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Dimensions of Training for Overseas Assignment

by

Robert J. Foster

HumRRO Division No. 7 (Language and Area Training)

June 1969

Prepared for:

Office, Chief of
Research and Development
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1. This report discusses some of the relevant dimensions of overseas work in a conceptual framework for guiding future planning and design of training programs to prepare personnel for working in foreign cultures.

2. The analysis is based on existing research and literature about the nature of overseas work and the learning process. The major theme is that Americans working in overseas assignments are constantly confronted with situations for which their own experience of only their own culture has not prepared them. While the problems that arise are often attributed by personnel to obvious cultural differences in language and customs, sources of difficulty that are more likely, but that tend to be overlooked, are the mental habits, attitudes, and assumptions acquired through experience in one's own social and cultural milieu. The report describes methods and goals that can be used in overseas training programs to increase trainees' insight and awareness regarding how to adapt to problems of cultural differences.

3. The report will be of interest to all those concerned with research and training for work in foreign cultures.

FOR THE CHIEF OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT:

Joseph A. Davis

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Technical Report 69-11
Work Unit AREA
Sub-Unit IV

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FOREWORD

The overall objective of the Human Resources Research Office Work Unit AREA is to increase the effectiveness of area training programs by broadening the concept of area training and by developing improved instructional techniques.

In AREA I (Survey of Selected Concepts and Techniques for Area Training) materials relevant to the conduct of area training were analyzed and the following reports prepared: Cross-Cultural Problems of U.S. Army Personnel in Laos and Their Implications for Area Training, Research Memorandum by Alfred J. Kraemer and Edward C. Stewart, September 1964 (For Official Use Only); Examples of Cross-Cultural Problems Encountered by Americans Working Overseas: An Instructor's Handbook, by Robert J. Foster, May 1965; An Analysis of Human Relations Training and Its Implications for Overseas Performance, Technical Report 66-15, by Robert J. Foster and Jack Danielian, August 1966; and Some Resources for Area Training, Technical Report 67-11, by Robert J. Foster and David T. O'Nan, September 1967.

In AREA II (Studies of Simulation Techniques for Training Military Advisors) certain aspects of the overseas working situation were simulated to demonstrate how American cultural assumptions and values manifest themselves in the behavior of advisors, causing difficulties in communication with host-country personnel. Reports of the research in Sub-Unit II are as follows: "The Simulation of Cross-Cultural Communication," by Edward C. Stewart, paper for symposium of the German Development Institute, Berlin, Germany, March 1966, issued as HumRRO Professional Paper 50-67, December 1967; "New Perspectives in Training and Assessment of Overseas Personnel," by Jack Danielian and Edward C. Stewart, paper for First Counterinsurgency Research and Development Symposium, Institute for Defense Analyses, Arlington, Va., June 1966, issued as HumRRO Professional Paper 6-67, February 1967; "The Simulation of Cultural Differences," by Edward C. Stewart, J. Communication, vol. XVI, no. 4, December 1966, issued as HumRRO Professional Paper 19-67, April 1967; "Live Simulation of Affect-Laden Cultural Cognitions," by Jack Danielian, J. Conflict Resolution, vol. XI, no. 3, September 1967, issued as HumRRO Professional Paper 49-67, November 1967; and Simulating Intercultural Communication Through Role-Playing, Technical Report 69-7, by Edward C. Stewart, Jack Danielian, and Robert J. Foster, May 1969.

AREA III (Development of Behavioral Criteria) was discontinued after limited activity and some aspects were incorporated in Work Unit COPE.

The present report is the product of AREA IV (Guidelines for Design of Area Training Programs). In this Sub-Unit, the knowledge and insight acquired during research performed under Work Units CIVIC and MAP and in earlier phases of AREA are used as a basis for a conceptualization of area training that could guide the development of programs of instruction and lesson plans.

Additional reports under Work Unit AREA were: "American Advisors Overseas," by Edward C. Stewart, Military Review, vol. XLV, no. 2, February 1965; "Simulation Exercises in Area Training," by Edward C. Stewart, paper for 11th Annual Army Factors Research and Development Conference,

October 1965, issued as HumRRO Professional Paper 39-67, September 1967; "An Approach to Cultural Self-Awareness," by Edward C. Stewart and John B. Pryle, paper for American Psychological Association Convention, September 1966, issued as HumRRO Professional Paper 14-66, December 1966; and "The Need for Innovative Approaches for Training in Cross-Cultural Interaction," by Arthur J. Hoehn, paper for American Psychological Association Convention, September 1967, issued as HumRRO Professional Paper 9-68, March 1968.

Research for Work Unit AREA was conducted at HumRRO Division No. 7 (Language and Area Training), Alexandria, Virginia. The Director of Research for the Division is Dr. Arthur J. Hoehn.

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Meredith P. Crawford
Director
Human Resources Research Office

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Problem

There is a need for a systematic overview of the training goals that guide the preparation of personnel for overseas assignments. Such training has, for the most part, been modeled after traditional academic education, even though studies in recent years have emphasized the special interpersonal and intercultural problems involved in working in overseas environments that are so different from situations in the past experience of the individual. Nevertheless, training models typically continue to be organized around language training and teaching *about* history, culture, geography, and so forth.

The objective of this segment of Work Unit AREA was to bring together some of the relevant dimensions of overseas work into a conceptual framework for guiding future planning and design of area training.

Approach

The analysis is based on research literature about the nature of overseas work and about the learning process. The presentation is, however, in the form of interpretive conceptualization of the most relevant dimensions, rather than a survey of the literature per se. The factors chosen for delineation are those that tend to be fairly prevalent, are unique to overseas work, and have a significant effect on performance overseas.

The focus of this report is on Americans in government work, serving in technical advisory positions in developing nations. It offers a systematic overall perspective of the dimensions of preparing Americans for such work overseas, together with some suggestions for training.

Summary of Analysis

Americans working in overseas assignments are constantly confronted with situations for which their own unicultural experience has not prepared them. Obvious cultural differences in language and customs are often considered to be the source of these problems; sources of difficulty that are more likely, but tend to be overlooked, are mental habits, attitudes, and assumptions acquired through experience in an individual's own social and cultural milieu.

The overseas job is characterized by the following underlying constants that form the work context toward which training should be directed:

(1) Differences in cultural values and assumptions. As noted above, this is one of the most pervasive and apparently critical aspects of working overseas. The most significant differences are the subtle attitudes, values, assumptions, and styles of thinking that become part of every person as he grows up in his social environment. Since they are so much a part of him, and are shared with most other people with whom he interacts, he has little reason to be conscious of how much they influence his behavior.

(2) Political overtones. The American overseas unavoidably represents not only himself but his country as well. Internal politics of the host country also will be a significant factor in how well the American can accomplish his goals.

(3) Interorganization conflict. A related problem is likely to lie *within* the American establishment, in the form of disagreement over responsibilities, problems of communication, and variants in interpretation.

(4) Difference in language.

(5) Technological differences.

(6) Differences in physical environment.

(7) The unprogramed nature of the work. It is inherently difficult, and perhaps impossible, to specify the work demands in most overseas assignments in any clear, systematic way. This is true for objectives, duties, and determination of what constitutes effective behavior or adequate problem solution.

(8) Ambiguity. Overseas, more than at home, the American is less sure of the meaning of another person's behavior, the appropriateness of his own behavior, and the measure of success in his work.

Training objectives can be considered in two different ways: kind of learning and content areas:

(1) Kinds of learning include fact acquisition, intellectual understanding, awareness-sensitivity, motivation, skill development, and affective predisposition.

(2) Content areas seem to fall into two somewhat different, although overlapping, types:

(a) Fairly identifiable topics, mostly of the "knowledge *about*" type. These include technical knowledge and skill, language proficiency, effective use of an interpreter, organizational orientation, area knowledge, area information relevant to personal concerns, knowledge of American foreign policy and institutions, and health and medical knowledge.

(b) Areas that are more interdependent, and tend to deal with training objectives in terms of "how-to" capabilities. These include mission and work role identity, organizational and human relations effectiveness, political effectiveness, intra-personal adjustment, specific psychological dynamics, and intercultural effectiveness.

Implications

Effective training is typified by clarity of goals and well-articulated training models. It is hoped that the analytical framework presented in this report will serve as a stimulus, to help those responsible for training personnel for overseas work to develop a more viable perspective of what their particular training should be trying to achieve.

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Dimensions of Training for Overseas Assignment

INTRODUCTION

What should go into the training of Americans for overseas assignments? Traditionally, such training has been thought of in terms of language, knowledge about the country in question, and, usually, an orientation to the formal administrative and procedural characteristics of the parent organization. Except for familiarization with the organization, the content has been structured according to the traditional academic categories used in our educational system—language, the arts, and so forth. Another possible approach is to look at the overseas situation, the trainee, and his mission and let the structure and content of training emerge from this analysis.

In this report, an attempt will be made to present an overview of the overseas situation and the nature of training objectives, in terms of kind or level of learning and the content areas of training. It represents an interpretative synthesis of what has already been written rather than an empirical study or a survey of research; the assumption is made that the reader is already familiar with most of the existing literature on the American overseas.[1]

The focus will be upon Americans in government service, in technical-advisory positions in developing nations. Observations and comments will be less directly relevant, although possibly useful, for other types of jobs or to more developed nations. The objective is to offer a fairly systematic overall perspective of the dimensions of preparing Americans for work overseas, together with occasional suggestions for training.

In many ways this report is only an outline, or informal checklist, of relevant points; the intent is to provide conceptual categories and a framework encompassing the major considerations in the design of training for overseas assignments. Conceptual categories that exist in a person's mind influence the manner and ability with which he thinks about any phenomenon and, consequently, the way he plans, organizes, and implements. A conceptual framework could be of help in synthesizing what is known in the area of overseas training and be useful as a frame of reference for the training executive and his staff in the planning and implementation of training programs.

THE OVERSEAS JOB

Working overseas in one of the developing nations may involve many different types of jobs that are directed toward varied missions in countries which may be very different from one another. From this perspective it is not feasible to give a general characterization of "the overseas situation" or "the overseas job." Each position or task differs in its demands from other positions or

[1]Previous HumRRO publications on this topic under Work Unit AREA are listed in the Foreword; publications under Work Units CIVIC and MAP are also relevant. These publications, in turn, provide a wide variety of references to the general literature on work of Americans overseas.

tasks, and the "same" position or task may easily vary from one location to another in order to meet local conditions.

While the jobs do vary tremendously (making it desirable for training to vary) it might be argued from another perspective that working overseas involves the same functions and personal abilities as corresponding jobs in the United States. Both overseas and stateside jobs involve such work functions as communicating, planning, coordinating, and influencing, and both require such personal qualities as technical competence, intelligence, perseverance, and integrity. Jobs will, of course, vary in the extent to which each of these functions is important in the particular assignment.

While both of these perspectives contain elements of truth, neither provides an adequate basis for the planning of training for overseas assignments. The first, which focuses on the immense variability among overseas situations and jobs, suggests that training for overseas is a waste of time unless it is entirely individualized. The second, by asserting that the demands of stateside and overseas assignments are basically identical, implies that the only preparatory training needed is of the kind that would be required in moving from one job to another within the United States.[1]

The proposition on which this report is based is that, despite the apparent variability in the more obvious surface features of overseas work situations, there are important underlying constancies, and that on some of these underlying common features, overseas assignments tend to be quite different from stateside assignments. It is the view of the writer that the design of training for overseas should start with identification of those underlying features of overseas assignments that (a) are unique to overseas work, (b) are fairly prevalent, and (c) seem to have a significant effect on performance.

Researchers who have studied performance situations overseas have identified a number of features that are believed to meet these criteria. Since various observers cite common themes, although with different emphases, it seems reasonable that the overseas situation can be characterized with a fair degree of accuracy and generalization. The following summary, while not including all aspects noted by others, is believed to cover the most relevant and relatively unique dimensions of the work situation for most overseas personnel, especially those involved in technical assistance in the developing nations.

DIFFERENCES IN CULTURAL VALUES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Perhaps one of the most emphasized, pervasive, and apparently critical aspects of working overseas is the contrast between the cultural values and expectations of Americans and those of the indigenous people, manifested at both the organizational and the interpersonal levels. The most significant differences are not customs or the more overt characteristics such as dress, forms of greeting, or food, since these are generally readily visible and quickly learned,

[1]Indeed, by and large, the current approach of the military and other government organizations toward working overseas tends to reflect this latter perspective. Personnel selected for overseas assignments tend to be those with records of satisfactory technical and personal performance in the United States. Surveys of the problem of selection for overseas personnel often conclude that, by and large, the same personal qualities that are desired in stateside positions are needed overseas. Training needs are typically not recognized or, when they are, are limited to procedural and administrative aspects of the particular organization overseas, language, and country-study type of information.

and since adherence may not be expected of foreigners. Far more significant are the more subtle and commonly shared attitudes, values, assumptions, and styles of thinking that become part of every person as he grows up in his social environment. Because he shares these ways of thinking and feeling with most other people with whom he interacts, he unthinkingly regards them as natural, right, and logical. Because they are so much a part of him, he has little reason to question them or to be conscious of how much they determine his behavior.

There are few aspects of the American's work overseas that are not affected by the intercultural dimension. Its potential impact on communications and interpersonal relationships is apparent, but it is also indirectly relevant to factors such as the effectiveness with which technical skills are applied and the appropriateness of specific or overall American policy. Indirectly, such things as the typical absence of indigenous manpower resources (management talent, trained technicians, literacy, etc., that the American is often dependent upon to achieve his mission) also reflect cultural factors.

POLITICAL OVERTONES

To one degree or another there is a political aspect to overseas work since (a) the American unavoidably represents not only himself, but his country as well, and (b) internal politics, whether at the national or the local level, will be a significant factor in how effectively most Americans accomplish their goals. It is necessary to be aware of the ways in which planned and implemented changes relate to the internal affairs of the country, whether at the more obvious level of encouraging the creation of a government agency or at the less apparent level of straightforward technical efforts that may have indirect and unintended effects. Cleveland et al. (1), in particular, have aptly described the prevalence of the political aspect of overseas work and the importance of political awareness and skill both in power politics and in consequences of everyday behavior.

Political involvement, and the consequent need for political sensitivity and skill, varies with the role of the person working overseas. High-ranking officials and local community development workers play highly political roles, in contrast to the "goodwill ambassador," whose political role is modest.

Regardless of level, the complexity and significance of the political dimension is not lessened by the fact that the United States is repeatedly in a donor, rather than a recipient role.

INTERORGANIZATION CONFLICT

Another political aspect of working overseas involves disagreement over responsibilities, and problems of communication, within the American establishment, both horizontally and vertically. Much of this kind of disharmony reflects honest differences in perspective that result from mission interpretation and subcultural differences that are not unlike the "honest" misunderstandings between American and foreign nationals caused by their different values and assumptions.

The extent of these difficulties will vary considerably from country to country and, in general, may be no greater than would be found within the bureaucratic structure in the United States. However, their significance is typically increased by the international context in which they take place and the distance between field operations and source of policy. The complexity of

the latter is further compounded by the culture-related factors that may not be entirely familiar to upper-echelon administrators back in Washington. This generalization probably holds true not only for the Washington-field relationship, but also for within-country interaction between capital city and field.

While reference has been made only to government operations, the same problems appear in the private sector, both internally and between government and private groups. The intra- and interagency strife is likely to be particularly disconcerting to technical-assistance personnel with little previous exposure to administrative politics.

DIFFERENCE IN LANGUAGE

One of the more obvious characteristics of overseas work is the need for facility in another language. In addition to the obvious contribution to communication, secondary interpersonal benefits have been observed because of the favorable perception created by the American's demonstrated interest and effort in using the national language. The degree to which fluency is critical, of course, varies with the American's mission and the extent to which English is spoken in the subculture in which he must communicate.

TECHNOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

Part of the reality of living overseas is the limited extent of technological advance compared to that on the American scene. This has several implications for training. One is that the job often does not demand full use of the American's technical sophistication (although the politics of the situation may require him to have credentials that merit adequate prestige in the eyes of the host national). For example, an engineer may never be required to use his most advanced training, but may need to know how to operate or construct equipment common in his father's day, but no longer part of American technology.

Second, technical skills and educated manpower that the American automatically assumes to be available in the United States, are likely to be scarce overseas.

Third, factors of the environment related to physical comfort and well-being—the dependability of electricity, sanitation, availability of telephones, and so forth—are also extensively mentioned as significant aspects of the overseas scene. There seems some reason to question, however, whether the sizable frustrations associated with these factors derive directly from them or represent a focus for frustrations stemming primarily from other sources.

DIFFERENCES IN PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

While they are perhaps relatively unimportant in the overall picture, differences in physical environment can be worthy of some training time. They can be significant factors in the health and well-being of the advisor; they can also be important considerations in decisions regarding the feasibility and desirability of particular projects and ways in which selected projects can or should be conducted. Avoidance of illness and maintenance of health require more time and attention than is generally the case in the States, and special knowledge and skills or techniques are likely to be required. In advisory efforts involving selection or implementation of work projects, knowledge of available

natural resources and ways in which they can be utilized can be crucial. Some of the differences in physical environment that may be important are those relating to climatic conditions and weather phenomena, topography, plant and animal life, and such natural resources as soil, minerals, and water.

UNPROGRAMED NATURE OF THE WORK

Perhaps the most critical aspect of working overseas is the inherent difficulty—perhaps even impossibility—of specifying the work demands. Objectives, duties, effective behaviors, adequacy of problem solutions, and so forth are difficult to spell out in any clear, systematic way. In part, this reflects the recency of extensive American experience overseas and the relative absence of systemic study of specific job functions. However, the unprogramed nature of the work would seem to be largely inherent in the roles of advisor and change agent that, to a large degree, typify overseas positions.

To some degree the overseas picture is similar to the unprogramed nature of management positions in the United States. The ingredients of the manager's job and what constitutes effective behavior remain elusive even though much of value has been learned in the study of management. However, the significance of the absence of established procedures is accentuated overseas by several considerations: (a) Goals are less clear and less agreed upon because experience has not been accumulated and because political considerations are involved; (b) cultural differences alter the meaning of feedback and create a need for new criteria of success; (c) the American is an outsider rather than a member of the organization with fairly clear-cut authority and responsibilities.

Most of all, Americans have had little experience or formal training to prepare them for the consultative institution-changing type of role that is often the core of overseas work. The "rules" learned in one's previous training and experience are suddenly altered in the area of people-related activities, an area of sufficient complexity that contradictory "rules" are often seemingly valid even in the familiar stateside environment.

As an advisor, in the limited sense of providing technical know-how, the American is confronted with new and unfamiliar situations for which traditional (American) solutions are not always appropriate. More important, he typically finds his technical know-how of limited value without changes in the organizations and attitudes of the people he is assisting. Recognizing this limitation to the advisor role, many observers have characterized the primary role of the person working overseas as that of an "institution builder" or a social change agent. Rather than only imparting knowledge or performing a task oneself, this role is one of bringing about—through foreign nationals—fundamental attitudinal, legal, and organizational changes that will insure the appropriate and continued use of the more tangible innovations.

The unspecifiable and unprogramed nature of overseas work, combined with the political and cultural complications, suggests an associated characteristic: Achieving one's objectives is typically more difficult than anticipated or than it seemingly ought to be. This difference between expectation and experience is one of the chief contributors to the discouragement and frustration that have been reported. It has led many observers to single out motivational factors such as "belief in mission" as being a far more significant personal attribute in success overseas than within the United States.

AMBIGUITY

The newness of the work and cultural milieu creates another dimension of overseas work that arises from the other dimensions that have been discussed: ambiguity. Overseas, more than at home, the American is necessarily less sure of the meaning of another person's behavior, the appropriateness of his own behavior, and the measure of success in his work.

For example, the person working overseas is constantly assessing whether a foreign national's behavior can be attributed primarily to cultural, political, or personality factors—a critical distinction because a different response is likely to be appropriate in each instance. If behavior is due to internalized cultural differences, a mutual understanding of the honest difference in underlying perspective may yield a resolution; if political, the game is one of manipulation or obedience to one's own organization rather than "honest" differences; if due to the idiosyncrasies of the individual (rather than differences that are culturally shared), the situation obviously is of another order. These distinctions are made within one's own culture with a reasonable degree of success, often unconsciously, but the cues that worked in the United States are not likely to be appropriate in the new culture.

Ambiguity is also inherent in work demands, already touched upon, that are not interpersonal in nature. For example, the American's task is one of social change yet, paradoxically, attainment of stability and order are typically key concepts; the objectives of the American and his counterpart are likely to be different—or at least perceived differently—because of the differences in their job responsibilities and situational pressures; the organizational pressure is to demonstrate accomplishment but the stated goals are to "help others help themselves," build institutions, or similar goals in which the payoff is diffuse and distant; the pictures from field and from headquarters diverge as to what reality is, and how it should be dealt with. Ambiguity in a work context is not unknown in the American scene but it appears to be an especially significant dimension of overseas life. One researcher went so far as to colorfully title his analysis of the experience of technical advisors with the International Cooperation Administration as "Assignment to Ambiguity" (Byrnes, 2).

OBJECTIVES OF TRAINING

From what has been described of the "overseas situation," it is apparent there are many new aspects for which training is desirable. One might also infer that the traditional form of training—teaching knowledge about something—is unlikely, alone, to bring about the kind of learning that is needed. The "natural" perspectives, attitudes, and habits—many of them outside of awareness—that served an individual so well in his own cultural milieu are frequently no longer appropriate overseas. Working overseas requires that the individual suspend his habitual perceptions and learn anew in the new environment. This is true not only with respect to the national cultural differences but is equally significant for the values, assumptions, and habits that are derived from an individual's necessarily narrow professional, technical, and administrative experience.

People typically deal with new situations in terms of concepts and attitudes developed, often unconsciously, throughout their lives, regarding them as the natural and normal ways of thinking and feeling. For example, while some of the American's ineptness in the change-agent role is due to an absence of

experience and know-how, it can also be seen as a consequence of previously acquired assumptions that requisite skills, institutions, and materials are readily available (as they usually are in the United States), or as a consequence of a self-image that a scientist, for example, should be a scientist or technical advisor, not a politically attuned change agent.

Training is largely an art guided, it is hoped, by an understanding of the learning process and a clear conceptualization of training objectives. Such objectives may be examined from a "content" or from a "kind of learning" perspective. While new knowledge is an important aspect of training, the core training task in preparing people for overseas assignments is primarily one of unlearning existing attitudes, creating greater awareness, and developing greater ability in "learning how to learn."

By analogy, the objective is more to learn how to read a map than to acquire knowledge from the map itself. The focus in the former is upon process, in the latter, upon content. One can think about the goals of training in terms of content of what is to be learned or in terms of the kind or "level" of learning that is to be achieved.[1] Focusing on the kinds of learning is more apt to cause one to think in terms of the learning process itself and to emphasize the how rather than the what, although both, of course, are integrally interwoven in the actual learning process.

OBJECTIVES IN TERMS OF KIND OF LEARNING

If, for the moment, we ignore the content of what is to be learned, training objectives can be thought of in terms of kinds or "levels" of learning necessary for effective overseas performance. These can be differentiated as follows: fact acquisition, intellectual understanding, awareness-sensitivity, motivation-commitment, skill development, and affective predisposition.

Fact Acquisition

This requires little explanation. It is important to point out, in the interest of counterbalancing the emphasis given to other kinds of learning, that fact acquisition is an adequate and complete kind of training goal for some purposes. A foreign national may be very favorably impressed, for example, that an American knows the names of national heroes, the characteristics of a city, or a date of historical importance. Also facts or assumed facts are the basis of attitudinal components and are obviously a necessary element in the emotional aspect of learning.

Intellectual Understanding

This is the integration of information into "theory" that provides the explicit rules-of-thumb or principles by which to interpret events. When we are dealing with informational content, the training objective usually can be best viewed as achieving a "background" or an "appreciation" of events with the anticipation

[1]Goals also need to be stated in terms of the *degree* or *extent* of learning for each "level" or kind of learning—in other words, how well and in how much detail something is learned. Note that "level," as used here, does not refer to degree of learning but is used to convey the notion of depth along an emotional-intellectual dimension. A correlation may exist between "level" and "degree" but they should not be confused.

they will be of possible utility in a variety of situations;[1] liberal arts are good examples. When the content is about processes, training objectives are likely to be focused on acquiring conceptual tools such as laws, principles, and so forth; scientific laws of physical phenomena represent the best illustration but principles of management, economic development, or social change also fall into this category.

One might also include under intellectual understanding goals that are frequently a by-product of learning, such as increasing analytical capabilities, developing more effective problem solving approaches, and so forth. These have been referred to as meta-goals. Since they can not be as concretely specified, and represent an acquired style rather than acquired knowledge (in the usual sense of the word), they tend to overlap with the next category.

Awareness-Sensitivity

This kind of learning is more elusive, although words describing it are present in our everyday vocabulary. Ordinarily we do not think of it as an aspect of formal training or education, since traditionally this learning takes place during the process of everyday psychological development rather than being a conscious and deliberate part of classroom instruction.[2] Emotional involvement is probably the key characteristic that distinguishes it from intellectual understanding. While cognitive content is necessarily present in the notion of sensitivity-awareness, it is likely to be out of immediate consciousness or not systematically organized. Such knowledge may be referred to as "intuition" or, from another frame of reference, "attitude" or similar concepts that incorporate both the cognitive and affective aspects of experience.

Saliency is also a key notion, since the trainee frequently already "knows" that which forms the content of the training. He may readily agree, for example, to the principle that trying to understand the other person's attitude is helpful in working effectively with him, but this does not mean his behavior will actually display this understanding. This can be attributed to the fact he may lack the capability to accomplish this end, or he simply may not be motivated to work more effectively with the person (see "Motivation" and "Skill Development"). However, another explanation is that conceptually and emotionally this concept is not a salient part of his personal way of relating to the world; in other words, he lacks "sensitivity" or he is "unaware."

Advertising often addresses itself to learning of this kind; bad-breath commercials attempt to change sensitivity-awareness to the effects of bad breath rather than provide information that bad breath is offensive (that is known) or alter one's evaluative attitude (it was already unfavorable toward having bad breath). Typically, learning of this type does not require great intellectual power (as intellectual understanding might); it involves emotional factors to a greater degree, since an important characteristic of this form of learning is meaningfulness at the personal, rather than merely abstract, level.

Numerous instances illustrating the need for increased awareness-sensitivity are found in the attempts made by Americans to implement new

[1]In some instances, utility may not be of concern. The understanding may be sought for its own intrinsic cultural (in the artistic sense) or intellectual value.

[2]When we do consciously plan for it, it is usually remedial in nature and referred to as psychotherapy, counseling, etc. rather than education or training. Such learning does, of course, take place in the classroom in the form of meta-learning even though it is not in the lesson plan.

ideas overseas (Foster, 3). For example: Although an American soldier speaks frequently about the importance to Asians of "saving face," he nevertheless attempts projects by methods that require a competitive attitude and will cause someone to lose face; a technician, while well aware of the rigid social hierarchy that typifies the country, bypasses it in implementing a change; an educator who has commented on the poor qualifications of host-country teachers builds an institute with an Americanized program for which indigenous teachers are not available. In these examples the relevant facts are "known" and the problem is not one of high intellectual complexity. What is usually lacking is salience of the specific knowledge and an "attitude" toward the work situation that would enable one to become aware of the relevant, but unconsidered, factors.

Often a person behaves as though he is sensitive or aware (of a class of events, characteristics, or phenomena) but is unable to verbalize his awareness; he is usually said to be "intuitively effective". Although conscious awareness is not essential to effective performance it is undoubtedly helpful, and training should usually attempt to bring existing sensitivity to a more conscious level. Cognitive or intellectual understanding is helpful, and perhaps essential, in bringing about change in the degree of awareness-sensitivity, but it probably is never sufficient alone.

It is also important to remember that increased awareness in itself does not necessarily mean behavior will be altered, although behavioral change usually does occur. Other factors, such as ability and motivation, must also be present.[1]

Motivation

The notion of awareness and sensitivity suggests an inherent motivational element (e.g., we perceive what we want to perceive), but motivation can be conceptualized as a separate objective of training.[2] An analogy can be found in speaking a foreign language: Knowledge of the language does not necessarily ensure its use; the desire to communicate and willingness to risk making errors are also important factors. Given adequate knowledge, skill, and awareness, failure to behave in the most effective way can be attributed either to the absence of appropriate motivation or, more likely to the presence of competing motives such as fear of experimenting with new behavior, or anticipation that one's own organization will punish the "correct" behavior.

This motivational aspect often is not an intended part of the learning process, but may occur as a consequence of it, typically in the form of meta-learning. (Such things as pep talks by football coaches or by instructors at sales seminars are similar in purpose and are acknowledged by both trainer and trainee as intended to alter the "will" rather than the "what.") In any

[1]In terms of training *method*, it should be recognized that behavior can alter attitudinal factors. Controlling or manipulating overt behavior may require a reassessment at cognitive-affective level so as to yield greater sensitivity-awareness and subsequent changes in behavior under noncontrolled conditions.

An example of attitudinal change through behavior-cognitive confrontation is a series of HumRRO role-playing exercises that deal with contrasting cultural values and assumptions (cf. Stewart, Danielian, and Foster, 4). Enforcement of administrative and legal changes also may alter internalized attitudinal dimensions as well as overt behavior of compliance—a consideration with implications for administrators overseas rather than trainers.

[2]Motivation is used here in the psychological sense, not in the sense of "getting ahead," which is but one example of a motive.

case, the critical determinants of behavior in the overseas situation probably rest largely with the prevailing reward-punishment system that exists overseas.

Training alone probably can have only limited effect. This will be largely through (a) restructuring both intellectual understanding and sensitivity—especially awareness of the forces in the overseas situation that determine behavior—so that when obstacles occur they are perceived as less frustrating, and (b) removing some of the conflicting motivations, especially feelings of inadequacy arising from poorly developed skills.

Sometimes skill training may have the secondary objective (or consequence) of altering motivational obstacles by reducing the fear of trying the particular behaviors ("skill" is used here in the broad sense of the word) in the safe and supportive environment of training.

It may also be that in overcoming new and difficult situations, the trainee generalizes learned motivation to situations beyond the specific ones he has encountered in training (e.g., he may develop a willingness to try new things that he would prefer to avoid). It is this kind of rationale that encouraged the Peace Corps to use, in some of their programs, the controversial "outward-bound" training, self-confrontation "tests" of physical stamina, risk taking, and so forth through such activities as rock-climbing, rappelling, and drown-proofing. In this particular instance, it seems likely that the training goals were not achieved since the overseas situation was markedly different from the training task, even though the training goals were appropriate, in terms of process, to the demands of overseas work.

Skill Development

Another kind of learning is skill development, a category fairly easily distinguished from those previously discussed. Unfortunately, such training frequently requires knowledge of specific desired behaviors, which are seldom known for every situation one may encounter overseas. However, if sufficient information is available about the target job, culture, and so forth, general categories of appropriate responses can be designated and practiced for each general type of situation.

Affective Predisposition

One consequence of training, intended or not, is a generalized positive or negative predisposition toward people or things associated with the content. In the case of overseas training, the critical concern is feelings that become associated with host nationals and the work situation. Since consequences are often other than intended, this fact should be kept in mind when formulating training intended to achieve other objectives. For example, typical orientation films that stress "the wonderful people" the trainee will deal with overseas tend to be discounted as propaganda or, if accepted, to lead to increased negative feelings when reality is not as presented in the film.

Attempts to increase awareness-sensitivity to cultural assumption by stressing cultural differences can create unnecessary apprehension and a negative predisposition unless there is also emphasis on common and "positive" characteristics of the host nationals. Evidence suggests that, in general, greater knowledge and understanding result in more favorable attitudes, whereas fear and aggression tend to be associated with the unknown.

OBJECTIVES IN TERMS OF CONTENT AREAS

While an analysis of training by level or kind of learning is useful in formulating training objectives, objectives also involve content. Consequently, a checklist of content areas that might be included in a program to prepare personnel for overseas assignment should provide an overall perspective relevant to planning and implementing training.

It should be stressed that these categories represent a conceptual, rather than administrative, breakdown, with considerable overlapping of categories.[1] Consequently, they need not represent parts of an actual program—nor be taught through any particular approach or method. Obviously, the significance of each factor will vary with each specific job and situation and the training emphasis will need to be adjusted accordingly.

The first eight content areas, while overlapping, form fairly identifiable topics that are often routinely included in overseas training. For the most part they represent "knowledge about" topics. These include technical knowledge and skill, language proficiency, effective use of an interpreter, organizational orientation, area knowledge, area information relevant to personal concerns, knowledge of American foreign policy and institutions, and health and medical knowledge.

The last six training areas are more interdependent, and tend to deal with training objectives in terms of "how-to" capabilities. These include mission and work role identity, organizational and human relations effectiveness, political effectiveness, intra-personal adjustment, specific psychological dynamics, and intercultural effectiveness.

Technical Knowledge and Skill

It is usually assumed that persons selected for overseas positions have the required technical proficiency. In general, the belief seems to be that greater competence is needed than for "comparable" jobs in the United States but, as previously noted, this is not necessarily true. In fact, some observers argue that the actual technical sophistication required is generally less because related demands stemming from cultural, political, and administrative factors frequently keep technical knowledge from being implemented.

In any case, a short training program can seldom undertake to add much to the overall level of technical sophistication. It can deal with specific knowledge or skills for which there is reason to believe trainees in a particular technical speciality will be deficient—for example, information on diseases rare in the United States but common in the overseas country. Effective training of this type is highly dependent on the availability of extensive knowledge of overseas factors for specific jobs in specific locations.

Language Proficiency

Being a tangible form of training with obvious relevance, language training has been widely recognized and requires little comment. Aside from the value

[1]Language, for example, can easily be separated either administratively or conceptually, but even in this rather clear case there is a cross-cultural aspect in language training which is usually handled in the language classes. By contrast, the management-organizational, human relations, and cross-cultural aspects might be most effectively taught simultaneously within a single administrative unit. Likewise, area knowledge might be taught along with the cross-cultural aspect even though the knowledge per se would probably be a secondary objective; it might also be taught in a single administrative unit or in a total program, as a primary objective (e.g., area study).

of its use in communicating, the demonstrated effort to learn the language often creates a favorable attitude on the part of host nationals. Efficient training, however, requires fairly detailed knowledge of the individual job and country.

Examined in terms of cost effectiveness, it seems likely that different degrees and types of language proficiency—and therefore different training—are desirable for different positions. Some may require high proficiency; for others, in view of the high cost of training, a brief course in practical phrases or "pidgin English" may be optimal. Another consideration that is often ignored is the meta-learning that might occur; some evidence, for example, suggests that many trainees develop unfavorable feelings toward foreign nationals during language training.

Effective Use of an Interpreter

There are numerous special skills that might be included in training, most of which would be unique to certain types of jobs. Instruction in using an interpreter is worthy of special attention because it is an aspect of the critical area of communication and is a skill most personnel will depend upon sometime during their tour. There are usually many precautions and guidelines in using an interpreter, most of them linked to intercultural factors and, consequently, specific nations.

Organizational Orientation

Familiarization with the formal structure and operations of the overseas organization and its relationship to headquarters in the United States is a standard aspect of most area training. However, information on the informal organization is typically omitted in training, even though it is usually even more significant to work effectiveness and must be acquired by less efficient means while on the job itself. While important, orientation to the formal organization tends to be relatively overstressed, probably because it is tangible, easy to handle, and highly valued by those whose job is primarily procedural administration.

Area Knowledge

Knowledge of social, political, historical, and cultural facts about a country and its people can serve three quite separate purposes for the person working overseas.

(1) As in the case of language, it demonstrates to indigenous people an interest in their country. This may be a vehicle for developing closer relationships, greater acceptance to ideas, and so forth.

(2) It provides a background of knowledge in the same manner as a liberal arts education, which can be called upon when needed.

(3) Overlapping with the second goal, the cultural and sociological aspects supply the content for training in interculture effectiveness (see separate category below).

The three purposes are quite different, each requiring different content and approach. People are usually most aware of the second purpose, providing background information and intellectual understanding through information. (Of course, the consequences, intended or not, may also achieve the other objective.)

The unthinking application of academic influence to area study is frequently demonstrated when the intermediate goals are not structured in more refined terms than teaching about the history, institutions, culture, or arts of the country. Too often, the question of what aspect of history for what purpose is

not raised; training, even though objectives are otherwise stated, seems to be designed to create well-rounded mini-scholars rather than to prepare individuals to function effectively in the overseas environment. Unfortunately, little attention has been paid to what kind of area information is important for what kinds of personnel.

Area knowledge is likely to be of more value if its probable relevance is clear and if it becomes an integral part of other portions of the program. In this approach the area information becomes a useful or essential bit of information while attention is focused on learning such things as special technical skills, social change techniques, and language. (Such integration is perhaps easier for cultural and sociological content than for history, government, etc.)

The medium of instruction for area study is typically, and for some content necessarily, lecture by area specialists. As a result, the emphasis tends to be historical, and at the abstract institutional level rather than in more immediate terms which would have more personal meaning. In the case of cultural content, for example, focusing on a situation the trainee is likely to encounter when he is confronted with typical host-national behavior is much more likely to yield knowledge that will be useful than if the culture is merely described to him. The situation-encounter approach is somewhat different than providing area information and consequently is treated under a separate category (Intercultural Effectiveness").

Area study could be included, wholly or in part, in the form of reading since learning is largely at the intellectual rather than emotional (affective) level. Training time is thus saved for parts of the program that cannot primarily be achieved through information-acquiring tasks. Reader interest and immediate relevance will usually be heightened by selections with emphasis on realistic cross-cultural interaction, as suggested above, rather than area knowledge per se. The "liberal arts" background aspect is probably best achieved by providing fairly comprehensive reference works to be used in the country after a general familiarization with the contents during the training period.

As with all training, some unanticipated learning is likely to take place. In the case of intercultural training (and area information) the trainee may unconsciously assume a "strange people I'm going to study" (rather than "live among") perspective that interferes with developing an open and direct relationship overseas. Also the amount of emphasis that is placed on differences may create apprehension or adverse feelings that could curtail interaction. It is important that this necessary emphasis be balanced by calling attention to common characteristics and more basic underlying values.

Area Information Relevant to Personal Concerns

Providing advance information about the overseas location, in terms of personal concerns about circumstances that will be encountered there, is an important way of reducing the anxiety of the family under the stresses of moving to an unfamiliar situation. This type of information is provided, for example, in the State Department "Post Reports"; while limited in depth and likely to be sparse with respect to information on geographic areas outside the capital, they answer many questions of importance to the family. Area information should be made available to the American going overseas as soon as the assignment decision has been made, before the training, since this information can be valuable in making decisions about moving and in reducing the general level of apprehension.

Knowledge of American Foreign Policy and Institutions

Americans abroad are frequently called upon to explain events in the United States by answering questions that may be either friendly or baiting in tone. Effectiveness in meeting these situations requires (a) knowledge and (b) skills in handling the interaction, especially if the questioning is aggressive. Officials responsible for this aspect of training are often dismayed by the limited knowledge well-educated Americans have of the United States. It seems impossible, however, in a brief training period, to add much to what has already been taught in numerous courses in American government, society, and history. But it is possible, and for some personnel perhaps important, that some instructions be given on how to handle questions of this nature. If enough is specifically known of the particular questions that are likely to be asked, it may be feasible to cover some information about the United States.

Health and Medical Knowledge

The content of training for health and medical considerations needs to be specific to job and geography. If the appropriate knowledge is available, it can be transmitted by written material or by instructors who need not have medical training. However, motivating people to use the preventive health measures, rather than transmitting the knowledge itself, has been the central problem for health educators. While both kinds of learning (motivation vs. fact and intellectual understanding) might be optimally achieved simultaneously, it is important that the trainer be aware of the two different objectives, since different methods may be appropriate to each.

Mission and Work Role Identity

These last six training areas are more interdependent and are less likely to be treated administratively as separate blocks of instruction. They are all characterized by having a large "people component," by being significant—directly or indirectly—because of the cultural component, and by requiring learning primarily at the awareness-sensitivity, motivational, and affective levels. However, the categories do not, except at a very general level, represent meaningful training objectives. They are intended to represent conceptual areas in which training needs exist.

The role and work functions of the American overseas are often different from the ones he performed in the United States. The effectiveness of the Agency for International Development (AID) technical experts, for example, has been lessened by failure to clearly conceptualize their role as that of a change agent rather than of technicians or technical advisors. (Cf. G.M. Foster, 5, pp. 171-194.) Americans tend to evaluate success in terms of immediate, tangible results such as miles of road completed, enemy killed, or dollars spent. Consequently, much has been written about "institution building" (called "community development" at the local level) and related concepts in an attempt to clarify desired organizational and individual goals.

Getting a person to think in terms of concepts such as institution building, however, runs counter to two types of forces: (a) internalized values and assumptions inherited from his stateside work role and professional identification and (b) structural factors in the overseas situation. Often the person working overseas is aware of the role he should play but is prevented from acting on this awareness because of interacting factors such as short length of tour, progress reports in a format requiring quantitative answers, and expectations of superiors who are not fully aware of the situation or are themselves "locked in" by

the system. Consequently, training is likely to be more effective if it recognizes the attitudinal component and offers some understanding and means of dealing with the organizational and situational pressures that affect work goals overseas.

Somewhere during his training the trainee should come to understand his objectives in terms of the various roles he will play: a representative of the United States ("good-will ambassador"), a teacher-advisor, a change agent, and an institution builder.

Viewed in terms of content, mission is likely to be thought of as part of organizational orientation. If, however, mission is viewed from a more dynamic perspective, it will seem to have more in common with the intercultural, political, and management aspects of training and, administratively, might be best handled in that context (see "Specific Psychological Dynamics").

Organizational and Human Relations Effectiveness

These two interrelated functions are universal to all jobs. They are singled out here only to draw attention to the fact that, in working in another culture, people-related factors take on even greater importance. Administratively, training is probably best done in the cross-cultural context, but in considering training design it is probably worthwhile to conceptually separate these aspects of work effectiveness.

The category is intended to include both skill development and the understanding of and sensitivity to the administrative and interpersonal process, including special functions such as advising and institution building. (This is closely related to "Mission and Work Role Identity", but there the clarity of the goal-mission aspects of one's work were emphasized; here the emphasis is on the skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary in achieving goals.) In some ways it seems inappropriate to attempt such training in a brief program after trainees have had many years of experience in these areas. However, brief training could bring about an "unfreezing" of preconceptions, and the awareness, interest, and restructured perspective that can be achieved may lead to renewed learning and modified behavior in subsequent real-life situations.

Political Effectiveness

Another desirable attribute of the person working overseas that has received attention is the "sense of politics." This aspect of overseas work is interwoven with interpersonal and organizational effectiveness, but merits consideration of its own for personnel whose work involves policy matters with international overtones. Development of skill and awareness in this area does not seem essential for many personnel, but some inclusion of this topic is necessary to offset the emphasis on other aspects of overseas work which might cause the trainee to assume that human behavior is explained fully by cultural and personality factors, with little consideration of power and organizational level variables.

The content and background information for this aspect is usually included in area study programs, but the approach is likely to be abstract and unconnected to work function at the individual level. Administratively the "awareness" level of training is probably best integrated with intercultural and organizational instruction, using similar methods and techniques.

Intra-Personal Adjustment

"Culture shock" is a term that has been used to designate nonadaptive behavior overseas that is attributed to the ambiguity and frustration inherent in the overseas situation. The individual working overseas must respond in the absence of meaningful cues or clear expectations of his own behavior, since

the cultural framework that provides the "rules" for interpreting the new environment is largely unknown. This is true not only because of the presence of another culture, but because of the vagueness of mission and work role. While conceptually distinct from interpersonal effectiveness and work performance generally, it is, of course, interdependent.

The term "shock" is somewhat unfortunate since its manifestations are often much less dramatic than the word implies. Also, culture shock should refer to the wide variety of reactions that occur in coping with the overseas situation, not just personal disorganization, withdrawal, and the like. Irrational aggressive reactions toward indigenous people, a strong need to associate with fellow Americans, and such common behavior as "griping" and over-eagerness to receive mail from home are all symptoms of problems of internal maladjustment that are precipitated by environmental circumstances.

The severity of the culture shock will depend largely on (a) personality factors, especially tolerance for ambiguity, which might not be readily changed through training; (b) the similarity of the culture and work situation to the United States environment; (c) awareness and knowledge of the cultural differences and one's work role; (d) the degree of understanding one has of the symptoms and psychological dynamics of culture shock. The importance of cultural shock is, of course, that it not only can affect a person's well-being but also his work efficiency, and could have a potentially adverse impact on foreign nationals.

In training, the trainee can achieve an understanding of the dynamics of culture shock, learn to recognize its symptoms, and become familiar with general modes of behavior that tend to alleviate its impact. Lectures (information) are of some value, but learning is more effective if the trainee can experience the same kind of reactions during training[1] or can relate the information to a somewhat similar past experience in his life (e.g., beginning a new job).

Administratively this segment is frequently included in the medical section. Functionally it is more closely related to cross-cultural training and achieving realistic expectations and clarity of work goals.

Specific Psychological Dynamics

This category is treated separately here in order to emphasize its neglect in most training programs. In the design of actual training programs, the dynamics of certain processes in human behavior should be integrated into relevant components. Examples of the processes that should be included are the dynamics of giving-receiving, ambivalence, loneliness, ascendancy-submission, psychological reactions to amgibuity, perceptual distortion, advising, stereotyping, and forming judgments. Others are more directly relevant to intercultural interaction (see "Intercultural Effectiveness").

These phenomena are part of our lives in any situation; the justification for emphasis in an overseas training program rests with the notion that a more conscious awareness of "what comes naturally" may aid one to be more flexible in a largely different environment. In addition, there are often special aspects of specific overseas situations, such as sharing blame and praise with counterparts, and handling a policeman (inspector) role simultaneously with being an advisor, that need to be examined from a social-psychological perspective.

[1]Such as in T-groups or sensitivity training where the unstructured nature of the group has many similarities to the overseas situation.

Intercultural Effectiveness

The pervasive significance of the intercultural aspects in almost all phases of overseas work has been noted. This element should be equally pervasive in training since the intercultural dimension is an integral part of most of the content areas that have been described. If it could be achieved, it would probably be desirable to teach about culture factors only in the context of training with other primary objectives. In reality it is probably necessary to have separate units addressed to this objective as well as to encourage this aspect being incorporated in other units.

Training for intercultural effectiveness should focus on the interaction between members of cultures rather than on the cultures themselves, although the latter provide the content for the interaction process. Thus, there are three "parts" to intercultural training: the foreign values and assumptions, American values and assumptions, and the social-psychological aspects of their interaction.

The primary training objectives are to create a culturally relativistic perspective that yields understanding and respect for both cultures, and to increase the trainee's flexibility by expanding his perspective beyond that permitted by either culture alone. With respect to the foreign culture, this requires not just knowledge but empathic awareness of the host nationals' affective-cognitive world; the trainee should be able to vicariously live the mentality of the other culture without himself adopting its modes of thinking and feeling. An increased awareness of and insight into American values and assumptions results in greater alertness and ability to diagnose failures in intercultural communication, and more flexibility in modifying one's own behavior.

It should be noted that the suggested training in American values and assumptions is not the same as training concerned with familiarizing one with American ideals and institutions, which is often part of training (indoctrination) before going overseas. (This falls within "Knowledge of American Foreign Policy and Institutions," although objectives may go beyond the knowledge acquisition that is emphasized there.) Such training may actually decrease intercultural effectiveness.

An inherent risk in spelling out "the American way" is an increased tendency to say, "Now, in the States we . . ." This is more likely to occur when the analysis of Americana is at the institutional level and the focus is on American culture per se rather than on the interaction of two cultures. In the approach suggested here, the American would become aware of the arbitrary nature of his values and presumably become less ethnocentric.[1]

The need for greater attention to psychological dynamics within the various areas of training has already been suggested. When focused on the interaction aspect, these process phenomena easily become part of intercultural training. The intercultural aspect of overseas work, after all, has no "existence" except as it is manifested in the human interaction that occurs in the bicultural context. Examples of process topics that might be included in this area are "we-they" perception, "win-lose" situations, the sources of cultural values and assumptions, and social perception.

TRAINING METHODOLOGY

The previous discussion offers a framework for thinking about training. Implementation and determination of more specific objectives are the province

[1]Some of the issues involved in teaching Americana are discussed in a recent HumRRO report by Foster and O'Nan (6).

of the individual trainer, who must attend to the particular requirement of each individual program.[1] While this report does not deal directly with training methodology, a few summary remarks about method and approach seem appropriate.

Training objectives, of course, need not be tied to any particular method. Once objectives are clear, one uses whatever methods or combination of methods seem most appropriate to the particular trainee population. It should be apparent, however, that certain approaches, such as lecture, are not very likely to achieve many of the kinds of training objectives that have been discussed here. Many of those objectives require a restructuring of emotional and mental "habits," rather than such things as imparting knowledge about another culture. As we have seen, the overseas problem often seems to be characterized by semi-conscious assumptions, egocentric perspectives, and limited experience rather than by lack of knowledge or intellectual demands.

The reader might infer that in some ways the task of training is not unlike that of psychotherapy. In training, however, we are dealing with commonly shared perception, feelings, and attitudes which, by and large, are not critical to the deeper recesses of personality. Consequently the overall task is quite different, even though the basic learning processes are fundamentally similar.

As with all learning, people will differ in their ability to absorb it. It seems likely, however, that emotional rather than intellectual factors will be the major determinants. It may be that some individuals will not benefit from cross-cultural training; if this is the case, it also seems likely that they will be relatively ineffective in most aspects of their work overseas.

More specifically, but still at a very general level, the needed training approaches can be summarized as follows:

(1) The instruction will involve "unlearning" and restructuring as well as new knowledge. This process usually involves a confrontation of existing ideas, values, assumptions, perceptions, and so forth under conditions that minimize resistance to change.

(2) Learning, especially the unlearning phase, should involve emotional as well as intellectual understanding.

(3) The major training effort must be "experience-based" rather than book- or lecture-based. Active involvement and commitment by the trainee are important.

(4) An overall training objective should be "learning to learn" (acquiring the necessary attitudes, motives, and conceptual tools that increase ability to learn) rather than trying to acquire specific knowledge and skills during training. By analogy, this would be like learning to read all maps of a similar kind, rather than learning the details (cities, roads, and rivers) of one map.

(5) Relative to the preceding point, the emphasis should be on sensitivity and awareness to certain types of phenomena rather than ready-made solutions or long lists of "do's" and "don't's." Awareness alone, of course, is not sufficient but it is one of the first steps in discovering alternative solutions.

(6) The emphasis of training should be on the "how's" and "why's" of behavior ("process dimensions") rather than on content. It is recognized, of course, that the two can not be separated except by abstraction, and that knowledge and experience with specific aspects of the coming assignment are highly desirable when possible.

[1]In another HumRRO report (7), Foster and Danielian have discussed in detail the application of some existing training techniques to cross-cultural training.

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13. ABSTRACT

This report presents a conceptual framework for looking at the problem of training personnel for overseas assignment. Characteristics of the overseas situation that are relatively unique, prevalent, and likely to have a significant effect on performance are briefly described and classified. From this analysis two types of goals for training are formulated: Objectives in terms of kind of learning and objectives in terms of content. Within each, a conceptual breakdown of types of objectives is presented as a general analytical framework for deriving goals for specific training programs. The report represents an interpretative summary of much of the research and writing on training for overseas but does not attempt to survey the literature.

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