



# ASSESSING LANGUAGE, REGION & CULTURE:

*THE POWER OF THE MEASURE IS IN THE ASSOCIATION OF THE COMPONENTS*

OR

*IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE LIKE THREADING A CAMEL  
THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE*





# THE MANDATORY DISCLAIMER

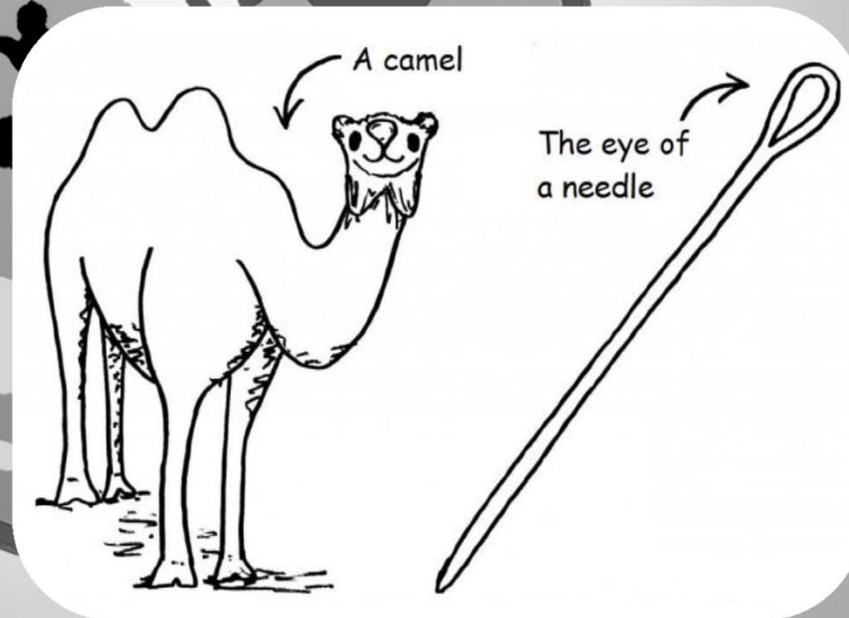
The following opinions, theories, stories, jokes about Lawrence of Arabia and jokes about camels, pictures of camels, other wildlife of Biblical times or numerous acronyms expressed in this presentation are not those of the US Army, Defense Language Institute, FLC, Institute for the Study of Culture and Language, Norwich University, the DoD more generally, MIT, any Ivy League school with or without a vowel at the end of their name, University of Maryland, or University of Maryland, University College, University of California, Santa Cruz (who by the way has the Banana Slug for a mascot. A complete list of organizations and institutions not represented can be provided at the end of the presentation if you can catch the presenter before he sprints out of the room



# THE PROVERB & ITS MEANING

*It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to gain eternal life.*  
(Matthew 19:24; Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25)

*So....not an easy task,  
in other words*







# APPLICATION OF THE PROVERB TO LREC...

By comparison, it seems far easier to thread a needle with a camel than develop an LREC assessment





# LAWRENCE OF ARABIA





# LAWRENCE IN ARABIA

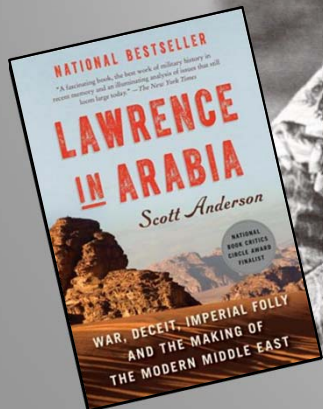
T.E. Lawrence, the quintessential language & culture transplant and warrior

More “native” than “native” in understanding beliefs, worldviews, the expression of cultural systems across various cultural groups

A critical and formative grasp of dynamic regional politics and the security issues of the time

A natural born leader and epitome of LREC warrior-diplomat – motivated, extremely patient with a love to learn

He also had some flaws, don't we all.





# EXPECTATION MANAGEMENT

Aspiring to T.E.  
Lawrence's abilities is  
an unreachable goal

Thus, this presentation  
only goes downhill  
from here







# THE UNDERLYING THEME OF THIS PRESENTATION

You can teach *language*, or you can teach elements of "*culture*", you can even teach *region* – culture-specific on steroids – BUT...

the emphasis on one over the others produces an incomplete and perhaps contrary path or end-state vis-à-vis the desired or necessary requirements, so...

the goal must be to develop, whenever possible, *coordinated* learning programs that incorporate both *language* and *culture* (general and specific) and *cross-cultural communication skills* to truly align with organizational requirements **AND THAT CAN BE ASSESSED TO BENEFIT THE ORGANIZATION AND LEARNER**





# WHERE THE MAGIC HAPPENS: THE CLARK HOUSE, BLDG 4292

Computer Lab



CLARK HOUSE



Classrooms





# JOINT BASE LEWIS McCHORD (JBLM) LANGUAGE & CULTURE CENTER (LCC)



Offers a unique laboratory of  
language and culture learning  
experimentation

(not necessarily accurately depicted here – there  
are more wires coming out of our language and  
culture machine )







# JBLM LANGUAGE & CULTURE CENTER AT A GLANCE

## I CORPS COMMAND LANGUAGE PROGRAM

PROFESSIONAL  
LINGUISTS

LANGUAGE  
ENABLED  
SOLDIERS (LES)

BASIC LANGUAGE  
AND/OR  
AOR FAMILIARIZATION

### Support to PACOM:

- **RAF Proof of Concept**
  - Cultural Orientation & Language Training (COLT) Program for GPF
  - Language Enabled Unit Model
  - PACOM Partner Languages (KP, TA, JN, TH)
  - Curriculum Development
  - Instruction
  - Commanders' menu of options
  - Mission-focus
  - Function-focus
- Cross-cultural Competency (3C) Training
- Distance Learning/LMS Options

### Training Programs & Services:

- FORSCOM Master Language Contract
- Instruction: 25 languages
- Curriculum Development: 26 languages
- MI Refresher/Enhancement
- NGB ISO-immersions
- MIRC Annual Training Events
- Language Enabled Soldier Program
- G.L.O.S.S. Development
- Broadcast Monitoring System
- Cultural AOR Briefs
- How to Use an Interpreter
- Cross-cultural Competence (3C) Training
- Distance Learning/LMS Options





# ISSUES – AND LAWRENCE’S THREE LAWS OF LREC DYNAMICS

As a *community of practice* – educators in the world of LREC – do we know what we are trying to teach when we teach?

Language, culture, region, communication or some combination?



## According to Lawrence

(and we think we have channeled him correctly...maybe)

- Lawrence’s first law of linguistic and cultural thermodynamics: To know language well, you have to understand cultural expressions of behavior
- Lawrence’s second law of languaculture: To communicate across cultural divides, you need to know how human behavior is parsed into systems and its expression, the extra-linguistic messages as well as the language –
- Lawrence’s third law of minimizing the background of cultural bipolarity: To be successful in complexity, one needs to engage skills to mediate the linguistic, cultural (and cognitive) disconnects -





# THE USUAL POLICY-MAKER GUIDANCE

“...in the 21st century, military strength will be measured not by the weapons our troops carry, but by the languages they speak and cultures they understand.”

(President Obama 2009)

“...We need a building block capability to respond to a broad range of missions.....Another goal is to educate soldiers on region-specific culture and language, so they are better prepared for conflict in any part of the world.”

(GEN Odierno 2012)

“...we will continue to focus on the Asia-Pacific, where we support our allies, shape a future of greater security and prosperity and extend a hand to those devastated by disaster...”

(President Obama 2014)





# LREC

DoD has created a Language, Regional Expertise and Culture Program with its amalgamation of disparate concepts – LREC

- Language
- Regional proficiency (expertise)
- Cultural (local) (capabilities)

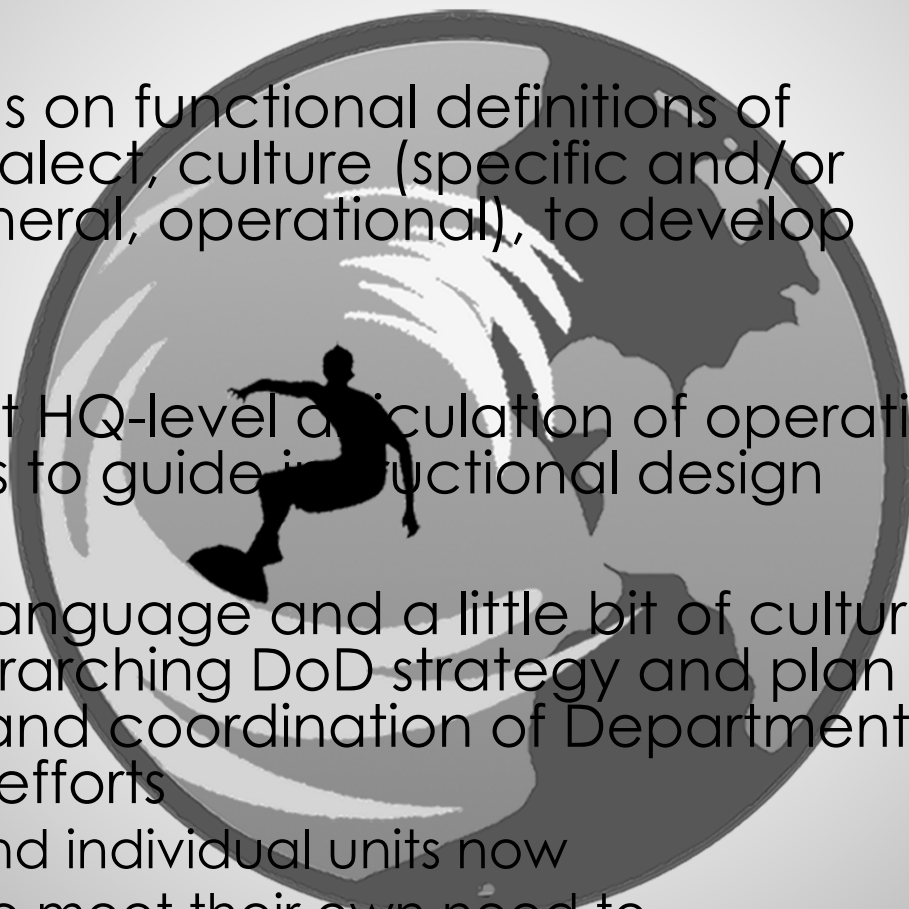


A catchy attempt to corral related but also *divergent* KSAs, programs, billets and budgets – “*acronymizing*” the complexity of the individual elements in order to make it more palatable, more like a single consumable that can simply be “purchased off the shelf”



# DoD REALITY

- Uneven and/or lack of “standardization” across and within LREC elements
- No consensus on functional definitions of language/dialect, culture (specific and/or regional, general, operational), to develop curricula
- No consistent HQ-level articulation of operational requirements to guide instructional design
- Funding for language and a little bit of culture lacks an overarching DoD strategy and plan - no articulation and coordination of Departmental and Service efforts
  - Services and individual units now attempting to meet their own need to establish programs





# IS LREC “TAUGHT” AS A COMMON PROGRAM?

- Language – has a more or less standardized learning program and associated institutions
  - Defense Language Institute (Foreign Language Center, English Language Center, Washington, and numerous Language Training Detachments)
  - Partner Language Training Center Europe, George C. Marshall Center, OSD
  - SOCOM and other organizations “contract out” learning development, sometimes in coordination with DLI
- Regional Proficiency (Expertise) – based on education (regional studies and international relations) & experience
  - not standardized nor always useful to mission need







# AND CULTURE

- “Culture” – ad hoc and opportunistic, approached differently in agencies and services – no set guidance on definitions, skills, or levels
- There are “Culture” Service Centers that have moved to institutionalize culture learning (training and education)
  - Region Culture Language Familiarization (RCLF) - Marines
  - Existing culture and cross-cultural communications courses through Community College of the Air Force
  - JBLM Language Enabled Soldiers (LES)





# SOME INHERENT FLAWS FOR ASSESSMENT IN LREC

- Regional Proficiency and Expertise – nowhere near standardized assessability
  - Definitions of proficiency levels lack relevance to any kind of sustainable development
  - Not relevant to all DoD populations
- “Culture” no agreement on concept, utility or use. Like Regional Proficiency blankets KSAs, policy, program identification
  - Where to start?

## Recent/ongoing Assessment Attempts in DoD:

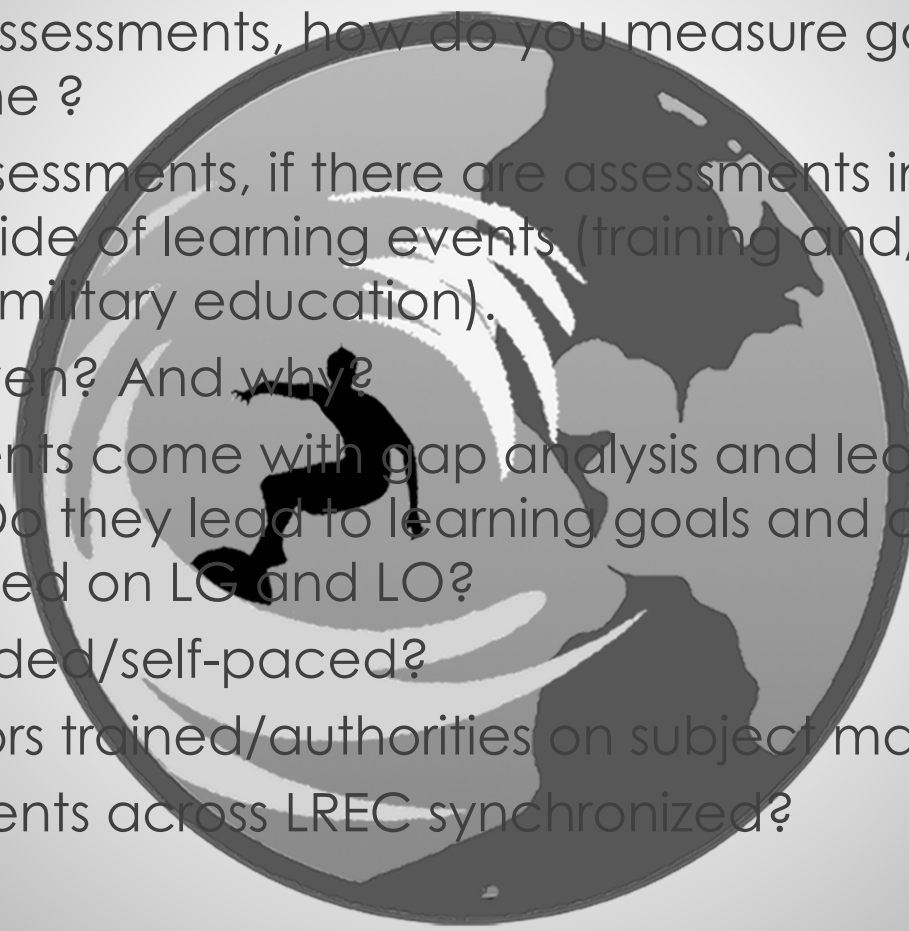
- Education only – Navy APAC
- Human Capital - Regional Proficiency Assessment Tool (RPAT)
- Selection/Training - ARI – 307 Assessment Battery





# ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- What does it mean to assess capability?
- For culture assessments, how do you measure gain in a short period of time ?
- Most LRC assessments, if there are assessments in the DoD, are applied outside of learning events (training and/or professional military education).
  - When given? And why?
- Do assessments come with gap analysis and learning programs? Do they lead to learning goals and objectives or are they based on LG and LO?
- Are they guided/self-paced?
- Are facilitators trained/authorities on subject matter?
- Are assessments across LREC synchronized?







# ASSESSMENTS: FACTORS TO CONSIDER

What do we want to get out of assessment?

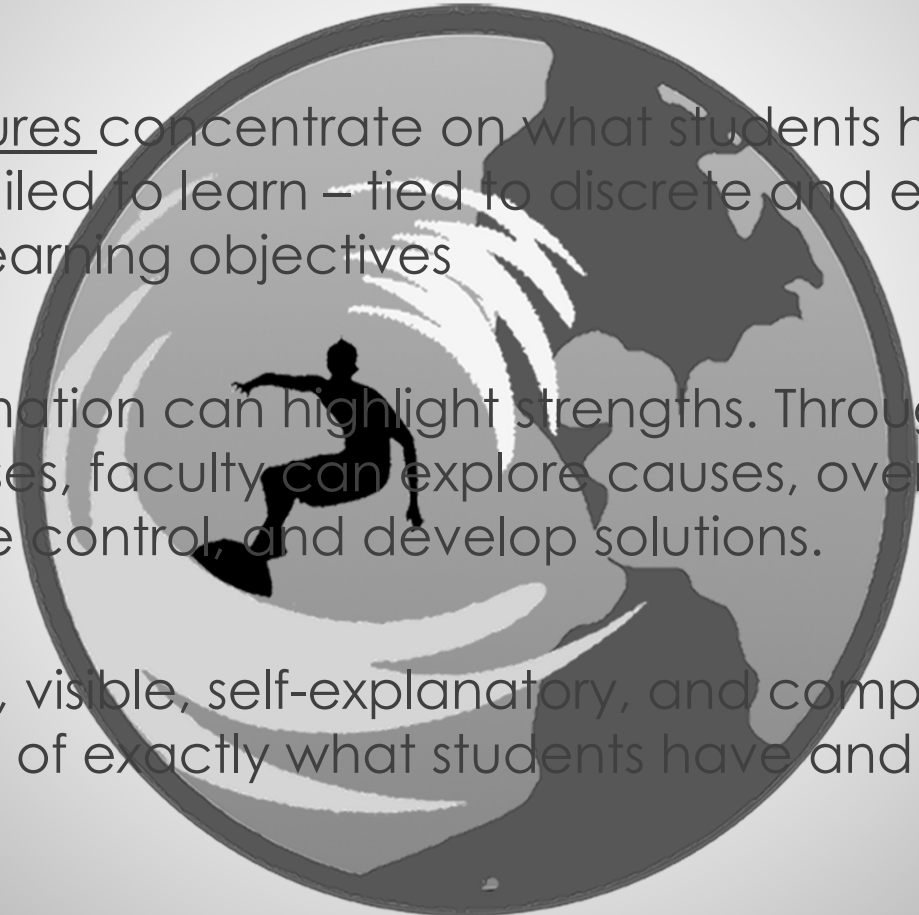
- An understanding of a or several capabilities? A biographical sketch?
- Something useful to an organization but based on a more generic model? – customizable?
- An understanding of what has been learned and can be expressed?
- A Department-wide “score” with relevance to a focus or mission but may not be the needs of an organization?





# ASSESSMENT IN LEARNING: DIRECT MEASURES

- Assessment measures divided into two broad categories: direct and indirect.
- Direct measures concentrate on what students have learned or failed to learn – tied to discrete and expert-generated learning objectives
  - This information can highlight strengths. Through weaknesses, faculty can explore causes, over which they have control, and develop solutions.
  - “tangible, visible, self-explanatory, and compelling evidence of exactly what students have and have not learned.”



Linda Suskie, *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 2009)





# ASSESSMENT IN LEARNING: INDIRECT MEASURES

- Indirect measures “reveal characteristics associated with learning, but imply that learning has occurred.”
  - “evidence consists of proxy signs that students are probably learning.”
- Mid-Semester course evaluations
- Evaluations of course assignments or units
- Course-level surveys
- Course evaluations that can be aggregated for the entire department/program
- Semester-end course evaluations
- Percent of class time spent in active learning
- Honors, awards, and scholarships earned by students and alumni
- Number of student hours spent on homework







# EMBED ASSESSMENT IN LEARNING

Programs can implement course-embedded assessments, i.e. use course work assignments, which can be a more efficient use of time and minimize the feeling that outcomes assessment is an additional task.

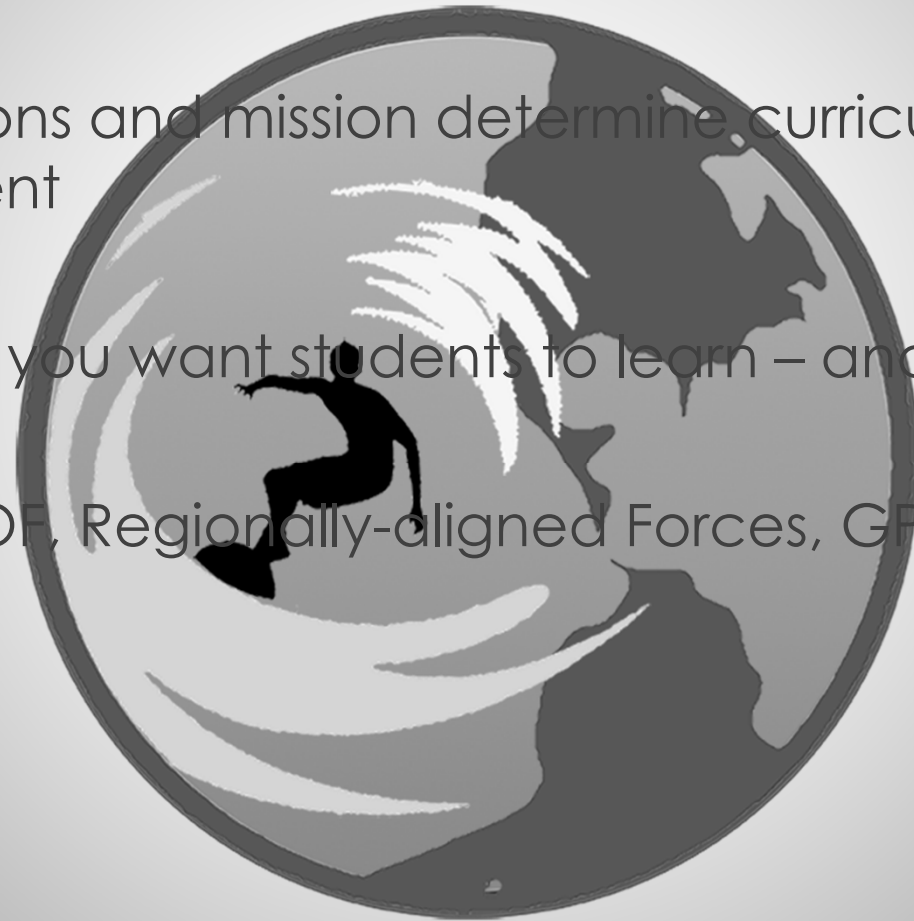
- Work that students complete is relevant to the learning goals being assessed; this increases the likelihood that they will put forth their best effort
- The course work is created by faculty, who are experts in their discipline and have a vested interest in maintaining the standards of their profession in the next generation.
- Learning objectives are written to capture measurable responses
- The results are relevant to faculty, who want to improve student learning.
- Grades based on explicit criteria related to clear learning goals





# DON'T LET ASSESSMENT DRIVE YOU UP THE WRONG STREET

- Populations and mission determine curriculum and assessment
- What do you want students to learn – and do?
- DoD - SOF, Regionally-aligned Forces, GPF and others





# MEASURE OF PERFORMANCE – LEARNING AT JBLM LCC

Supervisor/Commander – an idea of the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA) introduced and developed

- Has Soldier been provided proper content through an effective learning event
- What has the soldier been exposed to, considered/reflected and assessed across a spectrum of instruments in language, region and culture?
- Is there a measure (s) of performance that effectively captures LREC? Grades, scenario language proficiency only?







# AN EXAMPLE OF LES OPTION - GPF

- 10-week Plan of Instruction (POI)
  - Intensive Language Familiarization
  - Culture (general & specific)
  - Cross-cultural Interaction (e.g., CCC)
- Language Goal is 0+ to 1, heavy lean towards 1
- Operational Focus and Scenario Driven:
  - Rapport Building; Logistics; Security; Medical
- Blended Learning
  - In-class instructions
  - Distance Learning via Learning Management System
  - Embedded Direct and Indirect Assessment
- Over 35% of instruction, experiential learning is "culture"





# CONCEPTUAL UNDERPINNINGS

- **Cross-cultural Communication (CCC):** the act of conveying and understanding meaning with people from two or more cultures different from one's own; also "the study of a particular idea or concept within many cultures...in order to compare one culture to another.... cross-cultural communication involves a comparison of interactions among people from the same culture to those from another culture."
- **Cross-Cultural Communication Competence :** the ability to effectively grasp non-verbal and extra-linguistic means of communication and be able to compare and contrast across cultures. In a sense, the culture-general approach to application





# MORE UNDERPINNINGS

- **Cross-cultural Competence (3C):** the ability to navigate in complex interpersonal situations, express or interpret ideas/concepts across cultures, and make sense of foreign social and cultural behavior; 4 skill-based competencies
- **Inter-cultural Competence:** the ability to effectively/successfully convey and understand meaning with people from a single culture different from one's own





# EVEN MORE UNDERPINNINGS

- **Culture** – the shared patterns of behavior made meaningful by a group of people
- **Culture-general:** pertaining to the universal components of cultures, such as ideology, kinship, social networks, exchange, governance, etc.
  - Behavior coalesces around activities or situations more or less universal
  - Identify patterns and meaning can facilitate understanding and interaction
- **Culture-specific:** pertaining to the specific patterns of meaning-bearing behavior of a particular group of people (region usually refers to location where CS applies)
  - CS is utilized in various LREC learning efforts, usually as a focal point and often considered the only truly required element for pre-engagement education and training.
  - Utility is limited to culture group and based on recollection or experience of instructor, or resources





# CULTURE-GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Introduce conceptual, transferable, “common” sets of behaviors. Provides a framework of understanding own and others’ behavior.

Topics can include:

- Kinship/family
- Identity
- Exchange
- Health, gender
- Law & order
- Sport
- Gender
- Ideology
- Health
- Culture change/mobilization
- & more
- Select those more amenable to mission.





# LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT – OPI vs DLPT

- OPI - “live”, subjective, communicative assessment of global functional speaking ability
- standardized procedure using ILR scale for assessment of **global, functional speaking ability**
- Academic placement, student assessment, program evaluation, professional certification, hiring and promotional qualification
- DLPT – computer-based test, usually multiple-choice with automated grading
- standardized procedure using ILR scale for the global assessment of **reading and listening only**
- normed for military intelligence linguists along global domains of potential operational relevance (politics, society, economy, etc.)
- May not consider DoD mission/strategy changes since the Vietnam era or before; focused on Intelligence collection, rather than analysis and interpretation, for which CG are crucial
- no authentic linguistic production in the target language; not communicative in nature
- Neither mechanism is truly focused on assessing DoD operational ability in the target language, though the OPI is at least focused on communicative usage of the language.

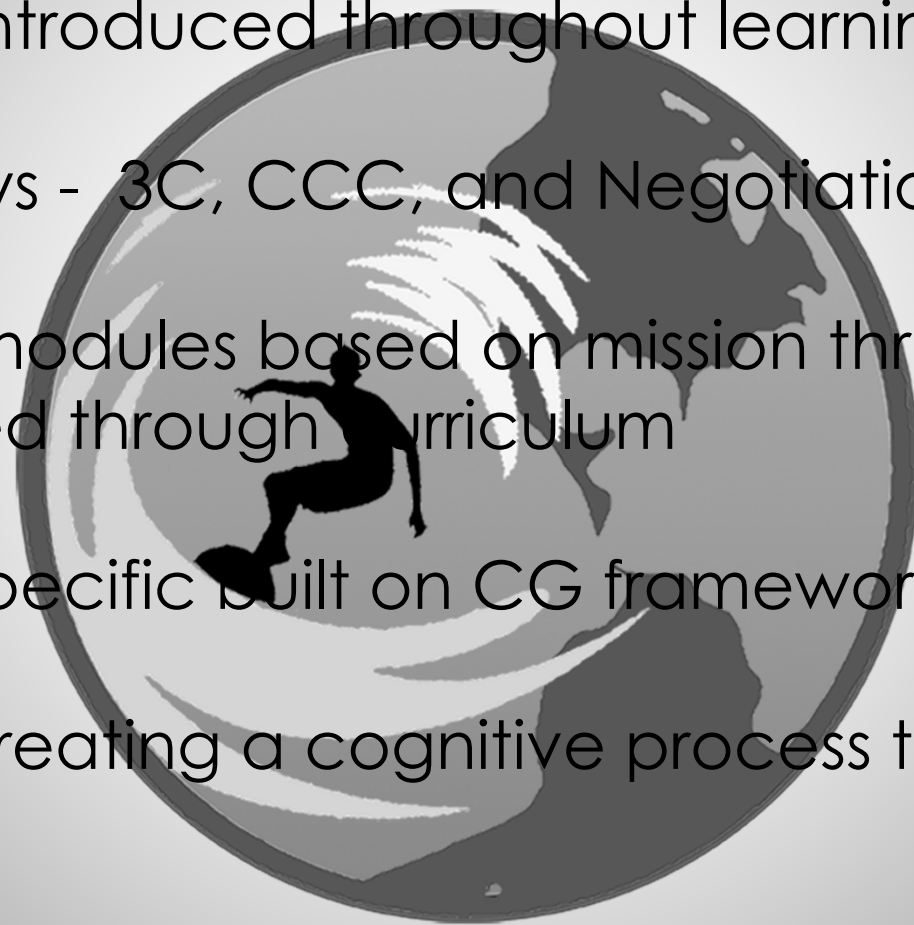




# CULTURE IN LES

Concepts introduced throughout learning event

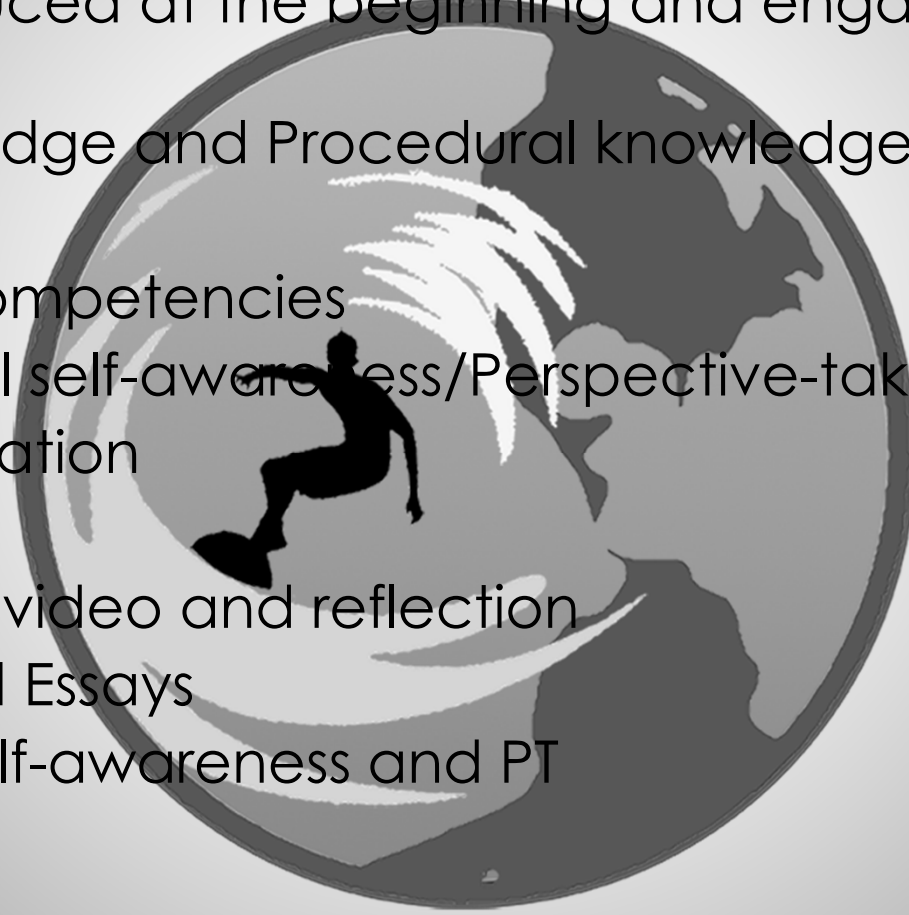
- First 2-days - 3C, CCC, and Negotiations
- Key CG modules based on mission through LMS
- Reinforced through curriculum
- Culture specific built on CG framework
- We are creating a cognitive process to learning





# CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE

- 3C Introduced at the beginning and engaged in modules
  - Knowledge and Procedural knowledge
- Primary competencies
  - Cultural self-awareness/Perspective-taking (PT)
  - Observation
- Narrative, video and reflection
  - KC and Essays
  - Push self-awareness and PT



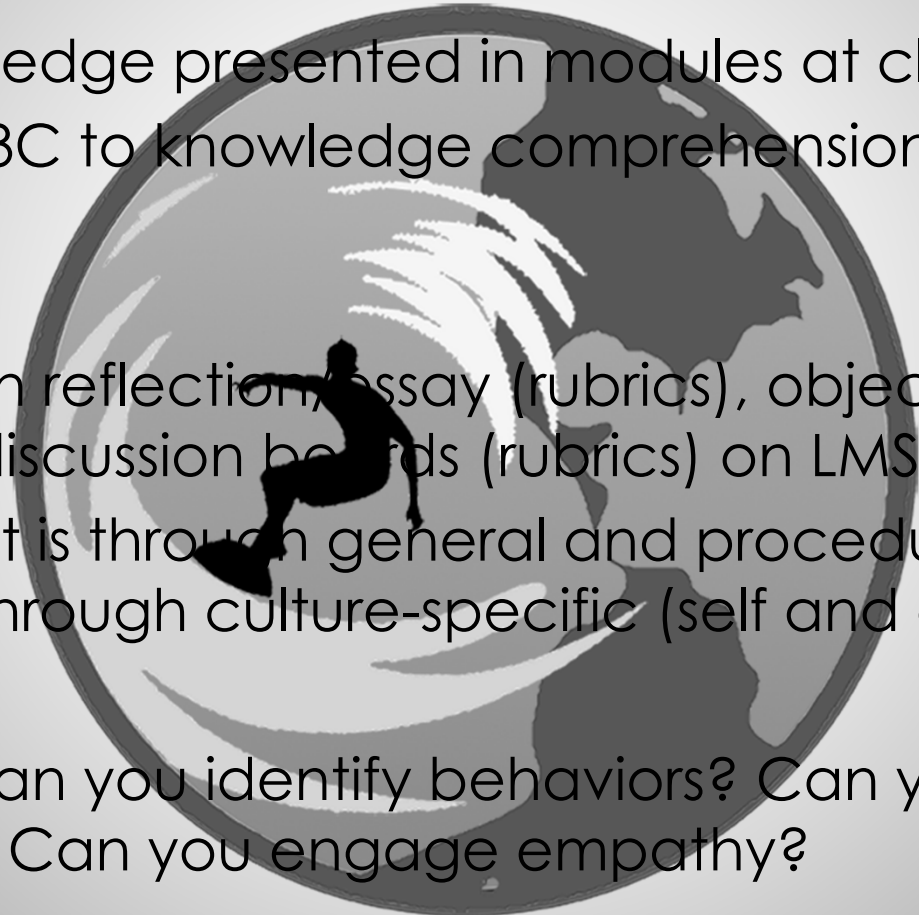




# CG/3C ASSESSMENT

Force reflection to identify behavior sets in self and other

- CG/3C knowledge presented in modules at class beginning
  - Align CG/3C to knowledge comprehension to language curriculum
- Assess through reflection/essay (rubrics), objective knowledge checks and discussion boards (rubrics) on LMS
  - Assessment is through general and procedural knowledge and part through culture-specific (self and other)
- Questions – can you identify behaviors? Can you mitigate cultural bias? Can you engage empathy?
- Assessment based on %Score of all work done.





# CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTION

- All of us mostly competent in effectively communicating at least with some or most social groups in our society
  - Successfully? Maybe
- We unconsciously or consciously communicate through different channels with or independent of the language. Socially, we are fast learners... sort of.
- Utilize a “culture” general approach to understanding the universal channels...then be able to transfer





# COMPETENCE

***ICC Competence** is the ability to take part effectively in a given social context by understanding what is being communicated and by employing appropriate language and behavior to convey an intended message.*

From ILR Skill Descriptors

***Cross-Cultural Communication Competence** is the ability to effectively grasp non-verbal and extra-linguistic means of communication and be able to compare and contrast across cultures. In a sense, the culture-general approach to application*

Adapted from MacKenzie 2014 – Strategic Enablers, *Journal of Culture, Language and International Security* (Vol 1)



# SKILLS

- Leveraging communication styles
- Employing effective interaction skills
- Displaying active listening techniques
- Managing paralanguage use and perception
- Decoding non-verbal messages







# LANGUAGE IN ACTION

## Our current course:

- The Soldiers will be conducting C-IED training, bilateral classes and a checkpoint/patrol lane.
- The C-IED lane will consist of them being taught what indicators to look for as well as common TTPs that are being used Thailand.
- There will be no traditional "IED Lanes" where they will be walking. The vehicle checkpoint lane will be a stationary bilateral lane with vehicles/personnel (RTA) moving through the established location (some will have IED materials).
- The dismounted patrol lane consists of a bilateral patrol where the Soldiers will interact with locals in a post disaster environment.
- There will be bilateral classes taught as well. The US Soldiers will be teaching classes on : 1. Convoy Escort, 2. MEDEVAC, and 3. Crowd Control.
- The RTA will be giving classes on 1. Survival, 2. Personnel/Vehicle Search, 3. Cordon and Search.
- We will develop a culminating LIA which will enable the Soldiers to "rehearse" some of the above.....we also want to make the point that our POI is tailored to the actual mission of the unit.



# ASSESSMENT OF CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTION

## Modules

- Cross-Culture Communication - Declarative and procedural knowledge of universal components of cross-cultural communication
- Working with Interpreters in non-permissive environments
- Elements of Cross-cultural Negotiation

## SJTs-

- Modeled after MacLennan 2015 – “Intentional Design: Using iterative Modification to Enhance Online Learning for Professional Cohorts” in Communicating User Experience (Milburn)

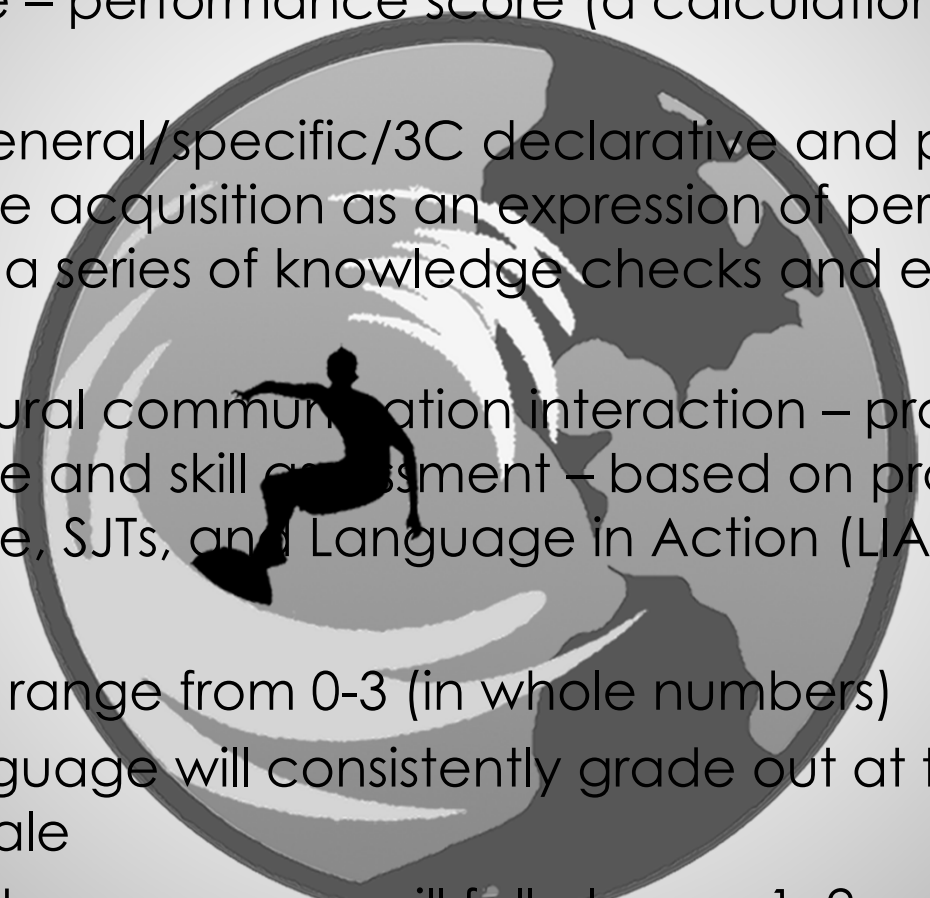
## LIA





# OUR LRC ASSESSMENT CONCEPT

- Three separate measures/scores – around knowledge and skills
  - Language – performance score (a calculation of OPI with LIA scores)
  - Culture-general/specific/3C declarative and procedural knowledge acquisition as an expression of performance–based on a series of knowledge checks and essays in class and DL
  - Cross-cultural communication interaction – procedural knowledge and skill assessment – based on procedural knowledge, SJTs, and Language in Action (LIA)
- Measures will range from 0-3 (in whole numbers)
  - In IAT, language will consistently grade out at the low end of the 0-3 scale
  - The other two measures will fall along a 1, 2 or 3 or *low, moderate, high* scoring



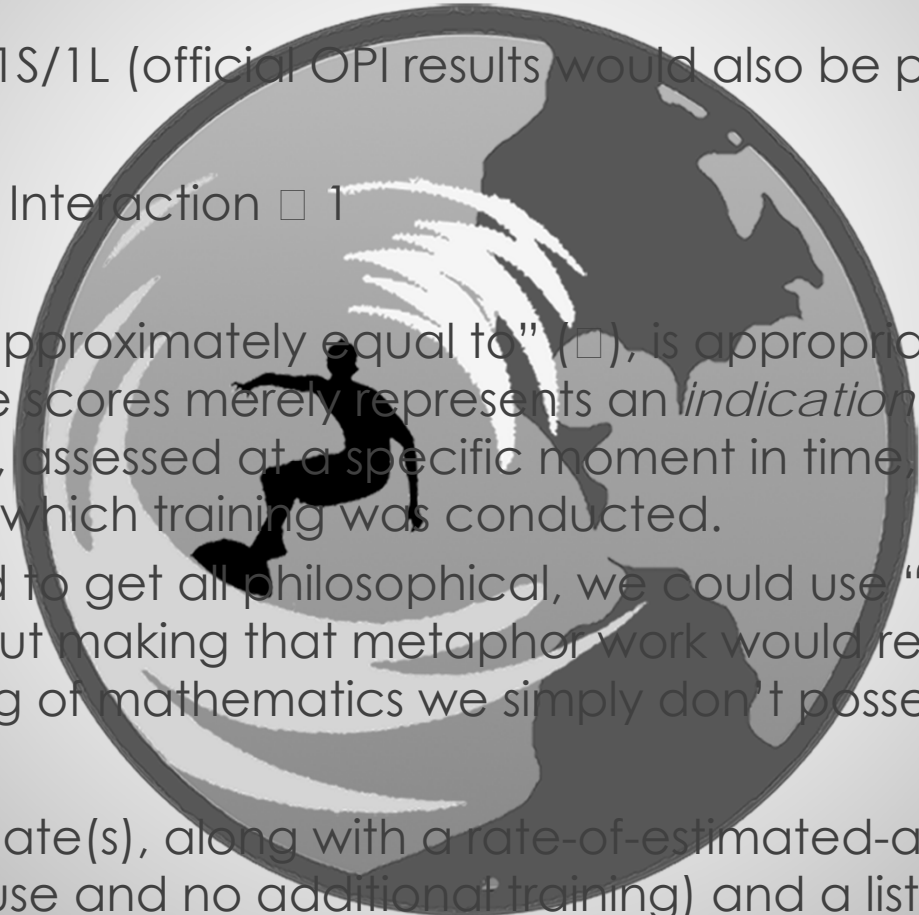


# SCORES (LRC) MODALITIES

Departure from overreliance on language-only ILR ratings

Example scoring:

- Language □ 1S/1L (official OPI results would also be provided)
  - Culture □ 2
  - Cross-cultural Interaction □ 1
- The symbol for “approximately equal to” (□), is appropriate as the grouping of these scores merely represents an *indication* of one’s potential abilities, assessed at a specific moment in time, *prior* to the engagement for which training was conducted.
- (If we wanted to get all philosophical, we could use “asymptotically equally” ( $\approx$ ) but making that metaphor work would require an understanding of mathematics we simply don’t possess.)
- The assessment date(s), along with a rate-of-estimated-atrophy (presuming non-use and no additional training) and a list of recommended sustainment resources (to be developed), would be provided as part of the assessment.

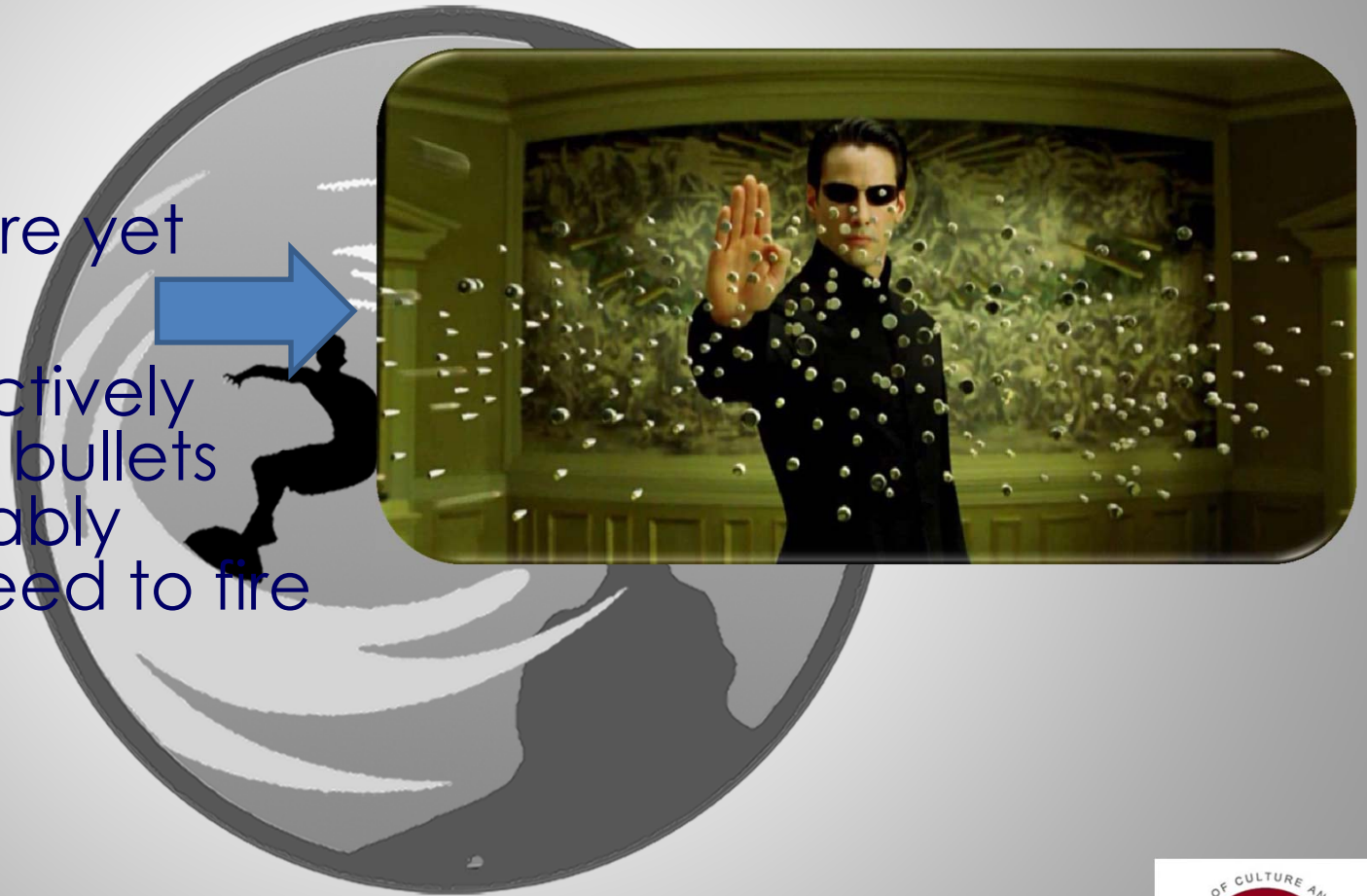




# NEO, YOU ARE THE ONE... SORT OF

Not quite there yet

But we *are* actively trying to stop bullets flying (preferably *before* the need to fire them arises).





# SMALL CAMEL THROUGH A BIG NEEDLE







# THE ASSESSORS

Camel



Yvonne, Pieter, Kevin  
and Rob





# Q&A / IDEA EXCHANGE







# Points of Contact

Yvonne M. Pawelek  
Director, JBLM Language & Culture Center,  
The Clark House, BLDG 4292, 9th Division  
Drive  
Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA 98433-9500  
(253) 966-3812  
Yvonne.M.Pawelek.Civ@Mail.Mil

Allison S. Greene-Sands, PhD  
Deputy Chief of Staff  
DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office  
4800 Mark Center Drive, Suite 07G21  
Alexandria, VA 22311  
(571) 372-7868

Robert R. Greene Sands, Ph.D.  
Director & Senior Research Fellow,  
Institute for the Study of Culture and  
Language, Norwich University  
& Editor of The Journal of Culture,  
Language and International Security  
(805) 320-2967  
rsands@norwich.edu  
<http://iscl.norwich.edu>

Pieter R. DeVisser  
DLIFLC Liaison to JBLM  
The Clark House, BLDG 4292,  
9th Division Drive  
Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA 98433-9500  
(253) 967-7479  
pieter.devisser@dliflc.edu



Camel  
University of the Desert  
camel@desert.edu

