

Case Study:
**How Alelo Courses Prepare U.S.
Military Personnel For Deployment
to 86 Countries**



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Before U.S. military personnel report for overseas deployments, they must complete required training on various topics, including operational security and injury prevention. Cultural awareness training courses sponsored by the Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO) and developed by Alelo are an increasingly important part of this mandatory training. According to the [latest published training requirements](#), American personnel deploying to 86 countries around the world are now required to complete one of these Alelo cultural awareness training courses for immersion into local customs and language. In total Alelo has developed courses for over 90 countries in 25 languages and is mandatory training for U.S. personnel deploying to 86 countries.

It is noteworthy that these specific courses have been singled out, as alternative cultural training courses are available. Each COCOM (COMbatant COMmand, the military command responsible for a particular part of the world) decides what training to require for their particular region, over and above what all trainees receive. Multiple COCOMs independently concluded that Alelo-developed cultural awareness training should be mandatory. SOUTHCOM (Southern Command) mandates such training for deployments to every country in their area of operations – Central and South America and the Caribbean. In the case of AFRICOM (Africa Command) Alelo-developed cultural training courses are the only region-specific training requirement.

Although we were not party to the decisions to make these courses mandatory, we have some ideas as to what factors might have contributed. First of all, they are designed around tasks and situations that people are likely to experience as part of their work overseas. We interview military personnel who have previously served in other countries, to find out what issues they encounter when they are deployed overseas. We then design the training to focus on these issues. Each trainee receives a personalized course of instruction on the topics that are most relevant to them, which ensures that training time is used efficiently.

We create avatar-based immersive scenarios, in which trainees must apply their skills in simulations of real-world encounters with people from other countries. They can practice as much as they need, without fear of making mistakes. When they encounter similar situations in real life, they feel familiar, and so trainees have the self-confidence to navigate them successfully.

DLNSEO requires that COCOMs participate in the creation of each cultural awareness course. Before course development begins the COCOM must agree to make subject matter experts available to advise the project. This ensures the COCOM's buy-in from the start of the project. Then once the courses prove effective the COCOMs are more likely to have an interest in promoting their widespread use.

During the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a substantial increase in usage of Alelo's online cultural training courses. When work-at-home orders were issued early this year the number of Department of Defense personnel who trained with Alelo courses increased fourfold.

The development methods that Alelo has applied successfully to cultural awareness training can be equally applied to training needs of other organizations to ensure that the training is relevant, effective, and has an impact on on-the-job performance.