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From: Major David F. Lawrence, Western Europe RAO
To: International Affairs Program Coordinator (PLU-8)

Subj: AFTER ACTION REPORT, FISCAL YEAR 2012 DEFENSE LANGUAGE AND SECURITY EDUCATION OFFICE (DLNSEO) FUNDED LANGUAGE SUSTAINMENT

1. **Purpose:** To report on official language training received through funding (\$5995, 10 hours for 16 weeks) provided by the Defense Language and National Security Education Office, administered by the HQMC International Affairs Program Office, for the period of 17 Sep 2012 to 31 Dec 2012, by Major David F. Lawrence, USMC, 8227 Western European RAO.
2. **Summary.** As a study-track RAO completing a payback tour, I was assigned to a NATO operational-level planning billet at NATO Joint Force Command Headquarters, Naples, Italy. Recent regional instability has resulted in time consuming operational planning efforts and uncertain work hours. As a result, I designed a program of personalized and flexible language instruction to address not only my specific language capability shortfalls, but to improve my language capacity in general, and to fit a training/studying/instructional regimen into my challenging schedule and home life in a foreign country. Private tutoring provided the personalization, quality, flexibility, and structured format to fit my specific needs. In order to ensure a good instructor and the pedagogical backing of an accredited institution, Central Texas College was chosen to provide the tutor.
3. **Discussion.** Over the last four months, I have engaged in considerable private instruction in Italian with a private tutor. I have found the structure and format to be extremely effective for the following reasons.
 - a. Personalized instruction is very efficient. It has allowed me to progress from my current level rather than endure more basic instruction first, or feel behind in a more advanced class. It includes direct and consistent one-on-one interaction with the instructor which I have found to be the most important factor for me in language improvement. And, tutoring avoids any amount of waiting or “lost time” during the period of instruction. Therefore, it is not only effective, but efficient, and doesn’t waste any time.
 - b. The quality of the instructor is outstanding. The tutor that was chosen for me by Central Texas College is also a high-school level literature teacher in several foreign languages. Therefore, she is knowledgeable in her native language, the differences between Italian and the local dialect, other foreign languages, and the process of teaching and learning language. Her patience and ability to encourage active speaking and listening have built my confidence in everyday conversation, improved my speaking vocabulary and thus my ability to express more and more complex thoughts, and have enabled me to absorb corrections and learn without hindering my ability to continue to experiment and speak freely.

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- c. The ability to cancel and reschedule with a private tutor is also an extremely important factor in progressing language ability without missing key instructional periods. As a comparative example, in addition to the private tutoring funded by DLNSEO, I also engaged in a lunchtime hour long group lesson that I funded myself. This class took place on base and was normally convenient. Unfortunately, if an important work meeting took place and I had to miss the group class, there was no way to make up the instruction. Because of the normal uncertainty of military planning and the priority associated with my primary billet, I was forced to miss many group lessons. Although, I am certain that the group class assisted my language learning, I do not feel that it was as effective as the private tutoring. I rarely missed scheduled tutoring and only during weeks of intense planning that extended late into the night. Also, because the instruction took place between myself and the instructor, I was able to reschedule and pick up where we left off. Because of the ability to schedule and reschedule private instruction I have found it to be more effective and more compatible with my primary billet than participation in group lessons.
 - d. Private tutoring has provided the much needed structure to focus home study and enable me to get more out of my time spent alone. Without the tutor, I found myself wavering between different study programs, exercises, and ways of interacting with the language that often left me with as many questions as lessons learned. I felt like I had to spend a lot of time trying to figure out grammatical expressions that weren't that difficult. I only realized this after having the professional coaching of a private tutor who provided a sensible structure for home study, and easily answered and explained what beforehand seemed to be confusing questions.
4. **Recommendation.** This form of training is a cost and time effective means to increase language proficiency amongst officers who need personalized, high-quality, structured instruction that allows flexibility in scheduling and doesn't waste time. It is compatible with busy primary billets for those officers that are willing to sacrifice their free time to engage in language sustainment. Private tutoring should be continued to be funded under the DLNSEO program.



D. F. LAWRENCE