

**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**  
MARINE CORPS CIVIL-MILITARY OPERATIONS SCHOOL  
WEAPONS TRAINING BATTALION  
TRAINING COMMAND  
2300 LOUIS ROAD (C478)  
QUANTICO, VIRGINIA 22134-5043

## **STUDENT OUTLINE**

### **EMPLOY AN INTERPRETER**

**0531-127**

**CIVIL AFFAIRS NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER COURSE**

**M02AAPD**

**FEBRUARY 2016**

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

a. **TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE**. Given a mission, Commander's intent, and an interpreter, communicate through an interpreter, to ensure the target audience understands the intent of the Marine in accordance with MCRP 3-33.1H App D. (CACT-EXE-2018)

### b. **ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

(1) Without the aid of references, identify the selection criteria for an interpreter, in accordance with MCRP 3-33.1A appendix C. (CACT-EXE-2018a)

(2) Without the aid of references, identify categories of interpreters, in accordance with MCRP 3-33.1A Appendix C. (CACT-EXE-2018b)

(3) Given a scenario, a contracted interpreter, and a contracted role player w/script, analyze the interaction, in accordance with the PE checklist. (CACT-EXE-2018c)

1. **SELECTION CRITERIA.** When operating abroad, CA Marines will most likely need interpreters to operate effectively. The CA team will not necessarily procure the interpreters needed. Oftentimes, these services are provided by contractors on behalf of the MAGTF. Ideally, the interpreter will be a U.S. citizen.

a. The following are criteria to consider when selecting an interpreter:

(1) Native Speaker. The interpreter should be a native speaker of the socially or geographically determined dialect. Speech, background, and mannerisms should be completely acceptable to the target audience so that no attention is given to the way the interpreter talks, only to what is said.

(2) Social Status. In some situations and cultures, an interpreter may be limited in his effectiveness with a target audience if their social standing is considerably lower than that of the audience. This may include significant differences in military rank or membership in an ethnic or religious group. CA team members must accept local prejudices as a fact of life.

(3) English Fluency. An often overlooked consideration is how well the interpreter speaks English. The interpreter must be able to convey the information expressed by the interviewee, or target audience; interpreting goes both ways. As a rule, if the interpreter understands you and you understand him/her, their command of English is satisfactory.

(4) Intellect. Your interpreter should be quick, alert, and responsive to changing conditions and situations. The interpreter must be able to grasp complex concepts and discuss them without confusion in a reasonably logical sequence. Although education does not equate to intelligence, generally speaking, the better educated the interpreter the better the interpreter will perform due to increased exposure to diverse concepts.

(5) Technical Ability. In certain situations, you may need an interpreter with technical training or expertise.

(6) Reliability. If your interpreter is to be considered a member of the team, he/she needs to be as reliable as the Marines in the team (punctuality, work ethic, etc.).

(7) Loyalty. If the interpreter is a local national, it is safe to assume that his ultimate loyalty is to the host

nation or subgroup, not the U.S. military. The security implications are clear; be very cautious in how you explain concepts to give them a greater depth of understanding of the mission. Additionally, some interpreters, for political or personal reasons, may have ulterior motives or a hidden agenda when they apply for the interpreting job.

(8) Gender, Age, and Race. Similar to social status, other factors such as gender, age, and race may have an impact on how your interpreter is perceived and how effective he/she will be. These aspects will depend on where you're conducting CMO.

(9) Compatibility. You and your interpreter will work as a team. Your target audience will be quick to recognize personality conflicts between you and your interpreter, which can undermine the effectiveness of the communication effort. If possible, when selecting an interpreter, look for compatible traits and strive for a harmonious working relationship to convey unity of effort.

b. **Selection Best Practice: Choose more than one interpreter**. If possible, select at least two qualified interpreters. This is of particular importance if the interpreters will be used during long conferences or courses of instruction. The exhausting nature of these tasks makes approximately four hours of active interpreting about the maximum for peak efficiency. Regardless of the mission, with two or more interpreters, one can provide quality control, assistance to the active interpreter, and observe side-bar conversations.

2. **CATEGORIES OF INTERPRETERS**. There are three categories of interpreters: Category I, II and III.

a. **Category I**. These interpreters are locally hired, require vetting, and should be used for basic interpretation activities such as patrols and base entrance coverage. They do not have a security clearance. They are the most abundant resource pool; however, their skill level is limited.

b. **Category II**. Category II interpreters are U.S. citizens with a secret clearance. Often they possess good oral and written communication skills. They should be managed carefully due to limited availability.

c. **Category III.** Category III interpreters are U.S. citizens with a top secret clearance. They are a scarce commodity and often retained at division and higher levels of command. They have excellent oral and written communications skills.

3. **BUILD RAPPORT.** Mutual respect and understanding is essential to effective teamwork. Rapport must be established early in the relationship and maintained throughout the deployment. The difficulty of establishing rapport usually stems from cultural and professional differences.

a. Most foreigners are reasonably knowledgeable about the United States. In an effort to build rapport, you should obtain some basic facts about the host nation. The area study, along with your ASCOPE/PMESII analysis will assist you. Other pertinent information can also be obtained through open source research.

b. Show a genuine concern for their family, aspirations, career, education, background, and so on. Many cultures place a greater emphasis on family over career than western cultures. Another area of focus should be cultural traditions. Though you should gain as much information on culture as possible prior to entering a country, your interpreter can be a valuable source to fill gaps. Showing a personal interest in the interpreter is a great way to build rapport.

c. Ensuring accountability and the safety of your interpreter is also a way to build rapport. If the nature of your mission requires you to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), you should also provide PPE for your interpreter.

4. **INTERPRETER TRAINING.** As part of the initial training with the interpreter, tactfully convey that the instructor, interviewer, or interrogator must always direct the interview or lesson. Put the interpreter's role in proper perspective. Stress to them their importance as a vital communication link between you and the target audience. Appeal to the interpreter's professional pride by clearly describing how the quality and quantity of the information sent and received is directly dependent upon their interpreting skills. Also mention how they function solely as a conduit between you and the subject.

a. Be aware that some interpreters, because of cultural differences, may attempt to "save face" by purposely concealing

their lack of understanding. They may attempt to translate what they think you said or meant without asking for clarification. This can result in disinformation and confusion, and impact credibility. Let the interpreter know that when in doubt they should always ask for clarification. Create a safe environment for this as early in the relationship as possible.

b. Other points to cover while orienting and training the interpreter are:

(1) Importance of the training, interview, or interrogation.

(2) Specific objectives of the training, interview or interrogation (if any).

(3) Outline of lesson or interview questions (if applicable).

(4) Background information on the interviewee, or target audience.

(5) Briefing, training, or interview schedules (it may take two to three times as much time using an interpreter to convey the same information).

(6) Copy of the briefing, questions, or lesson plan (if applicable).

(7) Copies of handout material (if applicable).

(8) General background information on subject.

(9) Glossary of terms (if applicable).

## 5. **CIVIL ENGAGEMENT PREPARATION**

a. Select an appropriate site for the interview. The physical setup of the area can be significant when conducting interviews with VIPs or individuals from different cultures and must be arranged accordingly.

b. Instruct the interpreter to mirror your tone of speech. Instruct the interpreter not to interject his/her questions or personality. Instruct the interpreter to inform you if he/she notices any inconsistencies or peculiarities.

c. Speak directly to the individual or audience and in short sentences to allow your interpreter to convey messages efficiently. The interpreter should watch you carefully and during the translation mimic your body language as well as interpret your verbal meaning. You should observe the interpreter closely to detect any inconsistencies between his manner and yours. Presenting one major thought in its entirety allows the interpreter to reconstruct it in his language.

d. Although your interpreter will be doing some editing as a function of the interpreting process, he/she must transmit the exact meaning without additions or deletions. As previously mentioned, insist that the interpreter always asks for clarification, prior to interpreting, whenever not absolutely certain of your meaning. A good interpreter, especially if he/she is local, can be invaluable in translating subtleties and hidden meanings.

e. During an interview or lesson, if questions are asked, the interpreter should immediately relay them to you for an answer. The interpreter should never attempt to answer a question on his own. Additionally, neither of you should correct the other in front of an interviewee or class; settle all differences away from the subject or audience.

f. Just as establishing rapport with the interpreter is vitally important, establishing rapport with an interview subject or target audience is equally important.

## 6. COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

a. Use Proper English. An important first step in communicating in a foreign language is to polish your own English language skills. This is true even if no attempt is made to learn the indigenous language. The clearer you speak in English, including diction, the easier it is for the interpreter to translate. Other factors to consider include avoiding the use of profanity, slang, colloquialisms, military jargon and acronyms. In addition, if a technical term or expression must be used be sure your interpreter conveys the proper meaning.

(1) Never say more in one sentence than you can easily repeat word for word immediately after saying it.

(2) Whenever possible, identify any cultural restrictions prior to interviewing, instructing, or conferring

with particular foreign nationals. For instance, determine when it is proper to stand, sit, or cross ones legs.

b. **Best Practices:**

(1) Position the interpreter by your side (or even a step back). This will keep the subject or audience from shifting their attention, or fixating on the interpreter and not on you.

(2) Always look at and talk directly to the subject or audience. Guard against the tendency to talk to the interpreter.

(3) Speak slowly and clearly and repeat as often as necessary.

(4) Do not address the subject or audience in the third person through the interpreter. Avoid saying "tell them I'm glad to be here today," rather say, "I'm glad to be here today". Ensure that the interpreter does this as well.

(5) Speak to the individual or group as if they understand English. Be enthusiastic and employ the gestures, movements, voice intonations and inflections that you would normally do before an English speaking group. Attitudes and meanings can be conveyed nonverbally. Encourage the interpreter to mimic your delivery.

(6) Avoid side comments to the interpreter that are not expected to be translated. This tends to create the wrong atmosphere for communication.

(7) While the interpreter is translating and the subject or audience is listening, you should avoid doing anything distracting.

(8) DO NOT permit interpreters to intimidate or berate the subject.

**REFERENCE:**

MCRP 3-33.1A Civil Affairs Tactics, Techniques and Procedures

