Culture in the DoD: Concepts, Initiatives & Applications

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Overview

• Identify Need and Establish Approach
• Explain DoD Cultural Concepts & Definitions
• Review DoD Culture-related Events & Initiatives
• Describe Specific Applications/Products for Culture Education & Training
Indicators of the Need for Culture

• **STRATEGIC GUIDANCE:** The importance of cultural capabilities is included in various strategic guidance documents, but no existing doctrine or policy mandates or standardizes a DoD-level approach.

• **WIDESPREAD SUPPORT:** Personal anecdotes - including from Senior leaders - underscore the critical role of culture in individual, unit, and mission effectiveness and performance.

• **GLOBAL IMPACT:** The unpredictability of world events and various complex and pressing transnational/global issues require multinational responses, highlighting the significance of cultural capabilities in “Building Partner Capacity” and “Counterinsurgency” initiatives.

• **ADDRESS GAPS/SHORTFALLS:** The General Purpose Force’s (GPF) training does not always include standardized measures to ensure all who deploy receive the requisite training for culture beyond the surface tidbits of the region or the broad, local culture.
Inadvertently, Roy dooms the entire earth to annihilation when, in an attempt to be friendly, he seizes their leader by the head and shakes vigorously.

"Take me to your leader," I said… and then the most hideous thing happened."
Tale of the Afghan Poppy Farmer & the SMSgt
Balanced Policy Approach

Grounded in theory ~ Operationally relevant

**ACADEMIA**
- Empirical research
- Evaluation methodologies
- Education (PME* & Universities)

**OPERATIONS**
- Operational Application
- Translate to lexicon of DoD
- Training

*Professional Military Education

Practical solutions for the complex cultural challenges facing the Total Force
Cultural Concepts & Definitions
Cultural Capability:

A combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes (KSAAs) regarding the associated culture(s) in the area of operations and those common to any culture (culture-general).
**Culture-Definitions**

*Specific vs. General*

**Culture-Specific**

*Refers to a specific culture or cultural group.*

**Culture-General**

*The common aspects and domains of culture, providing individuals with knowledge [concepts, theories, processes, etc.] and skills that offer broadly-applicable general principles and serve as a framework for culture-specific learning.*
Cross-Cultural Competence (3C):

The ability to operate and interact effectively within a culturally complex environment.

- Based on a set of culture-general knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes (KSAAs) developed through education, training and experience.
- Further developed and augmented by the acquisition of cultural, linguistic, and regional proficiency and their application in cross-cultural environments.
Components of Cultural Capability

**CULTURE IS THE CONTEXT**

- **Culture:** Includes both culture-specific and culture-general; related to language via the linguaculture; related to region via the associated culture.

- **Cross-Cultural Competence (3C):** Has at its foundation a culture-general concept that provides the framework to learn about and adapt to any culture.

- **C (+L+R):** Different roles, ranks, and functions require these interrelated components in differing degrees.
(FAOs*, RAOs*, Pol-Mils*, Intel Analysts) (Interpreters, Translators, Crypto-linguists)

For specialists, the amount of overlap, and the relative weight and interdependence of the three components, is dependent on the requirements of the job.

* Foreign Area Officers, Regional Area Officers, Political-Military Affairs Officers
Emphasis is training culturally-based language in a regional context. However, greater emphasis is needed on the culture-general component.
3C – Sample Competencies

- Acquires and applies culture-general concepts
  - What is Culture? Cultural Self-awareness
  - Worldview, Beliefs, Values, Symbols, Ethnocentrism
  - Universals: Family & Kinship; Religion & Spirituality; Time & Space...

- Alternative Perspective-Taking
  - Considers others’ point of view to interpret behavior
  - Suspension of Judgment

- Facilitates Intercultural Communication
  - Communication Adaptability
  - Decoding Nonverbal Cultural Cues
3C Bulls Eye
3C Career Developmental Continuum

Cross-Cultural Competence

Training + Education (PME) + Experience
DoD Culture Events & Initiatives
DoD Culture Events

• **June 2007 Summit:** “Regional & Cultural Expertise: Building a DoD Framework to Meet National Defense Challenges”
  * Laid a foundation for the importance and role of Regional & Cultural Capabilities in the DoD

• **September 2008 Roundtable:** “Cross-Cultural Communication in a Globalized World”
  * Examined the most essential application of cultural capability

• **June/July 2009 DoD Symposium:** “The Role of Cross-Cultural Competence (3C) in Organizational & Mission Success”
  * Established 3C as a critical competency for the Total Force
DoD Culture Events

January 2011 Summit:
“Language & Culture: A Strategic Imperative”

- 300+ Senior Leaders
  - Department of Defense, Interagency / USG, Academia (pre-K to university), Congress (Senate & House) & Professional Organizations

- Key Themes
  - Need a holistic, Joint & Interagency approach to resolve LRC challenges
  - LRC skills must be valued and endorsed as core warfighter competencies
  - Need a paradigm shift in personnel management system
  - DoD as a model for preK-12 language & culture learning (CDCs, DoDEA)
DoD Strategic Plan for Language Skills, Regional Expertise, and Cultural Capabilities

**VISION:** The Department will have the required combination of language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities to meet current and projected needs

**GOAL ONE**
Identify, validate, and prioritize requirements for language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities, and generate accurate demand signals in support of DoD missions.

1.1 (Identify) Develop and adopt methodologies to identify and determine language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities requirements based on current and future DoD mission needs.

1.2 (Validate) Incorporate validation processes for language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities requirements.

1.3 (Prioritize) Implement a transparent decision-making process that prioritizes language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities requirements.

1.4 (Demand Signals) Establish process to transmit all validated and prioritized language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities requirements to DoD Components.

**GOAL TWO**
Build, enhance, and sustain a Total Force with a mix of language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities to meet existing and emerging needs in support of national security objectives.

2.1 (Current Capabilities) Analyze Total Force capabilities and capacities against language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities requirements to identify gaps and associated risks.

2.2 (Personnel) Establish management and assignment processes that will shape the Total Force to meet current and future language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities requirements.

2.3 (Training and Education) Build and improve training and education programs to acquire, enhance, and sustain language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities for the Total Force.

**GOAL THREE**
Strengthen language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities to increase interoperability and to build partner capacity.

3.1 (Required Authorities) Seek appropriate authorities to provide and improve language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities support for security-related coalition and multinational objectives and missions.

3.2 (Establish Partnerships) Establish and leverage partnerships between DoD, other government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international security partners and allies to enhance language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities.

3.3 (Utilize Partner Capabilities) Utilize international partner and ally language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities to achieve coalition and multinational objectives and missions.

3.4 (Enhance Partner Capacity) Assist designated international partner and ally security organizations in building or enhancing sustainable language, regional, and cultural training capabilities.
Institutionalization of 3C

• Language & Culture Summit White Paper

  ➢ **Recommendation**: Require 3C Across the Force

    Require GPF to have a basic, foundational understanding of culture & its critical role in a variety of culturally complex operational environments.

  ➢ **Recommendation**: Build and Sustain 3C

    Train & educate all members of the Total Force to have a baseline of 3C, ensuring some members have additional, enhanced cross-cultural skills & abilities beyond the baseline.

• DoD Strategic Plan for “LRC”

  ➢ “Institutionalize cross-cultural competence by building and implementing a roadmap for managing, measuring, and sustaining these competencies for the Total Force.”

• Strat Plan’s Implementation & Action Plans (Draft)

  ➢ 2.3.1. Build & sustain cross-cultural competence (3C)
3C Study Initiatives

- Develop a 3C Framework
  - Review existing research across disciplines
  - Develop & refine core competencies & core enablers
  - Identify supporting Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, Attitudes (KSAAs)

- Identify 3C Foundational “Baseline”
  - A common starting point of minimally required 3C Competencies, Enablers & KSAAs
  - Foundational framework for learning about any culture and for developing critical interaction capabilities
Applications/Products for Culture Education & Training
Service Culture Centers

• Army – TRADOC Culture Center (TCC)
  • *Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy*

• Navy – Center for Language Regional Expertise and Culture (CLREC)
  • *Language Skills, Regional Expertise, and Cultural Awareness*
Service Culture Centers (cont.)

- Air Force – Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC)
  - *Culture, Region & Language Flight Plan*
  - [http://www.culture.af.edu/index.html](http://www.culture.af.edu/index.html)

- Marines – Center for Advanced Operational Cultural Learning (CAOCL)
Virtual Culture Awareness Trainer (VCAT)

- Provides web-based individual training capability
- Utilizes interactive courseware
  - *Gaming technologies*
  - *Live action and simulated mission scenarios*
- Uses global scenarios based on operational mission sets
- Located on Joint Knowledge Online (JKO) server under ‘Language and Culture’ link
  - *Provides Learning Management System*
  - *Links to Service personnel data systems*
VCAT Horn of Africa

• Countries include:
  • Comoros  Ethiopia  Mauritius  Sudan
  • Djibouti  Kenya  Seychelles  Tanzania
  • Eritrea  Yemen  Somalia  Uganda
  • Madagascar

• Missions include:
  • Civil Affairs
  • Security Cooperation
  • Humanitarian Relief
VCAT Northern Africa

- **Countries include:**
  - Algeria  Egypt  Libya
  - Morocco  Mauritania  Tunisia

- **Missions include:**
  - Civil Affairs
  - Humanitarian Assistance
  - Security Cooperation

- **Language Links to DLIFLC**
  - Moroccan Arabic
  - Tunisian Arabic
  - Egyptian Arabic
  - French
VCAT+L Afghanistan

- **Regions include:**
  - Kabul
  - Kandahar
  - Jalalabad

- **Small unit missions include:**
  - Initial Meetings
  - Local Grievances
  - Humanitarian Assistance/CERP*
  - House Searches

- **Language Links to DLIFLC**
  - Dari
  - Pashto

*Commander’s Emergency Response Program*
Cross-Cultural Competence Trainer “3CT”

• Provides 3C training that targets a core list of culture-general learning objectives:
  • Describe the primary concepts of culture
  • Understand the key components of cultural relativism
  • Demonstrate the skill of sense-making
  • Interact effectively with other cultural groups

• Global missions and scenarios
  • Humanitarian Assistance - Haiti
  • Counter-Insurgency - South America
  • Civil Affairs/Rapport Building - Afghanistan
Questions?