Full	Full
Maintain communication systems	Unsustained	Limited	Full	Full
Supervise/manage partner nation communication systems	Unsustained	Limited	Full	Full

Note. Unsustained = Random and often incomplete performance, *Limited* = Performance of the task in a limited context and manner, *Full* = Can perform the task minimally as described for NSW operations. *Full/Limited* is used when the requirements of the task are so high that even some speakers above ILR Level 2 may not be able to perform them fully.



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Questions & Discussion



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