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<b>14. ABSTRACT</b>  This report describes the current state of instructional supervision in Special Operations Forces (SOF) initial acquisition training (IAT) language schools. This report describes behaviors used for supervising instructors in these schools and compares with best practices from the theoretical and empirical, literature on this topic, as well as those used in language schools external to the SOF IAT community. Findings are organized into five main categories: (1) language learners and language learning environment, (2) responsibility of instructional supervisor (3) relationships between instructional supervisors and instructors, (4) strategies and methods for instructional supervision, and (5) classroom observation and assessments. It is recommended that task and knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) analyses be conducted in each of the SOF IAT language schools and additional research be conducted to examine the effects of effective instructional supervision in SOF IAT language schools. Specific recommendations are provided for SOF IAT leadership and Command Language Program Managers (CLPMs) related to selection, training, and resourcing. Finally, specific recommendations are provided for instructional supervisors related to classroom supervision and other important behaviors and skills. Using the information presented, SOF IAT leadership, CLPMs, and instructional supervisors can maintain and further develop effective instructional supervisory behaviors and practices in SOF IAT language schools.					
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## **Establish Best Practices for Supervision of Instructors**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

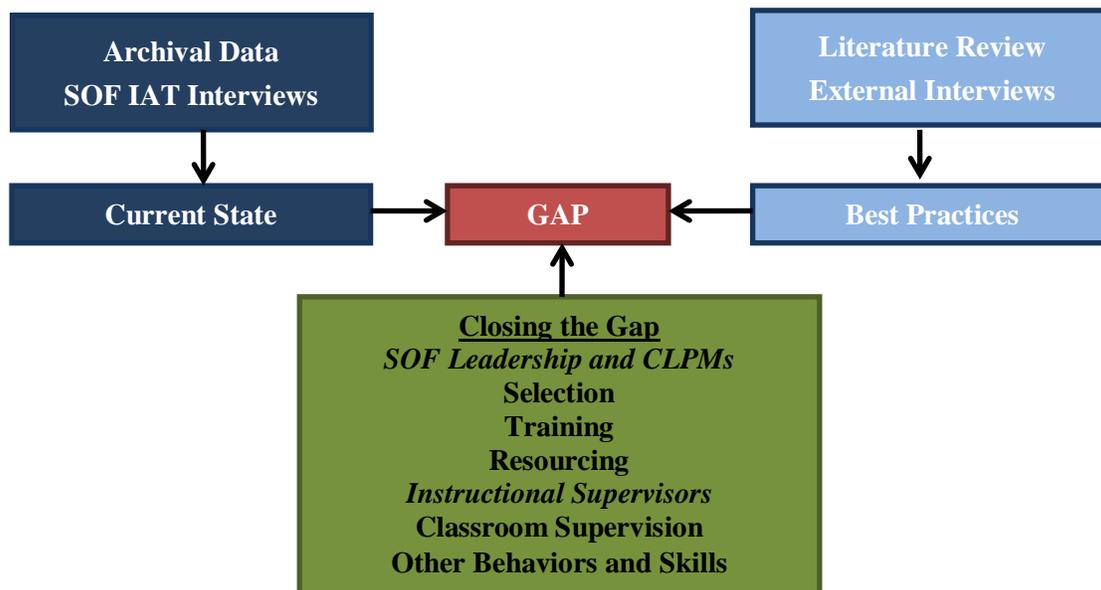
### Issue and Overview

This report describes the current state of instructional supervision in Special Operations Forces (SOF) initial acquisition training (IAT) language schools and compares the instructional supervisory behaviors and practices used in these schools to those identified in the theoretical, empirical, and best practices literature on this topic, as well as to those used in language schools external to the SOF IAT community. Using the information presented, SOF IAT leadership, Command Language Program Managers (CLPMs), and instructional supervisors can maintain and further develop effective instructional supervisory behaviors and practices in SOF IAT language schools.

### Method

A thorough review of the theoretical, empirical, and best practices literature in the fields of education, psychology, second language acquisition, and training was conducted to identify effective instructional supervisory behaviors and skills. Following the literature review, both SOF IAT current-state and external benchmarking studies were conducted to identify instructional supervisory behaviors and practices currently used in SOF IAT language schools and in external language schools, respectively. The information collected from the literature review and both the SOF IAT current-state and external benchmarking studies were used to identify gaps between the current and desired states of instructional supervision in SOF IAT language schools and provide SOF IAT leadership, CLPMs, and instructional supervisors with recommendations for closing these gaps (Figure 1, p. 2).

Figure 1. Gaps between Current State of and Best Practices for Instructional Supervision



## Findings

Based on the literature review, effective instructional supervisors:

- Perform a variety of administrative or general supervisory behaviors outside of the classroom. These include staffing, scheduling and planning, budgeting, reporting, and applying organizational policy.
- Perform a variety of classroom or clinical supervisory behaviors inside the classroom, such as conducting classroom observations of instructors' performance and providing performance evaluations and feedback to instructors after observations are conducted. Effective instructional supervisors also hold instructors accountable for failing to meet performance standards.
- Engage in professional development activities, provide opportunities for instructors' professional development, coach and mentor instructors, and openly and honestly communicate with instructors. Both group process and effective communication skills enable instructional supervisors to engage more effectively in these behaviors.
- Hold Master's or Doctoral degrees in second language acquisition or instruction, education, or other relevant fields and have relevant prior experience in administration, instruction, and in military environments or organizations.

The findings from the SOF IAT current-state study were organized into five main categories: (1) language learners and language learning environment, (2) position of instructional supervisor, (3) relationships between instructional supervisors and instructors, (4) strategies and methods for instructional supervision, and (5) classroom observations and assessments. Some of the main findings included:

### *Language Learners and Language Learning Environment*

- In general, language learners in SOF IAT language schools were similar to language learners in external schools in terms of their native language and previous language experience. SOF IAT language learners differed from external language learners in terms of their gender and purpose for language learning.
- Although the languages offered in external language schools were similar to languages currently taught within the SOF IAT community, course durations were shorter and class meetings were less frequent than in SOF IAT language schools. In external language schools, there was substantial variability in terms of how often students' proficiency was assessed.

### *Position of Instructional Supervisor*

- In both SOF IAT and external language schools, instructional supervisors have a diverse set of responsibilities. Although differences were observed between SOF IAT language schools and between these language schools and external language schools, there were several commonalities, such as monitoring instructor performance, providing constructive feedback to instructors, and providing resources to instructors.

- Common instructional supervisory qualifications included cultural expertise, English proficiency, instructional experience, and administrative experience.

#### *Relationships between Instructional Supervisors and Instructors*

- The number of instructional supervisors in SOF IAT language schools ranged from 1-5, with as few as five instructors to as many as 35 instructors per supervisor. The range of responses from external language schools was too large to be comparable to SOF IAT language schools.
- Participants from both SOF IAT and external language schools reported similar challenges in working with instructors. These included instructors' unwillingness to learn or cooperate, lack of cultural understanding, and inexperience in education and teaching.

#### *Strategies and Methods for Instructional Supervision*

- Effective instructional supervisors in both the SOF IAT and external language schools engaged in professional development activities and provided opportunities for instructors' professional development.
- Supervisors in both SOF IAT and external language schools encouraged their instructors to use particular models of instruction in the classroom. The most commonly mentioned models were communicative, task-based, and learner-centered.
- A difference was observed between SOF IAT language schools and external language schools in terms of the role supervisors play in instructor motivation. Only two external language program administrators indicated instructional supervisors in their schools play a role in instructor motivation.

#### *Classroom Observations and Assessments*

- Instructional supervisors in both SOF IAT and external language schools engage in a number of practices related to classroom observations and assessments. These practices differ somewhat between SOF IAT language schools and between these schools and external language schools.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are provided to SOF IAT leadership and CLPMs to advance the theoretical, empirical, and best practices literature on instructional supervision in adult, military-related instructional contexts, such as SOF IAT language schools.

- Task and knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) analyses should be conducted in each of the SOF IAT language schools to better understand the tasks instructional supervisors perform in these language schools and to empirically identify the KSAs required for them to be effective in their performance of these tasks. By conducting these task and KSA analyses, SOF IAT leadership and CLPMs can better ensure supervisor selection, training, and development interventions are aligned with the task and KSA requirements of instructional supervisory positions in SOF IAT

language schools and that instructional supervisors have the resources they need to perform their jobs effectively (cf. Surface, 2012).

- Additional research should be conducted to better understand how effective instructional supervision in SOF IAT language schools is related to instructor effectiveness and student learning outcomes, such as language proficiency. This research would extend our understanding of how supervision in adult, military-related instructional contexts is related to instructor effectiveness and student learning outcomes. To facilitate this research, additional data on instructional supervision in SOF IAT language schools should be collected.

Based on the findings of the SOF IAT current-state study and external benchmarking studies, the following recommendations are provided to SOF IAT leadership and CLPMs to maintain and further develop effective instructional supervisory behaviors and practices in SOF IAT language schools:

- Hire or promote candidates with the qualifications necessary to be effective instructional supervisors. This includes selecting instructional supervisors based on education, instructional experience, administrative experience, and English proficiency.
- Create an on-the-job training program for instructional supervisors. Among other topics, this training program should be focused on effective interpersonal communication skills, such as active listening, administrative skills, and the SOF IAT instructional context.
- Provide necessary resources to instructional supervisors to remove barriers to supervisory effectiveness. Examples include providing support staff to reduce the ratio of instructors to supervisors in some SOF IAT language schools and providing resources to support supervisors' and instructors' professional development.

Based on the findings of the SOF IAT current-state and external benchmarking studies, the following recommendations are provided to current instructional supervisors to maintain and further develop their effectiveness:

- Gain instructor buy-in in observation, evaluation, and feedback processes to maximize the effectiveness of these processes. Instructor buy-in can be gained by meeting with instructors prior to conducting observations, conducting more frequent observations, and providing feedback from multiple sources.
- Supervisors should leverage existing resources, such as Instructor Feedback Reports (IFRs) and the Instructor Developmental Feedback Guide, to provide instructors with multi-source feedback and recommendations for improvement. An IFR training module should be developed to help supervisors understand IFRs and how they can be used.
- Make an effort to understand instructors' languages and cultures when they are different than one's own. Learn greetings and commonly used phrases in these languages to build rapport with instructors.
- Communicate openly and honestly with instructors to assure instructors their input is valued.

## Caveats

In interpreting the findings from the theoretical, empirical, and best practices literature review on this topic, as well as the findings from both the SOF IAT current-state and external benchmarking studies, the reader is encouraged to consider a few important caveats regarding these findings:

- Much of the literature on this topic is theoretical in nature and focuses on supervision in K-12 instructional contexts. As such, the reader is encouraged to consider how the instructional supervisory behaviors, skills, and qualifications reported in the literature might differ in adult, military-related instructional contexts, such as SOF IAT language schools.
- Current SOF IAT language program vendors were included as participants in the SOF IAT current-state study. If language program vendors change in any or all of the SOF IAT language schools, then the instructional supervisory behaviors and practices reported in Section IV (pp. 23-43) may be subject to change.
- Although all SOF IAT language program administrators and current language program vendors were invited to participate in the current-state study, all of them were not able to participate. Likewise, only eight of the 35 external language schools contacted participated in the external benchmarking study. Thus, the findings presented in this report may be subject to change if additional interviews are conducted.

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

SECTION I: REPORT PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW .....	8
SECTION II: IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION.....	9
SECTION III: BEST PRACTICES FOR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION .....	11
SECTION IV: SOF IAT CURRENT-STATE AND EXTERNAL BENCHMARKING STUDIES .....	23
SECTION V: ANALYSIS OF GAPS BETWEEN CURRENT AND DESIRED STATES .....	44
REFERENCES.....	51
ABOUT SWA CONSULTING INC. ....	54
APPENDIX A: LETTER TO SOF IAT LANGUAGE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS.....	55
APPENDIX B: LETTER TO SOF IAT LANGUAGE PROGRAM VENDORS.....	58
APPENDIX C: LETTER TO LANGUAGE PROGRAMS EXTERNAL TO SOF IAT .....	61
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR SOF IAT LANGUAGE PROGRAMS.....	64
APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR EXTERNAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS .....	68
APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW ANALYSIS TECHNICAL APPENDIX .....	73

## SECTION I: REPORT PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

### ***Establish Best Practices for Supervision of Instructors Report Purpose***

Many elements of Special Operations Forces (SOF) foreign language training may be leveraged to improve training outcomes. One element is the effective supervision of SOF initial acquisition training (IAT) foreign language instructors. Supervisors of foreign language instructors in the SOF IAT community have a responsibility to support effective instruction, which in turn supports improved student learning and training outcomes. In the case of SOF IAT, these efforts will support the development of language-capable SOF personnel. This report describes the current state of instructional supervision in SOF IAT language schools and compares the supervisory behaviors and practices used in these schools to effective instructional supervisory behaviors and practices identified in the theoretical, empirical, and best practices literature on this topic, as well as to those used in language schools external to the SOF IAT community. Using the information presented, SOF IAT leadership, Command Language Program Managers (CLPMs), and instructional supervisors can maintain and further develop effective instructional supervisory behaviors and practices in SOF IAT language schools.

### ***Establish Best Practices for Supervision of Instructors Report Overview***

This report contains the following sections that describe effective instructional supervisory behaviors and practices used in SOF IAT language schools and compare these behaviors and practices to those described in the theoretical, empirical, and best practices literature on this topic. In addition, instructional supervisory behaviors and practices used in language schools external to the SOF IAT community are also described.

- Section II (pp. 9-10) describes why effective instructional supervision is important to developing more language-capable SOF personnel.
- Section III (p. 11-22) defines supervision and summarizes the theoretical, empirical, and best practices literature on effective instructional supervision to identify effective instructional supervisory behaviors, skills, and qualifications.
- Section IV (p. 23-43) describes the current state of instructional supervision in SOF IAT language schools. This section also describes the results of an external benchmarking study conducted with language schools external to the SOF IAT community.
- Section V (p. 44-50) provides an evaluation and synthesis of both the SOF IAT current-state and external benchmarking studies to identify gaps between the current and desired states for effective instructional supervision in SOF IAT language schools. This section includes recommendations for SOF IAT leadership, CLPMs, and current instructional supervisors in the SOF IAT community.

## SECTION II: IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION

Effective instructional supervision is necessary to develop language-capable SOF personnel. For SOF operators to develop their language proficiency during SOF IAT, operators must be trained by effective foreign language instructors who are developed and supported by effective instructional supervisors. This section emphasizes the importance of effective instructional supervision to developing language-capable SOF personnel in SOF IAT language schools.

In the SOF community, operators must develop and maintain the language capability needed to meet their language-related mission requirements and to achieve mission success (United States Special Operations Command [USSOCOM] M350-8). Despite the importance of developing language-capable SOF personnel, barriers to language acquisition and maintenance do exist for SOF operators. For example, SOF operators experience other training requirements that compete with language training (*Barriers to Language Acquisition and Maintenance*, Technical Report #2010011024). Thus, because SOF IAT training time is limited, it is critically important that all elements of SOF IAT be leveraged to mitigate barriers to SOF operators' language acquisition and maintenance. One such element is the effective supervision of SOF IAT foreign language instructors.

While much less is known about how effective instructional supervision is related to both instructor effectiveness and student learning outcomes in the SOF community, preliminary evidence suggests instructional supervisors in SOF IAT language schools do, indeed, impact instructor effectiveness. Using training effectiveness data collected from IAT students and instructors at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (SWCS) between 2010-2012, data-analytic results revealed the following:

- Instructors who reported ever receiving an Instructor Feedback Report (IFR)<sup>1,2</sup> received higher Semester 2 instructor evaluation ratings from their students on Engage ( $t(231.78) = 4.16, p < .000$ ), Manage ( $t(222.20) = 5.75, p < .000$ ), Respond ( $t(234.35) = 4.70, p < .000$ ), and Adapt ( $t(231.37) = 4.46, p < .000$ ), the four areas of instructor effectiveness assessed in the IFRs. With the exception of Adapt, these findings were similar for Semester 3 instructor evaluation ratings.
- Instructors who reported receiving their Semester 1 IFRs received higher Semester 2 instructor evaluation ratings from their students on Engage ( $t(579.69) = 1.99, p < .05$ ), Manage ( $t(559.71) = 2.68, p < .01$ ), Respond ( $t(598.82) = 2.10, p < .05$ ), and Adapt ( $t(579.21) = 2.24, p < .05$ ).

Thus, given that instructional supervisors play a role in distributing IFRs to the instructors they supervise and, more generally, in providing performance feedback to instructors, this preliminary evidence suggests instructor effectiveness is impacted by instructional supervisory effectiveness.

Despite the limited empirical evidence linking instructional supervisory effectiveness to student learning outcomes, empirical findings regarding the relationship between instructor effectiveness and student

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<sup>1</sup> IFRs are formative training evaluation reports provided by SWA Consulting Inc. to language program administrators, language contract vendors, and instructors in the SOF language training community. These reports identify instructors' strengths and areas for development during training and provide information for action at all levels, including a system for continuous instructor self-guided development.

<sup>2</sup> This survey item asked instructors if they had ever received an IFR at some point during their tenure at USAJFKSWCS.

performance can be leveraged to shed additional light on how instructional supervisory effectiveness may impact student learning outcomes. For example, Muijs and Reynolds (2003) found that effective instruction explained up to 24% of the variance in student performance in academic environments. Likewise, in the SOF community, nearly 50% of SOF operators' performance on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) was explained by instructor effectiveness (SWA Consulting Inc., 2009, Technical Report #2009010602). Taken together, these findings underscore the importance of effective foreign language instruction to developing language-capable SOF personnel. By extension, instructional supervisors play a key role in developing language-capable SOF personnel because they develop effective foreign language instructors in SOF IAT language schools.

In Section III (pp. 11-22), the theoretical, empirical, and best practices literature on instructional supervision is summarized to identify effective instructional supervisory behaviors, skills, and qualifications. These behaviors, skills, and qualifications were then used to generate interview questions to conduct a current-state study of instructional supervision in SOF IAT language schools, as well as an external benchmarking study conducted with language schools external to the SOF IAT community (Section IV, pp. 23-43).

### **SECTION III: BEST PRACTICES FOR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION**

#### **Purpose**

A thorough review of the theoretical, empirical, and best practices literature in the fields of education, psychology, second language acquisition, and training was conducted. The purpose of this review was to identify effective instructional supervisory behaviors, skills, and qualifications. Although most of the literature on this topic is theoretical in nature, emphasis was placed on studies that examined the effects of instructional supervision on key outcomes, such as instructor effectiveness. Additionally, a review of SWA Consulting Inc.'s (SWA) previous research and evaluation efforts for the Special Operations Forces Language Office (SOFLO) was also conducted. These sources were then summarized, and this information was used to generate a list of effective instructional supervisory behaviors, skills, and qualifications. From this list, four main themes were identified: (1) administrative or general supervision, (2) classroom or clinical supervision, (3) other effective instructional supervisory behaviors and skills, and (4) instructional supervisory qualifications.

#### **Research Questions**

- What effective instructional supervisory behaviors are performed by instructional supervisors outside of the classroom?
- What effective instructional supervisory behaviors are performed by instructional supervisors inside the classroom?
- What additional behaviors and skills enable instructional supervisors to be effective in their roles both outside of and inside the classroom?
- What qualifications (e.g., education, experience) enable instructional supervisors to be effective in their roles both outside of and inside the classroom?

#### **Main Findings**

Effective instructional supervisors:

- Perform a variety of administrative or general supervisory behaviors outside of the classroom. These behaviors include staffing, scheduling and planning, budgeting, reporting, and applying organizational policy.
- Perform a variety of classroom or clinical supervisory behaviors inside the classroom, such as conducting classroom observations of instructors' performance and providing performance evaluations and feedback to instructors after observations are conducted. Effective instructional supervisors also hold instructors accountable for failing to meet performance standards.
- Engage in professional development activities, provide opportunities for instructors' professional development, coach and mentor instructors, and openly and honestly communicate with instructors. Both group process and effective communication skills enable instructional supervisors to engage more effectively in these behaviors.

- Hold Master’s or Doctoral degrees in second language acquisition or instruction, education, or relevant fields and have relevant prior experience in administration, instruction, and in military environments or organizations.

### **Recommendations**

- Task and knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) analyses should be conducted in each of the SOF IAT language schools to better understand the tasks instructional supervisors perform in these language schools and to empirically identify the KSAs required for them to be effective in their performance of these tasks. KSAs may be defined as (Gatewood, Field, & Barrick, 2008):
  - Knowledge – information applied directly to perform an essential job function.
  - Skill – observable competence to perform a job task.
  - Ability – competence to perform an observable behavior or a behavior that will result in an observable product (e.g., written report).

By conducting these task and KSA analyses, SOF IAT leadership and CLPMs can better ensure supervisor selection, training, and development interventions are aligned with the task and KSA requirements of instructional supervisory positions in SOF IAT language schools and that instructional supervisors have the resources they need to perform their jobs effectively (cf. Surface, 2012).

- Additional research should be conducted to better understand how effective instructional supervision in SOF IAT language schools is related to instructor effectiveness and student learning outcomes, such as language proficiency. Given that much of the literature on this topic is theoretical in nature and focuses on supervision in K-12 instructional contexts, this research would extend our understanding of supervision in adult, military-related instructional contexts, such as SOF IAT language schools.

### **Literature Review**

The review of the theoretical, empirical, and best practices literature in the fields of education, psychology, second language acquisition, and training resulted in the identification of four main themes regarding effective instructional supervisory behaviors, skills, and qualifications: (1) administrative or general supervision, (2) classroom or clinical supervision, (3) other effective instructional supervisory behaviors and skills, and (4) instructional supervisory qualifications. The main findings for each of these themes are described in detail below. In addition, a definition of supervision is provided to aid the reader’s understanding of what supervision is and how it is commonly defined in instructional contexts.

#### **What is supervision?**

Management, or supervision, can be defined as “the attainment of organizational goals in an effective and efficient manner through planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling organizational resources” (Daft, 2008, p. 14). More specifically, instructional supervision is focused on the improvement of instruction and learning outcomes (Gebhard, 1990; Glanz, Schulman, & Sullivan, 2007;

Lunenberg, 1998; Neagley & Evans, 1980; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1998) and can be further divided into two categories: (1) administrative (“general”) supervision, and (2) classroom (“clinical”) supervision, with the former concerned with supervisory behavior occurring outside of the classroom, and the latter focusing on supervisory behavior inside the classroom (Neagley & Evans, 1980; Wallace, 1991). The discussion that follows focuses first on administrative supervisory behaviors.

### **Administrative or General Supervision**

Administrative or general supervision involves supervisory behavior that generally occurs outside of the classroom (Neagley & Evans, 1980; Wallace, 1991). Although these administrative behaviors do not constitute the full set of behaviors in which instructional supervisors must engage to be effective, these behaviors do enable supervisors to form a strong foundation for effective instructional supervision. In other words, effective administrative supervision is necessary, but not sufficient, for effective instructional supervision. Administrative behaviors may include staffing, scheduling and planning, budgeting, reporting and applying organizational policy.

#### **Staffing**

*Effective instructional supervisors are involved in the process of staffing foreign language instructors, to the extent possible.*

In the SOF IAT context, instructional supervisors may play a role in recruiting and selecting foreign language instructors of sufficient quantity and quality to support the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) in its goal to develop language-capable SOF personnel (USSOCOM M350-8). Staffing is defined as “the process of acquiring, deploying, and retaining a workforce of sufficient quantity and quality to create positive impacts on the organization's effectiveness” (Heneman, Judge, & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012, p. 8). Depending on the structure of the organization, instructional supervisors in SOF IAT language schools may have varying amounts of involvement in the staffing process for foreign language instructors. To the extent possible, instructional supervisors should be actively involved, as this may have a positive impact on the performance of their workgroup. In one study, supervisors’ involvement in effective staffing processes accounted for 14% of the variance in group performance (Bare, 1978). A number of factors could explain this finding, including the hiring of qualified and experienced personnel.

#### **Scheduling and Planning**

*Effective instructional supervisors schedule and plan important meetings and events.*

For example, instructional supervisors may be tasked with planning and scheduling time for instructor training and professional development activities. Likewise, instructional supervisors may deploy instructors with the requisite target language proficiency and skill sets to teach appropriate courses. These supervisors may also schedule time to meet one-on-one or in small groups with foreign language instructors on a regular basis to communicate important information and support instructors’ professional development efforts by providing instructors with resources and performance feedback.

## **Budgeting and Managing Resources**

*Effective instructional supervisors manage and administer budgets for some or all aspects of their language programs.*

These budgets may cover expenses such as the costs of professional development opportunities for instructors, as well as supplemental course materials. In managing and administering budgets, effective instructional supervisors work to distribute resources equally among instructors and other key personnel (National Association of Independent Schools [NAIS], 1990). In addition, effective instructional supervisors know where to locate and how to obtain important resources (Humphrey & Stokes, 2000). These resources might include classroom materials, such as pens or whiteboard markers, or course materials that are used to supplement the curriculum for a particular language.

## **Reporting**

*Effective instructional supervisors report important information to language program leadership and key stakeholders, using multiple communication media.*

These reports may include important information about language program activities (e.g., classroom observations of instructors), outcomes (e.g., students' proficiency scores), and trends to key stakeholders, such as language program leadership, language program administrative staff, and contract vendor leadership. Although these reports may be provided through multiple communication media, written reports may be the medium most commonly used by instructional supervisors for reporting.

## **Consistently Applying Policies**

*Effective instructional supervisors are knowledgeable about and consistently apply both language program and organizational policies across situations and instructors.*

Policy-related decisions may include, but are not limited to, determining leave time for instructors, such as for religious holidays, administering performance-related awards to instructors, and determining how professional development opportunities should be provided to instructors. In all of these situations, effective instructional supervisors communicate and explain policies to instructors at the beginning of their tenure and attempt to apply policies fairly and consistently across situations and the instructors they supervise (NAIS, 1990). In doing so, instructional supervisors can avoid the appearance of favoritism.

## **Summary**

Collectively, administrative supervision represents one category of behaviors that must be performed by instructional supervisors to be effective. These behaviors include staffing, scheduling and planning, budgeting and managing resources, reporting, and consistently applying both program and organizational policies across situations and instructors. These behaviors provide an important foundation for the second category of behaviors in which instructional supervisors must engage: classroom or clinical supervision.

### **Classroom or Clinical Supervision**

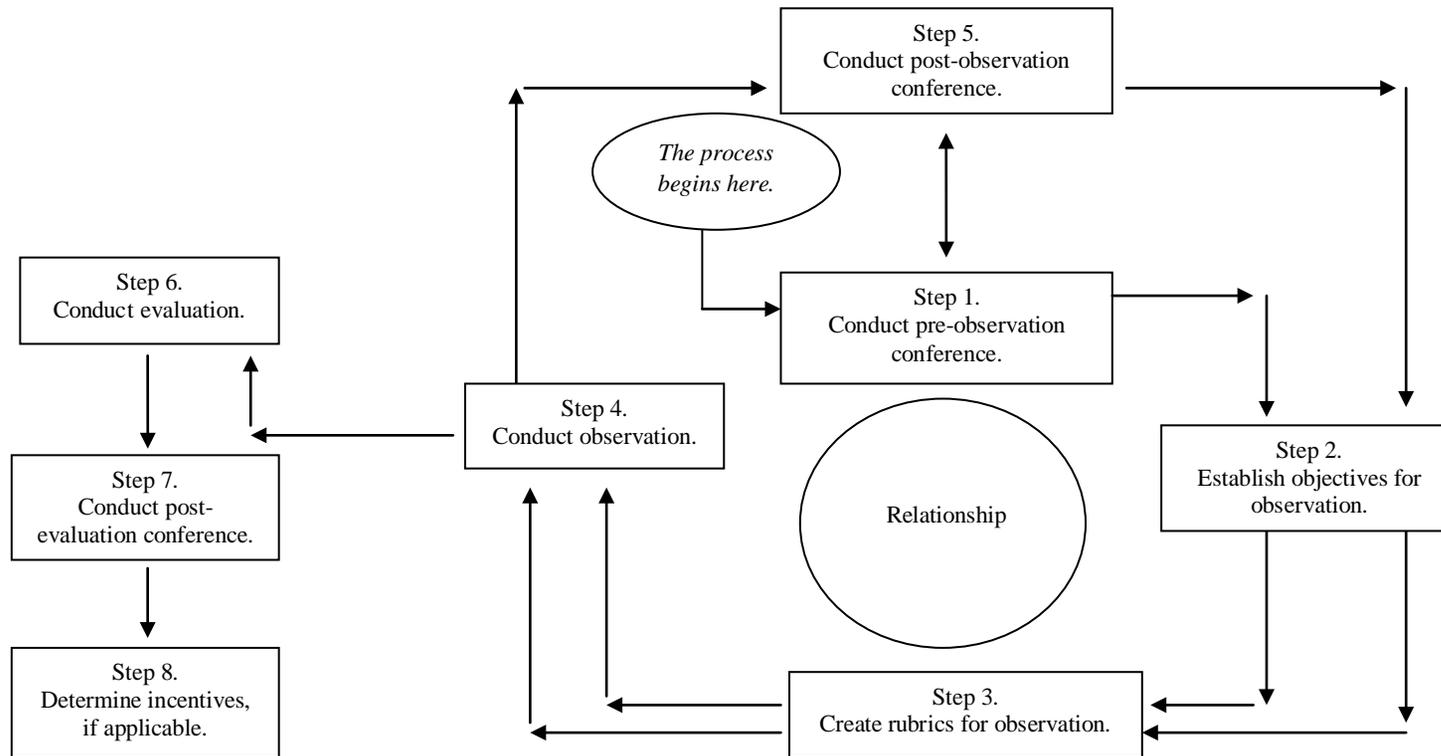
Classroom or clinical supervision involves supervisory behaviors that generally occur inside the classroom. This behavioral category is typically focused on “improving instruction and learning through the direct observation of teachers and pupils in action in the learning environment” (Neagley & Evans, 1980, p. 20; Wallace, 1991). The primary instructional supervisory behaviors that constitute classroom supervision are conducting classroom observations of instructors’ performance and providing performance evaluations and feedback to instructors after observations are conducted.

#### **Observation, Evaluation and Feedback: A Visual Depiction**

Observation, performance evaluation, and feedback are effective instructional supervisory practices that are well-documented in the theoretical literature on this topic. Lee (2010) integrated these concepts into a theoretical model known as the Consultative Supervision and Evaluation (CS&E) model. According to Lee, if the steps in this model are implemented in an instructional environment, they reinforce effective instructional supervisory behavior and facilitate instructor engagement in and awareness of their progress towards important performance goals.

This model (Figure 2, p. 16) demonstrates that frequent monitoring of instructors’ performance is essential for effective instructional supervision. This monitoring is broken into two phases: (1) supervision and (2) evaluation. The supervision phase is focused on improving classroom instruction, while the evaluation phase is more focused on rating instructors for quality and promotion purposes (Lee, 2010). In both cases, the model assumes supervision and evaluation will be frequent enough to provide instructors with specific, actionable suggestions that will improve the quality of their instruction. As is reflected in the center of the model, the relationships between instructional supervisors and their instructors form the core of this process.

Figure 2. Consultative Supervision and Evaluation (CS&E) Model, adapted from Lee (2010)



## Observation

*Effective instructional supervisors conduct classroom observations of instructors' performance.*

Before effective instructional supervisors evaluate or give feedback to instructors, they conduct classroom observations (Lee, 2010). To begin the process, pre-observation conferences are held between instructional supervisors and each instructor they supervise. The purpose of these meetings is to build rapport between instructional supervisors and instructors, as well as to discuss specific areas of performance to be observed and evaluated. Instructional supervisors and instructors should agree on the criteria against which instructors will be evaluated, and additionally, instructors should be made aware that these criteria could be used to evaluate their performance in the classroom on any number of future announced and unannounced classroom observations (Marshall, 2005).

Upon completion of the pre-observation conferences, instructional supervisors observe instructors in the classroom. During these observations, supervisors collect as much useful information about the instructors' performance as possible to generate the most fair and accurate evaluations. In addition, supervisors take detailed notes regarding what the instructors and students said and did in the classroom (e.g., amount of target language speaking; Sidhu & Fook, 2010). After these observations, supervisors promptly schedule post-observation conferences with each instructor to discuss his or her strengths and areas for development discovered during the observations (Gebhard, 1990; Sidhu & Fook, 2010). Once complete, follow-up conferences are scheduled between supervisors and instructors to discuss next steps for performance improvement.

## Evaluation

*Effective instructional supervisors provide performance evaluations to instructors after classroom observations are conducted.*

While similar to observation, evaluation, the second key component of the CS&E model, is the process of forming judgments based on direct observations of instructor performance (Lee, 2010). To mitigate the potential for negative instructor attitudes towards the performance evaluation process, effective instructional supervisors provide frequent evaluations of instructors and if their time is limited, they enlist the assistance of other administrative staff members to provide these evaluations.

## Feedback

*Effective instructional supervisors provide both positive and constructive feedback to instructors, focus on behavior, rather than personal characteristics or traits, when providing feedback, involve instructors in the feedback process, and deliver feedback to instructors in a timely manner.*

The third key component of the CS&E model is feedback (Lee, 2010). According to Cleveland, Lim, and Murphy (2007), "The only task more difficult than *receiving* performance feedback is *giving* performance feedback" (p. 170). While the feedback process may seem complex and anxiety-provoking, effective instructional supervisors engage in a number of practices to simplify and enhance the feedback process.

### *Types of Feedback Provided*

The objective of the feedback provided by instructional supervisors to instructors should be to improve instructor performance. Accordingly, effective instructional supervisors provide both positive and constructive feedback to instructors, with constructive feedback delivered as an opportunity for learning (NAIS, 1990; Ninomiya, 1988). Both during the feedback process and throughout instructors' tenure, effective instructional supervisors provide positive feedback when high instructor performance is observed. Approximately 80% of this feedback should be positive, and instructor accomplishments should be discussed upfront in feedback delivery meetings (Berry, Cadwell, & Fehrmann, 1996).

In many instances, instructional supervisors will also have constructive feedback to provide to instructors. These areas for performance improvement should be discussed after positive feedback and accomplishments are discussed. Effective instructional supervisors provide constructive feedback in a manner that respects instructors' abilities (NAIS, 1990). When delivered effectively, this feedback develops trust and rapport between supervisors and instructors (Klein & Posey, 1986).

When providing constructive feedback to instructors, effective instructional supervisors focus on instructor behavior, as opposed to personality characteristics or traits; it may be easier for feedback recipients to focus on what they did or did not do, rather than who they are or are not, when identifying areas for performance improvement (Harms & Roebuck, 2010).

### *Instructor Involvement in Feedback Process*

Feedback has traditionally been considered a unidirectional process, through which supervisors provide suggestions for improvement to their employees; however, modern feedback systems involve employees as active participants in the feedback process, allowing them to voice their opinions and collaboratively set goals (Norris, 1991).

In the foreign language instructional context, instructors may desire to participate in the feedback process (Norris, 1991). Accordingly, effective instructional supervisors involve instructors in this process. This practice is supported by Ellermeyer (1992), who suggests instructors should be involved in all aspects of the feedback process, including the setting of metrics and goals against which instructors will be evaluated. This consultative process, known as participatory supervision or value-expressive feedback, can: (1) enable instructors to feel more comfortable about sharing their opinions regarding their performance, (2) build instructor ownership in the feedback process, (3) allow for greater acceptance of feedback by instructors, and (4) enhance perceptions of fairness regarding the feedback provided by supervisors (Cawley, Keeping, & Levy, 1998; Lizzio, Wilson, & MacKay, 2008; Schonberger, 2001).

One way effective instructional supervisors encourage instructor participation in the feedback process is by giving instructors an opportunity to reflect on their performance prior to formal feedback meetings. These self-reflections also allow instructors to gather their thoughts ahead of time, rather than thinking about them during feedback meetings, which can hinder their ability to listen to supervisor feedback (Harms & Roebuck, 2010).

### *Feedback Delivery*

Effective instructional supervisors keep the amount of time between classroom observations and formal feedback meetings as minimal as possible, with an ideal turnaround time of 24 hours. Effective supervisors also attempt to frequently deliver less formal feedback to instructors.

### **Summary**

Classroom or clinical supervision represents another set of behaviors that must be performed by instructional supervisors to be effective. These behaviors include conducting classroom observations of instructors' performance and providing performance evaluations and feedback to instructors after observations are conducted. When performed regularly and effectively, these behaviors provide ongoing opportunities for supervisors to support effective instruction in the classroom.

### **Other Effective Instructional Supervision Behaviors and Skills**

Along with administrative and classroom supervisory behaviors, effective instructional supervisors also engage in several other behaviors, such as: (1) engaging in professional development activities, (2) providing opportunities for instructors' professional development, (3) coaching and mentoring instructors, (4) and openly and honestly communicating with instructors. Both group process and effective communication skills enable instructional supervisors to engage more effectively in these behaviors.

### **Professional Development**

*Effective instructional supervisors engage in professional development activities and provide opportunities for instructors' professional development.*

Supervisors' professional development activities may involve reading articles, books, or websites to stay abreast of recent advances in their fields. They may also attend conferences, short courses, or workshops (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Supervisors also develop themselves professionally by networking with other professionals or by joining professional organizations, such as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Collectively, these activities help supervisors remain knowledgeable about and up-to-date on recent developments in their fields.

Much like supervisors, instructors can benefit by attending professional events and reading relevant research and best practices literature. To the extent possible, effective instructional supervisors provide instructors with opportunities for professional development. This may include funding professional development workshops or training for instructors or disseminating information to instructors about recent research findings or best practices.

### **Coaching and Mentoring**

*Effective instructional supervisors coach and mentor instructors.*

According to Gratton (2008), "One of the most crucial organizational levers in the creation of cooperative working environments and collaborative teams is managers who coach and mentor others by providing constant feedback on employee performance (p. 9)." In the foreign language instructional context, effective instructional supervisors maintain an open-door policy and are available when instructors need

to discuss challenges they are facing or concerns they have. Further, they share their expertise and resources with instructors to improve instructors' effectiveness in the classroom. For example, if an instructor is experiencing classroom management issues, his or her supervisor can provide suggestions and discuss potential solutions for remedying these issues. In the SOF IAT context, in particular, instructional supervisors can also help instructors understand the nuances of instructing in a military context, a context with which many instructors may be inexperienced and unfamiliar.

### **Open and Honest Communication**

*Effective instructional supervisors openly and honestly communicate with instructors.*

Instructors may be more likely to accept and internalize feedback in environments where open and honest discussion is encouraged. To that end, effective instructional supervisors foster this type of environment by openly and regularly communicating important information to the instructors they supervise.

### **Group Process Skills**

*Effective instructional supervisors possess group process skills.*

Group factors, such as size and span of supervisor control, can significantly impact supervisor-instructor relationships. One psychological concept known as *span of attention* states that the number of things a person can typically think about at one time is about seven (Entwisle & Walton, 1961). This concept suggests that for a supervisor to effectively manage a group of instructors, the number of people he or she is responsible for should be restricted to that approximate number. This finding is supported by Gittel (2001), who suggests that smaller group sizes are most effective because more time is available to be spent with each instructor. Although a supervisor's span of control may be out of his or her control, effective supervisors are aware of how span of control can affect their relationships with instructors.

Additionally, effective supervisors facilitate cooperative and non-confrontational relationships among their supervisees (Ninomoya, 1988; Waters et al., 2003). Effective supervisors do this through situational awareness and communication. Situational awareness involves being sensitive to the moods and attitudes of instructors, aware of informal groups and relationships among instructors, and aware of any potential issues that could create discord, such as cultural differences (Ninomoya, 1988; Waters et al., 2003).

### **Effective Communication Skills**

*Effective instructional supervisors possess effective communication skills.*

Effective supervisors are effective communicators. This means they are able to send and receive information in a way that it is understood by all parties involved (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2012; Pankake, Stewart, & Winn, 1990). To do this, effective supervisors facilitate two-way communication (Pankake et al., 1990). In addition, they are aware of factors such as varying experiences and values that could affect instructors' understanding and tailor their communication with instructors accordingly (Hughes et al., 2012). This may be especially challenging and important in SOF IAT environments, where instructional supervisors and instructors may not share the same primary language or culture.

Effective supervisors are also active listeners (Daft, 2008; Hughes et al., 2012; Thomas, 1974). Active listening involves focusing on what is being said and verifying the message was understood correctly by

asking questions, paraphrasing, and repeating the message back to the speaker (Daft, 2008; Hughes et al., 2012). Active listeners also pay attention to speakers' non-verbal cues, such as body language, tone, volume, and pace of speech, to attach meaning to messages that are received (Daft, 2008; Hughes et al., 2012; Thomas, 1974).

### **Summary**

Additional supervisory behaviors, such as coaching and mentoring instructors and openly and honestly communicating with them, enable instructional supervisors to be more effective in the administrative and classroom roles in which they serve. Supervisors' ability to engage in these and other effective instructional supervisory behaviors is further enhanced by possessing both group process and effective communication skills.

### **Instructional Supervisor Qualifications**

While much of the discussion thus far has focused on effective instructional supervisory behaviors and skills, it is also important to acknowledge the roles education and experience play in supervisory effectiveness. In this section, the education and experience requirements for the position of instructional supervisor are discussed to develop the reader's understanding of how these qualifications may be considered in supervisor selection, training, and development processes.

#### **Education**

To optimize their effectiveness, it may be preferred for instructional supervisors to hold Master's or Doctoral degrees in second language acquisition or instruction, education (e.g., adult education or andragogy), or in other relevant fields. Formal graduate-level education in these fields may bolster supervisors' ability to support their instructors' efforts in the classroom.

#### **Experience**

Along with education, another way to enhance instructional supervisory effectiveness is to hire and promote supervisors who possess relevant experience. Research indicates that experience can provide some prediction of future performance, particularly when the past experience closely matches the current job to be performed, as similarity allows for knowledge and skill transfer (Dokko, Wilk, & Rothbard, 2009; Quinones, Ford, & Teachout, 1995). In the SOF IAT context, three types of experience may be particularly relevant: (1) administrative, (2) instructional, and (3) military.

##### *Administrative Experience*

As discussed previously, effective instructional supervisors engage in a variety of administrative behaviors. If supervisory candidates have previous job-related or other relevant experience in administration or management, then these candidates may be better equipped to perform effectively in instructional supervisory roles.

### *Instructional Experience*

Given the roles instructional supervisors play in developing, coaching, and mentoring instructors, as well as their classroom responsibilities, it is imperative that supervisors have prior instructional experience. Without this experience, supervisors may not be considered credible by the instructors they supervise.

### *Experience in a Military Environment*

Even if instructional supervisors have relevant graduate degrees and both administrative and instructional experience, their effectiveness in the SOF IAT context may be limited if they do not have experience in a military environment or organization. There are many elements of the SOF IAT context that make it distinct from other foreign language training environments (e.g., training duration and contact hours). As such, supervisory candidates who possess an understanding of or prior experience in a military environment or organization may be preferred over candidates who do not possess this experience.

### **Summary**

Formal education in second language acquisition or instruction, education, or other relevant fields may optimize supervisor effectiveness in the foreign language instructional context. Likewise, prior administrative, instructional, and military experience may enhance supervisory effectiveness. As such, these qualifications must be taken into account when instructional supervisors are selected and training and development interventions for instructional supervisors are planned.

### **Conclusion**

Instructional supervision is focused on the improvement of instruction and learning outcomes (Gebhard, 1990; Glanz et al., 2007, April; Lunenberg, 1998; Neagley & Evans, 1980; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1998). To be effective, instructional supervisors must perform a number of administrative and classroom supervisory behaviors. Their effectiveness in these two behavioral categories may be further enhanced by engaging in additional effective behaviors, such as coaching and mentoring instructors, and by possessing relevant skills and qualifications, such as effective communication skills, graduate education in relevant fields, and administrative, instructional, and military experience.

In Section IV (pp. 23-43), these behaviors, skills, and qualifications are discussed in SOF IAT language schools and in other language schools external to the SOF IAT community.

## SECTION IV: SOF IAT CURRENT-STATE AND EXTERNAL BENCHMARKING STUDIES

### Purpose

The purpose of the SOF IAT current-state study was to identify instructional supervisory behaviors and practices currently used in SOF IAT language schools by interviewing SOF IAT language program administrators and language program vendors. Likewise, the purpose of the external benchmarking study was to identify instructional supervisory behaviors and practices currently used in language schools external to the SOF IAT community by interviewing administrators of these schools. Results from these studies will aid SOF IAT leadership, CLPMs, and instructional supervisors in maintaining and further developing effective instructional supervisory behaviors and practices in SOF IAT language schools.

### Research Areas and Questions

For both the SOF IAT current-state and external benchmarking studies, there were four primary research areas: (1) position of instructional supervisor, (2) relationships between instructional supervisors and instructors, (3) strategies and methods for instructional supervision, and (4) classroom observations and assessments. Research questions for each area included:

#### *Position of Instructional Supervisor*

- How many instructional supervisors are there in your language school or department?
- What are instructional supervisors' responsibilities?

#### *Relationships between Instructional Supervisors and Instructors*

- How many instructors does each supervisor supervise?
- What are some of the challenges supervisors face in working with instructors?

#### *Strategies and Methods for Instructional Supervision*

- What power or resources do supervisors have to help instructors improve?
- What strategies are used to motivate instructors?

#### *Classroom Observations and Assessments*

- Who conducts classroom observations?
- What occurs after an observation is conducted or an instructor is assessed?

In addition to these four research areas, two additional research areas were examined for the external benchmarking study: (1) language learning environment, and (2) language learners. These research areas were examined to determine how similar the external language schools were to the SOF IAT language schools. Research questions for these two areas included:

#### *Language Learning Environment*

- What is the course duration and total contact hours?
- What is the purpose for learning the language?

#### *Language Learners*

- What is the gender of most of the students here?
- Do most of the students have previous language learning experience (i.e., high school or college courses, other language learning programs)?

### **Main Findings**

After interviewing language program administrators and language program vendors from SOF IAT schools and administrators of language schools external to the SOF IAT community, interview responses were content-coded and analyzed to examine the similarities and differences between instructional supervisory behaviors and practices used in SOF IAT language schools and language schools external to the SOF IAT community. The main findings resulting from the SOF IAT current-state study are:

#### *Position of Instructional Supervisor*

- Consistent responsibilities of instructional supervisors across all SOF IAT language schools include training, mentoring, or orienting instructors, monitoring instructor performance, providing constructive feedback, and providing resources to instructors.
- Interpersonal, motivational, and communication skills were mentioned by SOF IAT interviewees as important for effective instructional supervision. In addition, content knowledge and English proficiency were also described as important for effective supervision. According to interviewees, being closed-minded, overly critical, or lacking interpersonal skills can hinder instructional supervisors' ability to work effectively with instructors.
- All SOF IAT participants reported that instructional experience is a required or preferred qualification for instructional supervisors; however, the reported minimum years of instructional experience for SOF IAT instructional supervisors ranged from 0-5. Previous instructional experience in a military environment or organization is also preferred.

#### *Relationships between Instructional Supervisors and Instructors*

- The number of instructional supervisors in each SOF IAT language school is similar across all components interviewed, but there is a wide range in the number of instructors per supervisor. The reported range of instructors per supervisor was as low as 5-10 and as high as 35.

- Common challenges SOF IAT instructional supervisors encounter when working with instructors include instructors' unwillingness to learn or cooperate and their lack of cultural understanding.

#### *Strategies and Methods for Instructional Supervision*

- In SOF IAT language schools, instructional supervisors use current literature, additional training, discussions with instructors and attendance at professional conferences to stay informed of current best practices for instruction.
- Instructional supervisors in SOF IAT can recommend or direct instructors to resources, such as online resources, computer software, and professional development opportunities. Most supervisors interviewed indicated they know of these resources either through personal experience or their own research.
- Instructional supervisors can also introduce or encourage the use of particular models of instruction in the classroom. In the SOF IAT context, the models promoted are primarily communicative, task-based, and learner-centered.
- Within SOF IAT language schools, instructional supervisors motivate instructors by providing them with professional development opportunities and performance feedback and by showing instructors their appreciation for a job well done.

#### *Classroom Observations and Assessments*

- SOF IAT participants stated that instructional supervisors observe each instructor at least twice per course, with some reporting four or more visits during each course. Most participants indicated that frequency varies depending on instructor tenure; less-tenured instructors are observed more frequently than longer-tenured instructors.
- Instructional supervisors in all SOF IAT language schools observe low-performing instructors more frequently than high-performing instructors. This also varies as a function of instructor tenure.
- All SOF IAT participants stated that the classroom observations are usually scheduled (or announced) and that instructors are forewarned of supervisors' attendance.
- The length of classroom observations varies across SOF IAT language schools. The average length of an observation is one hour.
- Performance standards used as metrics during observations at SOF IAT language schools are most frequently derived from instructors' previous performance evaluations.
- After classroom observations are conducted, notes or scores are reviewed with instructors, and instructors have an opportunity to dispute or explain anything their supervisors observed. Following that, some participants mentioned that improvement plans are collaboratively developed by instructors and supervisors, and others mentioned creating reports covering the observations and their outcomes.

## Method

### Participant Identification

To conduct interviews for both the SOF IAT current-state and external benchmarking studies, it was first necessary to identify participants to be contacted.

#### *SOF IAT Current-State Study*

For the current-state study, SOF IAT language program administrators (Table 1, p. 28) and current SOF IAT language program vendors (Table 2, p. 28) for the following five SOF IAT language schools were identified:

- Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC)
- Naval Special Warfare (WARCOM)
- SWCS Basic Language Course (BLC)
- SWCS Intermediate Language Course (ILC)
- U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC)

Across the five SOF IAT language schools, 11 language program administrators and 12 current language program vendors were identified to request their participation in the SOF IAT current-state study.

#### *External Benchmarking Study*

For the external benchmarking study, administrators from language schools external to the SOF IAT community were identified to participate in an interview regarding instructional supervisory behaviors and practices currently used in their language schools. These language schools were selected for participation based on a number of relevant criteria, such as their reputations in the fields of second language acquisition and education and their similarity to the SOF IAT context. A total of 22 language schools were identified (Table 3, p. 29). For nine of these language schools, multiple points of contact (POCs) were identified. Thus, the total number of POCs identified to request their participation in the external benchmarking study was 35.

### Participant Contact

Participants who were identified for both the current-state and external benchmarking studies were initially contacted via email to request their participation in an hour-long telephone interview conducted by an SWA researcher. The email detailed the intent of the study and included a statement regarding how SWA researchers would use the data collected during the interviews.

A formal letter, individually addressed to each participant, was attached to the e-mail each participant received. Slightly different versions of this letter were created for individuals in each of the three participant groups: (1) SOF IAT language program administrators (Appendix A, pp. 55-57), (2) SOF IAT language program vendors (Appendix B, pp. 58-60), and (3) administrators from language schools external to the SOF IAT community (Appendix C, pp. 61-63).

Each letter contained a uniform resource locator (URL) for an online interest survey. By completing this interest survey, each participant would indicate his or her interest in participating in the study and general availability for the interview. Participants who did not respond to the online interest survey within several business days were contacted again via email to request their participation.

## **Interview Protocol Development and Participation**

### *Interview Protocol Development*

The interview protocols for both the current-state (Appendix D, pp. 64-67) and external benchmarking studies (Appendix E, pp. 68-74) were developed by SWA researchers expressly for these studies. The protocols were based on a systematic review of theoretical, empirical, and best practices literature in the fields of education, psychology, second language acquisition, and training (Section III, pp. 11-22). These reviews allowed SWA researchers to identify a list of effective instructional supervisory behaviors, skills, and qualifications; from this list, interview questions were developed. This approach to interview question creation allowed SWA researchers to compare instructional supervisory behaviors and practices currently used in SOF IAT language schools to practices recommended in the literature on this topic, as well as to practices currently used in language schools external to the SOF IAT community.

Upon completion, the interview protocols for both the current-state and external benchmarking studies were submitted to the Deputy Chief of FMD-J9 for an independent review of the studies' exemption qualification. Under Title 32, §219 of the Code of Federal Regulations from the Department of Defense Instruction 3216.02, these studies qualified as exempt because the information interviewees provided is not published in this report showing how specific individuals responded, identities are protected, and groupings of responses by external organization (for the external benchmarking study) are not shown.

For the current-state and external benchmarking studies, the interview protocols included greetings, introductory statements, interview questions, and closing statements. Though the interview questions for both the current-state and external benchmarking studies were largely the same, the interview protocol for the external benchmarking study included two additional sets of questions pertaining to the language learning environment and language learners.

### *Interview Participation*

After developing the interview protocols and contacting individuals in the three participant groups, telephone interviews were scheduled with interested participants in accordance with their availability. For each telephone interview that was conducted, there was one interviewer and one scribe from SWA.

A total of 22 interviews were conducted across the three participant groups. Thus, of the 58 individuals contacted, 37.93% actually participated in interviews (Table 4, p. 30). By participant group, the highest rate of participation was in the SOF IAT language program administrators group ( $n = 8$ ; 72.72%).

Table 1. Current-State Study Participation by SOF IAT Language Program Administrators by Component

SOF IAT Component	Number Contacted	Number Interested	Number Interviewed
AFSOC	2	2	1
MARSOC	2	2	2
SWCS BLC	4 <sup>1</sup>	3	3
SWCS ILC	2	1	1
WARCOM	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>

<sup>1</sup>This number includes two SWCS BLC Department Chairs. The third SWCS BLC Department Chair was contacted to participate, but her email was returned.

Table 2. Current-State Study Participation by SOF IAT Language Program Vendors by Component

SOF IAT Component	Vendor Name ( <i>Number Contacted</i> )	Number Interested	Number Interviewed
AFSOC	Defense Language Institute ( <i>1</i> )	1	1
MARSOC	Comprehensive Language Center, Inc. ( <i>1</i> ); Defense Language Institute ( <i>2</i> )	2	2
SWCS BLC	North Carolina State University ( <i>1</i> ); Comprehensive Language Center, Inc. ( <i>2</i> )	1	1
SWCS ILC	Defense Language Institute ( <i>2</i> ); Diplomatic Language Services ( <i>2</i> )	2	2
WARCOM	Group SSI Inc. ( <i>1</i> )	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>

Table 3. External Benchmarking Study Participation by Administrators of Language Schools External to SOF IAT

External Language School	Number Contacted	Number Interested	Number Interviewed
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages	1	0	0
Brigham Young University	1	0	0
Center for Applied Linguistics	2	0	0
Concordia Language Villages	2	1	1
Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center	3	0	0
Defense Language Institute Washington Office	1	0	0
Flagship National Security Education Program Headquarters	1	0	0
Florida State University	1	0	0
Foreign Service Institute	2	0	0
Language Acquisition Resource Center, San Diego State University	3	3	2
Lauder Institute, University of Pennsylvania	1	0	0
Michigan State University	1	0	0
Middlebury College	2	1	1
Monterey Institute of International Studies	1	0	0
National Foreign Language Center	2	0	0
National Security Agency	4	0	0
Stanford Language Institute	1	1	1
United States Air Force Academy	1	1	1
United States Military Academy at West Point	1	1	1
University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign	2	1	1
University of Montana	1	0	0
Washington University	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>

Table 4. Interview Interest and Participation Rates by Participant Group

<b>Participant Group</b>	<b>Number Interested (Interest Response Rate)</b>	<b>Number Interviewed (Interview Participation Rate)<sup>1</sup></b>
SOF IAT Language Program Administrators	9 (75%)	8 (72.72%)
SOF IAT Language Program Vendors	6 (50%)	6 (50%)
Administrators at Language Schools External to SOF IAT	9 (25.71%)	8 (22.86%)
<b>Overall</b>	<b>24 (41.38%)</b>	<b>22 (37.93%)</b>

<sup>1</sup>The interview participation rates by participant group represent the percentage of the total number of participants in that group who were initially contacted who actually participated interviews. For example, 11 SOF IAT language program administrators were initially contacted to participate in interviews and eight (72.72%) of these individuals actually participated in interviews.

## Results

Results of the interviews conducted for both the SOF IAT current-state and external benchmarking studies are presented in five sections. For these results, the responses provided by SOF IAT language program administrators and SOF IAT language program vendors for each language school were combined; likewise, the responses provided by administrators of language schools external to the SOF IAT community were also combined. Interview responses from SOF IAT language program administrators and SOF IAT language program vendors were analyzed together; there were too few responses within each language school to allow for separate analyses by administrators and vendors within each language school. In general, results are presented by SOF IAT language school and across all language schools that participated in the external benchmarking study.

Part I presents information provided by administrators from language schools external to the SOF IAT community. This section focuses on language learners and the language learning environment and contains three additional sections: (1) purpose for learning the language, (2) course duration and frequency of class meetings, and (3) proficiency assessments. These findings are presented to allow the reader to judge the similarities and differences between external language schools interviewed for the external benchmarking study and SOF IAT language schools interviewed for the current-state study. The results presented in Part I should be used to caveat the findings presented in Parts II-V, particularly when the language learners and language learning environments of the external language schools differed substantially from the SOF IAT language schools.

Part II focuses on the position of instructional supervisor. This section presents results from both the SOF IAT current-state and external benchmarking studies and contains two sections: (1) responsibilities, and (2) instructional supervisory qualifications (i.e., language proficiency and cultural expertise, content knowledge, instructional experience, administrative experience, qualities of effective instructional supervisors, and other qualifications). These findings are presented to inform the reader about supervisors' responsibilities in SOF IAT language schools and external language schools, as well as the qualifications that enhance supervisors' ability to effectively perform these responsibilities.

Part III examines relationships between supervisors and instructors. This section presents results from both the SOF IAT current-state and external benchmarking studies and contains two sections: (1) ratio of instructors to supervisors, and (2) challenges in working with instructors.

Part IV describes strategies and methods for instructional supervision used in both SOF IAT language schools and language schools external to the SOF IAT community. This section contains three sections: (1) professional development (for both instructional supervisors and instructors), (2) models of instruction, and (3) instructor motivation.

Part V summarizes information about classroom observations and assessments, such as who conducts observations, how often observations are conducted, and how long observations are. Observing and assessing foreign language instructors in their classrooms are two of the main responsibilities instructional supervisors have in both SOF IAT and external language schools.

## Part I: Language Learners and Language Learning Environment

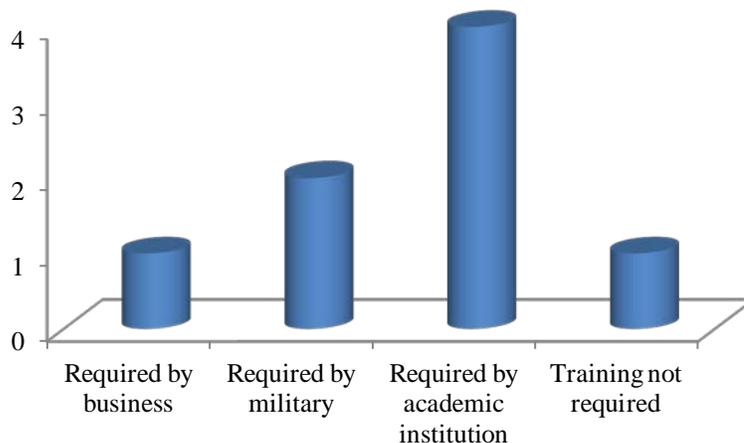
When asked about language learners and the language learning environment in their schools, administrators from external language schools described learner characteristics and learning environments that differed somewhat from SOF IAT language schools.

- *Native language and previous language experience.* In the areas of student native language and previous language experience, there were no differences between participant groups; for the majority of language learners, their native language was English and they had at least some prior language training, such as high school courses.
- *Gender.* The gender of the students varied across participant groups, with external language schools reporting a predominantly female population, and SOF IAT language schools reporting a majority male population.
- *Industry.* There was substantial variability in the responses provided by external language school administrators in terms of the industry in which their students were employed. Students in language schools external to the SOF IAT community were employed in many different industries, including education, business, and medical fields. Further results should be interpreted with this difference in mind, as the industries in which these students were employed could impact their purposes for language learning.

### *Purpose for Language Learning*

In six of the seven external language schools, administrators reported students were required to take the courses, either by their academic institutions ( $n = 4$ ), the military ( $n = 2$ ), or business employers ( $n = 1$ ; Figure 3, p. 32). In the remaining external language school, administrators indicated students were enrolled in language learning of their own volition. Some examples of these voluntary learners were those who took courses for their own self-improvement purposes and those who were training to fulfill elective academic credits.

Figure 3. Purpose for Language Learning in External Language Schools

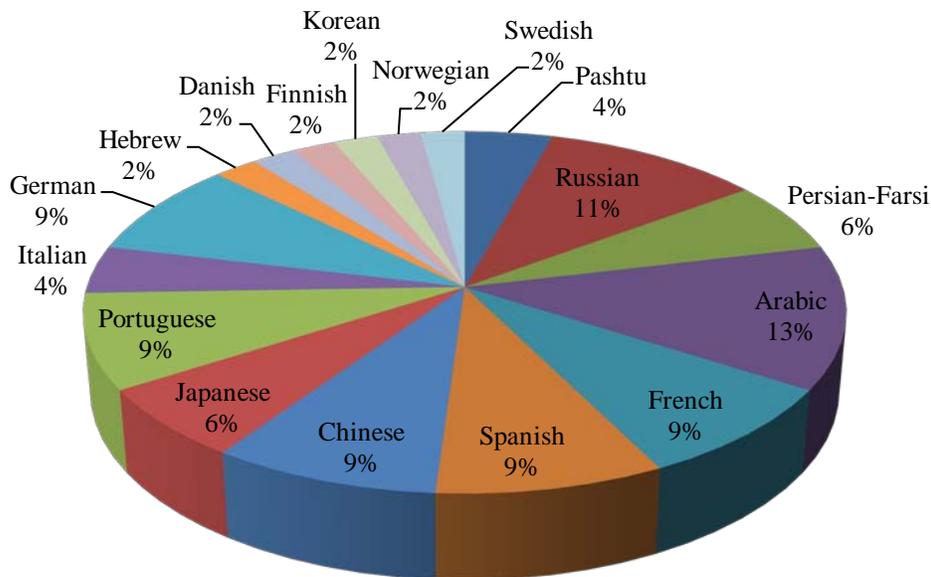


Administrators from external language schools were asked to provide an assessment of their students' motivation to learn their languages. Although one might assume learners who are required to take language courses may be less motivated than voluntary learners, reports from external administrators revealed that was not the case. According to these administrators, motivation was high for students in these language schools, regardless of whether or not the courses were required. Of those who provided responses, 83% ( $n = 5$ ) indicated students in their language schools were highly motivated to learn their languages. Motivation levels varied based on language, course level, and industry of employment.

#### *Course Duration and Frequency of Class Meetings*

Language schools external to the government offered courses in many of the languages currently taught within the SOF IAT community (Figure 4, p. 33). The number of languages offered varied greatly between these schools; administrators stated their respective language schools had between 4-40 different language offerings, with most schools offering about eight languages. Across all external language schools interviewed, Arabic (13%) and Russian (11%) were the most commonly reported language offerings, followed by Chinese (9%), French (9%), Portuguese (9%), and Spanish (9%).

*Figure 4. Languages Offered in Language Schools External to SOF*



For many of the external language schools interviewed, the duration of training varied in accordance with the languages being taught. In the SOF IAT community, languages are divided into categories (i.e., Cat I, II, III, and IV) based on difficulty for a native English speaker. The majority of the external schools interviewed offered an approximately even split between Cat I/II and Cat III/IV languages.

Certain external language schools also offered iso-immersion programs, and these immersion programs ranged between one weekend and four weeks in length, based on language difficulty and student need.

Other external language schools followed a more traditional academic schedule, with courses lasting one semester and meeting either three or five days a week for one to a few hours per class meeting. Regardless of the variation, seven of the eight external language program administrators stated that course duration and frequency of class meetings differed based on language difficulty and course level.

### *Proficiency Assessments*

The timing of proficiency estimations relative to course progress varied greatly across language schools external to SOF IAT. Six of the seven external schools who provided a response administered some form of proficiency test at the end of language training. However, only three of the schools did proficiency assessments at the beginning, in the middle, *and* at the end of training. The three remaining external language schools assessed student proficiency twice per course (i.e., one assessment at the end of training and one at another time during the course).

In general, external language schools interviewed for the benchmarking study did not necessarily have specific targeted proficiency levels students were expected to attain by the end of training. However, incoming proficiency levels of the students often affected when assessments were administered. External administrators who stated their schools predominantly enrolled students at beginner levels of proficiency did not administer assessments before training began. In contrast, schools with a range of incoming student proficiency levels reported administering assessments at all three time points (i.e., before, during, and at the end of language training).

## **Part II: Position of Instructional Supervisor**

### *Responsibilities*

In both SOF IAT and external language schools, instructional supervisors have a diverse set of responsibilities. Participants in both the current-state and external benchmarking studies were asked about instructional supervisors' responsibilities. For language schools external to the SOF IAT community, all interviewees indicated that supervisors in their organizations monitor instructor performance, provide constructive feedback to instructors, provide resources to instructors, and develop curriculum (Figure 5, p. 35). This is similar to SOF IAT language schools in that all schools' supervisors monitor instructor performance, provide constructive feedback to instructors, and provide resources to instructors (Table 5, p. 35). However, differences lie in that SOF IAT respondents unanimously indicated that their instructional supervisors also train, mentor, and orient instructors, but they do not all develop curriculum. The other responsibilities of instructional supervisors vary across organizations interviewed for both the current-state and benchmarking studies.

Figure 5. Responsibilities of Instructional Supervisors in External Language Schools

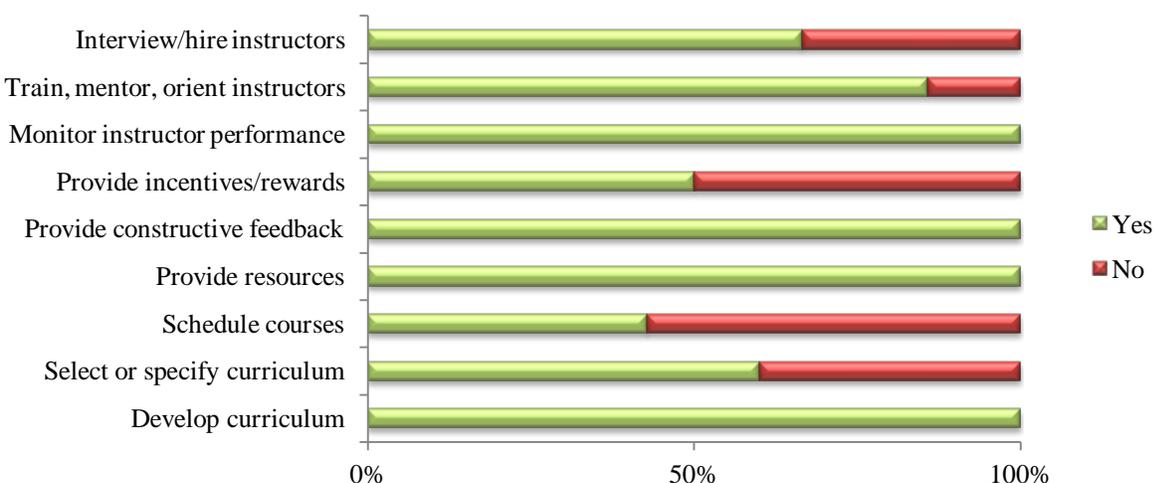


Table 5. Responsibilities of Instructional Supervisors by SOF IAT Language School

Responsibilities	AFSOC	MARSOC	SWCS BLC	SWCS ILC	WARCOM
Interview/hire instructors	Yes	Yes	Yes	Split	No
Train, mentor, orient instructors	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Monitor instructor performance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Provide incentives/rewards	Split	No	Yes	Split	No
Provide constructive feedback	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Provide resources	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Schedule courses	Split	No	Split	No	N/A
Select or specify curriculum	Yes	No	Yes	Split	No
Develop curriculum	Split	Yes	No	No	No
Lead meetings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Split	N/A

Note. Split responses indicate disagreement between interviewees from that language school. N/A = No answer.

There were other key differences between participating language schools, aside from instructional supervisors' responsibilities. For example, instructional supervisory positions were structured differently in the language schools interviewed, in terms of organizational level and reporting relationships. Instructional supervisors in SOF IAT schools report to government superiors, contract vendor superiors, or both, whereas in external language schools, supervisors reported to anyone from a program director to a school dean. Some of the differences in responsibilities across SOF IAT and external language schools could be the result of the placement of instructional supervisory positions within their respective organizational structures. Differences could also be a result of differences in the relationship between the

component and its vendors. Some vendors require their instructors be managed by only vendor instructional supervisors, while vendors at other components may work more collaboratively with government instructional supervisors, and the responsibilities will be more balanced between vendor and government instructional supervisors.

### *Instructional Supervisory Qualifications*

*Language proficiency and cultural expertise.* Participants in both the SOF IAT current-state and external benchmarking studies were asked about the importance of language proficiency, cultural expertise, and English proficiency to instructional supervisory effectiveness (Table 6, p. 36). Overall, though several participants did indicate that language proficiency is important to instructional supervisory effectiveness, the general consensus is that cultural expertise is more important than language proficiency, particularly when supervisors manage instructors in languages in which they are not proficient. If a supervisor respects and understands instructors and their ethnic and cultural backgrounds, then the ability to speak their language is less crucial to supervisory effectiveness. Further, rather than having supervisors who are proficient in multiple languages, most participants indicated they would prefer to have supervisors who can effectively communicate with their colleagues in English.

*Table 6.* Importance of Language and Cultural Proficiency to Supervisory Effectiveness

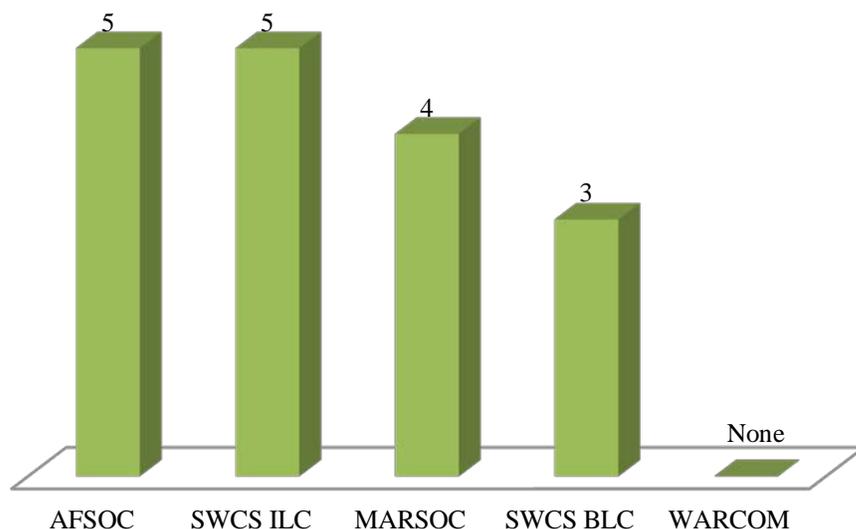
Is it important to have supervisors who are proficient in:	AFSOC	MARSOC	SWCS BLC	SWCS ILC	WARCOM	External
Other languages?	Mixed	No	No	Yes	No	Mixed
Other cultures?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
English?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Note.* A response of Mixed indicates there was no clear consensus among participants from that language school.

*Content knowledge.* Participants in both the SOF IAT current-state and external benchmarking studies indicated that content knowledge of second language acquisition or education is important to instructional supervisory effectiveness.

*Instructional experience.* Participants from all language schools (i.e., SOF IAT and external language schools) indicated their instructional supervisors were once instructors. In the SOF IAT language schools, in particular, the requirements for minimum years of instructional experience differ from one language school to another (Figure 6, p. 37).

Figure 6. Minimum Years of Instructional Experience for Instructional Supervisors



*Administrative experience.* In addition to prior instructional experience, participants were also asked about the typical background of instructional supervisors in their language schools. Of the external language school administrators who responded to this question, 100% ( $n = 3$ ) indicated their supervisors also had prior experience as administrators. This is almost identical to the responses provided by SOF IAT participants, 86% ( $n = 7$ ) of whom also said their instructional supervisors were once administrators.

*Qualities of effective instructional supervisors.* Participants were asked to reflect on examples of effective and ineffective instructional supervision. In describing these examples, participants highlighted a plethora of effective and ineffective supervisory qualities and skills. Specific to SOF IAT participants, leadership skills and effective communication skills were listed as highly important to supervisory effectiveness. SOF IAT participants also reported that motivational skills and the accessibility of supervisors are important, while none of the external language schools mentioned them as important.

For both the current state and benchmarking studies, some of the most frequently mentioned skills for effective supervision included mentorship abilities, interpersonal skills, cultural understanding, and pedagogical skill, while being closed-minded, overly critical, or lacking interpersonal skills were commonly described in examples of ineffective instructional supervision.

*Requirements.* When asked about degree or educational requirements for instructional supervisors, there was very little consistency in responses. Of the 12 responses from SOF IAT current-state participants, Master's degree was the most frequently mentioned qualification ( $n = 6$ ), followed by teaching experience and a background in education. The next most common responses from SOF IAT participants were management or business experience ( $n = 3$ ) and experience in the areas of languages, culture, literature, or linguistics ( $n = 3$ ). Surprisingly, previous experience with SOCOM or other military was noted only once as a requirement for instructional supervisors in SOF IAT language schools.

The qualifications for instructional supervisors in external language schools differed from those in SOF IAT language schools; a minimum Doctoral degree was mentioned in two-thirds of responses in the

benchmarking study ( $n = 4$ ). The next most common requirement was target language proficiency, with 50% ( $n = 3$ ) of interviewees reporting that instructional supervisors must be native speakers of, or have very high proficiency in, their target language.

### Part III: Relationships between Instructional Supervisors and Instructors

#### *Ratio of Instructors to Supervisors*

While interview participants from SOF IAT language schools reported having between 1-5 instructional supervisors for each language school, there is a wide range for the number of instructors per supervisor (Table 7, p. 38). MARSOC reported the smallest ratio, with each instructional supervisor responsible for 5-10 instructors. The most extreme case was reported by SWCS ILC, where each instructional supervisor is responsible for approximately 35 instructors. SOF IAT interviewees reported spending about 30 minutes one-on-one with each instructor per week. The range of responses from external language schools was too large to be comparable to SOF IAT language schools.

Table 7. Number of SOF IAT Instructional Supervisors and Instructors per Supervisor

	Number of Supervisors	Number of Instructors per Supervisor
AFSOC	1	10
MARSOC	3	5-10
SWCS BLC	3	10-28
SWCS ILC	5	up to 35
WARCOM	3	17

According to all participants from SOF IAT and external language schools, instructional supervisors predominantly supervise instructors of only one type (e.g., government service [GS] or contract, full-time or part-time, Master's degree or Doctoral degree). In SOF IAT language schools, 91% ( $n = 10$ ) reported their supervisors are responsible for only one type of instructor (e.g., GS). This is not necessarily viewed as positive, since within one component, there is usually a mix of GS and contract instructors. Since each type must have their own supervisor, inconsistencies can arise. One SOF IAT interviewee said, "Ideally, we would have just one type of employee...and that way they can be the supervisor for every type of instructor to ensure all instructors have the same type of training."

#### *Challenges in Working with Instructors*

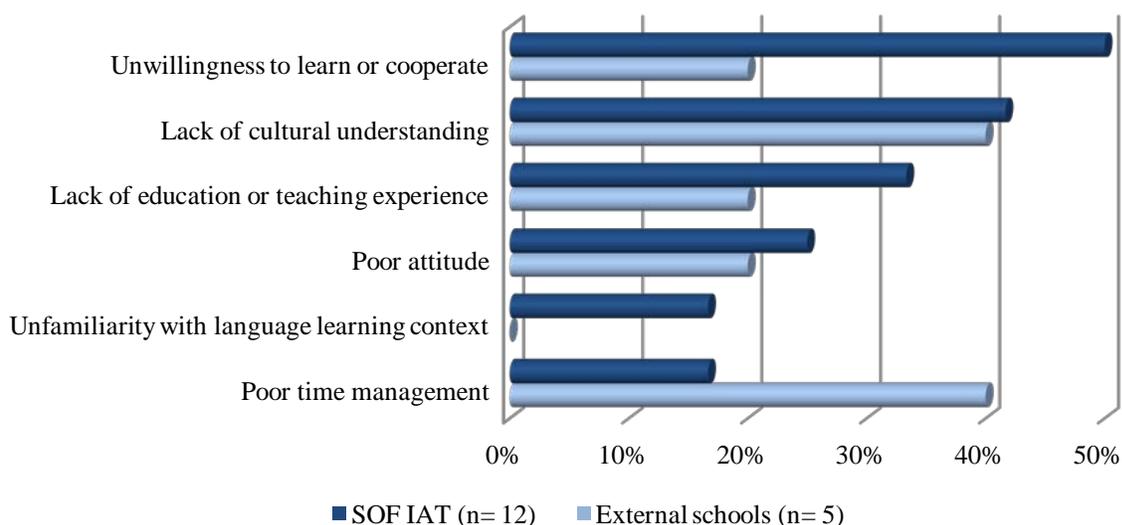
Instructional supervisors may encounter a number of challenges while working with foreign language instructors. In general, interviewees from both participant groups (i.e., SOF IAT schools and external language schools) mentioned the same challenges faced by their instructional supervisors while working with instructors (Figure 7, p. 39).

The challenge described most often by SOF IAT participants was working with instructors who are uncooperative or unwilling to learn or adapt to new ways of teaching their classes. An example response

from a SOF IAT interviewee says, “the [vendor] instructors come in thinking they know everything already.” Also, instructors’ inexperience or lack of familiarity with teaching in a military environment was mentioned as a challenge by 23% ( $n = 3$ ) of the SOF IAT participants. This can be due to the fact that vendors are used to supply instructors, and therefore they may have never taught in a military training environment. One respondent said, “They don’t know how the government system works,” and another commented that it takes supervisors “a good 12 months to help that [instructor] adapt to the environment.”

Both SOF IAT participants and administrators from external language schools frequently listed lack of cultural understanding as a challenge faced by their instructional supervisors. Instructors’ lack of cultural understanding can affect their supervisors’ ability to provide help or advice to their instructors. It could also be the cause of conflict between instructors. One interviewee described the difficulty of supervising such an instructor: “If their culture, particularly their professional culture of origin, is very different from Western culture, it’s a challenge to get used to teaching and working in a Western culture.”

Figure 7. Challenges Faced by Instructional Supervisors while Working with Instructors



#### Part IV: Strategies and Methods for Instructional Supervision

*Professional development.* To be effective, instructional supervisors must engage in their own professional development. Supervisors must stay up-to-date on the latest research findings on and current best practices for second language acquisition. If they do, then they will be better able to support instructors’ efforts in the classroom and evaluate instructors’ performance. Examples of professional development activities engaged in by instructional supervisors in both SOF IAT and external language schools included reading current research and best practices literature, receiving additional training, and attending professional conferences.

Effective instructional supervisors also provide opportunities for instructors’ professional development. Across both SOF IAT and external language schools, instructional supervisors suggested or provided instructors with supplemental resources and professional development opportunities. These resources and

opportunities are often identified by supervisors through their research and personal experience. In SOF IAT language schools, some participants stated that resources are occasionally requested by their language schools or are recommended by the government.

*Models of instruction.* Interestingly, the models of instruction supervisors encourage their instructors to use in the classroom do not differ between SOF IAT language schools and external language schools. The most commonly mentioned models are communicative, task-based, and learner-centered.

*Instructor motivation.* One area in which SOF IAT schools and external language schools operate differently is instructor motivation. Due to the traditional academic nature of the external language schools, the need for supervisors to motivate their instructors is not the same as in SOF IAT language schools. Only two external language school administrators indicated instructional supervisors in their schools play a role in instructor motivation.

Within the SOF IAT language schools, many strategies or methods for motivating instructors were described. For example, supervisors can motivate their instructors by providing professional development opportunities or offering to send them to training events, such as courses and workshops. They also motivate instructors by providing them with feedback and communicating their appreciation for a job well done. Several of the SOF IAT participants indicated that instructors in their language schools were intrinsically motivated by students' drive to learn the languages to which they have been assigned.

However, instructor motivation is one area in which there may be contract issues. For GS instructors, training can be used as a motivator for instructors. But one SOF IAT interviewee said, "depending on the contractor, and frankly the way the contract is written, the government cannot train the contractors." Similarly, another interviewee spoke about the professional development opportunities for contractor instructors: "There is a lot more that could be done, but the way their contracts are set up, they don't get paid for them." This one difference prohibits SOF IAT instructional supervisors from using a potentially powerful motivator with some instructors (i.e., professional development).

## **Part V: Classroom Observations and Assessments**

As noted previously, participants from all of the SOF IAT language schools indicated instructional supervisors are responsible for monitoring instructors' performance. One way in which instructional supervisors accomplish this is by conducting classroom observations and providing performance evaluations and feedback to instructors after observations are conducted. As is reflected in Table 8 (p. 41), these practices may differ markedly between SOF IAT language schools. Due to the wide variety of external language schools interviewed, those practices also differed greatly, to the point where presentation of results is not tenable.

The duration of language training differs across participating organizations, so the frequency with which supervisors made classroom observations also varied. Most participants stated that supervisors in their language schools visited each instructor at least once during the course, with some reporting four or more visits to each instructor's classroom during each course. Most of the participants indicated that the frequency of observation varies significantly depending on instructor tenure. Once instructors have gone several years with good or satisfactory reviews, it is less and less likely they will be observed and assessed with the same frequency as newer instructors. Similarly, in all language schools interviewed,

lower-performing instructors were observed and assessed more often than their higher-performing colleagues. If an instructor is not performing well, supervisors in both SOF IAT and external language schools tend to devote more time to observe and assist that instructor.

Best practices literature on whether classroom observations should be announced or unannounced is mixed. Of the language schools that participated in both the SOF IAT current-state and external benchmarking studies, most reported that they do, generally, give advance warning to instructors prior to conducting classroom observations.

*Table 8. Classroom Observations and Assessments*

Practices	AFSOC	MARSOC	SWCS BLC	SWCS ILC	WARCOM
Who conducts observations?	Supervisors	Supervisors and instructors	Supervisors (Department Chairs)	Supervisors	Instructors
How often are they conducted?	2 times per course	2 times per course	2 times per course	4+ times per course	3 times per course
Are they announced, unannounced, or both?	Announced	Both	Both	Announced	Announced
How long are they?	Part of a class session	Full class session	One hour	One hour	Full class session
Are high-performing instructors observed as often as low-performing instructors?	No	No	No	No	No

*Note.* The frequency of classroom observations varies for WARCOM based on instructor tenure. The figure represented here is for an instructor's first year of teaching.

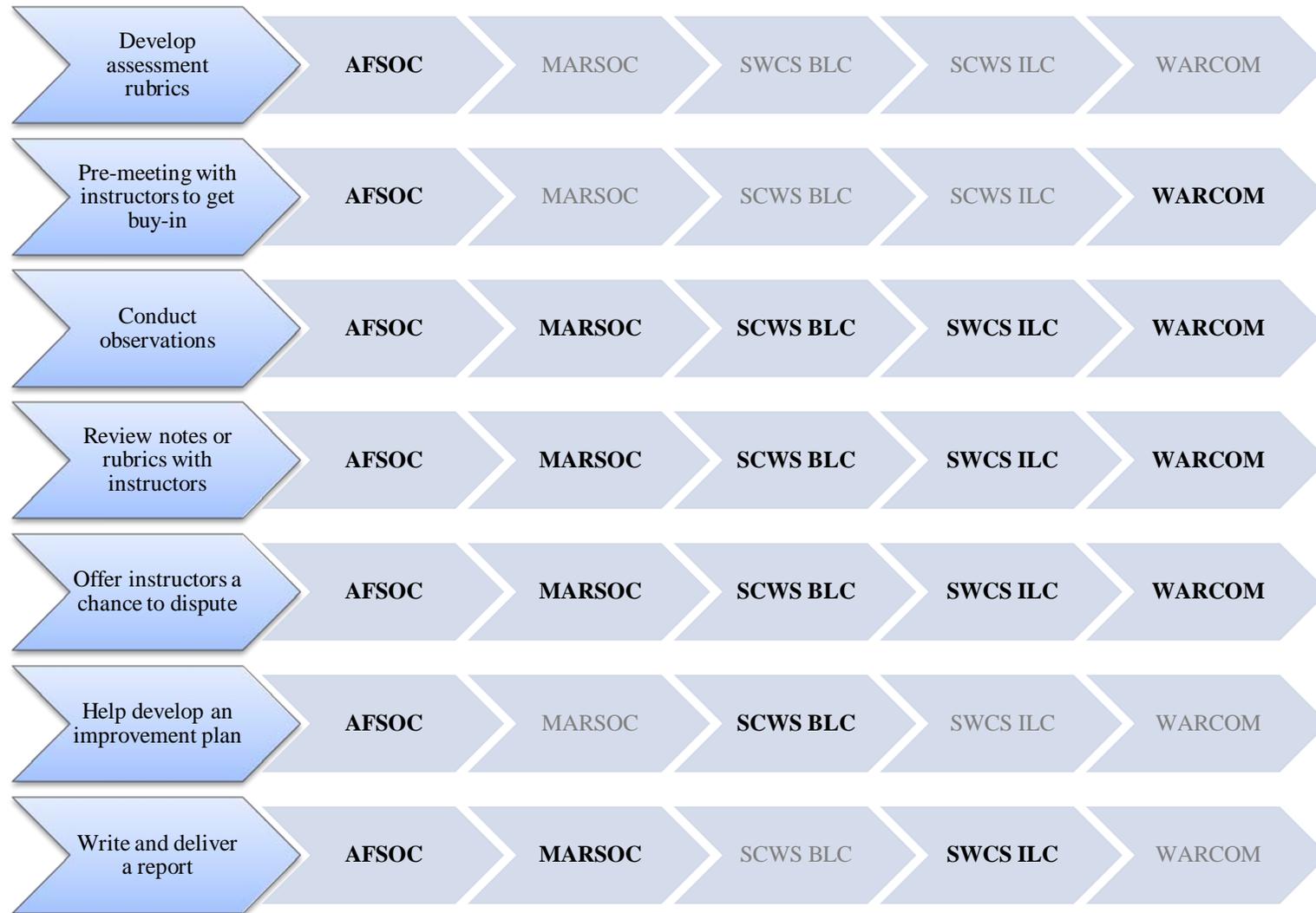
Other characteristics of classroom observations were discussed in interviews, including the length of a single observation. Time spent in the classroom can vary from one observation to another, even within the same SOF IAT language school. Many times, this is based on instructor tenure; those who have been teaching within the SOF IAT community longer are observed less frequently and their observations are not as long as less-tenured instructors.

The process of classroom observations is inconsistent across SOF IAT language schools, although the main elements are the same. The performance standards used to evaluate instructors most often come from instructors' previous performance reviews, both in external language schools (60%) and in SOF IAT language schools (45%). Also, there are many standard steps in a classroom observation and assessment process, derived from literature on the topic. Figure 8 (p. 43) illustrates the possible steps involved in a classroom observation process, and bold text indicates which of the organizations interviewed utilize each step. Instructional supervisors in all SOF IAT language schools meet with the observed instructor at some point after the assessment has taken place. In that meeting, instructors have the opportunity to dispute or explain anything the supervisor noted. Afterwards, some participants reported supervisors will help instructors develop individual improvement plans, including the timing of the next observations conducted by their supervisors. Also, after these post-observation meetings with instructors, some

supervisors will write reports describing the findings from their observations and evaluations. Some of the differences in the observation processes across components may be a result of the relationship with that component's vendor(s). One interviewee comment illustrates how the contract instructors are affected by this challenge, saying that after a classroom observation, "the instructor will come by and ask what they did well or poorly, and [the instructional supervisor] says that he can't tell them directly, but that he...will give a report to their manager and the manager gets to decide what to share with them." Therefore, even if a government instructional supervisor can and does observe contract instructors in their classrooms, the results of these observations must be given to managers on the contract side, and there are no guarantees contract instructors will receive the assessment feedback.

To mitigate the challenges of government/vendor relationships faced by instructional supervisors, SOF IAT interviewees reported that instructional supervisors pursue whatever avenues currently available to ensure trainees receive the best possible instruction. "When [supervisor] saw a problem on the observation, talked to [vendor] instead of to instructor, and they take care of it." This statement is an example of instructional supervisors doing what they can to pass information along, despite not being able to directly manage contract instructors.

Figure 8. SOF IAT Language School Participation in Classroom Observation and Assessment Stages



## SECTION V: ANALYSIS OF GAPS BETWEEN CURRENT AND DESIRED STATES

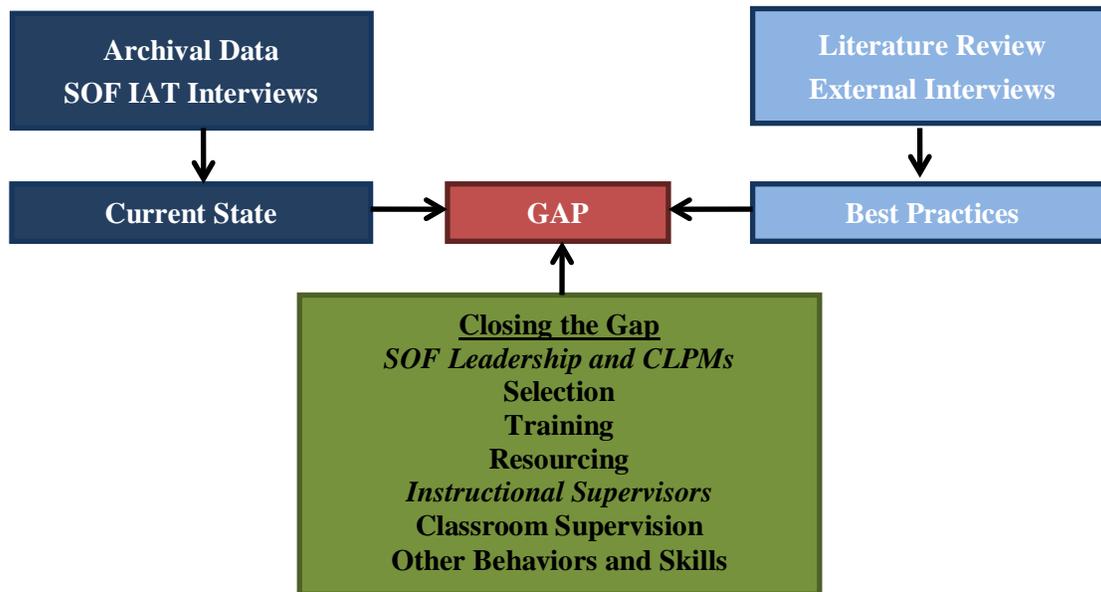
### Purpose

The purpose of this section is to identify gaps between current and desired states of instructional supervision in SOF IAT language schools. These gaps were identified by comparing instructional supervisory behaviors, skills, and qualifications currently used in SOF IAT language schools to those identified in the theoretical, empirical, and best practices literature on this topic. Gaps were also identified by comparing the current state of instructional supervision in SOF IAT language schools to instructional supervisory behaviors and practices used in language schools external to the SOF IAT community. Recommendations for addressing these gaps are made to assist SOF leadership, CLPMs, and instructional supervisors in maintaining and further developing effective instructional supervisory behaviors and practices in SOF IAT language schools.

### Research Questions

- What gaps exist between instructional supervisory behaviors and practices used in SOF IAT language schools, as compared to the theoretical, empirical, and best practices literature on this topic?
- What gaps exist between instructional supervisory behaviors and practices currently used in SOF IAT language schools, as compared to instructional supervisory behaviors and practices used in language schools external to the SOF community?
- What can SOF leadership, CLPMs, and instructional supervisors do to address these gaps?

Figure 9. Gaps between Current State of and Best Practices for Instructional Supervision



## Findings and Recommendations for SOF Leadership and CLPMs

Many of the instructional supervisory behaviors and practices currently used in SOF IAT language schools are comparable to those discussed in the literature and those currently used in external language schools; however, some opportunities for improvement were identified in the areas of instructional supervisor selection, training, and resourcing.

### Selection

To support the missions of SOF IAT language programs, it is important that SOF IAT leadership hires or promotes candidates with the qualifications necessary to be effective instructional supervisors. This includes selecting instructional supervisors based on education, instructional experience, administrative experience, and English proficiency.

#### *Education and Experience*

Participants from SOF IAT language schools reported that instructional supervisors in their schools had a range of educational backgrounds and experiences. In some cases, instructional supervisors did not have degrees related to second language acquisition, education, or other relevant fields but were hired or promoted due to their prior instructional experience or prior experience in the military or SOF communities.

- *Recommendation:* Instructional supervisors should have the content knowledge necessary to effectively perform their job responsibilities. This includes, but is not limited to, principles of second language acquisition, instructional methodology, and adult learning. SOF IAT language schools should hire or promote instructional supervisors who have Master's or Doctoral degrees in second language acquisition, education, or other relevant fields, or alternatively, should hire or promote instructional supervisors whose prior administrative, instructional, and military experience enables them to effectively perform their job responsibilities without formal education.

#### *Administrative Experience*

While many participants from SOF IAT language schools reported that instructional supervisors in their schools had administrative experience, some supervisors did not have this experience. It is important that instructional supervisors have the KSAs necessary to perform not only their classroom supervisory responsibilities, but any administrative responsibilities they may have as well.

- *Recommendation:* Instructional supervisors who do not have a background in management or administration should be provided with training for administrative responsibilities. Courses and materials in the fields of business, management, and educational leadership or educational administration may be used to develop instructional supervisors with the KSAs necessary to perform their administrative job responsibilities.

### *English Proficiency*

In addition to meeting requirements for education and experience, participants from SOF IAT and external language schools indicated that instructional supervisors need a high degree of English proficiency, as it is the common language of communication with instructors and stakeholders.

- *Recommendation:* Like instructors, instructional supervisors should be proficient in English at an Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Level of 2 or higher (*Special Operations Forces Instructor Language Needs Assessment* [Technical Report #2009010603]). Task and KSA analyses should be conducted to determine the specific ILR Level of English proficiency required for instructional supervisors to be effective in their roles.

### **Training and Development**

Even when instructional supervisors are highly qualified for their positions, there may be areas in which they need additional training, such as interpersonal communication skills and the SOF IAT instructional context. In addition, instructional supervisors need to continuously engage in professional development to stay current in the field.

- *Recommendation:* SOF IAT leadership should create an on-the-job training program for instructional supervisors. This training program should be focused on effective interpersonal communication skills, such as active listening, administrative skills, and the SOF IAT instructional context. Additionally, SOF IAT leadership could provide a module on effective instructional supervision during CLPM training. Courses and materials in the fields of business, management, and educational leadership or educational administration may be leveraged to create these trainings.
- *Recommendation:* Instructional supervisors should maintain memberships in professional organizations related to foreign languages, second language acquisition, and instruction, such as ACTFL. In addition, instructional supervisors should pursue professional development opportunities related to management and educational administration.
- *Recommendation:* SOF IAT leadership should work with SWA to develop a training module on Instructor Feedback Reports (IFRs) for instructional supervisors similar to the IFR module for CLPM training. Objectives of an IFR training module for instructional supervisors should include familiarizing instructional supervisors with the Instructor Evaluation and Feedback System, how the system works and the instructional supervisor's role in it, and how to interpret an IFR. A training module would ensure instructional supervisors become familiar with the IFR and the Instructor Developmental Feedback Guide and its suggestions so that instructional supervisors are prepared to assist instructors in any ways necessary to improve in areas indicated in the IFR. Other information that should be included in the module is the process for GS instructional supervisors to work with vendors to ensure contract instructors receive their IFRs.
- *Recommendation:* SOF IAT leadership should collect information about instructional supervisors' performance to identify supervisors' strengths and areas for improvement. This performance information could be used to create tools to support supervisors' continued development.

## Resourcing

Along with instructional supervisor selection, training, and development, SOF IAT leadership and CLPMs play important roles in providing necessary resources to instructional supervisors to remove barriers to supervisory effectiveness and enable supervisors to be more effective in their roles.

### *Supervisor – Instructor Ratio*

As discussed in Section III, a psychological concept known as *span of attention* states that a person can only think about seven things simultaneously (Entwisle & Walton, 1961). Participants from SOF IAT language schools reported that the number of instructors per instructional supervisor ranges from 5-35, indicating that many instructional supervisors are supervising more instructors than is ideal.

- *Recommendation:* SOF IAT leadership should be aware of instructional supervisors' workload and provide support staff, such as academic specialists and administrative personnel, to ensure supervisors have the resources they need to perform all tasks efficiently and effectively. Additionally, lead instructors could be appointed to assist with certain supervisory tasks, such as providing coaching and mentoring or resolving minor disputes. As one interviewee said, "The most successful supervisor identifies strengths and weaknesses and uses them for the project." By utilizing the strengths of instructors and support staff, instructional supervisors can reduce their day-to-day workload and make sure that their time is being used efficiently and effectively, to the benefit of the instructors they supervise.

### *Resources for Professional Development*

As discussed in the training and development section, professional development is vital for instructional supervisors to stay informed on current developments in second language acquisition and education. However, instructional supervisors in SOF IAT language schools may have numerous demands on their time and feel they are unable to attend conferences and workshops.

- *Recommendation:* SOF IAT leadership should provide resources to instructional supervisors to ensure that they have time and funding necessary to engage in professional development.
- *Recommendation:* SOF IAT leadership should ensure instructional supervisors have adequate funding to purchase necessary resources requested by instructors and provide instructors with professional development opportunities.

### *Contract Issues*

Many participants reported difficulties arising from an inability to directly supervise contract instructors. While these challenges spanned a variety of situations, the two that were mentioned most often were the inability to provide instructors with necessary training and feedback.

- *Recommendation:* SOF IAT leadership should coordinate with contract vendors to ensure contract instructors receive training recommended by GS instructional supervisors. Also, SOF IAT leadership should ensure GS instructional supervisors know the proper channels to use to provide contract instructors with feedback. It is also important that existing resources, such as IFRs, are

delivered to contract instructors by their vendor supervisors, as these reports provide contract instructors with valuable feedback on their performance, particularly when GS instructional supervisors are unable to provide this type of feedback directly to these instructors.

## Summary

In summary, SOF IAT leadership and CLPMs can maintain and further develop effective instructional supervisory behaviors and practices in SOF IAT language schools through selection, training and developing, and resourcing.

### Findings and Recommendations for Instructional Supervisors

Along with SOF IAT leadership and CLPMs, current instructional supervisors also play a role in maintaining and further developing effective instructional supervisory behaviors and practices in SOF IAT language schools. The recommendations provided to instructional supervisors span the areas of classroom supervision and other effective instructional supervisory behaviors and skills.

#### Classroom or Clinical Supervision

Observation, evaluation, and feedback are important instructional supervisory responsibilities and directly impact instructors' classroom performance. Instructional supervisors must gain instructor buy-in in the observation, evaluation, and feedback processes to maximize the effectiveness of these processes.

##### *Observation*

All participants from SOF IAT language schools reported that instructional supervisors conduct classroom observations at least once per course, with a majority reporting they conduct either announced or unannounced observations twice per course. However, few participants reported taking steps to gain instructor buy-in prior to conducting classroom observations.

- *Recommendation:* Pre-observation conferences can be used to gain instructor buy-in in observation, evaluation and feedback processes and reassure instructors that the goal of these processes is to help them improve their classroom performance. Instructional supervisors should meet with instructors prior to conducting observations to discuss the observation criteria and to address any concerns instructors might have about the observations. Having instructors provide a copy of their lesson plans and asking if there are any specific areas the instructor would like feedback on can help instructors feel involved in the observation process and reduce the stress that accompanies being observed.
- *Recommendation:* Instructional supervisors and Quality Assurance Surveillance Program (QASP) personnel should use IFRs to identify instructors who could benefit the most from receiving feedback based on observations of their classroom performance. This information can be used to prioritize observations so instructional supervisors and QASP personnel can use their time efficiently and effectively.

### *Evaluation*

As previously discussed, instructional supervisors may supervise up to 35 instructors, in addition to the administrative responsibilities they have. This makes it difficult for instructional supervisors to frequently evaluate all of their instructors. Infrequent evaluations can cause instructors to feel the evaluations do not fully represent their classroom instruction and are therefore inauthentic and not useful (Christen & Murphy, 1987).

- *Recommendation:* Instructional supervisors should use shorter, more frequent observations (e.g., 5-15 minutes once a week) to provide a more comprehensive picture of each instructor's performance. This approach may be seen as less intrusive by instructors and students (Marshall, 2005). Additionally, peer evaluation can be leveraged to provide instructors with more frequent evaluation without requiring additional time from instructional supervisors (Christen & Murphy, 1987).

### *Feedback*

After observations and evaluations occurred, most participants from SOF IAT language schools reported that instructional supervisors initiated feedback meetings with instructors; however, instructors may disregard this feedback if they feel it reflects only a snapshot of their classroom performance (Blumberg, 2001) or if they feel it is overly critical.

- *Recommendation:* Feedback should be based on a number of sources, including formal observations, peer evaluations, and student feedback. Instructional supervisors should leverage existing resources, such as IFRs and the Instructor Developmental Feedback Guide, to provide instructors with multi-source feedback and recommendations for improvement.
- *Recommendation:* Instructional supervisors should deliver feedback in an open, honest, and supportive manner. Feedback should be strength-based and criticism should be constructive and non-judgmental (Lee, 2010; Schonberger, 2001). Two models for providing positive and negative feedback are the Behavior, Effect, and Thank you (BET) and Behavior, Effect, Action, and Result (BEAR) models, respectively (Harms and Roebuck, 2010). In both cases, instructional supervisors describe the positive or negative behaviors that are affecting performance and the effects these behaviors have on performance. In the BET model for positive feedback, supervisors then thank instructors for their performance. In the BEAR model for negative feedback, supervisors then describe possible actions that could be taken to address issues and the positive results these actions could have, as well as possible consequences of not taking recommended actions.

### **Other Effective Instructional Supervisory Behaviors and Skills**

Many factors contribute to the effectiveness of instructional supervisors in both administrative and classroom supervisory behaviors. Participants in SOF IAT language schools identified cultural understanding and effective interpersonal communication skills as qualities that can reduce challenges faced by instructional supervisors.

### *Cultural Understanding*

Participants from SOF IAT language schools indicated that cultural understanding was an important qualification for instructional supervisors, particularly when they supervise instructors from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Challenges related to cultural understanding reported by instructional supervisors at SOF IAT language programs include accommodating religious preferences and gender roles.

- *Recommendation:* Instructional supervisors who supervise instructors whose culture is different than their own should research and make an effort to understand these cultures. This might include asking instructors to explain various aspects of their culture, which could serve as a means of building rapport, in addition to reducing misunderstandings due to cultural differences. Additionally, while it is less important for instructional supervisors to be proficient in every language they supervise, learning greetings and commonly used phrases in those languages can also help instructional supervisors build rapport with instructors.

### *Communication*

Instructional supervisors can contribute to effective communication and build rapport with instructors by being open and honest with the instructors they supervise.

- *Recommendation:* Instructional supervisors should strive to be open and honest in their communication with instructors. Supervisors should ensure instructors know their input is valued by encouraging instructors to make suggestions and express concerns and by carefully considering instructors' input. Instructional supervisors should also be willing to admit their own mistakes and shortcomings and take steps to address them, whether by apologizing for a mistake or asking for help when necessary. Instructors may be more likely to bring their concerns to instructional supervisors if they feel that doing so will not put their jobs in jeopardy. Likewise, when attempting to mediate conflicts between instructors, instructional supervisors should make sure they have and understand all of the facts before making judgments.

### **Summary**

Much like SOF leadership and CLPMs, instructional supervisors also play important roles in maintaining and further developing effective instructional supervisory behaviors and practices in SOF IAT language schools. By using the recommendations provided to instructional supervisors in the areas of classroom supervision and other effective instructional supervisory behaviors and skills, these supervisors will be more effective in their roles and in turn, enable instructors to be more effective in the classroom.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, although instructional supervisors in SOF IAT language schools currently engage in many best practices for effective instructional supervision, SOF leadership, CLPMs, and instructional supervisors can use the recommendations provided to close the gaps between the current and desired states of instructional supervision in SOF IAT language schools. In doing so, instructional supervisors can, and will continue to, play important roles in increasing instructor effectiveness, thereby helping to develop language-capable SOF personnel through SOF IAT.

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### ABOUT SWA CONSULTING INC.

SWA Consulting Inc. (formerly Surface, Ward, and Associates) provides analytics and evidence-based solutions for clients using the principles and methods of industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology. Since 1997, SWA has advised and assisted corporate, non-profit and governmental clients on:

- Training and development
- Performance measurement and management
- Organizational effectiveness
- Test development and validation
- Program/training evaluation
- Work/job analysis
- Needs assessment
- Selection system design
- Study and analysis related to human capital issues
- Metric development and data collection
- Advanced data analysis

One specific practice area is analytics, research, and consulting on foreign language and culture in work contexts. In this area, SWA has conducted numerous projects, including language assessment validation and psychometric research; evaluations of language training, training tools, and job aids; language and culture focused needs assessments and job analysis; and advanced analysis of language research data.

Based in Raleigh, NC, and led by Drs. Eric A. Surface and Stephen J. Ward, SWA now employs close to twenty I/O professionals at the masters and PhD levels. SWA professionals are committed to providing clients the best data and analysis upon which to make evidence-based decisions. Taking a scientist-practitioner perspective, SWA professionals conduct model-based, evidence-driven research and consulting to provide the best answers and solutions to enhance our clients' mission and business objectives. SWA has competencies in measurement, data collection, analytics, data modeling, systematic reviews, validation, and evaluation.

For more information about SWA, our projects, and our capabilities, please visit our website ([www.swa-consulting.com](http://www.swa-consulting.com)) or contact Dr. Eric A. Surface ([esurface@swa-consulting.com](mailto:esurface@swa-consulting.com)) or Dr. Stephen J. Ward ([sward@swa-consulting.com](mailto:sward@swa-consulting.com)).

**The following SWA Consulting Inc. team members contributed to this report (listed in alphabetical order):**

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**Dr. Eric A. Surface**

**APPENDIX A: LETTER TO SOF IAT LANGUAGE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS**



**UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND**

7701 TAMPA POINT BOULEVARD

MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA 33621-5323

FMD-J1/7-TL

9 July 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Request for Participation in Study of Best Practices for Supervising Language Instructors

1. We are working in conjunction with SWA Consulting Inc. (SWA) to identify best practices for supervision of foreign language instructors and we need your support in collecting relevant information about existing instructor supervision practices.
2. SWA will be contacting you to collect this information in the near future and any information you can provide would be most appreciated. Our aim is to collect this information by July 18, 2012 to facilitate publication of the technical report by the end of the Fiscal Year.
3. To indicate your interest in participating in this effort, please visit the following link to complete a short survey:

Click the link to take the survey or paste it into your browser:

[http://swa.us2.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_6GAXDQAbHjTfTWQ](http://swa.us2.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6GAXDQAbHjTfTWQ).

4. If you have any questions about the study, please contact Dr. Jenn McGinnis from SWA Consulting Inc. at (919) 835-1562 ext. 7007, [jmcginnis@swa-consulting.com](mailto:jmcginnis@swa-consulting.com) or me at [john.donnelly@socom.mil](mailto:john.donnelly@socom.mil), (813) 826-6040.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Donnelly", is positioned above the typed name.

JACK DONNELLY

DAFC, Directorate of Force Management and  
Development, J1/7-TL  
Director, SOF Language Office

DISTRIBUTION:

LTC Curtis W. Price  
U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (SWCS)  
Basic Language Course (BLC) and Intermediate Language Course (ILC)  
Ft. Bragg, NC 28307

FMS-J1/7-TL

SUBJECT: Request for Participation in Study of Best Practices for Supervising Language Instructors

Mr. Terry Schnurr  
SWCS ILC  
Ft. Bragg, NC 28307

Dr. Marla D. Federe  
Naval Special Warfare Advanced Training Command  
Naval Base Coronado, CA 92135

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Air Force Special Operations Training Center  
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Ms. Tanya G. Woodcook  
U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command  
Camp Lejeune, NC 28542

Mr. Todd J. Amis  
Marine Special Operations School  
Camp Lejeune, NC 28542

**APPENDIX B: LETTER TO SOF IAT LANGUAGE PROGRAM VENDORS**



## UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

7701 TAMPA POINT BOULEVARD  
MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA 33621-5323

12 July 2012

Director, Special Operations Forces Language Office

[NAME]  
[JOB TITLE]  
[ORGANIZATION]  
[ADDRESS]

Dear [NAME]:

My name is Jack Donnelly, and I work for the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) as the Director of the Special Operations Forces Language Office (SOFLO). This office is currently working in conjunction with SWA Consulting Inc. (SWA) to establish general best practices for supervision of foreign language instructors. This research will be beneficial to all parties who deal with foreign language instruction or training, regardless of learner population. To inform work on this project, SOFLO is assisting SWA in gathering information about existing institutional instructor supervision practices. These practices will serve as a baseline for research we are conducting on best practices.

I am requesting your assistance in this project by providing SWA with information about practices for the supervision of instructors used in your organization. SWA will begin collecting information soon, and any information you can provide would be most appreciated. Our aim is to collect this information by July 23, 2012.

To indicate your interest in participating in this effort, please visit the following link to complete a short survey:

[Click here](http://swa.us2.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6GAXDQAbHjTfTWQ) to take the survey or paste the following URL into your browser:  
[http://swa.us2.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_6GAXDQAbHjTfTWQ](http://swa.us2.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6GAXDQAbHjTfTWQ)

Please Note. This project is sponsored by SOFLO and USSOCOM and is conducted under a subcontract with CACI International Inc. as the prime and SWA Consulting Inc. as the technical lead subcontractor (Subcontract # B11-114482; Prime # H92222-10-D-0017/0007). This is not a solicitation, and participation in no way obligates the government to contract with your organization. The feedback received from your organization will be completely voluntary on your part and no payment will be provided by any parties associated with this contract.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Dr. Jenn McGinnis from SWA Consulting Inc. at (919) 835-1562 ext. 7007, [jmcginnis@swa-consulting.com](mailto:jmcginnis@swa-consulting.com) or me at [john.donnelly@socom.mil](mailto:john.donnelly@socom.mil), (813) 826-6040.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Donnelly', written in a cursive style.

Jack Donnelly  
Department of the Air Force Civilian  
Director, SOF Language Office

**APPENDIX C: LETTER TO LANGUAGE PROGRAMS EXTERNAL TO SOF IAT**



## UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

7701 TAMPA POINT BOULEVARD  
MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA 33621-5323

10 July 2012

Director, Special Operations Forces Language Office

[NAME]  
[JOB TITLE]  
[ORGANIZATION]  
[ADDRESS]

Dear [NAME]:

My name is Jack Donnelly, and I work for the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) as the Director of the Special Operations Forces Language Office (SOFLO). This office is currently working in conjunction with SWA Consulting Inc. (SWA) to establish general best practices for supervision of foreign language instructors. This research will be beneficial to all parties who deal with foreign language instruction or training, regardless of learner population. To inform work on this project, SOFLO is assisting SWA in gathering information about existing institutional instructor supervision practices. These practices will serve as a baseline for research we are conducting on best practices.

I am requesting your assistance in this project by providing SWA with information about practices for the supervision of instructors used in your organization. SWA will begin collecting information soon, and any information you can provide would be most appreciated. Our aim is to collect this information by July 20, 2012.

To indicate your interest in participating in this effort, please visit the following link to complete a short survey:

[Click here](http://swa.us2.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6GAXDQAbHjTfTWQ) to take the survey or paste the following URL into your browser:  
[http://swa.us2.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_6GAXDQAbHjTfTWQ](http://swa.us2.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6GAXDQAbHjTfTWQ)

Please Note. This project is sponsored by SOFLO and USSOCOM and is conducted under a subcontract with CACI International Inc. as the prime and SWA Consulting Inc. as the technical lead subcontractor (Subcontract # B11-114482; Prime # H92222-10-D-0017/0007). This is not a solicitation, and participation in no way obligates the government to contract with your organization. The feedback received from your organization will be completely voluntary on your part and no payment will be provided by any parties associated with this contract.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Dr. Jenn McGinnis from SWA Consulting Inc. at (919) 835-1562 ext. 7007, [jmcginnis@swa-consulting.com](mailto:jmcginnis@swa-consulting.com) or me at [john.donnelly@socom.mil](mailto:john.donnelly@socom.mil), (813) 826-6040.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Donnelly', written in a cursive style.

Jack Donnelly  
Department of the Air Force Civilian  
Director, SOF Language Office

## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR SOF IAT LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

### Greeting

Hi, this is \_\_\_\_\_ calling from SWA Consulting Inc. How are you today?

### Introductory Statement

During our interview today, we will be asking you some questions about supervision of foreign language instructors in your organization. SWA Consulting Inc. (SWA) is currently working in conjunction with the Special Operations Forces Language Office (SOFLO) to establish general best practices for supervision of foreign language instructors. This research will be beneficial to all parties who deal with foreign language instruction or training, regardless of learner population. Information that you provide will serve as a baseline for our research.

The questions we will be asking will take about one hour, and will center on different areas of instructional supervision in your organization. We will focus on current instructional supervision practices used in your organization and will be asking about the position of instructional supervisor, typical relationships between supervisors and instructors, strategies for effective supervision of instructors, and classroom observations and assessments. As you answer these questions, we will be taking notes.

The information you provide will be kept confidential and will be used for the purposes of producing a report for Mr. John Donnelly, Director of SOFLO. This report will be released to him and will include only summary results. The information you provide will not be attached to or associated with your name or organization. Instead, we will describe and summarize information across multiple participating organizations. In addition, the information you provide will be integrated with a systematic review of the literature on this topic, as well as appropriate empirical results available from SWA's other research and evaluation efforts. Under Title 32, §219 of the Code of Federal Regulations from the Department of Defense Instruction 3216.02, this study qualifies as exempt because the information you and other interviewees provide will not be published showing how specific individuals responded, identities will be protected, and groupings of responses by external organization will not be shown.

Do you have any questions for us before we begin?

### Interview Questions

#### *Position of Instructional Supervisor*

The first set of questions we have for you will ask you about the position of instructional supervisor and some of the responsibilities these supervisors have.

1. How many instructional supervisors are there in your language school or department?
  - a. If this role did not exist, where would these responsibilities be redistributed?
2. To whom do instructional supervisors report?
  - a. Who are they accountable to/who manages them?

3. Who decides on an instructional supervisor's responsibilities?
4. What are instructional supervisors' responsibilities?  
*[If not described above in response to previous questions]* Do instructional supervisors:
  - a. Interview and/or hire instructors?
  - b. Train, mentor, and/or orient instructors?
  - c. Monitor instructors' performance?
  - d. Provide incentives/rewards to instructors?
  - e. Provide constructive feedback to instructors?
  - f. Provide resources to instructors?
  - g. Schedule courses?
  - h. Select or specify curriculum?
  - i. Develop curriculum?
  - j. Lead meetings?
5. What is the typical background of an instructional supervisor?
  - a. Were instructional supervisors once instructors?
  - b. Were instructional supervisors once administrators?
  - c. Are instructional supervisors predominantly hired externally or promoted from within?
6. What are the degree or education requirements to be a supervisor?
  - a. Is there a minimum requirement for years of experience (or years instructing)?
  - b. Have candidates for this position generally taken additional training or certification to be a supervisor?
  - c. Is there on-the-job training for supervisors?
7. What are the most important characteristics of a successful supervisor (i.e., what is it most important that they be good at)?
8. How important is content knowledge (i.e., knowledge of language instruction) for a supervisor to be effective in his/her role?
  - a. How important is knowledge of the target language and culture?
  - b. How important is English proficiency for the supervisor? For the instructors?

9. Across your experience, give an example of a particularly effective supervisor. What did that supervisor do that made him/her particularly effective?
10. Across your experience, give an example of a particularly ineffective supervisor. What did that supervisor do that made him/her particularly ineffective?

#### *Relationships between Instructional Supervisors and Instructors*

The next few questions are about the relationships between instructional supervisors and the instructors they supervise.

11. How many instructors does each supervisor supervise?
12. What types of instructors does each supervisor supervise (i.e., GS, contractor)? How would you manage these types of instructors differently?
13. How much time do instructional supervisors spend one-on-one with instructors on a weekly basis?
14. What are some of the challenges supervisors face in working with instructors?

#### *Strategies and Methods for Instructional Supervision*

In this next set of questions, we will ask you about strategies and methods instructional supervisors can use to be more effective.

#### Resources

15. What power or resources do supervisors have to help instructors improve?
16. What resources can supervisors direct instructors to? How do supervisors find out about these resources?

#### Models of Instruction

17. Do supervisors have a model of instruction they recommend to instructors?
  - a. If so, how was that model developed?

#### Performance Standards

18. How are performance standards for instructors decided upon?
19. How does the supervisor make the standards for performance clear to instructors?

#### Motivation

20. What strategies are used to motivate instructors? Do these vary across supervisors or across instructors?

#### Professional Development

21. How do supervisors gain and maintain knowledge of current best practices for instruction?

*Classroom Observations and Assessments*

In the following set of questions, we will be asking you about observations and assessments that instructional supervisors do in the classroom. For the purposes of this interview, the words “observation” and “assessment” will be used interchangeably.

22. Who conducts classroom observations?

- a. If supervisors, when do they do classroom observations?
- b. How often?
- c. Are they scheduled or unscheduled? (Are instructors forewarned?)
- d. How long are they?

23. Please give a detailed explanation of the classroom observation process.

- a. Is there a “pre” meeting to involve instructors in developing the rubric for assessment?  
How is buy-in from instructors gained?
- b. Are observations always done by the same supervisor (or individual)?

24. Do supervisors equally distribute attention among both high- and low- performing instructors?

25. What tools do supervisors use for observation and assessment? How were these developed?  
What resources do supervisors use to create and update them?

26. How much input is sought from instructors in the observation/assessment process?

27. What occurs after an observation is conducted or an instructor is assessed?

**Closing Statement**

That concludes the questions we have for you. Thank you for your time and input. The information you provided is invaluable to our goal of establishing general best practices for supervision of foreign language instructors. If you have any questions for us later, please feel free to call or email.

## APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR EXTERNAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

### Greeting

Hi, this is \_\_\_\_\_ calling from SWA Consulting Inc. How are you today?

### Introductory Statement

During our interview today, we will be asking you some questions about supervision of foreign language instructors in your organization. SWA Consulting Inc. (SWA) is currently working in conjunction with the Special Operations Forces Language Office (SOFLO) to establish general best practices for supervision of foreign language instructors. This research will be beneficial to all parties who deal with foreign language instruction or training, regardless of learner population. Information that you provide will serve as a baseline for our research.

The questions we will be asking will take about one hour, and will center on different areas of instructional supervision in your organization. The first two sets of questions will focus on the language learning environment and language learners in your organization. We will then focus on current instructional supervision practices used in your organization and will be asking about the position of instructional supervisor, typical relationships between supervisors and instructors, strategies for effective supervision of instructors, and classroom observations and assessments. As you answer these questions, we will be taking notes.

The information you provide will be kept confidential and will be used for the purposes of producing a report for Mr. John Donnelly, Director of SOFLO. This report will be released to him and will include only summary results. The information you provide will not be attached to or associated with your name or organization. Instead, we will describe and summarize information across multiple participating organizations. In addition, the information you provide will be integrated with a systematic review of the literature on this topic, as well as appropriate empirical results available from SWA's other research and evaluation efforts. Under Title 32, §219 of the Code of Federal Regulations from the Department of Defense Instruction 3216.02, this study qualifies as exempt because the information you and other interviewees provide will not be published showing how specific individuals responded, identities will be protected, and groupings of responses by external organization will not be shown.

Do you have any questions for us before we begin?

### Interview Questions

#### *Language Learning Environment*

The first set of questions we have for you is about the language learning environment.

1. What languages are taught?
2. What is the course duration and total contact hours?
  - a. Are there differences in course duration across languages?
3. How often do classes meet?

4. What is the purpose for learning the language?
  - a. Is the course required?
  - b. In your opinion, how motivated are the students to learn the language?
5. What are the targeted proficiency levels or expected outcomes of language learning?
6. How is the students' proficiency assessed? How often is it assessed?

### *Language Learners*

For this second set of questions, we will be asking about the students participating in foreign language learning in your program.

7. What is the average age of the students in this language learning program? What range of ages do you typically see in this language learning program?
8. What is the gender of most of the students here?
9. In what industry are most of the students employed? What are some of the most common job titles they hold?
10. Is the native language of most students English? What other native languages have past students had?
11. Do most of the students have previous language learning experience (i.e., high school or college courses, other language learning programs)?
12. What is the initial proficiency level of most of the incoming students?
  - a. Is there screening or selection that takes place? Can anyone who signs up take the course, or must they meet certain requirements (e.g., experience, aptitude)?
  - b. Is there a placement process that takes place? That is, are students placed in a particular language? If so, what criteria are used to place them in a particular language?

### *Position of Instructional Supervisor*

This next set of questions we have asks about the position of instructional supervisor and some of the responsibilities these supervisors have.

13. How many instructional supervisors are there in your language school or department?
  - a. If this role did not exist, where would these responsibilities be redistributed?
14. To whom do instructional supervisors report?
  - a. Who are they accountable to/who manages them?
15. Who decides on an instructional supervisor's responsibilities?

16. What are instructional supervisors' responsibilities?

*[If not described above in response to previous questions]* Do instructional supervisors:

- a. Interview and/or hire instructors?
- b. Train, mentor, and/or orient instructors?
- c. Monitor instructors' performance?
- d. Provide incentives/rewards to instructors?
- e. Provide constructive feedback to instructors?
- f. Provide resources to instructors?
- g. Schedule courses?
- h. Select or specify curriculum?
- i. Develop curriculum?
- j. Lead meetings?

17. What is the typical background of an instructional supervisor?

- a. Were instructional supervisors once instructors?
- b. Were instructional supervisors once administrators?
- c. Are instructional supervisors predominantly hired externally or promoted from within?

18. What are the degree or education requirements to be a supervisor?

- a. Is there a minimum requirement for years of experience (or years instructing)?
- b. Have candidates for this position generally taken additional training or certification to be a supervisor?
- c. Is there on-the-job training for supervisors?

19. What are the most important characteristics of a successful supervisor (i.e., what is it most important that they be good at)?

20. How important is content knowledge (i.e., knowledge of language instruction) for a supervisor to be effective in his/her role?

- a. How important is knowledge of the target language and culture?
- b. How important is English proficiency for the supervisor? For the instructors?

21. Across your experience, give an example of a particularly effective supervisor. What did that supervisor do that made him/her particularly effective?
22. Across your experience, give an example of a particularly ineffective supervisor. What did that supervisor do that made him/her particularly ineffective?

#### *Relationships between Instructional Supervisors and Instructors*

The next few questions are about the relationships between instructional supervisors and the instructors they supervise.

23. How many instructors does each supervisor supervise?
24. What types of instructors does each supervisor supervise (i.e., GS, contractor)? How would you manage these types of instructors differently?
25. How much time do instructional supervisors spend one-on-one with instructors on a weekly basis?
26. What are some of the challenges supervisors face in working with instructors?

#### *Strategies and Methods for Instructional Supervision*

In this next set of questions, we will ask you about strategies and methods instructional supervisors can use to be more effective.

#### Resources

27. What power or resources do supervisors have to help instructors improve?
28. What resources can supervisors direct instructors to? How do supervisors find out about these resources?

#### Models of Instruction

29. Do supervisors have a model of instruction they recommend to instructors?
  - a. If so, how was that model developed?

#### Performance Standards

30. How are performance standards for instructors decided upon?
31. How does the supervisor make the standards for performance clear to instructors?

#### Motivation

32. What strategies are used to motivate instructors? Do these vary across supervisors or across instructors?

#### Professional Development

33. How do supervisors gain and maintain knowledge of current best practices for instruction?

*Classroom Observations and Assessments*

In this final set of questions, we will be asking you about observations and assessments that instructional supervisors do in the classroom. For the purposes of this interview, the words “observation” and “assessment” will be used interchangeably.

34. Who conducts classroom observations?

- a. If supervisors, when do they do classroom observations?
- b. How often?
- c. Are they scheduled or unscheduled? (Are instructors forewarned?)
- d. How long are they?

35. Please give a detailed explanation of the classroom observation process.

- a. Is there a “pre” meeting to involve instructors in developing the rubric for assessment?  
How is buy-in from instructors gained?
- b. Are observations always done by the same supervisor (or individual)?

36. Do supervisors equally distribute attention among both high- and low- performing instructors?

37. What tools do supervisors use for observation and assessment? How were these developed?  
What resources do supervisors use to create and update them?

38. How much input is sought from instructors in the observation/assessment process?

39. What occurs after an observation is conducted or an instructor is assessed?

**Closing Statement**

That concludes the questions we have for you. Thank you for your time and input. The information you provided is invaluable to our goal of establishing general best practices for supervision of foreign language instructors. If you have any questions for us later, please feel free to call or email.

## **APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW ANALYSIS TECHNICAL APPENDIX**

Data analysis was needed to identify themes from the interviews conducted with SOF IAT language program administrators, SOF IAT language program vendors, and administrators at language schools external to the SOF IAT community. Data analysis began with coding the interview transcripts with structural and content codes. To ensure the quality of the analysis, two coders were used and intercoder agreement was calculated. The prevalence of themes was then identified by frequency counts.

### **Interview Transcript Analysis**

The interview transcripts were exported from Microsoft Word into Microsoft Excel, and the data from the interviews were coded in two phases: (1) structural coding, and (2) content coding. Each phase provided a more detailed analysis of the data.

### **Structural Coding Phase**

Structural coding works well for data collected through discrete questions and probes (e.g., interviews) that are repeated across multiple files in a data set (MacQueen, McLellan-Lemal, Bartholow, & Milstein, 2008; Saldaña, 2009). Structural coding makes “subsequent analyses easier by identifying all of the text associated with a particular question and its associated probes” (MacQueen et al., 2008, p. 124). This step is essential to prepare for the more detailed content coding phase.

Structural codes were developed using the interview protocols for the SOF IAT language schools and external language schools (Appendices D and E, pp. 64-72). Across the two interview protocols, each question was assigned a number. Within each segment, the question asked by the interviewer and the complete response provided by the interviewee(s) were included. Additionally, any dialog between the interviewer and the interviewee(s) resulting from the initial question was captured in the segment. Each complete interview question-and-answer segment was exported from Microsoft Word into Microsoft Excel, and the appropriate structural code (i.e., question number) was applied. The structural codes were primarily used to segment the interview data for the codebook development and content coding phases.

### **Codebook Development Phase**

When coding qualitative data, codebooks and coding instructions are developed to create a shared mental model among coders for applying the comment codes. By establishing a detailed guideline for applying content codes, the interchangeability of coders is enhanced (i.e., a new coder could be added to the process at any time without affecting the coding). Furthermore, coding instructions allow others to replicate the results of the study or to apply the same codes to additional data collected at a later date.

To create content codes for this project, text segments assigned to each structural code were reviewed for recurring themes. Two research team members independently created themes and then met to ensure each theme was represented and to further clarify any unclear themes. Then the coders developed rules about when the codes should and should not be applied, in accordance with established guidelines (MacQueen, McLellan, Kay, & Milstein, 1998). The researchers conducted a final review of the codes for clarity and conciseness.

### Content Coding Phase

Content coding further identifies more specific themes that emerge from respondents' answers to the interview questions. Each discrete segment of text identified during structural coding is content coded. Although it is preferable if a single code can be applied to a single unit of text, simultaneous coding (i.e., applying multiple codes to a single unit of text) is often necessary with complex topics and discussion. This form of coding can be used when it is impossible to capture the sentiment of the text with a single code (Saldaña, 2009).

Coders began the content coding process by reviewing the codebook and making any necessary modifications. The segments were then independently coded. Within the content coding phase, simultaneous coding was used to accommodate the need to describe specific segments using multiple codes.

### Quality Assurance Phase

During content coding, coder training and the use of multiple coders were used to enhance the quality of analysis.

Prior to content coding, two coders were trained to ensure that each coder understood and executed the same process. A training session included discussions about guidelines for coding and how and when to calculate intercoder agreement during the content coding process. Two coders worked independently to assign content codes to segments of text and then met to review disagreements and discuss to consensus.

Absolute agreement was calculated for the content coding phase. This method assessed intercoder agreement by calculating the percentage of segments that the coders agreed upon (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Higher levels of absolute agreement were an indication the coders were applying the codes consistently. The percentage of absolute agreement for the content coding phase was 74%. The coders discussed their coding disagreements to 100% agreement.

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