Cross-Cultural Competence for Special Operations Forces (SOF): Curriculum Design and Development

Presented by:

Mr. Clay Leishman, LREC Program Manager NAVSPECWARCOM

In Cooperation with:

361 Interactive & Diplomatic Language Services

Agenda
Cross-Cultural Competence for SOF

- Background

- Approach
  - Curriculum Design
  - Preparation and Research
  - Outcome and Objectives
  - Content and Activities
  - Pilot and Revisions

- Assessment and Evaluation

- Conclusions

- Questions

Background

Background
LREC Requirements

- 2009 SOCOM published LREC requirements defining how Operators need to be able to apply LREC competencies in SOF missions.

- 2010-2013 All SOCOM components conduct **L**RE**C** needs assessments

- 2013 SOCOM published SOF Operating Concept and Vision 20/20 which further emphasized the unique LREC needs of SOF

- 2016 SOCOM commissions Regional Capability Study as initial step in developing a SOF-specific competency model for L**RE**C

Background
LREC Operational Need

LREC operational needs as specified by ADM Olsen Memo (2009), the SOCOM Operating Concept, and Vision 20/20:

- "Ability to communicate directly with indigenous in our highest priority operating areas."

- "Improved counterpart relations."

- "Enhanced operational capability at the unit level resulting from a decreased dependence on interpretation/translation by non-SOF linguists."

- "Increased level of cultural sensitive/knowledge that contributes to situational awareness, safety and security."
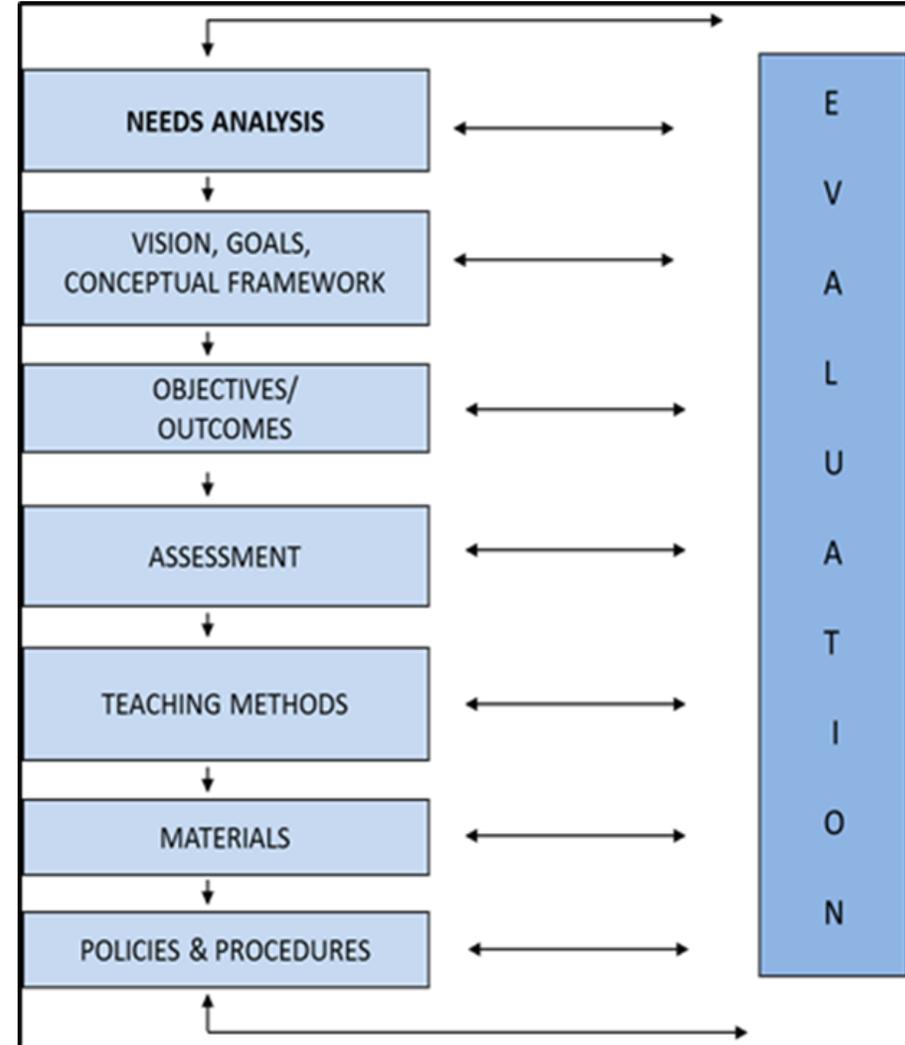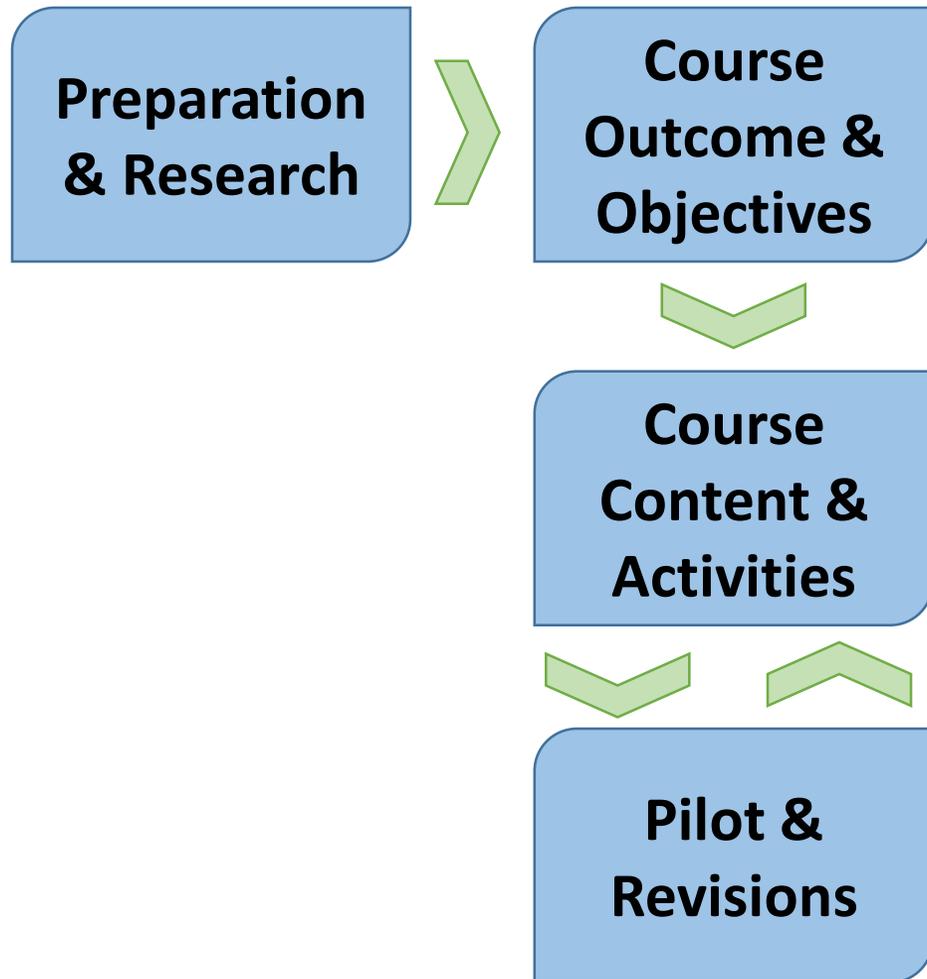
Background
LREC Project Goals

NSW project goal was to develop a culture-general, Cross-Cultural Competence (3C) course for Special Operations Forces (SOF) that is:

- Scientifically sound and research-based
- Operationally-focused and relevant
- Hands-on, interactive, and engaging

Approach

Approach
Curriculum Design

Approach
Responsibilities of Participants

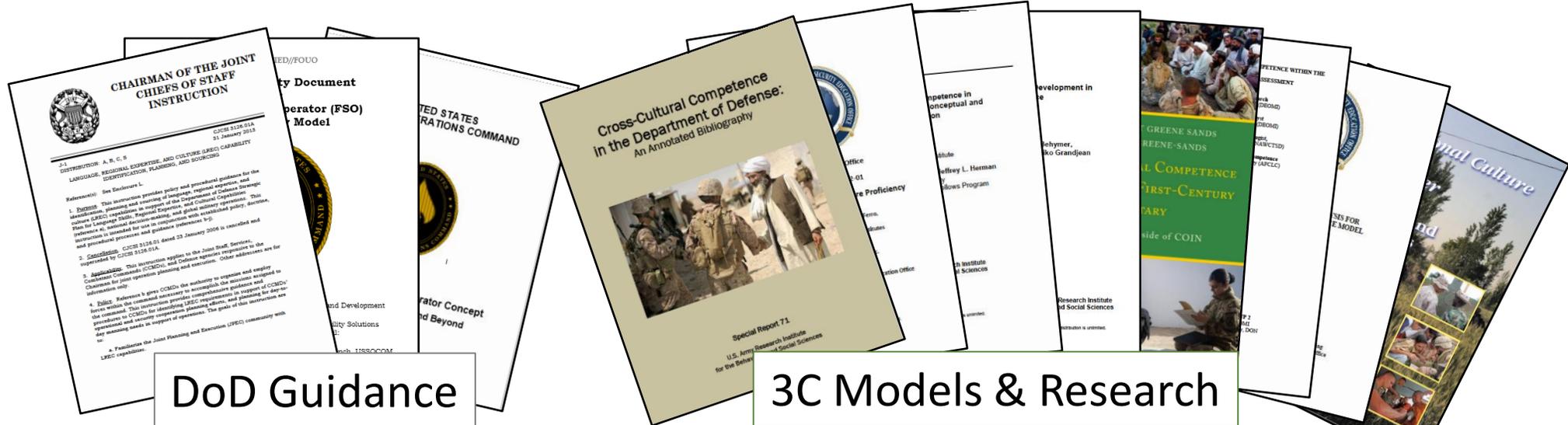| NSW	361	DLS
• Host Teams • Coordinate Interviews • Provide Content • QC	• Project Management • Assemble Core Team • Deliverables • QC	• Content Development • Materials Development • Curriculum Expertise • QC

Approach
Core Team
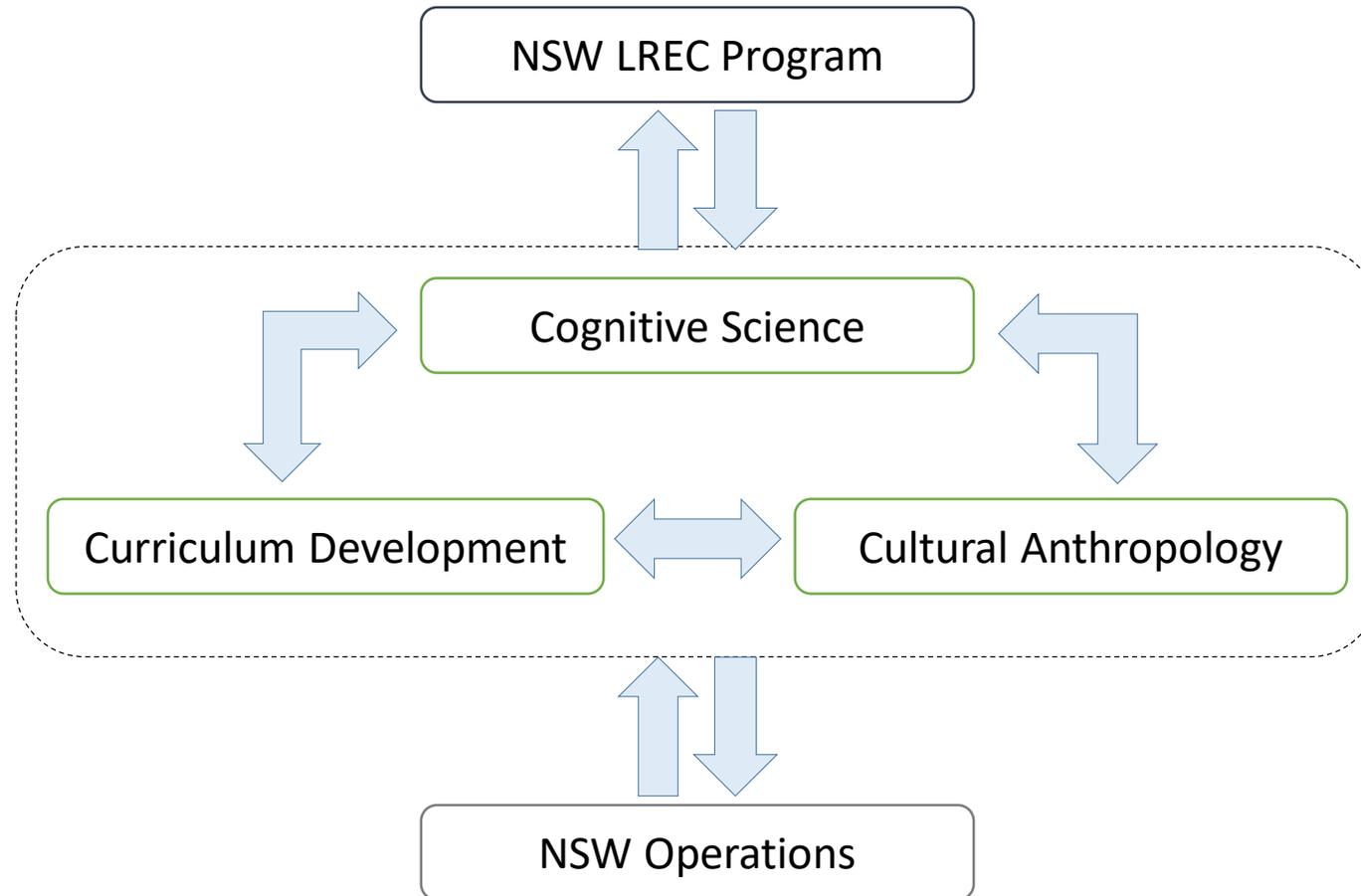
Approach
Preparation and Research

DoD Guidance

3C Models & Research
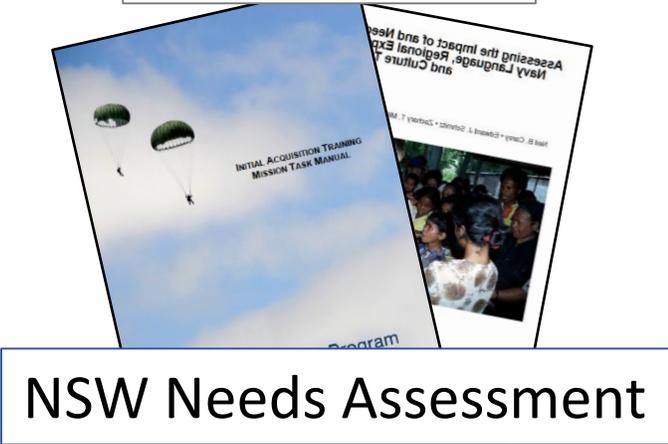
NSW Needs Assessment
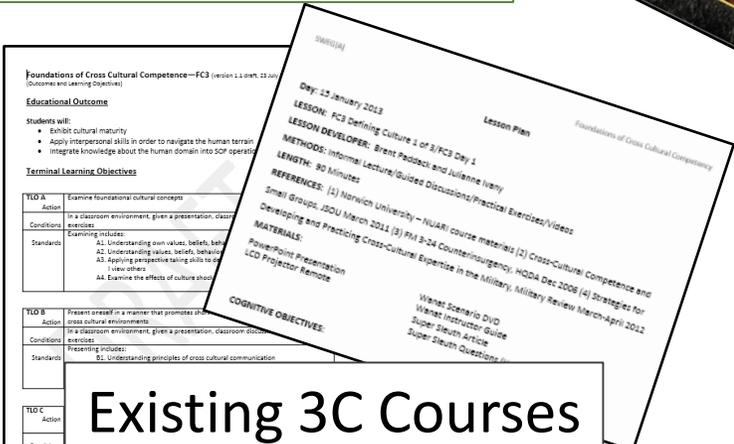
Existing 3C Courses

Approach
Outcomes and Objectives

Participants in the NSW 3C course will expand their capacity to perform standard NSW tasks in culturally challenging situations. Specifically, they will employ strategies and skills to better understand their own and others' perspectives, make sense of and navigate novel cultural situations, interact with and influence others, and reflect on their practice. By the completion of the course, they will possess the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for developing expertise in cross-cultural situations in order to achieve mission success.

Approach
Outcomes and Objectives

Category	Learning Goal
Understanding 3C	1. Understand the importance of cultur... operational success
	2. Understand how culture impacts one... cognition and behavior
Developing the Foundations for General 3C Skills	3. Make sense of and learn from novel...
	4. Think about the world from the pers... from diverse cultural backgrounds
	5. Build relationships with and influenc... diverse cultural backgrounds
Using General 3C Skills in Operational Environments	6. Use general 3C skills during the prep... NSW tasks to enhance mission succe...
	7. Use general 3C skills during the exec... enhance mission success
Reflecting on Practice	8. Reflect on one's own and team's cog... performance in cross-cultural situati...

Category 1 – Understanding 3C

Goal 1: **Understand the importance of culture and 3C for operational success.** As demonstrated by their increased ability to:

1.1 Explain what 3C is
1.2 Explain how 3C relates to self and to mission
1.3 Explain how 3C relates to doctrinal guidance
1.4 Discuss vignettes that illustrate how 3C positively or negatively impacts operational successes
1.5 Discuss second and third order effects of good and poor 3C in operational settings

Goal 2: **Understand how culture impacts one's and others' cognition and behavior.** As demonstrated by their increased ability to:

2.1 Explain the key aspects in which cultures differ
2.2 Identify core American and NSW SEAL/SWCC values, beliefs, behaviors, and norms (VBBN)
2.3 Compare one's own VBBN to the VBBN of individuals from other cultures
2.4 Explain how core properties and shared systems of culture offer a framework for developing an understanding of one's own and others' behavior in context
2.5 Identify ways in which cultural differences impact individual cognition and behavior
2.6 Reflect on own cultural biases

Category 2 – Developing the Foundations for General 3C Skills

Goal 3: **Make sense of and learn from novel cultural situations.** As demonstrated by their increased ability to:

3.1 Notice critical cues in novel cultural situations
3.2 Discuss cognitive strategies to make sense of ambiguous, unfamiliar situations
3.3 Discuss sensemaking traps and challenges
3.4 Apply cognitive strategies to make sense of ambiguous, unfamiliar situations

Approach
Outcomes and Objectives

Table 1

Goal	NSW 3C Learning Goal	Chairman Chiefs of St...
1	Understand the importance of culture and 3C for operational success	Not Explicit
2	Understand how culture impacts one's and others' cognition and behavior	Understand... Cultural Pe... Taking ("... compone...
3	Make sense of and learn from novel cultural situations	Understand... Cultural Ad... ("Gather... compone... Systems Th...
4	Think about the world from the point of view of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds	Cultural Per... Taking
5	Build relationships with and influence individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds	Cultural Ad... Cultural Per... Taking Building Str... Networks Strategic A... Cross-Cultu...
6	Use general 3C skills during preparation and planning for NSW tasks to increase mission success	Applies to a... competer... goals 1-5,... addresses... Interpreters

Table 2

Goal	NSW 3C Learning Goal	Wisecarver et al. (2012)	N...
1	Understand the importance of culture and 3C for operational success	Not Explicit	N... (b... et...
2	Understand how culture impacts one's and others' cognition and behavior	Understanding Culture Cultural Perspective Taking ("Awareness Component")	Se... Cu... Ta... Co...
3	Make sense of and learn from novel cultural situations	Understanding Culture Cultural Adaptability ("Gather and Interpret" component) Systems Thinking	Cu... Cu...
4	Think about the world from the point of view of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds	Cultural Perspective Taking	Cu... Ta...
5	Build relationships with and influence individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds	Cultural Adaptability Cultural Perspective Taking Building Strategic Networks Strategic Agility Cross-Cultural Influence	Se... In...
6	Use general 3C skills during preparation and planning for NSW tasks to increase mission success	Applies to all the competencies linked to goals 1-5, plus explicitly addresses Utilizing Interpreters	A... co...
7	Use general 3C skills during the execution of NSW tasks to increase mission success	Applies to all the competencies linked to goals 1-5, plus explicitly addresses Utilizing Interpreters	A... co...

Table 3

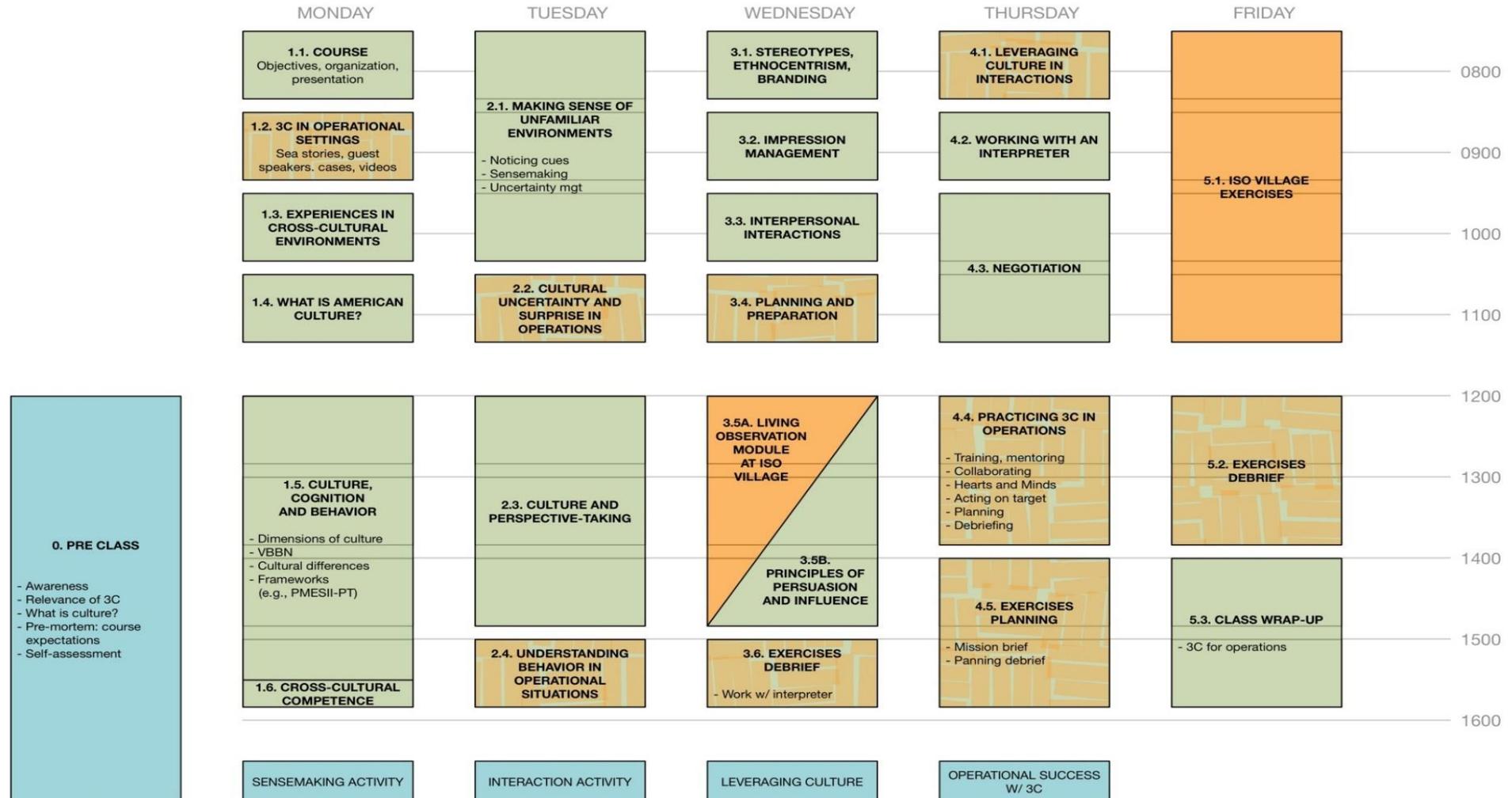| Goal	NSW 3C Learning Goals	Current NSWC 3C Course	USAJFKSWCS FC3 Course
1	Understand the importance of culture and 3C for operational success	Not explicit (**Know** the NSW operational definition of Intercultural Competence)	Not explicit
2	Understand how culture impacts one's and others' cognition and behavior	Comprehend how military operations may be impacted by 5 cultural domains	Not explicit
3	Make sense of and learn from novel cultural situations	Comprehend strategies to manage....potential cultural conflicts during a mission	Not explicit
4	Think about the world from the point of view of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds	Comprehend --the influence of religion in intercultural interactions; --the influence of gender in intercultural interactions	Examine foundational cultural concepts
5	Build relationships with and influence individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds	Comprehend the impact of verbal, non-verbal, & para-language communication	Present oneself in a manner that promotes short-term and long-term relationships in cross-cultural environments
6	Use general 3C skills during preparation and planning for NSW tasks to increase mission success		Conduct cross-cultural assessments of the human domain and examine the impact on the broader mission
7	Use general 3C skills during the execution of NSW tasks to increase mission success	Apply intercultural competence techniques in group discussions and...	

Approach
Content and Activities

Unpacked Objectives
- Students will know
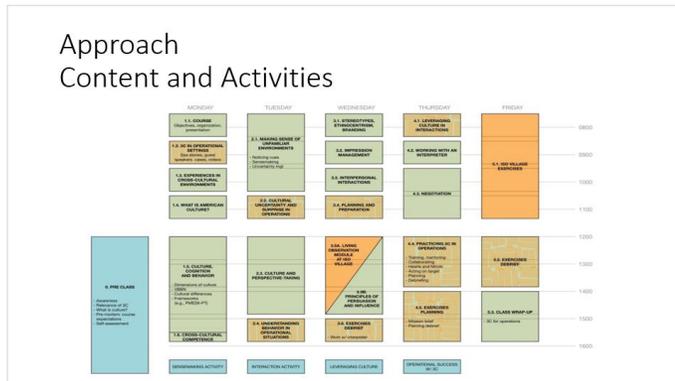- Students will understand
- Students will be able to

Goal 1: Understand the importance of culture and 3C for operational success	
Learning Objectives	**Unpacked**

1.1 Explain what 3C is	*The student will know:*
	• A working definition of 3C in operational environments to include:
	   o Effectiveness in cross-cultural environments
	   o Being mindful of second- and third-order effects
	
	The student will understand
	• What 3C is

1.2 Explain how 3C relates to self and to mission	*The student will understand:* • How 3C has come into play in his own life and experiences • The importance of 3C to the various NSW tasks and/or missions
1.3 Explain how 3C relates to doctrinal guidance	*The student will know:* • Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP) • Mission, Enemy, Terrain and Weather, Troops, Time Available, Civilian Considerations (METT-TC) • Operational Risk Management (ORM) • Politics, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure, Information, Physical, and Time (PMESII-PT) • Other Current Doctrinal Guidance (e.g., USSOCOM Future Operator Concept and Commander's Education and Training Guidance) *The student will understand:* • 3C is included in mission planning

Approach
Content and Activities

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	
	1.1. COURSE Objectives, organization, presentation		**3.1. STEREOTYPES, ETHNOCENTRISM, BRANDING**	**4.1. LEVERAGING CULTURE IN INTERACTIONS**		0800
	1.2. 3C IN OPERATIONAL SETTINGS Sea stories, guest speakers. cases, videos	**2.1. MAKING SENSE OF UNFAMILIAR ENVIRONMENTS** - Noticing cues - Sensemaking - Uncertainty mgt	**3.2. IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT**	**4.2. WORKING WITH AN INTERPRETER**	**5.1. ISO VILLAGE EXERCISES**	0900
	1.3. EXPERIENCES IN CROSS-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS		**3.3. INTERPERSONAL INTERACTIONS**	**4.3. NEGOTIATION**		1000
	1.4. WHAT IS AMERICAN CULTURE?	**2.2. CULTURAL UNCERTAINTY AND SURPRISE IN OPERATIONS**	**3.4. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**			1100
0. PRE CLASS - Awareness - Relevance of 3C - What is culture? - Pre-mortem: course expectations - Self-assessment	**1.5. CULTURE, COGNITION AND BEHAVIOR** - Dimensions of culture - VBBN - Cultural differences - Frameworks (e.g., PMESII-PT) **1.6. CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE**	**2.3. CULTURE AND PERSPECTIVE-TAKING** **2.4. UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOR IN OPERATIONAL SITUATIONS**	**3.5A. LIVING OBSERVATION MODULE AT ISO VILLAGE** **3.5B. PRINCIPLES OF PERSUASION AND INFLUENCE** **3.6. EXERCISES DEBRIEF** - Work w/ interpreter	**4.4. PRACTICING 3C IN OPERATIONS** - Training, mentoring - Collaborating - Hearts and Minds - Acting on target - Planning - Debriefing **4.5. EXERCISES PLANNING** - Mission brief - Panning debrief	**5.2. EXERCISES DEBRIEF** **5.3. CLASS WRAP-UP** - 3C for operations	1200 / 1300 / 1400 / 1500 / 1600

SENSEMAKING ACTIVITY	INTERACTION ACTIVITY	LEVERAGING CULTURE	OPERATIONAL SUCCESS W/ 3C

Approach
Content and Activities

Approach
Content and Activities

Interactive Group Activities
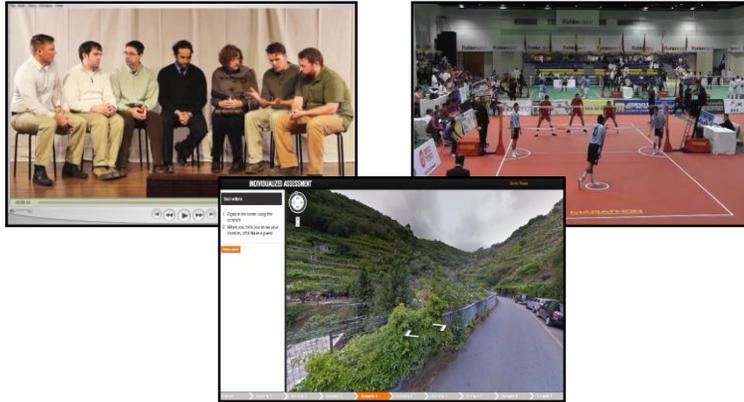
Training Village Scenarios

Videos + Discussion

Approach
Pilot and Revisions

Negotiation Learner Assessment Form

Rate each objective below with the following: *Met Standard (M) Approached Standard (A), Standard Not Met (–), N/A*

Day: Thursday   Friday   Facilitator _____   Learner _____

Planning	Created a plan for engagement	
Notes:	Set Team Roles for Negotiation	
	Set Objectives for Negotiation	
	Discussed Anticipated Events/Barriers	
	Incorporated Prior Experiences into Plan	

Meeting the Interpreter	Leveraged impression management	
Notes:	Introduced Self	
	Introduced Team	
	Applied basic communication skills	
	Asked Multiple Ice-Breaker Questions First	
	Asked or Tested Interpreter Language Skills	
	Asked for Intelligence on Upcoming Meeting	
	Asked about Cultural Elements	
	Prepped Interpreter on Role/Procedures	

Interaction with Village Elder/Government Official	Leveraged impression management	
Notes:	Introduced Self as Leader	
	Introduced Team as Appropriate	
	Positioned Interpreter and Self Appropriately Relative to Others	
	Appeared Confident and Friendly	
	Controlled Emotions/Used Humor Properly	
	Applied basic communication skills	
	Used Culture-Appropriate Eye Contact and Backchanneling	
	Used Appropriate Face and Body Language	
	Expressed Empathy	
	Understood and Accurately Repeated Back Opposing Position(s)	
	Applied appropriate rapport-building strategies	
	Asked Multiple Ice-Breaker Questions First	

ISO Village Learner Assessment Form

Day: Wednesday   Friday   Facilitator _____   Learner _____

Station: Elder's House   Café   Market   Hardware Store   Clothing Store   Household

Rate each objective below with the following: *Met Standard (M) Approached Standard (A), Standard Not Met (–), N/A* | Rating |

Meeting the Interpreter	Leveraged impression management	
Notes:	Introduced Self	
	Introduced Team	
	Applied basic communication skills	
	Asked or Tested Interpreter Language Skills	
	Asked Multiple Ice-Breaker Questions First	
	Asked for Intelligence on Upcoming Visit	
	Asked about Cultural Elements	
	Prepped Interpreter on Role/Procedures	

Interaction with Villager(s)	Leveraged impression management	
Notes:	Introduced Self as Leader	
	Introduced Team	
	Placed and Used Interpreter Properly	
	Appeared Confident and Friendly	
	Controlled Emotions/Used Humor Properly	
	Applied basic communication skills	
	Used Culture-appropriate eye contact and backchanneling	
	Used Appropriate Face and Body Language	
	Expressed Empathy	
	Gathered Intel without Directly Asking	
	Applied appropriate rapport-building strategies	
Behavior to share with the next station's Role Players:	Asked Multiple Ice-Breaker Questions First	
	Listened and Responded to Answers	
	Exited Gracefully at Appropriate Time	
	Applied principles of persuasion and influence	
	Convinced Villager to Act/Think Differently	
	Avoided Overpromising	

Debrief and Planning (After Meeting)	Considered alternative perspectives when interpreting behaviors	
Notes:	Asked Interpreter/Villagers for Feedback	
	Asked Team for Feedback	
	Listened to Feedback	

SQT Course Schedule

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	
0800	Experiences in Cross-Cultural Environments, Course Rules	Belief Systems Prep	PE 2: ISO Planning	HW Review: Op Cultural Model		
	Cmdr. Intro	Characteristics of Culture			PE 5: ISO Execution	0900
		Perspective Taking	PE 2: ISO Planning, Execution, Debrief	Embassy Brief		
1000	PE 1: ISO			Principles of Persuasion and Influence		
		Sensemaking		Negotiation Basics		
1100				PE 3: VE NEG Planning		
					PE 6: Cmdr Brief Planning & Exec.	
1200					PE 7: FINAL NEG Planning, Execution	
	Course Overview	Dimensions of Culture	Conversational Tea			
1300				PE 3: VE NEG Execution, Debrief		
	Characteristics of United States Culture	Indirect & Non-Verbal Communication	Belief Systems	PE 4: GOV'T NEG Planning, Execution, Debrief	Debrief and Wrap-Up	1400
		Communication Skills			Course Evaluation	
1500	Stereotypes & Impression Mngmnt	Working with an Interpreter		PE 5: Planning		
	Insurgency and COIN					
1600	HW #1 Islam Reading & Questions	HW #2 & #3 Operational Cultural Model & Country Comparison		HW #4 3C and ISO #5-7		

Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment and Evaluation
Student Assessment and Course Evaluation

ISO Village Learner Assessment Form

Day: Wednesday   Friday

Circle observables. Rate goals: (0) No competency

Positive & Constructive Feedback

Elder's House

Café

Clothing Store

Household

- rhythm, stress, volume, speed)
- Notices and uses words, phrases, and common expressions,
- Repeats and confirms important ideas
- Confirms understanding to ensure mutual understanding
- Shows appropriate interest
- Gives and receives compliments appropriately
- Builds trust in stressful situations
- Demonstrates respect or accommodates local customs
- Use cultural knowledge to make sense of others' motivations
- Influences decisions or perceptions to mission advantage
- Persuades locals to feel positive about US presence
- Deescalates conflict or tension
- Manages disagreement
- Motivates or persuades a person or group
- Manages expectations

Goal 6: Work effectively with interpreters to execute operational tasks. ☐

- Explain the purpose to the interpreter
- Preps interpreter on role/procedures
- Builds rapport with interpreter
- Identifies biases of interpreter (ethnocentrism, political affiliation, personal bias, religious beliefs, socio-economic status, insider/outsider view)
- Asks interpreter about culture elements
- Places interpreter correctly
- Talks directly to the LN
- Maintains control
- Identifies and/or leverages competing motives
- Uses interpreter to gather information

No Competency 0–3	Memorized 5–7	Emerging 8–11	Developing 12–15	Sustained 16	Total /16

Assessment and Evaluation
Student Assessment and Course Evaluation

ISO Village Learner Assessment Form

Day: Wednesday   Friday

Station: Elder's House   Café

✓ each criteria the group met. Then, rate each category with

Meeting the Interpreter

Positive

Interaction with Villager(s)

Positive

Behavior to share with the next station's Role Players:

Debrief and Planning(After Meeting)

Positive   Negative

☐ Used Culture-appropriate eye contact and backchanneling	
☐ Used Appropriate Face and Body Language	
☐ Expressed Empathy	
☐ Gathered Intel without Directly Asking	
Applied appropriate rapport-building strategies	☐
☐ Asked Multiple Ice-Breaker Questions First	
☐ Listened and Responded to Answers	
☐ Exited Gracefully at Appropriate Time	
Applied principles of persuasion and influence	☐
☐ Appeared to Convince Villager to Act/Think Differently	
☐ Avoided Overpromising	
Considered alternative perspectives when interpreting behaviors	☐
☐ Asked Interpreter/Villagers for Feedback	
☐ Asked Team for Feedback	
☐ Listened to Feedback	
Discussed adaptations made and/or flexible thinking	☐
Discussed sensemaking strategies used or needed	☐
Discussed overall strengths and weaknesses of own and team's performance	☐
Discussed ways in which cognition and performance might be improved in the future	☐
Created a plan for engagement at next station	☐

Conclusions

Conclusions
Future Research and Next Steps

NSW LREC

Colombia Regional Expertise and Culture Course

The Naval Special Warfare Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (NSW LREC) Program has partnered with 361 Interactive to deliver an innovative, 5-day Regional Expertise and Culture course on Colombia. The course provides actionable knowledge and cognitive skills for NSW Operators to succeed in their missions in Colombia. The Colombia Regional Expertise and Culture curriculum targets both novice and experienced NSW Operators.

Key Curriculum Attributes
- ✓ Provides cognitively authentic experiences while promoting reflection on learning
- ✓ Provides a targeted overview of events influencing today's environment in Colombia
- ✓ Enables better understanding of Colombian nationals and their culture
- ✓ Provides extensive opportunities to learn from and practice interacting with Colombian nationals
- ✓ Promotes and facilitates further research into current-events and cultural issues in the region

References

References
Learner Syllabus

Foreign Language Program

NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND

Negotiation

Practical Guide to Negotiating in the Military (2nd Edition) – culture.af.mil/NCE/PDF/pracguide2011.pdf

Cultural Issues and Communication in Crisis Negotiation by E. Giebels and P. J. Taylor; Chapter in The Psychology of Crisis Intervention of Law Enforcement Officers by M. St. Yves, and P. Collins (Eds.) – www.carswell.com/product-detail/the-psychology-of-crisis-intervention-for-law-enforcement-officers/

The Psychology of Persuasion by Robert B. Cialdini – www.amazon.com/gp/product/006124189X

Cross-Cultural Competence and Sociocultural Issues in Operational Settings

Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications by Barak A. Salmoni and Paula Holmes-Eber – www.amazon.com/gp/product/1907521844

Culture, Regional Expertise, and Language (CREL) Focused Issue of the Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin – www.cultureready.org/sites/default/files/publications/MIPB%20Jul_Sep14%20Online%20Final.pdf

The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World by Rupert Smith – www.amazon.com/gp/product/0307278115

Kill or Capture by Matthew Alexander – www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00A17O2O2

"Left of Bang": The Value of Sociocultural Analysis in Today's Environment by Michael T. Flynn, James Sisco, and David C. Ellis – cco.dodlive.mil/files/2014/02/prism12-21_flynn-sisco-ellis.pdf

Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan by Michael T. Flynn, Matt Pottinger, and Paul D. Batchelor – www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/AfghanIntel_Flynn_Jan2010_code507_voices.pdf

INSTRUCTORS &

Course Instruct