The *Journal of Military Conflict Transformation* (JMCT) is a professional journal of the US Air Force and the Air University. This publication is intended to serve as an open and scholarly forum for the advancement of topics within conflict transformation, negotiation, mediation, and facilitation. Opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed or implied within are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, the Air Education and Training Command, the Air University, the Air Force Negotiation Center, or any other US government agency.

JMCT welcomes research articles, op-eds and commentary, book reviews, case studies, negotiation stories, artwork, and photographs. Individuals interested in publishing may submit materials via email to **jmct@au.af.edu**. All submissions must be unclassified, non-sensitive, and releasable to the public. Content must be original, not previously published, and represent substantive new content or perspectives. For more information on guidelines and submission requirements, please visit us at www.airuniversity.af.edu/AFNC/About-JMCT.

Comments

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Director's Note

Happy New Year, we trust that everyone had a wonderful holiday, and more importantly, we hope you were all glad to see 2020 end and welcomed 2021 with open arms. The AFNC team has been working extremely hard to bring you a top quality issue of the Journal of Military Conflict Transformation (JMCT), complete with changes, additions, and relevant literature in the field of conflict transformation.

Recently I was asked what 2020 taught me—my first thought was negative—I think it was something like, COVID-19 sucks. But after taking a moment, I realized 2020 taught me that change is constant and if an organization is unable to react to change, it will become irrelevant. In order for the AFNC to continue teaching, we had to change the way we do things; this was not met with open arms. Change is typically met with resistance, not because people want to be difficult, but because resistance bubbles up from existing cultures or we simply don't know how to change. It can also be very uncomfortable, as it forces us to come out of our known comfort zone. This past year challenged our AFNC team, but we knew failure was not an option, and we had to remain resilient and continue to provide a platform for people to share research and best practices in the field of conflict transformation. Not only did we completely overhaul our classes to fit an online format, we increased our student population and our online and social media presence while also continuing to support Air University courses.

Included in our 2020 transformation are additional changes to the JMCT. You will see a more inclusive journal that provides other opportunities for you to publish your work—be it scholarly articles or professional opinion—we are working hard to provide a platform for everyone to submit. I will end with a statement you may recall from the previous journal, we believe that providing an open forum and the tools to discuss will have lasting benefits throughout the force.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to serving you both in-person and virtually.

Lt Col Christopher M. Lacek
Director, Air Force Negotiation Center

Editor's Note

You may have looked at the cover of this issue and wondered, what does a road in the middle of nowhere have to do with conflict transformation? Well, sometimes in conflict, it is easy to feel lost, in the middle of nowhere, with no light at the end of the proverbial tunnel. Very much like conflict transformation, in life, we must build in steps for self-reflection and pause for a moment to assess our current situation before we can begin to find a path forward. We teach our students the importance of preplanning, but also emphasize the ability to step away from the table and reassess how far you have come, what you have gained, and where you want to be. As we celebrate our two-year anniversary, we felt this image accurately captured so much of our journey with the journal and our field, because it was time for us to pause, assess how far we have come, rejoice in what we had accomplished, and determine where we wanted to go next.

When we began this journey, our goal was to provide scholars, of all levels, a platform to share research, best practices, recommendations, and their stories, but we never envisioned we would be where we are today. To date, we have published 24 different papers, by 20 various authors, and collaborated with some of the best and brightest in the field, both inside and outside of the military community. We took home a MarCom Honorable Mention Award for our second publication of the journal and continued to push the bounds of conflict transformation by widening our areas of focus to fields with compatible issues such as communication, leadership, and culture.

As we have expanded, we have also had time to reflect on who we want to be and where we want to go as a journal. We believe we owe it to our students, faculty, partners, and readers to ensure quality, accessible, and relevant information, while also adhering to our core goal—to be a platform for all.

It is our mission to continue to be a peer-reviewed, scholarly journal, but we would be remiss if we did not share some of the great work being done by others, which may not always come in the form of a fully researched paper. Because of this, we are redefining our categories to ensure you can continue to rely on us to be a platform for all, but rest assured, knowing our standards have not changed, only expanded.

I am proud to announce that the *Journal of Military Conflict Transformation* will now be accepting submissions within all the following categories:

Featured Articles: Peer-reviewed research articles that enhance, or build upon, current theories, methodologies, or practices in the field of conflict transformation or complementary fields.

University Collections: Editorial-reviewed perspectives, op-eds, essays, best practices, commentary, and program overviews.

Case Study Analysis: In-depth analysis of cases in the field, which provide an evaluation, possible outcomes/solutions, and recommendations.

Book Reviews: Reviewed books in conflict transformation and complementary fields.

Student Papers: Professional studies papers conducted by students at the Air University during their yearlong program at Air Command and Staff College or Air War College.

Negotiation Stories: Today's military in action - Real negotiation stories from the field.

Digital Media: Original artwork or photography. Please see page 46 for a special announcement in this category.

As we journey into our third year of publication, I want you all to know this continued growth would not have been possible without your unwavering support. We are proud to be able to serve the Air University community, our civilian partners, and the field of conflict transformation. We are still a growing publication and we hope you will grow with us by not only continuing to read and share our journal, but by considering us for your own work. We are confident our efforts to expand the areas of interest to compatible fields, and the expansion of our categories, will give more scholars an opportunity to be published and recognized for their great work and accomplishments.

Thank you for all you do to support the journal. Cheers to another great year.

Michelle A. Osborne, PhD
AFNC Publications Manager
Editor-in-Chief, JMCT

The Changing World of Conflict Transformation: Negotiations Using Technology

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Abstract
COVID-19 has accelerated our field's need to adapt to the current environment, which has lead to an increase in online collaboration. This article examines the pros and cons of our use of technology in conflict transformation and how it influences our ability to negotiate virtually.

In late 2019, the World Health Organization identified a severe respiratory illness in China, subsequently identified as COVID-19. This illness made its way to the United States in January of 2020 and has continued to spread, affecting millions of people globally. The overall effects of this disease have taken a toll on local and world economies, travel, work and home activities, and many other aspects of our daily lives. While the full impact this disease will have on our future is unknown, one thing is for certain, it has changed the way we do everything, especially the way we work. For many people affected by this growing pandemic, work-life has changed drastically. No more are the holiday office parties, talks around the proverbial watercooler, or daily office visits. In both the civilian and military sectors, there have been significant shifts to telework environments. In 1995, only 3% of the population worked from home, and in 2017, that number was only slightly increased to roughly 10-15% of the population.[1] Our current situation has increased this number exponentially. While working out of the home is not a new concept, the advancement of technology has transformed the landscape. Technology during this global crisis

has been both a blessing and a curse. While it has allowed many to sustain a safe work environment, the transition for some has not come without angst. There are many professions and businesses who were already engaging in telework practices, such as call centers, IT support professionals, and some universities and colleges, but many fields had not made the leap, including some areas of practice like medical and legal professionals. There are examples of practitioners who developed niche markets within these fields, offering virtual services, but the majority of professionals in these fields were thrust into the 21st Century this past year.

This was exceedingly true for the Air Force Negotiation Center, which specializes in conflict transformation, negotiation, and mediation education and training. The majority of the courses taught by the center are delivered in person, by subject matter experts in the field. Our faculty and staff not only saw a drastic change in how we delivered our products, but how our students applied the skills and techniques learned in class.

So, how does technology influence our ability to negotiate, and what are the pros and cons of our available resources? According to the DoD's Chief

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[1.] U.S. Department of Transportation, "Transportation Statistics Annual Report, 2018," accessed 16 April 2020, https://rosap.ntl.bts.gov/view/dot/37861.

Information Officer, we have always had teleworking capabilities, supported by a multitude of collaboration tools.[2] Digital collaboration technologies not only improve our ability to connect with one another, they also increase our ability to find mutually beneficial solutions in a social distancing environment.[3] These technologies afford us the opportunity to work on transforming conflicts in real-time, even if we are multiple time zones apart. Collaboration tools, such as the DoD's version of Microsoft Office, also provides a one-stop location for tasks, schedules, and the sharing of information.[4] For example, notes from a negotiation, or schedules and tasks, can be shared and updated as all key players in the conflict transform, view, and/or edit documents simultaneously. Virtual collaboration technology also allows us to effectively share information in remote environments without the fear of missing a vital piece of data or losing track of notes, agreements, or other important documents. There is an inherent sense of increased cooperation in a negotiation when you are willing and able to share information about your needs and interests.[5] Outcomes in negotiations are also more effectively achieved by the sharing of information.[6] So it stands to reason that an increase in the ability to share information virtually would lead to better communication and better outcomes. In addition, it has the ability to help you better understand and appreciate where your negotiation counterpart is coming from and gives you an opportunity to consider what you can offer to help him or her meet their needs and interests.

Digital collaboration technology also allows information sharing to be accomplished across multiple mediums. Negotiation partners can communicate using text, email, phone, and even video teleconferencing. Each of these options allow people to connect, regardless of their location, and also gives participants various levels of "capacity to facilitate shared meaning".[7] Additionally, texting and email allow the negotiator time to reflect on the information they received, before he or she responds.[8] There is also an opportunity to conduct additional research based on the information received.

When emotions are running high, or when dealing with highly emotional issues, some digital technologies allow for emotion management; meaning, there is an opportunity to step away from the conversation before something is said that could be detrimental to the situation. While this can be very beneficial in some negotiations, it is important to note these types of collaboration tools can hinder our ability to pick up on non-verbal communication clues, which are a large part of communication.[9] For example, if I tell you I am "fine" through an email or a text message, can you truly say I am "fine" without having the capacity to recognize if the paralanguage and non-verbal communication are congruent with the words that I use?

On the other hand, the more interactive the medium, the greater the capacity to garner a full understanding of the message.[10] For instance, using the phone or videoconferencing allows the negotiators to hear the paralanguage of the message and the use of video improves the ability to evaluate non-verbal communication.

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2. Ibid.

3. Tiffany Poepplman and Nikki Blacksmith, "Virtual Workplaces: Technological Functions Can Address Common Challenges," *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist* 52, no. 3 (2015).

4. Ibid.

5. Wendi Adair and Jeanne Brett, "The Negotiation Dance: Time, Culture, and Behavioral Sequences in Negotiation," *Organization Science* 16, no. 1 (2005): 33-51, doi:10.1287/orsc.1040.0102.

6. Poepplman and Blacksmith, "Virtual Workplaces."

7. Richard Daft, Robert Lengel, and Linda Trevino, "Message Equivocality, Media Selection, and Manager Performance: Implications for Information Systems," *MIS Quarterly* (1987): 358.

8. Joshua Weiss, *The Wired Negotiator*, TEDX Springfield, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8uC_-SLW6YM.

9. Erika Darics, "E-Leadership or 'How to Be Boss in Instant Messaging?' The Role of Nonverbal Communication," *International Journal of Business Communication* 57, no. 1 (2017): 3-29.

10. Weiss, *The Wired Negotiator.*

These mediums do pose security risks in the negotiation,[11] as you do not truly know who is listening on the other end of the line. This may leave you feeling vulnerable and hesitant to provide valuable information to your counterpart, but these are things that you cannot control. There is the additional risk of the other side recording the meetings without your knowledge and mitigating your ability to protect any critical information you share. Your future negotiations will most likely incorporate multiple uses of the various communication mediums, and it is critical for you to understand the benefits and drawbacks of each and utilize them accordingly when you engage in one or the other when communicating with your negotiation partner.

While using various types of digital platforms for negotiation has its benefits, there are drawbacks the negotiator must consider when employing each one.

Technology provides flexibility in negotiations using various mediums, but there is a downside of virtual communication. One is diminished relationships.[12] The separation during a negotiation, or conflict transformation, can denigrate interpersonal relationships between the people. This can also impact the building of trust between negotiators. Virtual communication also impacts the ability to communicate cross-culturally.[13] Even within our own country, there are cultural and language differences when negotiating. Recognizing and adapting to these differences are difficult in face-to-face interactions, which are further complicated when dealing with these differences in an online environment. Some cultural norms are associated with non-verbal and para-lingual clues which can also be missed in an online environment. These environments can also be difficult to build a cohesive team–Interest-Based Negotiations

require both parties to work together as a team to reach mutually beneficial solutions to their conflict transformations. Furthermore, virtual environments can reduce the amount of interaction time between counterparts, reducing the time you have to build the relationships.[14]

Clearly, COVID-19 has altered the way we do business, but this crisis has also demonstrated that we can still operate, despite being physically apart. Online collaboration was never anything new, but it had yet to have been tested to the extent to which the COVID-19 crisis forced us to. It has demonstrated the power of technology and its ability to keep us together and operating as a nation, albeit not to the full capacity. The trust we are building with online technology will facilitate its use in the future. While virtual negotiations will not fully replace face-to-face negotiations, they will not be going away either, and will most likely be used more often than we have seen in the past. Because of this, it is important that we continue to strive to be engaged leaders, work to build and maintain personal relationships, adapt to technology, and place full consideration of the counterpart's needs and interests in the forefront of the negotiation.[1]

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[11.] Ibid.

[12.] Stephanie Smith, Alyssa Patmos, and Margaret Pitts, "Communication and Teleworking: A Study of Communication Channel Satisfaction, Personality, and Job Satisfaction for Teleworking Employees," *International Journal of Business Communication* 55, no. 1 (2018): 44-68.

[13.] Poepplman and Blacksmith, "Virtual Workplaces."

[14.] Ibid.

[15.] Ibid.

Developing and Implementing a Communication Plan to Internalize Organizational Change

Beverly D. Hill, EdD

Abstract

Organizational change and lack of clear communication from leaders typically results in less than optimal performance and results. This article describes and delineates components of communication and effectiveness thereof. Specifically, it examines organizational communication from military and civilian agencies' viewpoints. Properly developing and implementing a communication plan is percipient to effective and lasting organizational change and during crises, whether wartime or natural disasters. Finally, the elements of a globally-applied communication plan are addressed.

Let's begin with a rhetorical question. What tends to be one crucial source of impermanent change, employee insecurity, and ineffective leadership? While the answers likely vary, it typically resorts to one imperious factor—lack of clear communication. Communication takes many forms; however, examined here is a more comprehensive view—namely, (1) a brief review of communication; (2) organizational communication and its methods; (3) communicating change with negotiations therein; and (4) a communication plan to develop and implement change. It seems apropos to begin by examining communication and other experts' perspectives.

Communication is commonly regarded as a channel requiring a sender, a message, and a receiver. Yet, there are synonymous meanings of communication. For example, Spaho stated, "communication is transfer of information from sender to receiver, implying that the receiver understands the message".[1]

The descriptive term in Spaho's definition is understanding the message(s) conveyed. Additionally, communication is an interrelated system consisting of a source or producer, containing a message, including a consumer, or to whomever the communication is intended.[2]

Thus, from an organizational standpoint, George interestingly portends when employees do not feel heard or are completely omitted from communication, it often translates to not agreeing with the leader's assertion or message; conversely, communication often supplants outright disapproval.[3] Therefore, effective communication can generally only occur when the senders, methods, receivers, and messages converge, whether agreed upon or otherwise. Since communication is essential at all levels of civilian and military hierarchies, it is essential to examine organizational communication and the means thereof.

Organizational communication has seemingly been the most prevailing challenge organizations currently face. As Argyris posited

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[1] Kenan Spaho, "Organizational Communication and Conflict Management," *Management Journal of Contemporary Management Issues* 18, no. 1 (2014): 103-118.

[2] Michal Kolcun, Bianca Teodorescu, and Daniela Gîfu, "Elements of Organizational Communication," *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences* 35 (2014): 66-73.

[3] Melvin D. George, "Communication in Reform," *New Directions for Higher Education*, no. 119 (2002): 115-117.

more than 25 years ago, organizations would not succeed in the 21st Century unless the communication was enhanced.[4] Oftentimes, strategic or corporate communication has been synonymous with organizational communication. Their descriptions and uses seemingly vary along industry lines, yet similarities abound.

According to Christensen, organizational communication pertains to the attitudes, feelings, relationships, and skills of people.[5] The DoD's view of organizational communication is usually known as strategic communication; however, The White House study elucidated the necessity of having a clear meaning of strategic communication as well as the need for such methods required to guide and coordinate communication efforts.[6] The White House described strategic communication as synchronized speech and actions to deliberately communicate with and engage specific audiences, including a determination of how the audience's perception of the words, actions, activities, and programs was regarded.[7] Relatedly, the Air Force Public Affairs states "communication is a leadership and command responsibility at all levels".[8]

The foregoing DoD explanation may lead one to consider organizational or strategic communication as solely belonging to public affairs or an organization's marketing department. However, organizations beyond those who manage communications add worth and influence to communication.[9]

Hitherto, Nordin noted how organizational communication can be unclear and often not articulated.[10] This could further the claim surmised by George, stating it could be employees' disagreement or perception of the leader's communication being misrepresented or distinguished as no communication.[11] Moreover, organizational communication involves strategies that are planned and developed to achieve specific results or goals.[12] Organizational and strategic communication nevertheless, others have construed the consequential effects.

Bakar and Mustaffa observed how organizational communication affected other organizational outcomes, such as being committed and having job satisfaction, as reported in a Malaysian organization study.[13] The authors measured 13 communication variables which included the characteristics of messages, the in flow of information, and the climate for communications. Organizational communication can also link formal and informal information as well as vertical and horizontal relationships.[14]

Preferably, the foregoing results in Eoyang's transforming feedback loop, with its emphasis on lasting changes resulting from open and honest dialogue with a subsequent enduring impact on all participants.[15] Bakar and Mustaffa also relayed how Malaysians, in the above mentioned study, preferred group work to individual work.[16] Although the sample was 24 individuals, the authors ascertained

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4. Chris Argyris, "Good Communication that Blocks Learning," *Harvard Business Review* 72, no. 4 (1994): 77-85.

5. Marit Christensen, "Communication as a Strategic Tool in Change Process," *International Journal of Business Communication* 51, no. 4 (2014): 359-385.

6. White House, *National Framework for Strategic Communication* (Washington, DC: White House 2009), https://www.hsdl.org/?abstract&did=27301.

7. Ibid.

8. Department of the Air Force, *Public Affairs Responsibilities and Management*. AFI 35-101 (Washington, DC: Secretary of the Air Force, 2016).

9. The White House, *National Framework*.

10. Eric J. Nordin, "Exploring Effective Communication for Organizational Change," (Doctoral Dissertation, Walden University, 2013), https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED554037.

11. George, "Communication in Reform."

12. Steven M. Norman, Bruce J. Avolio, and Fred Luthans, "The Impact of Positivity and Transparency on Trust in Leaders and their Perceived Effectivess," *The Leadership Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (2010): 350-364.

13. Hassan A. Bakar and Che S. Mustaffa, "Organizational Communication in Malaysia Organizations," *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 18, no. 1 (2013): 87-109.

14. Ibid.

15. Glenda H. Eoyang, *Coping with Chaos: Seven Simple Tools* (Circle Pines: HSD Institute Press, 2007).

16. Bakar and Mustaffa, "Organizational Communication."

that culture seemed more prevalent since respondents preferred group bond and mutual respect over communication. Nonetheless, a leader's communication is of utmost import and absolutely essential before, during, and after the organizational change.

The effects of communication and organizational change have been measured. Tang and Gao studied the effect of employees' emotional intelligence, described as having social skills and abilities related to interpersonal relationships, and its relation to intra-departmental communication as well as employees' reaction to organizational change.[17] The authors observed how employees exhibited more commitment to organizational change with effective communication; thus, reducing the stress and uncertainty characteristically associated with change, especially when communication with supervisors and peers in the same departments were foremost during the change process.

An organization's readiness for lasting change though, seems dependent on the manner in which a leader communicates. For example, when Argyris described leaders who looked for answers to long-standing problems without the benefit of having they or their employees reflect on how or why they may have contributed to the issues, the result was less desirable single-loop learning.[18] Conversely, double-loop learning would have likely prevailed if questions were asked in regards to objective facts and reasons and motives behind those facts, possibly contributing to pervasive problems.[19] But how can leaders effectively make prominent and permanent changes?

One way of cementing lasting communication and other organizational changes is to use influencers. Grenny,

Maxfield, and Shimberg discovered that executives who effectively influenced change, on issues such as a lack of collaboration and adherence to quality standards, used multiple simultaneous change strategies.[20] Various executives' actions were also measured during their study, finding some executives attempted to link behaviors to mission and values by transforming attitudes toward mission attainment. However, according to Grenny et al., less than five percent used four or more influence strategies at one time, while the difference made in combining strategies proved most effective.[21] Similarly, the influence seems nothing more than well-executed negotiation.

Negotiating effectively is used in a myriad of daily interactions, from our collegial pursuits with colleagues to our families.[22] However, most think of negotiations as deal-making in the boardroom, congressionally, and in military units. Yet, as Moffitt and Peppet underscored, each opportunity to negotiate is an opportunity for knowledge—a mainly overlooked attribute. As the authors stated, these negotiations transpire from explicit and implicit actions where intent, facts or truth, do not align; simply, goal attainment becomes paramount to negotiators.[23]

In fact, Moffitt and Peppet describe negotiation methodologies:

> Negotiators have no shortage of theories of action. In describing approaches to negotiation, one person may say that she always looks for common ground. Another says that he tries to knock the other side off balance. A third insists that she sticks to her guns, and a fourth says that he tries to remain open to learning throughout the conversation. One of

17. Chaoying Tang and Yunxia Gao, "Intra-department Communication and Employees' Reaction to Organizational Change: The Moderating Effect of Emotional Intelligence," *Journal of Chinese Human Resource Management* 3, no. 2 (2012): 100-117.

18. Argyris, "Good Communication that Blocks Learning," 77-85.

19. Ibid.

20. Joseph Grenny, David Maxfield, and Andrew Shimberg, "How to have Influence," *MIT Sloan Management Review*, October 2008, 46-52.

21. Ibid.

22. Michael Moffitt and Scott R. Peppet, "Action Science: Action Science and Negotiation," *Marquette Law Review* 87, no. 4 (2004): 649-654.

23. Ibid.

the assumed tasks of the negotiation literature has been to critique various theories of action, sorting good advice from the less universally helpful. A negotiation theorist might ask, for example, in what ways is it good advice to look for common ground? In what respects might this behavior undermine one's negotiation goals? How might we describe the conditions in which this behavior is most appropriate? Lines of inquiry such as these have led to the development of important and widely-accepted negotiation advice. Focus on interests, not positions, for example, is a prominent theory of action for many negotiators.[24]

As Moffitt and Peppet further explained, negotiators as well as many of us, operationalize the behavior which nets results; undoubtedly it is the implicit, or theory-in-use behavior, not what we say or espouse.[25] For example, indicating an open door policy to employees and dismissing employee complaints is an example of an incongruent espoused theory and theory-in-use, respectively.[26] Notwithstanding, one method of transforming organizational, corporate, or strategic communication with internal and external stakeholders is through developing and implementing a communication plan.

Collaboration and information form the basis for developing and implementing organizational communication. A variety of viewpoints should be sought, considered, and reflected upon, to help ensure the communication plan's comprehensiveness. Feedback on the contents of a communications plan's components from internal and external stakeholders and colleagues are essential, as the author experienced first-hand. Collaborating in this manner seems the true application and essence of double-loop learning.[27] In addition, a focus group made up of employees affected by the plan and varied changes furthered a tenet of double-loop learning as Argyris posited.[28]

The Department of the Air Force lists some potential communication planning considerations, such as those appropriate to support a commander's objective, including the four stages of "…research, plan, execute, and assess…".[29] Though, specificity in communication plan objectives is imperative as they "… are outcomes that [taken together] enable the achievement of strategic intent and desired end state"; hence, strategic communication and its elements.[30] It is significant because leaders are required to pivot quickly and effectively during disasters, happening naturally, or during wartime. Developing and implementing a communication plan is imperative to successfully and promptly return to a functional operating state.

Pitt and Treen explain how successful communication planning is the centerpiece before and after a disaster.[31] Additionally, not only must an immense amount of information surrounding a tragedy be communicated, but procedural instructions for safety, continued monitoring, and adapting circumstances will also be urgent. The authors emphasized a marketing strategy known as formulation-implementation, which can readily relate to effectively developing and implementing a communication plan—assists in ascertaining if the success or failure is the plan itself or indoctrination/implementation therein.

24. Ibid., 650.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Chris Argyris and Donald A. Schön, *Organizational Learning II: Theory, Method, and Practice*, 2nd ed. (Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company Inc., 1996).
28. Argyris, "Good Communication that Blocks Learning," 77-85.
29. Department of the Air Force, *Public Affairs Responsibilities and Management*, 35.
30. Ibid., 64.
31. Christine S. Pitt and Emily Treen, "Understanding Communication in Disaster Response: A Marketing Strategy Formulation and Implementation Perspective," *Journal of Public Affairs* 17, no. 3 (2017).

Nevertheless, if an organization addressed these attributes: (1) where are we; (2) what do we have to work with; (3) where do we want to be; and (4) how do we get there, the communication plan will likely be sound. As noted in DoD communication planning, it directly correlates to researching, planning, executing, and assessing; hence, this is true irrespective of industry. Further, in emergency and military planning, there are several types of communication planning and implementing considerations. Pitt and Treen recommend four considerations to effective planning using a grid, or SWOT format (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), ask: what are previous operational successes we can point to (examine worldwide responses)? Where were the trouble spots in the plan (if implementation was unsuccessful)? Can the plan be rescued or is it ruined (normally when a plan is poor or nonexistent, but there was exceptional pivoting/good on-the-spot execution)? Did the plan fail (generally from insufficient communication planning formulation and implementation)?[32]

However, Pitt and Treen provide recommendations to minimize developing and implementing communication plan oversights, including several salient ones. First, ensure your plan involves every stakeholder to whom the plan applies—not in a void. Second, ensure the plan specifically states required actions, not be implicit. Third, ensure plan developers and stakeholders remain engaged, regardless of representation. And fourth, be sure the plan is properly assigned; strategic thinkers are crucial to comprehensive planning.[33]

Finally, general communication plan contemplations, postulated by George and seemingly globally accepted are: (1) recognize communication is not a one-way, downward-driven process, but two-way as it includes listening, speaking, and writing; (2) gather sufficient and relevant information toward the end goal, as aforementioned in the Department

of the Air Force; (3) ensure stakeholders and those impacted by the change are top of mind and placed in order of urgency and level of coordination; (4) observe affected employees closely and address any feelings of isolation; (5) consider timelines of any needs and/or opportunities to consult with individual groups impacted by the change; and finally (6) as with emergency planning, test your communication plan by ensuring all departments and agencies on the organization's directory is included, review it with those involved in its composition, and seek feedback from a trusted member.[34]

Overall, understanding the importance of upward, downward, and lateral communication on organizational/mission effectiveness is vital, irrespective of organizational setting. Developing and implementing your organization's communication plan can be an integrative means of helping ensure communication is disseminated and properly adhered to.

Noted here were brief attributes of communication. Particularly, communication is likely not to occur if the messenger, medium, and recipient are disjointed. Then organizational, corporate, and strategic communication, and its myriad components were discussed, which included attitudinal, procedural, actionable, perceptual, and personal. If communication is not intentional and thoughtful, there will likely be disconnects. Properly communicating and negotiating change were also addressed in terms of being authentic, not espousing one action and doing another. While communicating/negotiating change, negotiators should approach organizational changes from a knowledge acquisition standpoint, such as understanding processes through double-loop learning and using influencers. Finally, communication plans were examined for commonalities, whether civilian or military. While terminology differed, the processes were very similar, such

[32]. Ibid.
[33]. Ibid.
[34]. George, "Communication in Reform," 115-117.

as thoroughly researching to ensure all aspects of procedures, stakeholders, and resources are foremost; explicitly stating and defining roles and responsibilities; and testing, assessing, and retesting completes the cycle.

Mission success is unlikely without intentional, perpetual, and congruent communication. Leaders may document communication by way of a communication plan to assist in delineating duties and accountability.

Dr. Beverly D. Hill is the Chief of Institutional Effectiveness at the Eaker Center for Leadership Development, having previously served as Director of Academic Curriculum at Eaker's Air Force Chaplain Corps College. A retired USAF Chief Master Sergeant who served 25.5 years in varied administrative, executive, and adult education capacities. Dr. Hill's expertise is curriculum, organizational and professional development, where she serves daily as a reliable, committed teammate who goes the distance for the Eaker team. Beyond her career, she is passionate about bettering the community and families therein, particularly our youth. Originally from Macon Georgia, she and her husband Wyatt are Montgomery transplants who are heavily involved in their church and community. Foremost to them is the love of family. They are the proud parents of one son, Cori and 2 beautiful grandchildren, Cori Jr. and Aubrei.

Student Paper Disclaimer

The following student papers were selected for publication by the JMCT Review Board based on their contributions to the field of conflict transformation. Opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed or implied within are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of The Air University, the United States Air Force, the Department of Defense, or any other US government agency. Student papers have been modified to reflect JMCT formatting standards, but retain all original content as submitted to The Air University.

Leveraging Virtual Reality to Maximize Pre-deployment Cultural Awareness

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Abstract

The incorporation of Virtual Reality (VR) immersive training components into pre-deployment preparations can increase the readiness and effectiveness of military service members and Foreign Service Officers in the field. VR technology can support more intensive and effective pre-deployment cultural awareness education and training. Thorough cultural awareness includes an understanding of the obvious as well as the nuances of other societies and their traditions. In addition to reading about the destination, it is also necessary to empathize with the people and the challenges they endure. This learning process can be better achieved through the experiential education opportunities offered by VR, which can more effectively introduce individuals to the differences they are likely to face in their new environments prior to deployment. Students will not only observe but will also experience the feeling of being in another location while watching content and hearing local narratives. This type of immersive experience gives students a sense of visual and audible presence that differs from traditional media forms. VR technology improves user experiences due to its high levels of immersion and presence, and it is a better way of training than reading and lecture alone. Therefore, more effective immersive training using VR prior to deployment can ensure that transitioning individuals are more fully informed culturally and immediately effective without the risk of encountering cultural missteps that often undermine the individual's tour and in some cases, the mission at large.

Most of my important lessons about life have come from recognizing how others from a different culture view things. — Edgar H. Schein

Introduction

Virtual reality (VR) immersive technology has the potential to assist in building positive overseas relationships through its use as a pre-deployment teaching method. Through a VR teaching approach, our service members will be better informed and better prepared for their missions, and this preparation will facilitate more effective engagement and greater impact. The first section of the paper reviews the United States (U.S.) military's recognition of the importance of cultural awareness for deploying members of the military. The second section discusses constructivist educational theory as a model well suited to support cultural awareness training. The third section assesses the use of VR as a desirable teaching methodology. The final section is an argument that the use of VR is an effective means to build cultural awareness and understanding through pre-deployment education efforts and recommends its incorporation in formal pre-deployment training curricula.

The United States routinely sends Americans to live, work and engage in foreign cultures across the globe. This paper advocates for the incorporation of VR technology into pre-deployment training for service members, however, the approach would be equally effective for Foreign Service Officers and representatives of other agencies dispatched to reside overseas. Whether members of the military or the Foreign Service, these Americans will live among and interact with the local population. To benefit from these engagements, the local population must be comfortable with the service members, who are viewed as guests in the country. The awareness of local cultures, expectations, and respect for traditions are essential to building critical, positive relationships.

Cultural missteps that negatively impact a new relationship can forever impair a mission. Inappropriate behavior, disrespectful cultural references, or unintended physical contact can easily produce disastrous results.[1] New immersive learning methods can more effectively facilitate the understanding of different cultures while also deepening awareness of one's own unconscious habits. Through VR's use of detailed, high definition video, sound, and animation, it can accurately replicate important features of a specific culture, such as architecture, infrastructure, markets, art, dress, speech, and gestures.[2] Extremely detailed teaching modules in VR can create presence, produce empathy, generate intimacy, and build awareness for students – all critical concepts discussed at length later in the paper. When immersed in an accurately designed and crafted virtual environment, the user can experience realistic situations that will further cognitive learning as well as interpersonal engagement with the culture he or she is studying.[3] Fostering respect and appreciation for that culture will also ensure a more enjoyable experience for these deployed Americans and a more positive relationship with the host country and its citizens. VR experiential learning will help build these necessary competencies.

If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle. — Sun Tzu

Cultural Awareness is Critical to Accomplishing the Mission

Deploying military members and Foreign Service Officers are expected to immediately adapt to their new environments.

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[1] Donald Brown et al., "Design and Evaluation of an Avatar-Based Cultural Training System," *The Journal of Defense Modeling and Simulation* 16, no. 4 (2018): 1.

[2] Chad H. Lane and Amy E. Ogan, "Virtual Environments for Cultural Learning," in *Handbook of Research on Culturally-Aware Information Technology: Perspectives and Models*, eds. Emmanuel G. Blanchard and Danièle Allard (Hershey: IGI Global, 2011), 1.

[3] Ibid., 1.

When these environments are in foreign or unfamiliar places, such adaptation is not always easy. Often these locations present unexpected cultural uncertainties that can lead to social missteps that undermine the individual's (and, in some cases, the mission's) credibility.

Consider a common scenario. A young soldier will deploy in a week. His duffel is full of uniforms and essential equipment. His mind is full of details, protocols, information, and restrictions. His emotions are across the board. He has little time to think about the day after he touches down on foreign soil, much less the people he will meet or the places he will travel. How does one greet a woman in an Islamic state? What is the appropriate protocol when invited to someone's home in Asia? Who makes decisions for a remote tribal village? What is an honor killing and is it acceptable? Why are cats revered in Kosovo? The answers to these common questions require an appreciation and understanding of years of history, tradition, and practice in a given culture. As a further complication, different cultures, although having the same roots, may have developed different practices over the years. Therefore, one can take nothing for granted, and demonstrating a knowledge of a country's culture and a respect for its people and its history will create a strong foundation on which to build a lasting, positive relationship in an unfamiliar place.

The Military Recognizes the Need for Cultural Awareness

The idea of knowing people suggests understanding their history, their culture, their way of thinking, and possibly their language. Broader knowledge and awareness allows us to gain insight into how a foreign contact might engage us socially or politically.

In his publication, "Through the Lens of Cultural Awareness: A Primer for US Armed Forces Deploying to Arab and Middle Eastern Countries," William D. Wunderle explores the importance of cultural awareness for service members. The primer provides excellent resource data to support the need for additional cultural awareness training in the military. Wunderle describes the unexpected results that can occur when military operations do not consider local culture. A perceived indifference for the Iraqi culture demonstrated by American forces in Iraq produced a noticeable animosity among many Iraqis, which led to an increasingly negative image of the U.S. military. Service members also revealed ignorance of Islamic religious practice. For example, when Iraqis were arrested, U.S. troops forced their heads to the ground. This position is prohibited by Islam except during prayers, and the actions offended detainees as well as bystanders and only further alienated the local population.[4]

It is important to remember that the U.S. military has approximately five hundred thousand troops and staff stationed in almost 150 different countries.[5] These Americans overseas should not be viewed as occupiers or imperialists. An awareness of a culture is an increasingly important component of the relationship-building effort, and the more different the adversary is, the more important it is for military service members to understand the local society, its cultural dynamics, and its traditions to achieve the mission's desired results.[6] The higher one's level of awareness, the less confusing and frustrating a new culture will be. Such awareness is an indispensable factor in tasks that require close and extended engagement with the local culture, such as post-conflict stability and support operations, peacekeeping, and nation-building.[7]

Adequate pre-deployment preparation can expose service members to cultural differences before being thrust into them. This will give them an opportunity to adapt to and prepare for the new culture and its

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[4] Ike Skelton and Jim Cooper, "You're Not from Around Here," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 36 (2004): 12.

[5] Brown et al., "Design and Evaluation," 3.

[6] William D. Wunderle, *Through the Lens of Cultural Awareness: A Primer for US Armed Forces Deploying to Arab and Middle Eastern Countries*, (Washington: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006), 1.

[7] Ibid., 1.

differences, which will help ensure that they do not immediately perceive foreign behavior as capricious or unpredictable.[8] Additionally, cultural awareness training courses will provide valuable insights that can assist decision-makers at all levels to make more accurate and appropriate decisions that can save lives, materiel, and other critical resources.[9]

Current Preparatory Programs are Limited

The conflicts we face today often include irregular warfare, counter-insurgency and countering violent extremism, all of which regularly place service members in totally unpredictable, erratic environments where insight into the motivations of the adversary is critical to operations.[10] The military, however, has not yet been able to significantly incorporate cultural awareness across the services' training platforms. There are certain resources available through facilities such as the Joint Knowledge Online portal, the Army Research Institute, and the U.S. Army Training & Doctrine Command. However, there is no military directed or designed formal curriculum that is triggered or required when a deployment is planned.

Informal discussions with various service members and Foreign Service Officers confirmed that cultural awareness training is ad hoc and given limited priority in any pre-deployment preparation. Depending on the destination, there may be no preparation option offered at all. In some cases, a one-hour online course on general cultural themes was all that was required as part of the pre-deployment training. In another case, once deployed, service members met with a local expert at the destination who responded to questions. While the intention to provide pre-deployment cultural training exists, a means to adequately provide it to the many service members

remains a daunting challenge. Further, when it is available, it tends to be rushed, abbreviated, and oversimplified, focusing on language basics and a handful of cultural faux pas to avoid.[11] Further, efforts to provide such training on the ground is often too late or too focused on superficial elements to create a tangible basis for effective communication and cultural awareness.[12]

The Air Force has taken the lead in designing in-depth cultural awareness programs through its Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC). Its director, Howard Ward, explains that the AFCLC aims to empower airmen to operate seamlessly with other air forces and populations around the world. While other branches focus on ad hoc tactical information, such as do's and don'ts in the field, the AFCLC was created to focus on connections between people and cultures–to understand the why in addition to just learning the what about other cultures. To accomplish this goal, the AFCLC has piloted a number of programs, and the Center's experts teach a variety of Professional Military Education (PME) classroom and online courses. More importantly, these experts also travel around the world to work with professionals and students in-country to create and expand connections, to develop accurate scenario templates, to address issues of cultural heritage, to explore property protection needs and to examine broader sociocultural dynamics.[13]

Perhaps its two most coveted courses are the General Officer Pre-Deployment Acculturation Course (GOPAC) and the Language Enabled Airman Program (LEAP). The intense senior-level GOPAC is a highly customized training and deployment preparation program for general officers and lasts from two to five days. The LEAP Scholars must already possess some level of

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[8] Ibid., 58-59.

[9] Hershel L. Holiday, *Improving Cultural Awareness in the U.S. Military*, USAWC Strategy Research Project: Carlisle Barracks, U.S. Army War College, 2008.

[10] Brown et al., "Design and Evaluation," 3.

[11] Montgomery McFate, "The Military Utility of Understanding Adversary Culture," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 38 (2005): 46.

[12] Timothy E. Stenmark, *Looking for Gold Nuggets in the Melting Pot: Language, Cultural Awareness, and the Fourth Generation Warrior*: Maxwell AFB, Air Command and Staff College, 2012, 4-5.

[13] Howard Ward (Director, Air Force Culture & Language Center, Maxwell AFB, AL), in discussion with the author, 20 March 2019.

proficiency in a foreign language to qualify for the program. The criteria to participate in these programs necessarily limits the number of applicants who can access them. As the AFCLC grows and develops new innovative programs, it will continue to identify ways to reach and serve the many service members preparing for assignments overseas. Further, the AFCLC has identified VR as an excellent tool for refresher training of its courses and will explore the possibility of preparing follow-up VR modules for its course participants.[14] However, its reach will be limited by budgets and resources.

Much of the currently available information on culture tends toward factual, non-interactive modules in area studies. This is a different discipline distinct from culture studies. Area studies such as those taught at the Foreign Service Institute for deploying diplomats typically teach topics such as history, economy, geography, and group identities. This approach certainly generates a useful overview of a destination country, however, it only scratches the surface. The nuanced cultural information and insights needed to truly appreciate and effectively engage with the local population, however, are lacking. Through a broader understanding, deployed personnel develop the important capacity to compare and contrast the conduct and practices of the local culture with those of their own culture, and with any significant sub-cultures.[15] The question then remains as to how can the military effectively and efficiently develop cultural awareness in its many deploying troops.

Tell me and I will forget, show me and I may remember; involve me and I will understand. — Confucius

Experiences Can Expand Knowledge

Jean Piaget[16] shaped the theory of constructivism as a way to explain how people produce knowledge and craft meaning through their experiences. The concept of culture, for example, is not new to the deploying service member; however, building awareness of and respect for a foreign culture requires that it be introduced as something more detailed and more nuanced than what one already knows. There are likely to be common threads, such as religion or costume, on which the new understanding can be built. While there are a number of educational approaches, theories, and techniques that could help build awareness, constructivism stands out as the approach most suited for the topic and the audience, and the one that will most effectively help the student build on existing knowledge.

Constructivism suggests that a student can construct his or her own evolving understanding and knowledge of the world by reconciling new ideas and information with what is already known. This can best be accomplished through the use of experiments, problem-solving and other interactive techniques that generate new knowledge and skills that influence one's understanding.[17] Constructivism then facilitates the use of one's existing understanding of culture and its concepts and builds upon them with the new experiences. In this way, constructivism helps transition from what is already known to a new level of understanding that is influenced by the individual's ability for perception and action.[18]

In her research, Wendy Ashby analyzed various educational theories to determine which model best supported cultural awareness building. Her findings supported a constructivist approach as the most appropriate.

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Wendy Ashby, "Employing Constructivist Models of Culture Teaching for Enhanced Efficacy in Pre-Departure, Cross-Cultural Training," *Applied Language Learning* 22, no. 1&2 (2012): 9.

[16] Jean Piaget (9 August 1896 – 16 September 1980) was a Swiss psychologist known for his work on child development and a pioneer in the area of the constructivist theory of learning.

[17] "Constructivism as a Paradigm for Teaching and Learning," WNET Education, 2004, https://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/constructivism/index.html.

[18] P. Aiello et al., "A Constructivist Approach to Virtual Reality for Experiential Learning," *E-Learning and Digital Media* 9, no. 3 (2012): 320.

Ashby describes constructivist learning as being "co-created" and learner-directed in a highly individualized, adaptive, and non-linear manner. Information is no longer delivered in a linear process, as the internet and online learning tools allow students to search for information in an infinite array of orders. The teaching of culture is facilitated by the ability of students to navigate input and co-create cognitive networks of cultural discovery.[19]

The idea of co-creation is an important one for identifying the best available options to effectively build understanding and engender a cultural awareness in students. Arguably, simple lectures or even online videos lack the essential element needed for co-creation – engagement in the learning process to better understand another's culture. The need for this type of engagement underscores the benefits of experiential opportunities. Through their experiences, learners build knowledge while they contemporaneously develop empathy and commonality with those sharing that experience. Training through VR offers the user actual experiences to bolster learning.

Games lubricate the body and the mind.
— Benjamin Franklin

Virtual Reality as an Educational Tool

What is VR?

At its core, VR is a computer-generated simulation of three-dimensional images woven together to create a virtual environment with which the user can interact. In VR the user wears a headset (referred to as a Head Mounted Display) and can then freely look in all directions. Everywhere the user looks, the headset displays a seamless view of the environment. If the user moves in close to focus on something, the object becomes larger and more visible just as in reality. VR refers to the capacity to move around freely as degrees

of freedom. In a three-dimensional space, there are a total of six degrees of freedom. Three degrees are rotational – the head can tilt, nod, and turn – and three are positional – the body can move forward, backward, and sideways.[20] Some VR headsets limit the user to three degrees of freedom, which are the three rotational movements. A good example of this is the Google Cardboard. More sophisticated headsets, such as an Oculus or Vive, however, permit the viewer to look in every direction as well as move about within the environment.

Additionally, gloves, vests, and footwear can be fitted with sensors that respond to the users' actions within the environment. These "haptic devices" stimulate the senses of touch and motion and supplement the visual cues within the alternate reality to increase the effectiveness of the experience. For example, when users shake hands with an avatar in a virtual environment, they actually feel the pressure of the palms touching.

VR is a technology that dates back to the mid-1980s. However, the advances in technology, reduction in equipment size and more manageable costs have facilitated a resurgence of VR and its coming into the mainstream with new, creative uses.[21] These advances in technology and new software allow individuals located across town or across the world to contemporaneously share an experience. For example, one could host a meeting where none of the participants were in the same location in reality but could be in the same virtual conference room. Consider a situation where various interested commanders located in different regions could all virtually fly over contested territory together for visual awareness of the environment as an aid to necessary planning efforts. There is great optimism that VR and related technologies can transform education, entertainment, healthcare, and corporate training. Notably, VR also provides an excellent platform for training,

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[19] Ashby, "Employing Constructivist Models," 7.
[20] Peter Rubin, *Future Presence: How Virtual Reality Is Changing Human Connection, Intimacy, and the Limits of Ordinary Life* (New York: HarperCollins Publishing, 2018), 97.
[21] Elliot Hu-Au and J.J. Lee, "Virtual Reality in Education: A Tool for Learning in the Experience Age," *International Journal of Innovation in Education* 4, no. 4 (2017): 217.

simulations, and therapy where repeated practice or a safe space to fail are needed.[22]

This virtual reality can reproduce a historically accurate or completely new credible world, where users can experience a genuine sense of being there. This sense of "being there" is called presence, and the feeling of presence occurs when your brain is so fooled by a virtual experience that your body responds as though the experience were real.[23] This presence is generated through a realistic digital environment and delivers an enjoyable and appealing immersive experience for users.[24] The wider the range of perceptions and the more accurate they are for the user, the more immersed the user will feel.[25] Immersion occurs when the user becomes so completely engaged in a task or interaction that any distraction or attention to the external environment is ignored. It is this immersion that offers the greatest potential for individual learning.[26]

The educational theorist's point of view identifies the nature of knowledge as that which results from an interplay of experiences and interpretation based on one's background and perceptions.[27] The use of VR technologies offers new, creative opportunities to incorporate constructivist education approaches into training programs.[28] Jaron Lanier[29] describes VR as a scientific, philosophical, and technological frontier. VR permits the creation of "comprehensive illusions" that can transport the user to historical places, modern cities or even fantastical, alien environments. While in the experience, the systems can collect data

and learn from the user while testing the user's cognition and perception.[30] Such collected information can then be used to refine and improve the experiences for future users.

It is through the complete immersion and feeling of presence that a user will copiously experience the virtual setting. The user is able to engage, learn about the environment, and learn from the experience. Notably, the experience can be faithfully reflective of a real environment or digitally enhanced to highlight particular locations or aspects of the story being told. Through its immersive nature, a VR story can induce emotions and empathy that will stimulate learning and will influence action.[31] Following the constructivist theory, the user can then build on his or her preexisting knowledge with multiple new and meaningful experiences.[32]

The information age that introduced the internet, personal computers and digital sharing of data also introduced the idea of computer-based and online games. That early exposure has evolved into a demand for more experiences and more accurate depictions of potential or desired realities in a world of interconnected mobile devices, multiplayer gaming, and social networking. This connectivity will foster continued increasing user demand for experiences and engagement, bolstered by empathic and active, authentic learning opportunities, which VR can deliver in ways that a computer monitor cannot. The virtual reality can be whatever the user or designer can imagine as VR technology permits and encourages the exercise of

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[22] Ibid., 217-219.

[23] Rubin, *Future Presence*, 4.

[24] Michela Mortara and Chiara Eva Catalano, "3D Virtual Environments as Effective Learning Contexts for Cultural Heritage," *Italian Journal of Educational Technology* 26, no. 2 (2018): 7.

[25] Ibid., 8.

[26] Henrik Kampling, "Feeling Presence in Immersive Virtual Reality for Individual Learning," In Proceedings of the International Conference on Information Systems – Bridging the Internet of People, Data, and Things, ICIS 2018, *San Francisco, CA, December 13-16, 2018*.

[27] Aiello, "Constructivist Approach to Virtual Reality," 319.

[28] Ibid., 320.

[29] Jaron Lanier is the scientist said to have either coined or popularized the term virtual reality.

[30] Jaron Lanier, *Dawn of the New Everything: Encounters with Reality and Virtual Reality*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2017), 1.

[31] Donghee Shin, "Empathy and Embodied Experience in Virtual Environment: To What Extent Can Virtual Reality Stimulate Empathy and Embodied Experience?" *Computers in Human Behavior* 78 (2018): 64.

[32] Hu-Au and Lee, "Virtual Reality in Education," 219.

unlimited creativity in an arena that completely and comfortably supports the visualization of abstract concepts.[33]

Importantly, VR excels in providing opportunities for considering perspectives, feeling empathy, and visualizing difficult models or complex concepts. When students participated in a VR experiment entitled "The Virtual Mirror," they assumed the avatars of elderly people, and their empathy towards older generations significantly increased.[34] Another excellent example of VR effectiveness is Chris Milk's Clouds over Sidra. The work differs from traditional film and is categorized as a "VR film," which is filmed in 360 degrees and relies as much on the viewer as the director in dictating how one follows the events. Clouds over Sidra transports the viewer to a Syrian refugee camp in Jordan where Sidra's family is now living. Empathy with Sidra and her situation is triggered by immersing the viewer in the realistic experience of being a refugee.[35] This type of experience and the empathy it creates unconsciously increases the awareness of the viewer to the details and the difficulties of the situation.

As a VR film, Clouds over Sidra does not employ music, cinematography, or dramatic close-up shots in the way they are used in more traditional films. The work weaves together simple scenes of Sidra, her family, and her friends. The difference between traditional film and VR film is that the viewer is not watching through the frame of a screen, but is experiencing the situation as though he or she is actually there.[36] It goes beyond a simple tug on the heartstrings and allows one to actually experience the environment. Clouds over Sidra and similar VR films evoke empathy, but more importantly, they also

evoke intimacy. Empathy involves one or more other people and the emotional understanding between them. Intimacy, however, involves the emotion itself.[37] While empathy helps build understanding, the intimacy that comes from the connection produces the emotion needed to build a relationship or to create a link to an issue or an idea. It is the interplay of immersion, empathy, and intimacy that makes VR such a powerful tool for learning. One of the strongest arguments for VR as a learning tool is this ability to create empathy in users and to change their perspectives.[38]

From a practical viewpoint, one of the most encouraging aspects of VR as a learning tool is its game-like quality. It is easy and fun to use. It is generally believed that games have the potential to exact changes in student's knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Arguably, it is the immersive, affective power of games that will also facilitate a change in students' awareness of other cultures. Emotions like empathy, understanding, and identity are critical parts of intercultural competence.[39] As in gaming, VR allows participants to engage in experiences together, which will encourage them to transfer knowledge from one perspective to another, from one culture to another and in the end, to learn from each other.[40]

Another important game-like aspect of a VR experience is that its simulations require actual problem-solving skills. This level of engagement and the virtual games prevent the user from being a passive participant but forces her or him to be an active contributor, and that constant interaction fosters a fertile learning environment. Consider the game Surgeon Simulator.[41] In the experience, the user cannot sit by idly but must perform an

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[33] Ibid., 216.

[34] Jeremy Bailenson, *Experience on Demand: What Virtual Reality Is, How It Works, and What It Can Do* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2018), 84.

[35] Hu-Au and Lee, "Virtual Reality in Education," 221.

[36] Bailenson, *Experience on Demand*, 77.

[37] Rubin, *Future Presence*, 86.

[38] Bailenson, *Experience on Demand*, 76.

[39] Lane and Ogan, "Virtual Environments for Cultural Learning", 9.

[40] Ibid., 9.

[41] Surgeon Simulator is a surgical simulation video game by Bossa Studios. It is described as a darkly humorous over-the-top operation game where players become a would-be surgeon taking life into his own shaky hands, performing life-saving surgical maneuvers on a passive patient.

autopsy on an alien in a space station. The user has available a full array of medical instruments, power tools, and weapons. As with most video games, the user has the choice to do damage or to do good work. One can learn from the experience as well as from the mistakes he or she will make. Likewise, flight simulators allow one to fly and crash planes without damaging million dollar equipment and to do so in full VR immersion puts the user in the cockpit rather than simply looking at it on a monitor. While in VR, distractions are minimized and focus is increased. The user, as a doctor or a pilot, is able to focus on the task and identify the options available. A quick assessment can be made and problems solved; or, more importantly, the effort fails and the user can try again, without loss or damage to people or equipment. The full immersion and the presence in the VR experience make the training more effective.[42]

Virtual reality is a technology that could actually allow you to connect on a real human level, soul-to-soul, regardless of where you are in the world. — Chris Milk[43]

Effective Cultural Awareness Training through Virtual Reality

The immersion and presence experienced in VR make it an outstanding methodology for building cultural awareness for anyone, including deploying service members. Through VR, the user can be immersed in another person's experience or plight, which buttresses his or her capacity to understand and relate to the person or situation. The connectivity and presence felt in their VR environment clearly makes one more interested and invested in other people's journeys and

relationships, as the characters one meets along the way take on new depth and dimension. VR slips the user into another's experience and both are there to hear, to enjoy, to love, to hate, to fear with each other.[44] This helps to make every experience in VR powerful and impactful.

High-resolution 360-degree photography and a VR headset can transport the viewer from a classroom to the seat of a WWII Bomber in Berlin Blitz[45] to defending your castle against invading hordes with a few simple clicks of the controller. The presence one feels while in VR is the foundation of the experience and creates empathy for the characters and respect for the environment. Introducing features of a different culture in this intriguing and enjoyable way opens the mind of the viewer. The experiences do not need to be long and drawn-out as even short experiences have tremendous impact. In fact, most VR simulations are intense, emotionally engaging, and compelling such that five to ten minutes is often enough.[46]

A recent study explored methods to improve cultural awareness specifically in situations confronting members of the military today. This study repurposed an existing Army simulation so that it could be used as an avatar-based game to train personnel in key cultural differences.[47] The game was based in Afghanistan using two scenarios -- an interaction with a local council and a visit to an urban street market. Both scenarios were detailed and validated in consultation with personnel recently returned from Afghanistan, native Afghanis, and other members of the local Muslim community.[48] The training through avatars in the game significantly improved the participants' understanding of the Afghan culture to a level where they could

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[42] Bailenson, *Experience on Demand*, 65.

[43] Chris Milk is an American entrepreneur, innovator, director, photographer, and immersive artist. He is founder and CEO of Within (Virtual Reality), formerly Vrse, a virtual reality technology company, and co-founder of Here Be Dragons, formerly Vrse.works, a virtual reality production company.

[44] Rubin, *Future Presence*, 94-95.

[45] Berlin Blitz is a VR video experience created by BBC Northern Ireland and Immersive VR Education, and puts you inside a Lancaster bomber as it navigates a most dangerous WWII journey.

[46] Bailenson, *Experience on Demand*, 258.

[47] Brown et al., "Design and Evaluation," 4.

[48] Ibid., 6.

interact in two different scenarios versus other participants who received only simple video-based training.[49] The results disclosed that game-based approaches offer the potential to improve cultural understanding and ensure effective interactions in complex environments and that the approach was easily scalable for other countries and cultures. Importantly, the study affirmed the use of experiential learning for cultural awareness and recommended modification of the simulation into a three-dimensional immersive format. A more experiential VR immersive experience that enhances the qualities, personality, emotions, attitudes, and social awareness should result in even more valuable cultural training.[50]

Implementation

Most pre-deployment training must focus on the current military situation and needs. However, cultural awareness training can be accomplished on a regular basis as part of early preparation well in advance of one's deployment. In this way, the foundations of knowledge will already be in place when the time to go arrives.[51]

The number of service members who will benefit from cultural awareness training is constantly increasing. The use of VR as a training mechanism provides the military with an effective and efficient training approach. The portability and ease of using VR equipment allow it to be made available to a number of students to train contemporaneously without the need for instructors or classroom space. For example, a digital library could be created to house a plethora of desired topics in a module format. Experiences such as a tour of a mosque with an Imam, a visit to a market and actual interaction with the local merchants via avatars, a history lesson of the region with virtual travel to various locations, a risk-free flyover of the contested border that will be relevant to the mission, virtual travel to non-permissive geographic locations, and a myriad of other examples could be created

and filed in the virtual library. There will be necessary upfront costs for equipment and module design, however, once online, the programs could be accessed an unlimited number of times, simultaneously by multiple users allowing for a significant increase in efficiency in training delivery. Importantly, many topics related to cultural issues are based on tradition and history and will seldom need to be updated.

The library could be constantly expanded based on need and shared widely among the services. A curriculum could have initial tailored modules and supplemented as assignments change. Centralized access could support specific services as well as joint efforts across the services with experiences focused on coordinated efforts and support requirements of the various combatant commands. As new experiences and scenarios are needed, custom content can be created.

The experiences in this digital VR library must be accurate and believable to accomplish the full immersion and presence desired. Teams of cultural, military, diplomacy and VR experts should be assembled to design accurate and effective experiences that accomplish the goals of the scenario. Development of content can be time consuming and expensive, however, the investment can pay off in training opportunities for hundreds of service members and long-term use.

The library can also include content supporting regular, more traditional courses such as overview courses for new service members, which can be offered remotely or at any educational facility, at any convenient time and place. The portability of VR headsets also offers the option of including them in transit operations where they can be used in flight. This would allow the service member to refresh and hone skills during a multi-hour flight to the deployment location.

Given the flexibility of VR, the library could eventually be expanded to include a

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[49] Ibid., 14.

[50] Ibid., 14-15.

[51] Skelton and Cooper, "You're Not From Around Here," 16.

number of experiences from United States culture such as visiting Smithsonian museums, participating in a Fourth of July bar-b-que, riding in a Mardi Gras parade, or attending a university speaker series. These illustrative experiences could be shared with the local population so that they could become more culturally aware of the United States and better understand the American service members with whom they will interact.

Recommendations

The military services should incorporate VR technology into pre-deployment training curricula where possible to leverage the effectiveness of preparation efforts and enhance service members' awareness of culture, its importance, and key differences prior to deployment.

One or more military universities should collaborate to create and make available an accessible digital library of VR cultural awareness modules for training of military forces to support readiness.

Additional study should be undertaken by the services to identify which scenario characteristics produce the best outcomes and thereafter have additional, relevant experiences created for inclusion in the digital library.

As VR training methodologies are integrated into training efforts, evolving trends and advancements in VR technologies should be followed and incorporated so as to design more immersive training courses that maximize the use of haptic technology, realistic gestures, and vision tracking that will facilitate more technical training options.

Conclusion

Effective immersion training using VR technology prior to deployment will ensure that transitioning individuals are more fully culturally informed and immediately effective without the risk of making cultural missteps. The military has recognized the link of cultural awareness to the success of operations in foreign locations. For the deploying

individual, it is necessary to not only read about the destination, but to truly understand and empathize with the people and the issues they face. To maximize effectiveness, this level of understanding must be made available to as many deploying individuals as possible. Arguably, the military must weave a constructivist education approach into its training efforts to facilitate experiential learning and increased awareness. Through the use of VR, users will not only observe but will also experience the feeling of being in another location and meeting other individuals while watching content and hearing local narratives.

The military can effectively and efficiently improve cultural awareness in its deploying troops through the use of VR immersive technology, which will also allow the training modules to be safely stored, easily accessed, and repeated as often as desired. This immersive experience gives students an enveloping sense of presence that differs from traditional media forms, while the possibilities for mistakes are reduced and the prospects for building new, lasting relationships are exponentially increased. Most importantly, by introducing users to cultural awareness experiences through VR immersion, opportunities to build upon their preexisting knowledge will be maximized for the benefit of the individual and the mission.

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Army Leader Development
for the Cross-Cultural Environment

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Abstract

This paper examines the challenges the United States Army faces working in diverse and complex cultural environments. With the advent of increased technology along with the changing political climate, the world is much more connected than ever before. Cultural understanding of world views, customs, religion, and language has become an unavoidable part of life . This essay presents an analytical framework to describe and gain an appreciation of intercultural communication.[1] This framework utilizes the Hofstede model of cultural dimensions, which gives us an understanding of the cultural aspects and tendencies of a nation.[2] This cultural model offers a framework to fill the gap in the Army's shortfall on cross-cultural communication training and helps us understand why Army leadership needs to develop a forward-looking training program. It is essential to understand why culture is significant and how it influences people to understand perception, behavior influences, and how it shapes personalities.[3] As stated in Buzzle, "Culture is related to the development of our attitude. Our cultural values influence how we approach living. According to the behaviorist definition of culture, it is the ultimate system of social control where people monitor their standards and behavior. Our cultural values serve as the founding principles of our life. They shape our thinking, behavior, and personality."[4]

[1.] Hans Gullestrup, "The Complexity of Intercultural Communication in Cross-Cultural Management," *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, no. 6 (2003): 1.

[2.] Anthony P. Arcur, *The Importance of Cross-Cultural Awareness for Today's Operational Environment*, USAWC Strategy Research Project: Carlisle Barracks, U.S. Army War College, 2008.

[3.] William B. Gudykunst and Stella Ting-Toomey, "Communication in Personal Relationships Across Cultures: An Introduction," in *Communication in Personal Relationships Across Cultures*, ed. Astrid Virding (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 1996).

[4.] "Why Is Culture Important and How Does It Influence People," Buzzle.com, accessed 2019.

Introduction

There are many practical reasons to study intercultural communication. Intercultural communication is "communication that involves cultural group membership differences."[5] It is all about learning the necessary skills to understand and manage cultural differences appropriately and effectively.[6] For example, people from two very different cultures may approach problem-solving issues very differently. Furthermore, friendships and relationships between people of different cultures will have different expectations, desires, patterns, and end goals.[7] With the increase in Joint Military operations throughout various regions of the world and an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) global environment, Soldiers require a fundamental understanding of cultural dimensions. For the Army to be effective in today's multicultural operations, Soldiers need a mindset attuned to understanding the complex cultural environment in which they are expected to operate with skill sets to manage them. Leaders must understand how the local culture affects the environment and take this into account when executing military operations.[8] Only through proper cultural education and training to close the communication gap of understanding "how and "why" cultures operate can the Army significantly increase operational success. If the Army does not develop a more robust cultural awareness training program, the secondary and tertiary effects on Army actions will substantially affect operations in complex operational environments throughout the world.[9]

Thesis

For the United States Army, cultural competence is an essential skill. With increased globalization and foreign missions, Soldiers will inevitably communicate with people who are culturally different.[10] As stated in the Department of the Army's Cultural Awareness Training Program, a Soldier needs to "understand the importance of collaboration among diverse organizations, and how individual and organizational actions affect strategic relationships."[11] This paper will cover the importance of cultural training and its impact on the future of the U.S. Army in today's joint operational environment and present a case study of a humanitarian Civil Assistance mission in the country of Macedonia using the Hofstede Model. Hofstede's model describes the effects of a society's culture on the values of its members, and how these values relate to behavior.

To illustrate the impact of cultural differences, this paper will look at a Humanitarian Civic Assistance (HCA) mission that the 412th Theater Engineer Command (TEC) conducted in the Slavic country of Macedonia. The purpose of this mission was to build and reinforce trust by generating positive public relations and demonstrating the goodwill of the American people.[12] The mission of the 412th TEC was to renovate a grade school in Negotino Macedonia. This HCA mission was one month in duration, required nine American Soldiers, and nine Macedonian Soldiers to work in cooperation. The American Officer in Charge (OIC) of the on-site project was a young female engineer First Lieutenant, and the OIC for the Macedonians was a combat-hardened special forces Sergeant Major. None of the American Soldiers had cultural training or a country

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[5.] Stella Ting-Toomey and Leeva C. Chung, *Understanding Intercultural Communication* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 5.
[6.] Ibid.
[7.] Ibid.
[8.] Department of the Army, *Cultural Awareness Training Program.* USACC Pamphlet 145-9-1 (Fort Knox: Cadet Command, 2015).
[9.] Ibid.
[10.] Ting-Toomey and Chung, *Understanding Intercultural Communication.*
[11.] Department of the Army, *Cultural Awareness Training Program*, 4.
[12.] "Media Library," Vesi Terieva, United States European Command, 2011, https://www.eucom.mil/media.
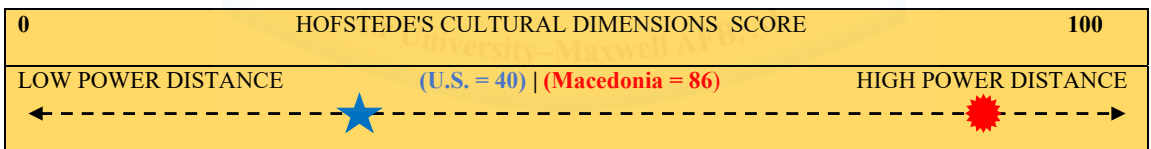
orientation briefing before arriving in-country. The very first morning of the HCA project, the American Lieutenant and Macedonian Sergeant Major had a cultural head-on collision. This paper of "The American Lieutenant and the Macedonian Sergeant Major" is an excellent example of a case study because it illustrates intercultural conflict and how we can manage it by understanding the components of different cultures through Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions. In the case between the Lieutenant and Sergeant Major, we will look at what happened, why it happened, and how to avoid cultural conflicts by exploring five of Hofstede's cultural dimensions. An excellent place to start in understanding this case study is by looking at the country comparison (Culture Compass Scores) values of the Hofstede Model to compare and contrast Macedonia and United States cultures. Each Hofstede dimension is explained in the case study comparisons by scores from 1 for the lowest, to 100 for the highest.

Case Study: The American Lieutenant and the Macedonian Sergeant Major

The first Hofstede dimension utilized in the present case study is Low Power Distance vs. High Power Distance. This dimension deals with the fact that not all individuals are equal in society.[13] As defined by Ting-Toomey and Gudykunst, "Power distance is the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally."[14]

People in Low Power Distance cultures value equal rights and relationships based on performance. People in High Power Distance cultures accept unequal power distribution, hierarchal rights, rewards, and punishment based on gender, age, status, rank, title, and seniority.[15] Macedonia scores were high in this dimension, with an eighty-six indicating a high-power distance culture. In this culture, everybody has a place, and subordinates expect guidance and direction from an autocratic leader. The United States shows a much lower power distance, scoring at forty percent.

This much lower score for the U.S. indicates that there is a lesser degree a person can influence other people's behavior and that there are more equal rights and equal relations.[16] On the first morning of the HCA mission, the Lieutenant took a straightforward approach with the Sergeant Major, establishing herself as the person in charge of both American and Macedonian Soldiers. This cultural faux pas was the Lieutenant's first mistake, and it immediately caused difficulty between her and the Macedonians. The Lieutenant had an ethnocentric mindset, which is, as Ting-Toomey and Chung define as, "being stuck with our cultural worldviews and using our own cultural values as the baseline standards to evaluate the other parson's cultural behavior."[17] She perceived that all cultures and militaries were the same and assumed that being an officer automatically gave her the right to authority, even over the Macedonians. The Macedonians opposed her position because they viewed the young Lieutenant lower in the hierarchical position due to her age and gender.

0	HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS SCORE	100
LOW POWER DISTANCE	(U.S. = 40) | (Macedonia = 86)	HIGH POWER DISTANCE

13. "Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory Nuances in Language Reflects Nuances in Culture," *Do You Speak My Language?* (blog) June 12, 2018, http://www.tobetranslated.com/blog/hofstede-s-cultural-dimensions-theory.

14. Stella Ting-Toomey, Tsukasa Nishida, and William B. Gudykunst, *Communication in Personal Relationships Across Cultures* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 1996), 48.

15. Ting-Toomey and Chung, *Understanding Intercultural Communication*, 48.

16. "The 6 Dimensions of National Culture," Hofstede Center, 2019, https://www.hofstede-insights.com/about-us/.

17. Ting-Toomey and Chung, *Understanding Intercultural Communication*, 28.

The second cultural dimension in our analysis is Individualism vs. Collectivism. The issue addressed by this dimension is the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members.[18] The Individualism/Collectivism dimension is the importance of the individual versus group interests. Individualism is a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals take care of mainly themselves and their immediate families. Its opposite, collectivism, is a tightly-knit framework in society in which individuals of an in-group are looked after in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.[19] This dimension has to do with people's self-image of the "I" or "We." In a collective society, people belong to tightly woven in-groups, as pointed out by Kamwangamalu in African culture, "I am because you are, and you are because

the "I" approach with the Sergeant Major by making it clear that "I" am in charge and will call the shots, rather than "We" will collectively work together to achieve a common objective. This misunderstanding set the tone for the rest of the mission, causing constant friction and pushback from the Macedonians. To further complicate the situation, the Lieutenant found herself pushed to the outside of an in-group that started to form between the Macedonian and the American Soldiers.

The third dimension of Hofstede's model is Masculinity vs. Femininity. The central issue here is what motivates people, wanting to be the best (masculine) or liking what you do (feminine).[21] This dimension shows us the different responsibilities in a culture based on gender roles. A high score

0	HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS SCORE	100
COLLECTIVISM	(U.S. = 91)	(Macedonia = 25)	INDIVIDUALISM
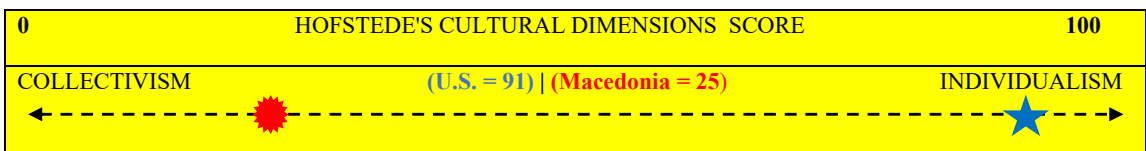
I am."[20] Macedonia has a lower percentage score of twenty-five, indicating that it is a very collective "We" society. In a collective culture, commitment to the group is fundamental, and individual interests are generally considered subordinate to that of group interests. The United States, in contrast, scores very high with a score of ninety-one indicating a robust individualistic "I" society in which individual interests and concerns are customarily prioritized over the group.

In this dimension, the Lieutenant took

(masculine) in this dimension indicates distinct gender roles with high values given to achievement, success, and assertiveness. On the other hand, a low score (feminine) indicates the societal characteristics of more fluid gender roles, modesty, and nurturing.[22] In this dimension, both the U.S. and Macedonian cultures scored relatively high with the U.S. at sixty-two percent, and Macedonia at eighty percent. In the traditional Slavic culture, men are in charge, make the decisions, and dictate the rules.

0	HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS SCORE	100
FEMININITY	(U.S. = 62)	(Macedonia = 80)	MASCULINITY
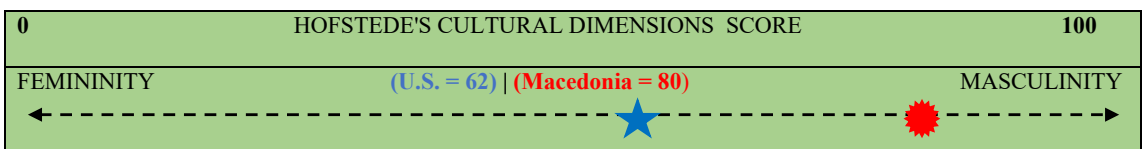
[18.] "The 6 Dimensions of National Culture."

[19.] "Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions," Hofstede Center, 2017, https://www.business-to-you.com/hofstedes-cultural-dimensions/.

[20.] Nkonko M. Kamwangamalu, "Ubuntu in South Africa," in *The Global Intercultural Communication Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Molefi K. Asante, Yoshitaka Miike, and Jing Yin (Milton Park: Routledge, 2008).

[21.] Ting-Toomey and Chung, *Understanding Intercultural Communication*.

[22.] Ibid.

Another point is that there are very few women in the Macedonian military due to it being a highly masculine culture with women there working mostly in the humanities such as medicine, teaching, and art. In this part of the case study, it is essential to understand that the major problem here is the cultural differences between a dominantly male Slavic society to the American society where there is a distribution of roles between the genders. The Macedonian military has less than ten percent of females out of a total number of eight thousand service members.[23] The United States, in comparison, has a much higher percentage of women with twenty percent in the Air Force, nineteen percent in Navy, fifteen percent in the Army, and nine percent in the Marine Corps.[24] The Lieutenant's lack of knowledge created tension with the Macedonian's because she failed to realize she was in a masculine culture. Whenever she tried to give direction or guidance, the Soldiers ignored her expecting direction from the Sergeant Major; additionally, in a masculine society, women are not typically engineers. This lack of respect for the Lieutenant jeopardized the mission by creating delays in getting material, delaying important information, and created a very laissez-faire attitude in the men. As mentioned earlier, the male American Soldiers quickly became a part of the Macedonian in-group. This in-group loyalty caused the Americans to also adopt the same attitude as the Macedonians, further complicating the situation.

The fourth dimension of Hofstede's Model is High Uncertainty Avoidance vs. Low Uncertainty Avoidance. "The Uncertainty Avoidance dimension expresses the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. In addition, its impact on rulemaking is taken into account."[25] The central issue here is how a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known. This dimension is a question of if the culture tries to "control" the future, or simply lets things happen and accepts things for what they are. Countries that show high Uncertainty Avoidance, according to Hofstede, "embrace or avert an event of something unexpected, unknown, or away from the status quo. Societies that score a high degree in this index opt for stiff codes of behavior, guidelines, laws, and generally rely on absolute truth, or the belief that one lone truth dictates everything and people know what it is."[26] Countries with a low Uncertainty Avoidance maintain a more relaxed attitude in which Society tends to impose fewer regulations, ambiguity is tolerated, and the environment is more free-flowing.[27] This ambiguity, however, can cause a great deal of anxiety in high uncertainty avoidance cultures.[28] The Macedonian score in this dimension is ninety-two percent, showing it to be a high uncertainty avoidance culture. The United States has a greatly differing score of forty-six percent, indicating a high degree of acceptance for new ideas with a willingness for something new or different.[29]

The substantial cultural difference in uncertainty avoidance between the Lieutenant and the Sergeant Major created a complicated situation in delegating roles, responsibilities, and scheduling. In Macedonia, the Soldiers had distinct jobs with well-defined responsibilities; moreover, they had a very specific routine to follow to avoid any conflict or disrespect to the faculty, their team, and staff of the renovated

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[23.] Note this statistic was produced by the embassy Liaison Officer (LNO) in 2013. There is no historical data on record to support the information.

[24.] Mary Dever, "With Historic Number of Women in Uniform, the Vet Community Is About to Change," *Military.com*, March 11, 2019, https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/03/11/historic-number-women-uniform-vet-community-about-change.html.

[25.] "Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions," James Madison University, Center for Global Engagement, 2019, https://helpdesk.jmu.edu/global/isss/resources/global-campus-toolkit/hofstede.shtml.

[26.] Geert Hofstede, "Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context," *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture* 2, no. 1 (2011).

[27.] Ting-Toomey and Chung, *Understanding Intercultural Communication*.

[28.] Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey, "Communication in Personal Relationships Across Cultures."

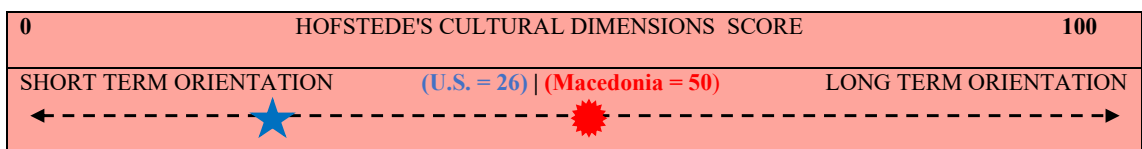[29.] "The 6 Dimensions of National Culture."
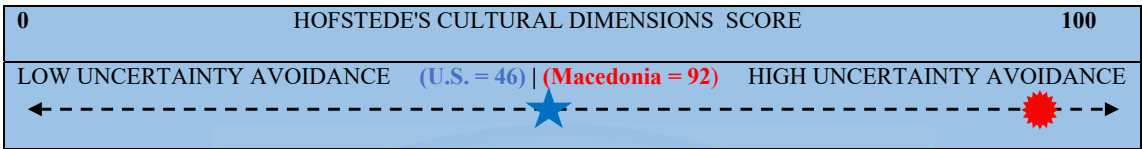
school. Being unaware of Macedonian social norms, rules, formalities, and traditions, the Lieutenant tried to delegate what each Soldier would be doing and with whom they would be working, (e.g., one American with one Macedonian on a specific task). The Lieutenant had a schedule all planned out throughout the day, including a half-hour lunch break on the economy, with the duty day starting at 7:00 am and ending at 6:00 pm. The Macedonians, however, regularly began their duty day at 8:30 am and end at 3:30 pm. As part of the Macedonian social culture, they consistently have coffee and cigarette breaks throughout the day. The lunch break for the Macedonians was to be no less than an hour, and everyone was expected to eat together, including the school faculty (another sign of collectivism and in-group belonging). Anything other than this would be considered rude, unorthodox, and offensive. The American Lieutenant's disrespect for this lunch custom, coupled with her ethnocentrism, caused her to only see the Macedonians as lazy and stubborn. The Macedonians, being highly social, felt offended because they wanted to take advantage of the frequent and long breaks to get to know the Americans. To them, the opportunity to build relationships was as or more important than the mission itself.

The fifth element of Hofstede's model to understand in the context of this case study is Long Term Orientation vs. Short Term Orientation. This dimension describes how every society has to maintain some links with its past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future.[30] This dimension is one of the most difficult to understand because of the broad differences between geographic regions of a given country, meaning, people can be in the same country, but have different cultures (e.g., Northern Americans ''Yankees'' vs. Southerners). Nonetheless, this element will be addressed to understand further the cultural differences that relate to this case study. Macedonia scores around fifty percent in the country comparison (Culture Compass Scores) values, which shows no clear preference for this dimension. Short-Term orientation in traditional Slavic cultures typically scores low on long-term orientation. As in this case study, the mission took place in a conservative rural village where people exhibited the cultural dimension of short-term orientation. The Macedonian Soldiers and villagers valued traditional methods, take a considerable amount of time in building relationships, and leisure time is significant. Short-term orientation also means that time is circular and that the past and the present are interconnected (i.e., what cannot be done today can be done tomorrow).

In comparison, the United States scored twenty-six, which also illustrates a short-term orientation culture; however, in this case, the Lieutenant and Sergeant Major were in total opposition to each other concerning their own cultures. The Lieutenant (long-term) had a fixed timeline and was persistent in keeping on schedule, which meant long days with only a short lunch break and very little time to socialize. The Sergeant Major (short-term orientation) held to tradition that required regular social breaks for coffee and

| 0 | HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS SCORE | 100 |

SHORT TERM ORIENTATION   (U.S. = 26) | (Macedonia = 50)   LONG TERM ORIENTATION

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30. "Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions," 3.

cigarettes; everyone was required to have lunch together, with the expectation that everyone reciprocates greetings and favors. Furthermore, in contrast to the Lieutenant, the Macedonians were not concerned with the mission timeline because there is more value in the project or event than in time or punctuality.[31] The Lieutenant fostered virtues towards future rewards in perseverance and thrift, whereas the Sergeant Major fostered virtues in respect for tradition and fulfilling social obligations. This case study drives the point that intercultural misunderstandings and differences are not only theoretical, but can actually happen, and from this, we can learn that there can be practical solutions to real dilemmas. This lesson is why it is essential to provide cultural training to today's Army Soldiers.

The Importance of Cultural Training

The critical ingredient to understanding other cultures is defined by journalist Brenden O'Brien as "the ability and willingness to objectively examine the values, beliefs, traditions, and perceptions within our own and other cultures. At the most basic level, it is the ability to walk in someone else's shoes in terms of his or her cultural origins."[32] It is not enough to experience a culture to gain an understanding to develop intercultural competence, as illustrated in the case study. It is a misconception that being in a particular culture, and in contact with those citizens is enough to develop some competence and understanding. This is instead a rare exception rather than the rule. For cross-cultural skills to be beneficial, there must be an awareness of the elements of a culture as defined by Ting-Toomey and Chung as "patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, meanings, and symbols

that are passed on from one generation to the next and are shared in varying degrees by interacting members of a community."[33] As a leader and Soldier in the modern Army, it is necessary to consider what the Army does in the world and the impacts it has. With the increase in globalization and Army missions on both sides of the globe, it is also essential to evaluate the skills necessary for our Soldiers to operate in a diverse variety of environments.[34] In order for Soldiers to operate effectively across international borders, especially a joint cultural environment, Soldiers must have a clear understanding and perspective of the political, social, and cultural factors that can significantly influence the success of Army operations and foreign relations in various countries.[35]

As demonstrated in the case study, people have many different and diverse backgrounds that imprint an image in our minds as to how things should be. Many outside influences impact our perception of people and their cultures, such as religion, media, national threats, language, environment, customs, and politics. We cannot escape culture since culture is all around us and makes us who we are; it shapes our cognitive thoughts (mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through experience, and the senses)[36] that drive our perceptions of the world around us. As the world continually grows smaller, it is essential to understand that for the United States to remain a world leader, the Army must be prepared to act and communicate to build trusting relationships with our neighboring countries.

Simply put, cultural education and training are essential to understanding other people's ways of thinking and behaving.

[31.] Peter O. Nwosu, "Understanding Africans' Conceptualizations of Intercultural Competence," in *The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence*, ed. Darla K. Deardorff (Thousands Oaks: Sage Publications, 2009), 158-177.

[32.] "What is the Meaning of Cultural Awareness," Brendan O'Brien, Classroom, 2017, https://classroom.synonym.com/what-is-the-meaning-of-cultural-awareness-12084258.html

[33.] Ting-Toomey and Chung, *Understanding Intercultural Communication*.

[34.] Margaret D. Push, "Interculturally Competent Global Leader," in *The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence*, ed. Darla K. Deardorff (Thousands Oaks: Sage Publications, 2009), 66.

[35.] Arcur, *The Importance of Cross-Cultural Awareness*.

[36.] Merriam-Webster (online), s.v. "Cognition".

Cultural education and training can help instill an appreciation that, in turn, may prevent misunderstandings, promote trust, positively affect productivity and efficiency, and gives the U.S. a competitive advantage in long-term benefits of friendship, trust, and cooperation.

Where the Army Falls Short on Cultural Training

The United States Army recognizes the value of diversity and promotes the development and training on diversity "to serve the American people, protect vital national interests, and fulfill national military responsibilities."[37] The Army's vision is to continue to remain the world's dominant political and social land power and to remain to be the "ultimate instrument of national resolve.[38] However, the Army falls short in understanding the importance of developing our Soldiers in cross-cultural competence across all branches to meet the Army's vision. Moreover, our leaders and Army institutions fail to see the importance of adequately training today's Army leaders and Soldiers to be competent representatives of our nation. The case study presented in this paper is a primary example that cultural training falls short in its context, or is not reaching all the Soldiers who need it to meet the Army's vision.

Example, the Army specifically designed current training programs for language and culture targeted only to specialized Soldiers in such fields as Public Affairs, Intelligence, and Civil Affairs. Also, cultural training for Soldiers on deployments rarely happens, and when it does, it is in short briefings by non-commissioned officers (NCO) who may not truly understand all the cultural dynamics. These NCOs may lack the knowledge and understanding of the distinction between ethnocentrism "seeing our own culture as the center of the universe and seeing other cultures as insignificant or even inferior,"[39] and ethnorelativism, "an acquired ability to see many values and behaviors as cultural rather than universal."[40]

Further illustrating the Army's shortfalls, the Army fails to look at the actual training needs to be delivered and to who conducts the training, who develops the training material and environment, and what the actual training standardization is.[41] The current training for Soldiers in the above mentioned specialized skills may work well for those requirements and situations; however, it does not work for Soldiers in other Army occupation specialties (MOS) that end up on deployments and missions to a vast number of countries and cultures. Overall, the Army must understand the common training challenges and how to successfully develop and implement training that suitably focuses on all Soldiers and the appropriate cultures in which they will be operating. This training requires a thorough assessment to establish the proper principles, training objectives, material for the specific cultural environment, and proper implementation (i.e., exercise scenarios). This comprehensive training is essential to close the gap between cultures so that we may see other cultural values and behaviors outside our "center of the universe."

Recommendations

As stated in the Intercultural Competent Global Leader Management Essay, "Effective intercultural communicating" or "cross-cultural communicating" is the ability to understand and to dialogue with other people from another civilization."[42] Since 9/11, the United States changed dramatically; 9/11

[37.] Department of the Army Diversity Office, *United States Army Diversity Roadmap* (Washington, DC, 2010).

[38.] Army Diversity Office, *Diversity Roadmap*.

[39.] Ting-Toomey and Chung, *Understanding Intercultural Communication*.

[40.] Ibid.

[41.] "What Are the Most Common Training Challenges and How Do Successful Managers Overcome Them," Nikos Andriotis, published 2016, https://www.efrontlearning.com/blog/2017/04/common-training-challenges-solutions.html.

[42.] UKEssay, "The Interculturally Competent Global Leader Management Essay" (unpublished [essay], January 1, 1970), https://essaylead.com/the-interculturally-competent-global-leader-management-essay/.

events forced awareness of our vulnerability in security and a collective sense of tragedy from the attack that took place on our sovereign soil. This attack further impacted operations for the Army in Afghanistan and Iraq, driving the Army programs and policies to prepare Soldiers for operations in foreign cultures.[43] The challenges of preparing Soldiers for operations abroad have been an ongoing problem that requires a look at the very beginning of a soldier's entry into the Army. For example, as previously mentioned, specialty fields such as Civil Affairs and Special Forces are trained in the specialty region in which they operate. This branch-specific training does not address the training required for the general-purpose Soldier.[44] Even though there is no perfect solution to this cultural training problem, the Army can certainly better prepare Soldiers across the spectrum by implementing cultural training at the very beginning of both the enlisted Soldiers and commissioned officer's professional development. Whether enlisted or commissioned, the Army needs continuous training requirements to keep Soldiers ready and capable. However, cultural training is often overlooked, which is a crucial factor in enhancing the capability of the U.S. Army and its success in foreign missions.

Some solutions to help strengthen and develop our Soldiers and to better prepare them in today's VUCA environment is to start cultural training at the very beginning.[45] Even though the Army is continually facing resource constraints driven by budget and time, it would take little effort, time, and expense to implement a training program to indoctrinate Soldiers in the basics of cultural awareness. One simple proposed method of training could be the introduction of the Hofstede model.

This model describes the effects of a society's culture on the values of its members, and how these values relate to behavior.[46] The model would provide a necessary foundation to bring Soldiers to an awareness and understanding of how cultures influence their members' beliefs, values, knowledge, and customs.

Furthermore, the Army can add electives to Professional Development Training for officers and NCOs, such as Captains Basic Course, Captains Career Course, Army Command and General Staff College, Army War College, Basic training, Army Technical Schools, NCO academies, and even yearly unit training requirements. In order for Soldiers to develop intercultural communication skills, the U.S. Army must start developing and preparing today's Soldiers through a standardized training program at the primary level. This fundamental training can be as simple as teaching the six cultural dimensions of Hofstede's Model.[47] Also, the use of case-based studies and incidents can provide relevant problem-solving opportunities to help in the training applications of cultural dimensions and how they apply cultural knowledge and skills to situations and events.[48] On the whole, by implementing even a fundamental level of training to Soldiers across the broad spectrum, the Army can have profound and lasting effects in not only the future of Army operations but in the future of U.S. foreign relations.

The Impact of Cultural Training on the Future of the Army

The Army has a very different culture from the rest of the civilian populous. Army culture has frequently had a very negative impact on the views and perceptions of Soldiers on different cultures in various

[43] Allison Abbe and Melissa Gouge, "Cultural Training for Military Personnel: Revisiting the Vietnam Era," *Military Review* 94, no. 4 (2012).

[44] William A. Friday, *U.S. Army's Diversity Strategic Plan: The Attitude and Knowledge of Today's U.S. Army Majors*: Strategy Research Paper: Carlisle Barracks, U.S. Army War College, 2008.

[45] Ibid.

[46] "Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory Nuances in Language Reflects Nuances in Culture," Cultural pragmatics, accessed 2019, http://www.tobetranslated.com/blog/hofstede-s-cultural-dimensions-theory.

[47] "Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions."

[48] Abbe and Gouge, "Cultural Training for Military Personnel."

deployments around the globe. Miller and Moskos argue that "there is a culture clash between deployed troops and the local civilian population that can exacerbate tensions and have negative consequences strategically, operationally, and tactically."[49] For instance, it is not uncommon for Soldiers to develop a fear or prejudice against certain people within a culture that poses a threat (e.g., WWII, Vietnam, Iraq, Iran). This can and will cause cultural clashes between Soldiers and individuals within the deployed culture. Cultural perceptions can also have the opposite effect where Soldiers entirely adopt a culture in which they serve, taking on the empathies of that culture without a real understanding of the consequences. For example, during the U.S. involvement in Iraq in 2006, several Soldiers openly sympathized with Baath Party members and detainees held in Camp Cropper near Baghdad International Airport (BIAP). These Soldiers became so empathetic that they eventually converted over to Islam by adopting the Sunni faith.[50] Regrettably, these Soldiers, mostly the female Soldiers, ended up regretting their decision as they did not understand all the dimensions of the Sunni culture (Hofstede's Cultural Dimension of High-Power Distance and Masculine Society). These female Soldiers did not realize the restrictions Sunni women have according to beliefs in that they are considered inferior to men, treated unfairly, and are even oppressed legally.[51]

This example, along with the Macedonian case study, suggests some of the consequences of what happens when our Soldiers do not receive adequate training in cultural communication and understanding. The Army needs to take a serious look at training Soldiers to better prepare them for the cultural environment in which they operate. Training Soldiers is invaluable in that it builds confidence and loyalty to the unit and to allied and partner countries, and in the end, may help cultural mistakes that can have lasting effects in the future.

Conclusion

To summarize, there are many practical reasons for developing cultural competence. The more the United States Army is involved in foreign missions, the more critical it is for Soldiers to develop a perspective and understanding of other cultures. The U.S. Army must train Soldiers in necessary cultural skills to strengthen relationships with partners and allies to reinforce stability through positive relations and goodwill. As with the American Lieutenant, in this case study, when someone steps into a foreign culture, things suddenly are different, driving the importance of knowing how to understand other cultures. Soldiers can manage cultural differences adaptively and creatively in a wide variety of situations.[52] By using the country comparison (Cultural Compass Scores) values of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions as a starting point, anyone can evaluate their approach, "based on a general sense of how people in a particular society might think and react."[53] Cultural dimensions are only one framework among many ways of assessing a given culture and thus guiding better decision making. Only through cultural training can Soldiers properly be successful in situations that require an understanding of ethnicities and individuals. Understanding other cultures foster an understanding of why people act and do things in a certain way, and it brings a realization that there is more than one way of doing things. The Soldiers of today's Army are our diplomats, and they are our messengers and representatives at all ranks that support the Army vision and "ultimate instrument of national resolve".[54]

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[49] Neil Greenberg et al., "The Impact of Culture Clash on Deployed Troops," *Military Medicine* 175, no. 12 (2010): 958.

[50] Note these are personal experiences from CPT James Lewis while on deployment as Deputy Commander and Engineer of Compound 5, Camp Cropper Iraq 2006-2007.

[51] Tehmina Durrani, *My Feudal Lord: A Devastating Indictment of Women's Role in Muslim Society* (London: Corgi Books, 1996).

[52] Ting-Toomey and Chung, *Understanding Intercultural Communication*.

[53] "Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions."

[54] Army Diversity Office, *Diversity Roadmap*.

Colonel James M. Lewis started his military career when he enlisted in the United States Air Force on 16 December 1986. He served four years, nine months active duty with an Honorable Discharge after Desert Storm in September 1991. In August 1992, a year after his discharge from the Air Force, he started his freshman year at the University of Wisconsin-Superior, majoring in molecular biology with a minor in anthropology, graduating with a Bachelor's of Science in May 1996. He simultaneously attended the Wisconsin Military Academy receiving his commission in the Wisconsin Army National Guard in June 1996. He resigned his commission as a Captain from the National Guard to accept an active duty commission (AGR) in the Army Reserve in October 2003. COL Lewis is an Army Civil Engineer with a two-year assignment in Athens Greece, a fifteen-month deployment to Iraq, and multiple short duty assignments to over twenty-two countries. Colonel Lewis's duty assignments include serving as an Engineer Platoon Leader, Engineer Detachment Commander, Engineer Company Commander, Brigade Liaison Detachment Executive Officer, Army Careers Division Deputy Battalion Commander, 412th TEC Strategic Planner in support of EUCOM, PACOM, AFRICOM, and SOCAF, 88th Regional Readiness Command Engineer Master Planner, 88th RD Engineer Division Chief, and nineteen state Regional Engineer Director. COL Lewis furthered his civilian education by attending Concord University School of Law, graduating in 2010 as a Juris Doctor with a concentration in Information Technology Law. He is also a resident graduate of the United States Army Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth, KS, and a resident graduate of the Air War College, Maxwell AFB, AL, where he earned his Master's degree in Strategic Studies.

Negotiation Stories: Today's Military in Action

Negotiation Downrange

by Anonymous

We were downrange and working with another governmental agency. They were 12 hrs out from briefing their in-country leadership on fixes to some of their contingency plans. Their current plan was extremely weak, and for about a week they pressed us on using our Army birds as primary insertion/extraction platforms. We said no, because that's not what we do, not what we're in charge of, and that we're there as a contingency response, not a primary insertion/ extraction. They pressed us on it. We stood firm...but we also wanted carte-blanche access to on/off-base training opportunities that we desperately needed. Throughout the week, they kept pressing about using the Army's birds, even so far as going to the first Army O-6. Well, he got all spun-up, called my boss asking what this was about, and why we were farming out his birds (classic telephone game right there). My boss did some leader deflection but told me we had better figure out something soon. So, we met with this agency again, and we asked them "at the end of the day, what do you feel is important for you to get out of this?

"What do you care about the most?"

They responded "just making our response better than it is now." My teammates and I glanced at each other. Easy problem to solve! This was much broader of an answer than we'd thought they'd come back with. They had been pigeon-holing themselves into this one solution of taking command of a service's insertion/extraction platform without thinking of other possible solutions. Not their fault, sometimes you just don't know what you just don't know. So, we presented another solution–we can improve your response by dedicating one or two of our tech rescue specialists to your operations. They can act as team members during your contingency responses, but again we have no power over insertion/extraction platforms." They came back with "really!? Y'all can do that?! That's what we originally wanted, but didn't think we could get that, so we threw that idea out! That's way better!" And then, the best part... they said "so what can we do for you guys?" We said "well, would we be able to get a day at the range, and get a fam on a couple weapon systems?" They said "that's it?! Heck, we'll get you on the range every day if you want, and we'll do more than just fam you on those weapons. Also, you have full access to our armory for whatever you need. And we can get you access to the scrap yard on base for extrication before it gets destroyed. And we can send some of our guys over to help teach combat medicine, terminal air control, and tactics to your guys."

Funny, we said "really?! That's what WE wanted originally, but didn't think we could get that!"

Sometimes, people make assumptions about what they can and can't get.

They hold their cards too close. It's not often that it happens, but it's a good example of how asking the straightforward and specific question can actually force them to give you an idea of what they want, and in the end get both parties to win-win. We tapped into their emotional side a bit by using words like "what do you FEEL is important...what do you CARE about most", and that help cut through the specifics to get to the most important thing. Also, a really great book on negotiation is "Never Split the Difference" by Chris Voss. Former FBI hostage negotiator. He'd be an awesome person to bring in as a guest lecturer, too.

"*Getting to Yes*"
Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In

by Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton

reviewed by CMSgt John G. Boyles, USAF (Ret), BS, Air Force Negotiation Center

Getting to Yes is a great foundational book, that outlines the basics of negotiating principles. It is an easy-to-follow process which doesn't get you bogged down in the fine details of why people think, feel, and act the way they do during a negotiation, but rather how to go about negotiating with someone. Getting into the nuts and bolts of why people think, feel, and act are skills that can be learned in advanced classes. Learning the process first will help you to be more focused on what's being negotiated instead of worrying if you missed a step in the process.

The authors suggest a negotiation should be judged by three criteria. It should produce a wise agreement; it should be efficient, and it should improve (not damage) the relationship. I think the process of Principled Negotiation will help you do just that. The process of Principled Negotiation has four focus points: people (separate people from the problem), interests (focus on interests, not positions), options (develop multiple ones before you go to the table), and criteria (insist results be based on objective standards).

When it comes to people, the authors identify several things individuals bring to the negotiating table with them besides the problem at hand. Things such as biases, perceptions, blind spots, all of which can affect the way a person negotiates. People can also get emotional and express feelings of anger, depression, fear, or they can become hostile. Individuals have egos and frequently confuse their perceptions with reality. The authors stated, "Conflict lies in people's heads, not in objective reality." When you understand these things about people, you can better equip yourself to deal with them at the negotiating table. You need to know that people think differently and reality, as each side sees it, is what constitutes the problem. Understanding these differences and seeing things the way the other side sees them is a great skill to have. Therefore, you must negotiate the problem, not the people.

In order to negotiate a wise solution, you should attempt to reconcile interests, not positions. Interests define the problem, why you want what you want, and motivate people to work toward satisfying their interests. Reconciling interests works for two reasons: First, a person's interests usually have several possible solutions, and second, behind opposed positions lie shared and compatible interests, as well as conflicting ones. Agreement is often made possible precisely because interests differ. How do you identify the interests of the opposing party? There are two very simple ways, ask them or do some in-depth research. A very common error in negotiating is assuming you and the other side have the same interests; this is rarely the case. When researching your
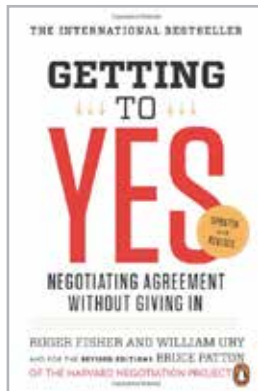
opposite's interests, consider basic human needs-things such as safety and security, economic wellbeing, a sense of belonging, and recognition. Your opposite may need to feel like they are in control of their own success or simply hear you acknowledge their interests. When identifying your interests, they need to be specific, and you need to establish the legitimacy of those interests. By identifying your interests, you are putting the problem before the answer. Lastly, when talking about interests, you need to look forward, not backwards. Don't let past interactions with people cloud the current negotiation.

According to the authors, negotiators all too often leave "money" on the table. Unfortunately, having many options is not often valued. The authors mentioned four habits that inhibit inventing an abundance of options; premature judgment, searching for a single answer, the assumption of a fixed pie, and thinking that solving the problem is the other party's problem. However, there are several ways to fix these habits: First, separate inventing options from deciding on an option. Second, broaden your options. Third, look for mutual gain. And lastly, make the other party's decision easy by developing options that are appealing and require a yes or no answer.

The last focus point in Principled Negotiation is criteria. Trying to reconcile differences based on "will" has serious costs. The authors suggest using standards of fairness, efficiency, or scientific methods. They also suggest using past precedent. A solution may be less vulnerable to attack if it was previously successful. Additionally, people who use objective criteria tend to use time more efficiently. Criteria need to be independent of each side's will and should be legitimate and practical. Above all, it must be fair. The authors suggest three points to remember about criteria: frame each issue as a joint search for objective criteria; use reason and be open to reason as to which standards are most appropriate, and never yield to pressure, only to principle. A Principled Negotiation is open to reasonable persuasion on the merits.

The last three chapters of this book address how to deal with people who are more powerful than you (Chapter 6), how to deal with getting people to the table who may be reluctant to negotiate (Chapter 7), and how to deal with the dirty tricks people use in a negotiation (Chapter 8). While not reviewed here, these chapters are still very important to understanding the basics of negotiation.

Overall, Getting to Yes spells out how to achieve a better process when dealing with differences. It suggests Principled Negotiation will produce, over the long run, substantive outcomes as good or better than you are likely to obtain using any other negotiation strategy. And it should prove more efficient and less costly to human relationships. We have all used some of these focus points in our daily problem-solving activity. Hopefully, seeing them together here will enable you to practice using all of them the next time you sit down to negotiate.

John is an Instructional Systems Designer at the Air Force Negotiations Center (AFNC), Maxwell AFB, Alabama. John has over 10 years of experience in the training and education arena. John served as an instructor and Director of Curriculum at the Air Force Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy. He also assisted in the development of three Leadership Skills Courses and taught over 150 classes for the State of Alabama's Department of Commerce.

The Education of an Idealist: A Memoir

by Samantha Power

reviewed by Edward Salo, PhD, Associate Professor of History
Arkansas State University

It is common after a Presidential administration for high-level officials to write memoirs explaining their time in government and to justify their policies. The questions asked by scholars should be how much of these books are accurate, how much of the books are self-serving, and what can they tell us about the governmental system and leadership in general? If a President supports an administration, yet he follows another party, how much of the book's context is an attack on the current administration? In his book, *The Room Where it Happened*, former National Security Advisor John Bolton commented that he believed that high-level government officials are obligated to explain their actions while in government. I agree with him for many reasons, many of which are illustrated in Samantha Power's recent memoir.

In *The Education of an Idealist: A Memoir*, former ambassador to the United Nations under President Barack Obama, Samantha Power presents a memoir that not only illuminates the inner working of the Obama foreign policy apparatus but also addresses issues related to women and immigrants in modern-day America, which are just as engaging and important for today's leaders to examine. Along the way, Power tells the story of an "Idealist" who comes to

international relations with a desire to stop genocide. She does everything in her power not to lose sight of that and become jaded and cynical as she rises to the peaks of power as well as reminds the reader that diversity in the halls of power results in a stronger nation.

Power uses the autobiography to tell her story, which is interesting and compelling. Born in Ireland, she chronicles growing up in a house with an alcoholic father and how her mother emigrated to the US when Power was only nine. She then discusses growing up in the US and finally attending Yale. But it is her decision in 1993, to travel to the former Yugoslavia as a freelance war correspondent, that had the largest impact on her future path. Seeing the horrors of the war on the people of the nation, Power dedicated herself to the protection of human rights, which resulted in her first book, "*A Problem from Hell*": *America and the Age of Genocide*. It resulted in her becoming the director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy and connecting with a young politician, Barack Obama. She catalogs working with Obama as a Senator during the campaign and later in his administration. It is very interesting to see Obama portrayed as a "real person" while President, who sometimes wants to talk about people's real-life rather than policy. Power
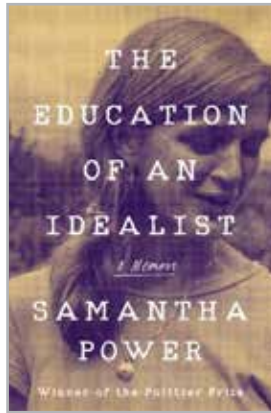
does not skip over her mistakes including, a flub in the campaign where she called Clinton a "monster," which resulted in exile from the campaign.

The large portion of the book dealing with her time as Ambassador to the United Nations is insightful. We get to see how an idealist works in the "real world" of diplomacy. Power suggests that it is through the personal relationships she developed with other foreign officials as the secret of her success, and of course, picking her battles. Also, Power discusses her personal life through the book, including her time at the UN, but not as the super-woman model that can do it all. No, we get to see a highly-skilled professional who, like most people must handle her personal and public lives.

This book succeeds in numerous ways. First, students of foreign policy will enjoy the insight into the Obama White House and how it dealt Post-Cold War challenges that have faced American Presidents since George HW Bush. This is especially true when examining the debate on intervention in Syria. Second, the book shows the evolution of an "idealist," but not away from her core values. However, to me, the book really shines as a tale of how the American Dream is still alive. We see the story of an immigrant who came to America, succeeded academically, fought for causes she believed in, and reached the top levels of foreign policy. A person that made mistakes and missteps but continued to fight for what she believed in.

While I think anyone involved in National Security matters should be required to read *A Problem From Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*. As it reminds us that humans are affected by international actions, *The Education of an Idealist: A Memoir* offers a different approach to Power's life while still showcasing why she remains an idealist.

The Education of an Idealist: A Memoir
New York, NY: Dey Street Books, 2019
592 pages. Estimated $15

Edward Salo, PhD is an associate professor of history at Arkansas State University. He also serves as the Associate Director of the Heritage Studies PhD Program. Before coming to A-State, Dr. Salo served 14 years as a consulting historian working on projects for the DoD across CONUS, Guam, Japan, Saipan, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Alaska, and Germany.

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Volume 3, Number 2 | May 2021 | ISSN 2643-4547
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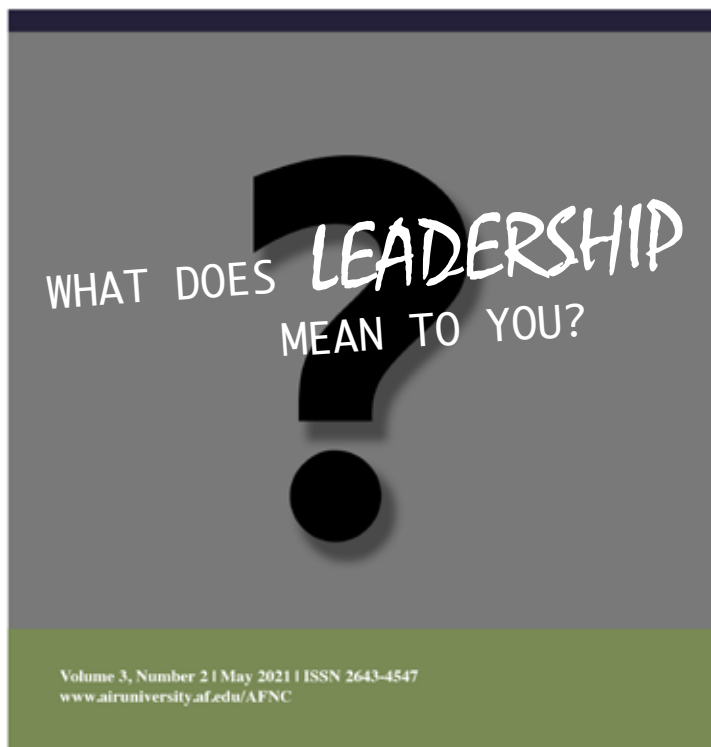
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