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BUILDING UNIT COHESION VIA THE VIDEODISC  
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT  
(VISTA) UNIT TRAINING PROGRAM (VUTP)

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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) The purpose of VUTP is to teach counseling and discussion skills to company leaders in an atmosphere which maximizes the possibility that these skills will be used and thus increase unit cohesion. The purpose of the pilot evaluation described here was to test the feasibility of conducting such training in line units before subjecting the program to a full scale field evaluation. Eighty-one company leaders from four line units were trained for three hours in small groups, starting with the company commanders and first sergeants and going systematically down the chain of command to the		

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squad/team leader level. The first session was led by an ARI trainer; subsequent sessions were led by the company leaders themselves.

The lack of prior training and the behavior of the participants suggest that this type of training is needed, particularly for leaders in platoon sergeant positions and below. The majority of participants felt the training was appropriate for all company leaders and all Army units. Most participants enjoyed and felt they benefited from the experience, and that their units would also benefit (e.g., have better working relations, function more smoothly, and be more cohesive). Several suggestions for improving VUTP will be incorporated into future versions of the program.

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BUILDING UNIT COHESION VIA VIDEODISC INTERPERSONAL SKILLS TRAINING  
AND ASSESSMENT (VISTA) UNIT TRAINING PROGRAM (VUTP)

BRIEF

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Requirement:

To build and test a pilot program for enhancing unit cohesion in Army units, particularly newly formed New Manning System (NMS) units.

Procedures:

VISTA was developed to teach newly commissioned second lieutenants in the Infantry Officer Basic Course (IOBC) at Ft. Benning how to handle commonly occurring/important interpersonal problems in infantry units. VUTP combines the VISTA technology (i.e., interactive computer controlled videodisc scenarios) with group discussion/problem solving techniques to create a unit-based program designed to teach VISTA skills and to increase unit cohesion.

Eight one company leaders were trained in small groups of from 2 to 16 individuals, starting with the company commander and first sergeant and proceeding systematically down the chain of command to the squad/team leader level. The first session was led by the ARI trainer. Subsequent sessions were conducted by the company leaders themselves. The leaders came from four combat units at Ft. Lewis WA: an attack helicopter company, a conventional rifle company, and two NMS rifle companies (one newly formed and one in existence for 15 months).

Input for the pilot evaluation came from participant comments, questionnaires, and observations by the ARI trainer. The central questions to be addressed were the feasibility of conducting this type of training in a variety of units and suggestions for how it should be improved before wider use.

Findings:

o Company level leaders need additional training in counseling skills. More than half the platoon leaders and below have had no prior training in counseling. Their responses during VUTP training indicated they did not have a good grasp of counseling skills needed to handle the commonly occurring/important counseling and situations VISTA and VUTP portray.

o VUTP participants like the experience and feel that it is a good investment of their time. They say that the elements of VUTP (e.g., the training media and the discussions) contribute to its training effectiveness and that discussion was conducted in a helpful fashion.

o The majority of participants say that they personally benefitted from VUTP and that their units will also benefit (i.e., working relations will improve, the unit will function better, and be more cohesive). A majority of VUTP participants also say that all Army units would benefit from VUTP (i.e., work better as groups and be more cohesive).

o The strong relations between the elements of VUTP and feelings about benefits suggest that one way to improve VUTP is to improve the content and presentation of the three scenarios. The most frequent suggestion for improving VUTP was to retain the presence of a skilled/experienced group trainer. Other suggestions included reducing the redundancy in the scenarios by more training for group discussion leaders, and inclusion of additional scenarios.

The ARI trainer also made suggestions for change: (1) more group leader training, (2) use of specific discussion techniques to reduce group member resistance to the content of the lessons, and (3) additional editing of VUTP scenarios to make them run more smoothly.

#### Utilization of Findings:

Initial staffing of this document indicates that the findings will be used by Soldier Support Center (SSC) in the development of leader training for newly formed NMS units. The Leader Policy Branch of DCSPER, DA has also indicated that they will use these findings to help develop training for the 7th Infantry Division. ARI-Pt. Benning also feels that the content of this report will be helpful to instructors in the counseling laboratory of the IOBC at Ft. Benning.

BUILDING UNIT COHESION VIA VIDEODISC INTERPERSONAL SKILLS TRAINING  
AND ASSESSMENT (VISTA) UNIT TRAINING PROGRAM (VUTP)

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## INTRODUCTION

The highly lethal and distributed nature of the modern battle field requires cohesiveness, trust, and interdependence among unit members and their leaders if units are to be effective in a "come-as-you-are-war." In response to this need, the Army has initiated two related efforts to address the "cohesion" problem: Project COHORT (Cohesion, Operational Readiness, and Training) and the New Manning System (NMS). A number of Army agencies have participated in the field evaluation of the NMS. Both Walter Reed Army Institute for Research (WRAIR) and ARI have found that members of NMS units perceive that their units are more effective/combat ready (U.S. Army Research Institute, 1982; Tremble, Kerner-Hoeg, and Bell, 1983; Tremble, Yoest, and Fell, 1984; and WRAIR, 1983). However, the findings from these two efforts do not agree about the development and maintenance of unit cohesion. ARI (Tremble et al., 1984) finds that peer bonding is initially higher in NMS units but is not sustained beyond the first four months. WRAIR (1983) found it to be uniformly higher in the six units they interviewed in USAREUR. ARI found the same pattern for bonding across levels of the company (i.e., senior leaders, junior leaders, and enlisted personnel). WRAIR (1983) found that bonding across levels of the unit was higher than conventional units in some NMS companies but not in others. The reasons for the differences in findings are not totally clear. However, it must be emphasized that both reports involve relatively small numbers of units at different times in their life cycles. Once the evaluation is more "mature" these differences in what is being found may well disappear. The important thing is that these reports have sparked the Army's interest in providing more training to NMS unit leaders on how to build and maintain unit cohesion.

In February, 1983, the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER, DA) requested that ARI help develop leadership training programs to be used in newly forming NMS units to build cohesion. This request was repeated by the NMS Commanders at the NMS Commanders' Conference held in Rosslyn, VA in September, 1983. In November the DCSPER was shown an ARI leadership training program known as VISTA (Videodisc Interpersonal Skills Training and Assessment). He requested that ARI prepare a program to be tried in the 9th Infantry Division at Ft. Lewis, WA. The 9th ID command group was briefed on the project in December, 1983, and arrangements were made to conduct a pilot effort in February. This report presents the findings from the pilot effort.

The remainder of the introductory section covers six topics: (1) What is VISTA? (2) How does it work? (3) How was it developed? (4) How was VISTA originally evaluated? (5) What is the VISTA Unit Training Program (VUTP)? and (6) How was the pilot field evaluation (described in this report) designed?

### What is VISTA?

VISTA is an interactive videodisc/computer-based system designed to teach leadership/counseling skills to newly commissioned second lieutenants in the

Infantry Officer Basic Course (IOBC) at Ft. Benning. It was developed by the ARI Field Unit at Ft. Benning and the Mellonics Systems Development Division of Litton Systems, Inc (Litton-Mellonics) in conjunction with a number of Army agencies and contractors: Training Developments Institute (TDI) of the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), Ft. Monroe, VA; Army Communicative Technology Office (ACTO), Ft. Eustis, VA; the US Army Infantry School, Ft. Benning, GA; and DiscoVision Associates (now Pioneer Video), Costa Mesa, CA. Details on the system and its development can be seen in Schroeder, Dyer, Czerny, Gillotti, and Youngling (1982).

VISTA was designed to be either self-contained/self-paced and used by individuals to learn counseling skills or group-paced in a classroom setting with an instructor to operate the equipment and guide the discussion.

The system consists of both hardware and software. The hardware includes three components: a TV monitor to show scenarios and text to the students; a videodisc player containing the scenarios; and a computer with two disc drives, a videodisc controller card, a clock card, and a game paddle which is used to play the videodisc, display the text and control what is seen on the monitor.

The software consists of two elements: a master floppy disc to operate the "system" and eleven other floppy discs--one for each of the eleven VISTA scenarios. ARI-Ft. Benning (and Litton-Mellonics) also developed two users' manuals: (1) an instructor's guide (Perkins, Salter, Perkins and Cook, 1983, and (2) an equipment setup and troubleshooting manual (Perkins et al., 1983).

#### How VISTA Works

Once the hardware is assembled, the operation is relatively simple. Most of what an operator will need is provided in the text on the computer screen. Additional instructions including how to "trouble shoot" the equipment were provided by ARI (Appendix A).

VISTA is designed to be shown in one of two modes. The first mode is called "pedagogical" because it contains extensive feedback and never allows the student to go more than one step off the "best path" or "school solution." After appropriate background information is given, a video sequence depicts a problem situation. The student, or group of students, is instructed to think through how to resolve the problem situation. The computer then presents a "menu" of three to five options for the student(s) to try. Since the text on the screen is shorter than the response delivered by the actor or may include a "tone of voice" not apparent in the written words, the student is shown a "preview" of the chosen option (i.e., the actor is shown actually delivering the lines). The student is then given the choice of keeping that option or returning to the menu. If he keeps the option, a video segment is played including the subordinates' reactions to what is said. The computer provides a critique of the chosen option. If the chosen option is not the best possible one, the student is taken back to the menu to make another selection.

If his chosen option is the "school solution," the computer continues to a new menu that allows the student to: (1) continue, (2) review the last segment, (3) review any or all of the "wrong" choices, or (4) request help from the computer on how to run some portion of VISTA.

The second instructional mode is called "the experiential mode" because it more closely simulates an actual interpersonal interaction. In this mode, the action continues without any feedback, and the student can go as many as two or three steps off the "best" path before the situation deteriorates to a point where the scenario is ended in an unsatisfactory manner. The main teachings here are in the reactions by the subordinates in the scenario to the appropriate and inappropriate choices a student makes and any discussion which occurs among the students. But the student does not always realize that a counselee "can be salvaged" or "be taught a valuable lesson" and thus he may think he is handling the situation correctly even though he is not achieving the best results.

The time required to see the scenarios varies from 10 minutes to over an hour depending upon the length of the script and the amount of discussion it elicits. The topics covered in the 11 scenarios can be seen in Table 1, below.

Table 1  
VISTA Inventory

Disc Title	Scenario Number/Title	Disc Number
Verbal Abuse	1. Verbal Abuse	1
Taking Charge	2. Taking Charge: Meeting the Platoon Sergeant	2
Meeting the NCOs and the Platoon	3. Part 1: Meeting the NCOs Part 2: Meeting the Platoon	3
Performance Counseling of NCOs	4. Performance Counseling	4
Insubordination	5. Moderate Insubordination 6. Chronic Insubordination	5
Personal Crisis	7. Emergency Leave 8. Suicide Threat	6 7
Financial	9. Financial	8
<u>EEER</u> Counseling	10. Positive EER 11. Negative EER	9

### How VISTA Was Developed

VISTA is the product of a front-end analysis of frequently occurring, important, and difficult problems company leaders encounter. Interviews conducted at Ft. Benning with Second Lieutenants, Company Commanders, and NCOs resulted in a list of 57 potential problem areas. These areas were rated by 58 Captains and senior First Lieutenants in the Infantry Officer's Advance Course to insure that they were problems which occurred frequently, that the solutions were important to smooth functioning of the unit, and were not easily handled by untrained persons. The 11 scenarios developed covered 25 of the identified problem areas. Composite ratings (difficulty + importance + frequency) showed that these scenarios covered 9 out of 10 "top" areas in these ratings.

The "school solution" for each problem was derived from Army doctrine (FM 22-100 and FM 22-101). When appropriate it was also augmented by other sources in leadership and counseling literature or from decision theory, management theory, behavior modification, legal considerations, time management, etc. (A complete list of the documents reviewed in preparing VISTA can be seen in Schroeder et al., 1982). Instructional objectives were also identified for each scenario, and a "best" path was developed to address them based on Army doctrine, relevant theories, and input from subject matter experts. Alternative paths were then developed to illustrate common errors in handling the same situation. The VISTA system was evaluated in the IOBC Counseling Laboratory at Ft. Benning and in FORSCOM units at the same installation.

### Evaluation of VISTA

Most of the evaluation work with VISTA was done in the IOBC Counseling Laboratory. VISTA scenarios were experimentally compared to role playing and programmed texts that covered the same material. In terms of learning of "leadership principles" (i.e., how to deal with people, how to better do their jobs, and how the Army works), VISTA was clearly superior to the other two teaching methods. Next, students were exposed systematically to all three teaching modalities and asked which they preferred. Their ratings showed a clear preference for role playing and for VISTA over the texts. They showed a slight, but nonetheless statistically significant preference for role playing over VISTA. They felt the best method would be some combination of VISTA and role playing. The training effectiveness of VISTA was shown to be equal in a self-paced individual mode, normal classroom-sized groups, and in small groups. But the students greatly preferred small groups.

VISTA was also tried with FORSCOM units. There it was shown that enlisted personnel became more sympathetic towards officers after exposure to VISTA. The test of whether they learned any leadership principles was inconclusive (Bayer, Salter & Dyer, 1983).

In June 1983 VISTA was implemented as part of the regular training in the IOBC Laboratory. It has been released by the Combined Arms Center (CAC) for use in other OBCs. However, implementation is being delayed by the need to modify VISTA to make it compatible with the variety of hardware used by these installations.

#### The VISTA Unit Training Program (VUTP)

VUTP was designed to be part of a larger program for increasing the skills of company leaders and building unit cohesion in newly formed NMS units. The particular skills VUTP was designed to address were those needed to conduct: (1) personal/performance counseling of subordinates and (2) problem-solving sessions which result in group consensus and willingness of members to carry out group decisions.

Historically, social scientists have looked at group cohesiveness in terms of members' attraction to, and desire to remain in, a group. Forces which attract and hold members include the ability of the group to meet member needs (e.g., member safety, desires for social camaraderie, and needs for personal growth). Other attractive features of groups include their activities, attractiveness of the members, and the nature of the group itself (e.g., its goals and philosophies). More recent conceptualizations have added the aspect of member commitment to the group's objectives.

Group attraction and member commitment are captured in the definition of military cohesion adopted by the U.S. Army Soldier Support Center (SSC) conference on unit cohesion held in October, 1983:

Military cohesion is the bonding together of soldiers and their leaders in such a way as to sustain their will and commitment to each other, their unit, and the mission.

ARI research has used the elements of cohesion derived by Etzioni (1975) to help measure whether units are achieving the characteristics spelled out in the SSC and related definitions: (1) horizontal bonding - evaluative relationships among peers; (2) vertical bonding - evaluative relationships between soldiers at different hierarchical levels within a unit; and (3) personal integration - adjustment to and identification with Army values and Army life. The ideal military unit would be one which had strong bonding among peers (horizontal bonding), strong bonding across levels of the unit (vertical bonding) and high levels of personal integration.

Factors known to facilitate the development of high levels of group cohesion include: (1) stabilization of the group's membership, (2) opportunity for member interaction, (3) mutual perceptions of caring, concern, and trust, (4) shared values, (5) shared positive experiences of a challenging nature, (6) feelings that the group can achieve excellence, (7) feelings that the leaders and members are competent to perform their functions, (8) a

cooperative work environment (including tasks which require interdependence in accomplishing a common goal), and (9) perceptions that there is a common threat.

VUTP is designed to be a three hour block of instruction conducted in small groups (i.e., 2 to 8 individuals). The most direct effect of the training is expected to be increased skills in how to counsel subordinates and lead productive discussion groups. Increase in these skills, in turn, should have positive impacts on both unit functioning and cohesion. For example, good performance counseling can lead to increased vertical bonding between leader and subordinates. That is, a leader will be more likely to be seen as competent, concerned about his subordinate, and concerned about the good functioning of the unit. Increased proficiency in conducting discussions should lead to greater sharing of values and a more cooperative work environment.

For VUTP to be successful, these skills must not only be learned but also put into practice in the life of the unit.

The basic train-the-trainer strategy used in VUTP has several advantages over conventional classroom training in terms of the amount of material learned, willingness to try it in the unit, and unit cohesion. The leaders are more motivated to learn under this condition because they will soon have to teach it to their subordinates. Their role as both student and teacher means that many unit leaders will be exposed to the material twice and thus have more opportunity to learn and to be comfortable with the teaching points before they have to try them in the unit. Being the group leader also provides a chance to practice discussion skills with the help of the ARI trainer.

The group discussion has many of these same advantages. The discussion provides a chance for input which is "better" than the VISTA scenarios alone. Leaders can add their experiences, they can reach agreement on how they want to handle situations in the unit and determine how much of what they see in the films they want to actually try. Thus there is social support for putting VUTP principles into practice, particularly if the senior leaders lend their support to the VUTP program. The discussion provides a chance for leaders to show they are competent, desire an excellent unit, and are concerned for the welfare of their subordinates.

These training points were reinforced in the pilot program by the scenarios which were chosen. All three VISTA scenarios (verbal abuse, moderate insubordination, and performance counseling) reinforce important cohesion themes: leader competence, concern for subordinates, mutual respect for unit members, and reinforcement of unit policies which both support individuals and contribute to the effectiveness of the unit.

The written materials discussed the need for unit cohesion and how learning VUTP skills helps to improve it. The ARI trainer not only taught the materials to the leaders but also "modeled" behaviors so that the group could see these principles in action.

### How the pilot field evaluation was designed

The pilot evaluation focused on two main questions: (1) How feasible is it to conduct this type of training in line combat units? and (2) What areas can or should be improved before undertaking a more formal field evaluation? Specific questions included: (1) Is there a need for this type of training?, (2) How do participants react to the various elements of VUTP (e.g., the VISTA scenarios, the discussions, the solutions suggested by their peers, the presence of an outside trainer)?, (3) What benefits do they feel they or their units might derive from participation?, and What suggestions do they have for improvement? The media for gathering this information included comments and questionnaires from participants and observations by the ARI trainer.

At this stage of the development of VUTP, we were not ready to test long term effects of the program or to compare it with other known technologies. Such a test would have, necessarily, involved a much larger sample, a control group, and extensive follow-up to see how much of what was being taught was actually put into practice and with what effects. Instead, we were interested in determining the feasibility of adapting the VISTA program for broader use in Army units.

## METHOD

### Sample

The pilot trial of VUTP was conducted in four companies at Ft. Lewis, Washington during the weeks of 13-26 February. The types of units that participated were: an attack helicopter company, a conventional rifle company, a "new" NMS rifle company (i.e., it had not yet received its first four troops) and an "old" NMS rifle company (i.e., it had been in existence for 15 months). The newly formed NMS unit was selected because it is the intended audience for VUTP. The other units were included to see if VUTP training might also be beneficial for other types of units (i.e., all NMS units, conventional rifle units, and other types of combat units).

The design called for participation by the company commander, company first sergeant, three platoon leaders and nine squad leaders. However, the number of participants varied from this design. The attack helicopter company did not have all the leaders and several rifle companies chose to have all four platoons participate and also to send their team leaders. The numbers and kinds of participants are listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2  
Number of Participants per Company and Position

Position	Companies				Totals
	Attack Helicopter	Conventional Rifle Company	New NMS Rifle Company	Old NMS Rifle Company	
Co Cmd	1	1	1	1	4
1st Sgt	1	1	1	0	3
Pl Ldr	2	4	2	3	11
Pl Sgt	2	5	5	5	17
Sqd Ldr	1	7	9	12	29
Team Ldr	0	3	1	13	17
TOTAL	7	21	19	34	81

Although 81 individuals participated in the pilot effort, most of the analyses involve fewer respondents, because respondent data were not always complete.

### Procedure

The VUTP program began with an orientation meeting for the company commanders and first sergeants from the four companies. This orientation covered the purpose of VUTP, the training materials, and how the training was to be conducted.

The number of sessions per company needed to conduct VUTP varied with the number of leaders to be trained. The smallest unit (the attack helicopter company) took two; the largest unit (the old WMS company) was planned for six. However, these were compressed to four sessions, with the last two sessions involving leaders of two platoons in a single session.

The first session in each company was conducted by the ARI trainer with the company commander and his first sergeant. The purpose of that session was to provide these two leaders an opportunity to learn leadership principles, increase the vertical bonding through their interactions, exchange of views and attempt to reach consensus. It also trained them in how VUTP was to be administered in the second session, when they would be the leaders.

The second session was led by the company commanders and first sergeants with some assistance from the ARI trainer. They trained the platoon leaders and platoon sergeants.

The rifle companies required subsequent sessions for the squad and team leaders. These sessions were led by the platoon leaders and/or the platoon sergeants with some help from the ARI trainer. Figure 1 below shows the layout of the training for the rifle companies down through the team leader level. The same procedure was followed in the helicopter company but it stopped with the second level because they did not have the rest of the structure shown here.

LAYOUT OF COMPANY TRAINING

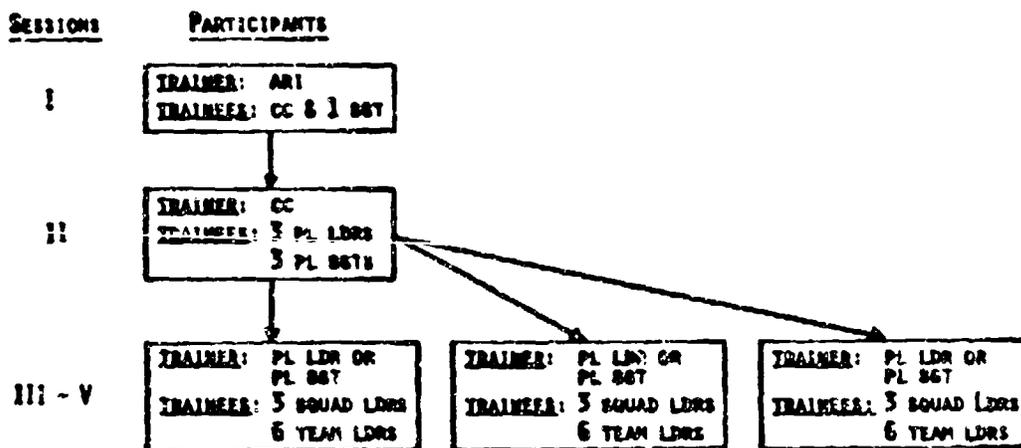


Figure 1. ARI Representative was present to observe discussion, administer forms, take over if discussion became counterproductive.

## Instruments

Two types of materials were prepared: training materials and evaluation materials.

Training Materials. Three training materials were prepared: (1) a briefing on VISTA, (2) an overview of the VUTP training sessions, and (3) a handout on how to use the VISTA equipment. The briefing covered five topics: (1) what VISTA is, (2) how it works, (3) how it was developed, (4) how VISTA was evaluated, and (5) what we proposed to do at Ft. Lewis. It was used to orient leaders on what VUTP was about and the schedule we intended to follow at Ft. Lewis.

The training sessions overview (Appendix B) was designed to help the company leaders to conduct VUTP sessions and to understand the type of feedback we wanted from the participants. Topics covered in the overview included: (1) the training objectives, (2) the type of feedback we wanted, (3) how sessions were to be conducted, and (4) the type of discussion which was to take place and (5) what the "school solution" was for each of the three scenarios. The latter information was provided to the company discussion leaders to help them keep track of what was happening in the scenarios. However, they were instructed to let the answers emerge from the group.

The Evaluation Materials. Evaluation of VUTP was obtained through two media: (a) a questionnaire given to all participants, (2) comments from participants, and (3) the observations of the ARI trainers.

The Questionnaire. The VUTP questionnaire (Appendix C) consisted of 64 separate questions which tapped participants' reactions to VUTP, what benefits they had received or expected to receive for having gone through it, and some basic demographic facts (i.e., individuals' companies, positions, how much prior counseling training they had received). The procedures used to develop scales and their content are covered in Appendix D. A list of the measures used in the evaluation and the number of questions which are part of these measures appear in Table 3.

Table 3

Names and number of items in the scales included in the VUTP Evaluation

Scale Names	Number of Items
<u>Need for VUTP Training:</u>	
. Number of prior counseling courses	1
. Relevance of VUTP training for company leaders	7
. Recommendation for Army adoption of VUTP	1
<u>The VUTP Experience:</u>	
. Verbal abuse/moderate insubordination scenario & discussion	8
. Performance counseling scenario and discussion	4
. The scenarios' focus on the platoon leaders' job	3
. Agreement with peers	3
. Nature of the discussion	6
<u>VUTP Benefits:</u>	
. Personal benefit from participation in VUTP	6
. VUTP impact on unit working relations	7
. Unit benefits from VUTP	3
<u>Suggested Changes in VUTP</u>	7
<u>Participant Characteristics:</u>	
. Name of company	1
. Duty position	1
. Time in the company	1
. Time in position	1

Statistical Analysis

Since we anticipated that the evaluation questions would require inferential as well as descriptive statistics, we designed most of the responses to occur on either a seven point scale (-3 to +3), a five point scale (1 to 5) or a three point scale (1 to 3). The exceptions to this rule were the "yes/no" questions on suggestions for improving VUTP and the fill-in-the-blank or check format used to gather basic demographic information. In many places we wanted to know what percent of respondents reacted positively to a given question. In these cases we combined all the responses above the neutral points of a scale into a single score and divided by the number of respondents answering that question. An example of this type of descriptive analysis would be "what percent of the participants recommended that all Army units go through VUTP training?" In those cases where this strategy did not seem to be appropriate, we simply reported the average rating given by the participants.

We were also aware that many questions were viewed similarly to one another. To test this notion we conducted extensive factor analyses of the questionnaire and constructed three to eight item "scales." (The exact procedure used in constructing these scales is spelled out in Appendix D). Questions with the same number of choice points were combined (e.g., questions with seven choice points were combined with other seven choice point questions), so that by dividing the total for a scale by the number of questions in it, we were able to keep the metric the same as that used for single questions.

We were interested in the reactions of sub-groups of participants (i.e., members of different companies and different types of leaders) to different aspects of VUTP and in the extent to which these sub-groups saw that they derived benefits from their participation. In these analyses we used a two-way analysis of variance procedure which "corrected" for the presence of different-sized samples in each of the sub-groups. The "F-values" computed from these analyses were then compared to those expected in a random situation to determine whether the obtained values were statistically different from "chance." In these analyses we report any differences which have less than a 5% chance of occurring in a random situation (i.e., the probability is .05 or less). We were particularly interested in differences between the conventional rifle unit and the NMS units; differences between the two NMS units; differences between company level leaders (company commanders and first sergeants) and those at platoon leader and below, and between platoon leader/sergeant and squad/team leaders.

On one question--the appropriateness of VUTP training for different company leaders--we conducted a one-way analysis of variance to see if ratings differed by the raters' leadership position. The resulting "F-value" was tested for statistical significance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The pilot evaluation of VUTP at Ft. Lewis addressed four basic questions. First, is VUTP needed by Army units? Second, how do participants react to the elements of VUTP (e.g., the scenarios, the discussion, the solutions suggested by their peers)? Third, what benefits do they feel they received or their units might receive because they participated? And fourth, how might VUTP be improved?

### Who needs/would benefit from VUTP training?

Table 4 shows the percent of participants in each of six leadership positions who stated that they had had similar training in the past. All officers and first sergeants had had at least one prior counseling course. In contrast, nearly two thirds (63%) of the squad leaders and nearly three fourths of the team leaders (72%) had no prior training. If the participants are typical of company leaders, in general, there is a need for VUTP or something like it at the level of platoon sergeant and below.

Table 4  
Number of Prior Counseling Courses Taken by VUTP Participants

Number of Courses	Leadership Position					
	Co Cmd	1st Sgt	Pl Ldr	Pl Sgt	Sqd Ldr	Tm Ldr
None	0%	0%	0%	47%	63%	72%
One	50	33	36	24	19	22
More than One	50	67	64	29	19	6
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	101% *	100%

\* Due to rounding, percents do not always add up to 100%.

The question of whether counseling training or VUTP, per se, is more needed for units is more directly addressed by the analyses in Tables 5 and 6. Table 5 provides a breakdown of positions within the company that participants feel would most benefit from VUTP. Over 75% of the participants felt that all the company leadership would benefit from participating in VUTP. Participants were particularly strong in their feelings about the appropriateness of this type of training for platoon, squad and team leaders. A further analysis of the data in Table 5 also showed fairly good agreement among the leaders in their ratings (i.e., the appropriateness of training ratings did not vary by the position of the person doing the rating).

**Table 5**  
**Perceived Usefulness of VUTP Training for Different Company Leaders:**  
**Percent of Raters Stating That It Would Be "useful"**

Position Rated	Percent
Company Cross-landers	81%
1st Sergeants	76
Platoon Leaders	86
Platoon Sergeants	81
Squad Leaders	84
Team Leaders	87
The Rater	80

Table 6 indicates participants' feelings about whether all Army units would benefit from taking VUTP in its present form. Most (63%) felt that all units would benefit from taking VUTP (i.e., 41% said "definitely yes" and an additional 22% said "yes"). Only 11% felt that this would not be a good idea.

**Table 6**  
**Recommendations for All Army Units to Take VUTP**

Participants' Ratings	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Definitely Yes	41%	41%
Yes	22	63
Maybe	17	80
No	11	91
No Opinion	10	101

**Participants' Reactions to the Elements of VUTP**

Five scales were used to measure participants' reactions to various elements of VUTP. They were: (1) the verbal abuse/moderate insubordination scenario and discussion, (2) the performance counseling scenario and discussion, (3) the focus on the platoon leader's job, (4) the nature of the discussion, and (5) the extent to which participants agreed with their peers on how to resolve the problems presented in VUTP. Each of these five aspects of VUTP are discussed below. The first three (the scenarios) are also presented in a table (Table 7).

Table 7

Participants' Reactions to the Elements of VUTP: Percent Responding Positively to Each Element

Element	Percent
VA/MI scenarios and discussion	86%
Performance counseling scenario and discussion	84
Scenarios' focus on the platoon leader's job	80

Reactions to the VA/MI scenarios and discussions. Participants were asked to rate the degree to which the film content, film feedback, group discussion leader, and discussion by peers added to the training effectiveness of the "verbal abuse" and "moderate insubordination" scenarios. Since the participants' reactions to these elements for the two scenarios were quite similar, they were combined into a single scale: "VA/MI scenarios and discussions" (see Appendix D for details on how scales are constructed). Eighty-six percent of the participants felt that the elements of the verbal abuse/moderate insubordination scenarios contributed to their training effectiveness.

The three rifle companies--the only units with sufficient numbers of participants to be analyzed--were subjected to a two-way analysis of variance (type of company by three levels of leaders: Company Commanders and First Sergeants vs. Platoon Leaders and Platoon Sergeants vs. Squad and Team Leaders). No statistically significant differences were found in this or in any of the subsequent analyses. This finding suggests that VUTP training is equally relevant for, or well received by, all of the rifle company participants.

It should be noted that the attack helicopter company was as positive as the other units on this and all subsequent analyses. This pattern suggests that VUTP can be used by non-infantry units. However, additional units will have to be tested before we know the full range of units for which VUTP is appropriate.

Reactions to the performance counseling film and discussion. Participants were asked to rate the same four elements in the performance counseling scenario and discussion. That is, the extent to which (1) the film content, (2) the film feedback, (3) the group discussion leader and (4) the discussion by peers contributed to the training effectiveness of the scenarios. Although they were less positive about this aspect of the training, 84% nonetheless rated it positively.

Focus on the platoon leader's job. VISTA was originally designed to teach new lieutenants how to be platoon leaders. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that all three VISTA scenarios are written from the perspective of the platoon leader. Although we expected that this feature of VUTP would be viewed negatively--particularly by the more junior leaders--80% of par-

Participants said that this part of VUTP contributed to the training effectiveness of the program. Furthermore, there was no significant difference in the ratings given by different types of leaders.

Participants' ratings of the nature of the discussion. The participants were asked to rate whether the discussions were conducted in the prescribed manner. Did participants feel free to offer their opinions? Were their opinions considered by the group? Did participants share their views? Did they proceed on the basis of the majority opinion? Did they remain focused on the scenarios rather than the personalities of unit members? The average rating obtained on this scale (i.e., 4.0 out of a possible 5.0) indicates that the participants felt that the discussions were conducted in the prescribed manner most of the time.

Degree of agreement among peers on solutions to VUTP. Participants were asked to estimate the extent they agreed with their fellow participants on how to best solve the "problems" being presented in the three VUTP scenarios. Based on the amount of time they had been together, we expected to see the highest agreement among members of the "old" NMS unit. However, this was not the case. Neither unit nor rank differences were discovered. The average rating on this scale (i.e., 1.9 out of a possible 3.0) indicated that most of the time the participants agreed with their peers.

Personal benefit from participation in VUTP.

Table 8 shows the percent of participants who felt that they got some personal benefits in each of the six areas measured. All elements of "personal benefit" received positive ratings by at least half the participants. Most (89%) liked VUTP and felt it was a good investment of time (79%). Gains in ability to handle similar situations in the unit and lead good discussion groups, increased knowledge of leadership principles, and alternative ways of handling unit problems were also claimed by over two-thirds of the participants. The relatively low rating for learning "new" principles (69%) is consistent with the fact that many have had prior training and that most leaders have been exposed to these leadership challenges through other experiences.

Table 8  
Degree Participants Derived Personal Benefit from VUTP:  
Percent Who Said They Benefitted

Item Rated	Percent
Liked the VISTA Unit Training Program	89%
Increased Skill with Similar Problem	81
Increased Ability to Lead Discussion Groups	80
VUTP was a good investment of my time	79
VUTP increased knowledge of different solutions	77
Increased Knowledge of Leadership Principles	69

Each of the five dimensions of the VUTP experience was entered into a "backwards elimination" multiple regression model to determine which features were most responsible for participant ratings of personal benefit from VUTP. The analysis shows that ratings of "personal benefit" from participation in VUTP can be predicted in a highly significant manner (i.e.,  $F=33.36$  with 3 degrees of freedom; probability is less than .001) using three ratings from three aspects of the VUTP experience: (1) the elements of the VA/MI film and discussion, (2) the elements of the performance counseling film and discussion, and (3) the degree of agreement among the group participants (i.e., agreement with peers). Taken together, these three measures also produce a multiple correlation of .79, which accounts for 62% of the variance in the personal benefit ratings. Improvements in any of these features of VUTP--particularly the reactions to the VA/MI films and discussions--could well have a major impact.

Anticipated improvement in the units' working relationships.

Table 9 shows the percent of participants who expected positive outcomes for the unit's working relationships as a function of having gone through VUTP. The range of these percents was between 74 and 86%, indicating that the majority of participants expected improvements in their units' communications and problem solving strategies.

Table 9  
Percent of Participants Who Anticipate Improvement in Unit Working Relationships

Item Rated	Percent
VUTP will help the unit:	
Deal with similar problems	86%
Air differences in opinions	85
Coordinate actions	83
Find good solutions to problems	83
Generate common approaches	81
VUTP will have a positive impact on the whole unit	84
VUTP will help unit leaders' working relations	74

Anticipated overall unit benefit from participation in VUTP.

Table 10 shows the percent of participants who felt their units would improve in functioning, become more cohesive, or increase in empathy for leaders because of VUTP. The relatively low expectation for increased empathy for leaders (56%) compared to the other two helps explain why the scores for overall benefit were not more positive. However, the facts that 84% of the participants expected an improvement in unit functioning and 80% expected the unit to be more cohesive suggest that the program was viewed positively by the great majority of the participants.

Table 10

Anticipated Overall Unit Benefit from VUTP Participation:  
Percent of Participants Who Feel Unit Will Benefit

Item Rated	Percent
Improvement in unit functioning	84%
Better unit cohesion	80
More empathy for unit leaders	56

We again used the backwards elimination multiple regression technique to determine which features of VUTP were most highly associated with participants' ratings of overall unit benefit. Only one element--ratings of the VA/MI scenario and its discussion--showed a statistically significant relationship. The resulting correlation (.40) accounted for 16% of the variance in the overall benefits scale. The size of this correlation is much smaller than was obtained for either the prediction of personal benefit or improvement in unit working relationships. The most likely explanation is that the scale is much shorter (three items), and the concept being tapped is much harder to pin down. For example, we know from prior research that soldiers do not always know what unit cohesion is and yet we are asking them to estimate how much it might improve. In any case, this portion of the questionnaire should be reworked before it is tried with subsequent groups.

Suggestions for how to improve VUTP

Three sources of information were used to derive suggestions for how to improve VUTP: (1) relationships which emerged in the questionnaire data, (2) specific suggestions from the participants, and (3) observations made by the ARI group trainer. Each of these is discussed separately.

Relations which emerged from analyses of the questionnaire. The analyses have shown that there is a need for counseling training, particularly for platoon sergeants and below. Most participants felt that VUTP is appropriate for company level leaders and for all Army units. Most participants liked VUTP and felt that it was a good investment of their time. Most felt that the elements in the scenarios contributed to their training effectiveness and that the discussions were conducted in a constructive manner. Most participants felt that their own knowledge and skills in handling these kinds of leadership challenges had been improved. However, they were more likely to say that they knew how to handle specific situations than that they had gained general leadership principles or knowledge about how to lead a discussion group. This suggests that the program could be improved by making the counseling and discussion principles more explicit or spending more time on them.

Most participants felt that their units had also benefitted from VUTP. They felt more sure that the process would improve than that they would get better outcomes (Table 9). They were also more sure that the unit would function better and be more cohesive than that the leaders would be viewed more empathetically (Table 10).

Reactions to VUTP including claimed benefits might have been made more positive by changing the conditions under which the "old" NMS unit participated. That is, we should eliminate Saturday training, restrict the size of units, and schedule sessions when units have had a chance to rest up after field exercises. However, it is also possible that part of the negative reaction by this particular group is due to its "age". A unit which has been together for 15 months may have already established policies for how to handle VUTP type situations and may also be quite resistant to changes in the working relations. If this is the case, then timing of VUTP training may prove to be critical to its success in the NMS.

The extent to which participants agreed with their peers was strongly correlated with personal benefit and with anticipated improvements in unit working relations. Peer agreement might increase if the mode of presentation of the scenarios were changed from the "pedagogical" to the "experiential" mode. If the scenarios were shown under this mode, the participants could concentrate on how they would handle the situations, without having to worry about the "school solution." Although switching to the experiential mode might improve the ability of the group to reach consensus, we would not recommend making that change. It would be difficult to find trainers who could successfully duplicate the teaching which is currently done by the computer. If such trainers were found, they might engender the hostility which is now displaced onto "the computer" as the students try to cope with making mistakes in front of their peers. If the trainer simply lets the group agree on a less than optimal answer, the program will end up reinforcing bad habits in handling unit problems.

Higher agreement among peers could also be obtained by providing participants with higher levels of skill and experience so that they could participate on a more even footing with one another. This could be done by: (1) providing other training, or (2) providing the participants an opportunity to discuss the types of scenarios they are going to encounter in the films before coming to the VUTP sessions. Higher agreement might also be reached by making the discussion groups smaller and/or more homogeneous and by providing more time for discussing each scenario.

Participants' suggestions for improving VUTP. Table 11 shows the percent of participants who felt that some aspect of VUTP could be improved. By far the largest area in which participants commented was the presence of a civilian group trainer (67%). The participants felt that the group trainer had been a positive feature which should be retained. They said such things as:

"Good, we need someone who isn't biased",  
"He keeps the flow going in the right direction.",  
"It's a very good idea.",  
"He reduces the requirements on the group leaders."

These comments suggest that VUTP will be less effective if the units are left to their own resources to conduct the training.

The next most frequent comments focused on (19%) the number of participants. Most of those who commented wanted smaller groups (e.g., no more than 6 to 8 per session). Some participants wanted more of the company to be included in the training. However, none of these respondents stated that they wanted the increased participation to occur in large groups.

Equal numbers of participants (18%) commented on (1) the number and types of topics covered and (2) the pace at which the training was conducted.

About half of those commenting on topics wanted to see more topics added. Candidates included scenarios on tactics, general leadership principles, and leader ethics. Others commented on the focus on the platoon leader's job. Here they wanted the films to be done to make them more relevant for the jobs of team leaders, squad leaders and NCOs, in general.

Most of those commenting on the pace of VUTP objected to the repetition of material as the computer moved from the "choice points" to the "answer". Several participants suggested that the discussion leader be given an option which would allow him to skip this repetition as often as possible. Those who objected to the pace, per se, were evenly divided: half wanted it speeded up and half wanted it slowed down. Reasons for slowing it down included more time to read the text, more time to consider options, and more time for discussion.

The 15% of the participants who commented on the time required to conduct the training mostly wanted shorter sessions or some reduction in the total time. However, one participant wanted it to be expanded to a full day (as opposed to the current 3 hours) and one participant wanted to "use as much time as needed."

Nearly all the participants who commented on "who should take VUTP" wanted it to include the entire company down to squad leaders. The one exception was an individual who recommended limiting participants to recruits with leadership potential, since all "leaders (already) know these principles." Several of those who commented felt that it was "good" for team leaders and should be seen by the entire team.

Those commenting on the conduct of the discussion leaders felt that they needed more and better training on how to conduct discussion groups. Several went so far as to suggest that the discussion leaders be "school trained."

Table 11  
Percent of Participants Suggesting Changes

Item Rated	Percent
Presence of a Civilian Trainer	67%
Number of Participants	19
Types or Numbers of Topics Covered	18
How quickly the training was conducted	18
Total amount of time required	15
Who was included in the training	13
How the leader conducted the sessions	12

In addition to the categories in Table 11, participants were asked if they had any other suggestions: twelve of the 83 participants did. Most of these involved a specific suggestion for changing the film presentations. For example, several participants criticized the acting in the films. One suggested a larger TV monitor; another suggested going through the films in the "experiential mode" first and then repeating using the "pedagogical mode"; and still another participant suggested more dialogue before the choice points.

Those making content suggestions focused on a lack of structure in the training. They wanted more definition in the teaching objectives, principles to be learned, and realism in the options and subsequent outcomes. Several others simply made summary statements (e.g., "good class" or "scrap the program").

#### Observations of the ARI trainers.

The observations include the need for VUTP training, the reactions to it, the benefits derived from it, and other suggestions.

The need for VUTP training. Table 4 shows that the presence of prior counseling training is related to leadership position: senior leaders have had it but junior leaders have not. We had anticipated that the company commanders and first sergeants would have already had courses in counseling, but we felt that we had to include them to familiarize them with the VUTP materials and to gain their acceptance of VUTP so that the junior leaders would be more comfortable in participation in the VUTP training.

The interaction of the participants in the sessions was related to whether they had had prior training. Those who already knew VUTP principles

were much more articulate in stating why they would handle situations in the "approved" manner, and they had a higher agreement with others. Those with no prior training tended to guess at the answers and to be more frustrated by the VUTP experience. Sprinkling the group with some more experienced leaders and having more discussion about the "whys" or consequences of the different choice points might reduce the frustration levels among the more junior leaders.

Even the inexperienced leaders already knew some VUTP principles (e.g., don't correct NCOs in front of their troops; keep your "cool" in handling situations; and use professional help when you get a problem which is beyond your capability). However, they tended to rely more on punishment and to believe that persons who had risen in the Army to the rank of E6 should know their jobs and handle their personal problems without any assistance from senior leaders or Army agencies. The number of "errors" these junior/inexperienced leaders made in going through VUTP reinforced the notion that this type of training is, indeed, needed.

Participants who rated the elements of VUTP positively felt it was appropriate for unit leaders, and felt they and their units had benefited from it, tended to also recommend that VUTP be made available for all Army units. Not only did most participants recommend VUTP in their questionnaire responses, but they also commented favorably about the experience both during the sessions and afterwards. However, those who recommended VUTP also suggested keeping the civilian trainer. Providing an experienced group trainer would make the program more expensive for the Army to maintain.

Reactions to the elements of VUTP. The verbal abuse scenario starts with a platoon leader walking past a squad formation in which the E6 squad leader is correcting a squad member by insulting his intelligence. In the school solution, the lieutenant pulls the squad leader aside and points out that such behavior is against Army and company policy and that he wants to meet with the squad leader the next morning to discuss the situation. In the office, the lieutenant reiterates his policy, insists that the squad leader change his behavior, and then moves to the "family problem" which is the apparent cause of the recent changes in the squad leader's behavior as reflected in the undesirable leadership behavior just seen. The scenario ends with the lieutenant recommending counseling by the chaplain and following through to make sure that the squad leader does something to lessen his stress level and behave better.

Most participants appreciated that the lieutenant must take action and that he must not chew out the squad leader in front of his troops. However, many did not see the squad leader's behavior as "verbal abuse". Many felt that the behavior was okay, but that one must not get caught doing it. Many wanted to move to "personal counseling" right away and put off the performance counseling until later. Their reasoning was that the squad leader obviously had a problem which he was willing to talk about and that he would be less willing to discuss it if the lieutenant insisted on discussing his

performance. There was also some resistance to the vigorous follow-up by the lieutenant in getting the NCO to seek professional help. Many felt that the lieutenant was insisting on too quick a resolution and others felt the NCO could solve his own problem.

The resistance to the verbal abuse scenario could be fixed by changing the film, but we also found that we could reduce the resistance by the way it was discussed. Extending the discussion about the nature and consequences of verbal abuse, acknowledging that doing the personal counseling first is good but not the preferred way, encouraging participants to withhold judgment about VUTP until the scenario was over, and acknowledging that instant referral is not always needed, all contributed to reducing the resistance encountered when this scenario was shown. We also encouraged the participants to "improve" on the VUTP solutions and to tailor them to their own situations. We found that it was important to make participants feel "okay" about making mistakes. We stressed that all participants made mistakes and that seeing the feedback from these errors contributed to the power of the VUTP lessons. When participants don't feel comfortable in making mistakes, they are resistant to participating, frequently hostile, and frustrated.

This and all other scenarios ran more smoothly and more rapidly if we did five things. First, stay in the pedagogical mode. The essential points can be made without switching modes. Second, skip the VISTA system overview. It is too long for people to remember what it is saying, and it isn't needed if the participants can watch the action for a while or have a trainer present. Third, get the participants to discuss the background and opening scene before they begin to make choices. This practice avoids future arguments about handling the problem by providing a common starting place for making decisions based on what the problem actually is and what the range of possible options is for resolving it. Fourth, have participants state why they preferred one option over another. This type of discussion helped the participants see differences in the choices they may have missed and often led to agreement on how to proceed. Fifth, in the absence of agreement, show two or more options to the group, and show the "wrong" one first. This technique takes advantage of the automatic feature of the pedagogical mode which returns the group to the original choice menu without having to go through extra steps.

The Moderate Insubordination scenario depicts a lieutenant counseling a Spec 4 who was an outstanding troop up until the last month when he was late to formation, refused to get a haircut, and has generally shown a bad attitude. Although the NCOs have counseled this troop, they have asked the lieutenant to find out what is going on and, if possible, turn this troop around. During the session we find that the Spec 4 wants out of the Army but does not appreciate that his bad discharge has consequences in civilian life. Once he realizes this, the troop promises to change his behavior and earn an honorable discharge.

This scenario evoked strong reactions from some participants. They felt that his offenses warranted punishment and that the Army was wrong in not suggesting that he get it. Others felt that once a troop gets "short", there is nothing that can be done to change his attitude.

Two discussion techniques were tried to make this scenario more realistic. The first was to change the disc and show the group the "chronic insubordination" scenario so that they could appreciate how this troop differed from one who could not be salvaged. Participants who saw the second scenario were quite enthusiastic. They enjoyed putting the hammer down on the chronic case and seemed to know what was needed. The second technique was to invite the group to try to devise a better method of handling the moderate insubordination case. This worked in some groups but not in others. Salvaging wayward soldiers does not seem to be as easy as punishing them and/or discharging them.

Perhaps the best method of fixing this scenario would be to reshoot it to show how NCOs might handle the case before it is raised to higher levels. Inclusion of additional motivational techniques might also strengthen it.

The Performance Counseling scenario again shows a squad leader being counseled by his lieutenant. The problem here seems to be a lack of consistency in the squad leader's behavior. He is technically competent and handles his troops well but he: (1) grabbed the wrong map on an FTX and got the troops lost, (2) failed to supervise his troops in motor pool and thus failed a roadside inspection, and (3) was an hour and a half late getting his troops to a work detail because he forgot to arrange transportation. The scenario reveals that the squad leader is not good at planning and organizing his time and resources. The lieutenant gives him lessons in time management and planning and some follow-up exercises to insure that he can put these new techniques into practice.

This scenario evoked many comments about the acting skill of the players. It was also harder to follow this scenario because the choice points were often poorly written. Furthermore, there was a tendency for the participants to assume that the NCO had a personal problem (e.g., drugs, booze, or family) which was causing his inconsistent behavior. This assumption on the part of many of the participants made them go off the track and thus find the scenario frustrating.

This scenario would be improved by switching actors and rewriting the choice points. However, it was also helped by having the group withhold judgment about causes of behavior and by simply giving them the answers on some of the more obscure choice points. This film was a nice counterbalance to the other two scenarios, which were more interpersonal and less technical in nature.

Focus on the platoon leader's job. All three scenarios were written from the standpoint of the lieutenant's job. Participants' reactions to this feature of VUTP were related to other reactions to the program and whether they felt that they and their units had benefitted from it. However, leadership position was not relevant (i.e., higher ranking individuals were not any more likely to find this a positive or negative feature of the program than were lower ranking individuals). Most groups chose to handle this

feature by having all participants role play as if each were the lieutenant in the scenario. This seemed to work. But there were comments from time to time from the participants which suggested that they also identified with the NCOs being counseled in the verbal abuse and performance counseling situations. The dynamic of identifying with the NCOs could probably be exploited along with the theme of mutual respect--to open up the discussions to be more personal in nature. However, there is a danger that the sessions would then get too personal and turn into "bitch" sessions (e.g., "my officers certainly don't treat me with the respect that that NCO is getting"). We tried to discourage this type of reaction whenever it occurred because VUTP is not sensitivity training. Rather it is to teach skills which can be used by the unit to improve its working relations without directly confronting personalities.

Nature of the discussion. The discussion rules outlined in Appendix B were generally followed. The group discussion leaders learned fairly quickly how to get group members to participate. However, they tended to poll the members about their choices and not to spend much time trying to resolve differences of opinion. Some leaders, particularly the captains, tried to get the participants to give the right answers by giving broad hints. As a whole, the leaders were most comfortable when the sessions were structured as a skills-acquiring session. They were less comfortable pulling solutions from the groups; letting groups make mistakes and learn from them; and getting members to talk about their experiences in handling similar situations. Contrary to our expectations, leaders also avoided talking about how to implement VUTP lessons in their units. None of the group leaders went out of their way to align themselves with the computer solutions. Rather they offered the computer as a useful teaching tool they felt free to disagree with.

Company commanders proved to be the best group leaders. They were confident and had good control over the interactions. Lieutenants seemed to have the verbal skills necessary to lead groups but generally seemed to lack confidence in themselves as trainers. NCOs, as a rule, were less able to lead the discussions. One NCO, in particular, was a silent machine operator, which produced such a chaotic situation that the group had to be rescued by the trainer. However, there were two NCOs who did an outstanding job. One was a highly articulate first sergeant. The other was a recent BNOC instructor. This suggests that NCOs can lead the sessions but they must be carefully picked or trained.

The nature of the discussions could be improved in a number of ways. The first way would be to improve the training materials, using the information gathered in this pilot effort. A second improvement would be to insure that potential discussion leaders actually read the materials. Our observation during the pilot evaluation was that most leaders used information that they gained from going through the training but did not specifically consult the printed materials. A third improvement would be to spend more time in training the leaders. Although they were familiarized with the equipment and

given the materials, they were not specifically rehearsed on what they were to say or given any role playing exercise to help them handle specific areas of the VUTP. A fourth way would be to make the introduction of the program longer and more standardized. Topics which should be systematically covered in the introduction include: the nature and objectives of the training, the types of situations participants will be seeing, and an expectation that the groups are to try to incorporate the lessons that they learn into their units. A fifth improvement would be to try to get the leaders to "buy into" the content of the lessons. If the leaders were more articulate in their support of the VUTP lessons, the members might be less resistant to them. A sixth suggestion would be to keep the discussion groups to 6 to 8 individuals so that each member has a greater chance to fully participate. Participation might also be enhanced by insuring that all participants have had prior training and that the groups are more homogeneous (e.g., restricted to individuals who work with one another on a daily basis).

The fact that unit leaders liked VUTP and felt that it would benefit their units encourages us to make the changes suggested here and then subject it to a larger, more controlled study.

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APPENDIX A

INSTRUCTIONS FOR VISTA



## INSTRUCTIONS FOR VISTA

**NOTE:** AT THIS TIME IN THE INSTRUCTIONS, ALL MACHINES SHOULD BE TURNED OFF.

BEFORE EXPLAINING HOW TO RUN VISTA, WE WILL COVER SOME BASIC TERMS TO AVOID CONFUSION LATER.

**"CURSOR":** THIS IS THE SMALL BLOCK WHICH APPEARS ON THE SCREEN WHICH CAN BE MOVED BY ROTATING THE DIAL ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER.

**"HAND-CONTROLLER":** THE HAND-CONTROLLER IS THE SMALL DEVICE BY WHICH YOU OPERATE VISTA. THIS DEVICE ALLOWS YOU TO MOVE THE "CURSOR" TO APPROPRIATE COMMAND LINES ON THE SCREEN. PRESSING THE BUTTON ON THE SIDE OF THE HAND-CONTROLLER IS THE MEANS BY WHICH YOU SELECT CHOICES AND MOVE THROUGH THE LESSON.

**"CHOICE POINT":** POINTS DURING EACH LESSON AT WHICH VISTA WILL PRESENT YOU WITH SEVERAL ALTERNATIVE ANSWERS FROM WHICH YOU MUST SELECT THE BEST ANSWER. (EXCEPT WHEN THESE INSTRUCTIONS ASK FOR PREDETERMINED ANSWERS.)

BE SURE THAT YOU HAVE THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS:

APPLE COMPUTER WITH TWO DISK DRIVES  
T.V. MONITOR  
VIDEODISK PLAYER  
APPROPRIATE DISKETTES AND VIDEODISKS  
TRAINING MATERIALS

BE SURE THAT THE SYSTEM HAS BEEN PROPERLY SET UP WITH ALL CONNECTIONS BEING SECURE INCLUDING A GROUNDED (3-PRONG) SOURCE OF POWER.

**STEP 1:**

CHOOSE THE APPROPRIATE VIDEODISK AND LESSON DISKETTE.

**STEP 2:**

PUT THE "SYSTEM" DISKETTE INTO DISK DRIVE #1. THIS DISK IS CLEARLY LABELED "SYSTEM DISKETTE".

PUT THE APPROPRIATE "LESSON" DISKETTE INTO DISK DRIVE #2. THE LESSONS ARE CLEARLY LABELED BY NAME. THE NAME SHOULD BE FACING UPWARDS BEFORE THE DISK IS INSERTED.

PUT THE VIDEODISK INTO THE VIDEO PLAYER. THE "SHINY" SIDE SHOULD BE FACING UPWARDS. PLACE THE VIDEODISK OVER THE PLASTIC SPINDLE. ONCE THE VIDEODISK IS SECURE AGAINST THE PLAYING SURFACE, SNAP THE LOCK HATCH ON THE SPINDLE SO THAT IT FIRMLY HOLDS THE VIDEODISK IN PLACE. CLOSE THE LID.

TURN THE POWER SWITCH TO "ON" ON THE VIDEO PLAYER.

TURN THE T.V. MONITOR ON -- ALLOW FIVE MINUTES FOR THE MONITOR TO WARM-UP.

STEP 3:

TURN ON THE APPLE. THE POWER SWITCH SHOULD BE LOCATED IN THE LOWER-REAR CORNER OF THE MACHINE. TURNING ON THE MACHINE WILL AUTOMATICALLY "BOOT" THE SYSTEM. WITHIN 10-20 SECONDS, THE SCREEN WILL SHOW:

---

WELCOME TO VISTA  
PLEASE WAIT, PROCESSING

---

DURING THIS TIME -- DO NOTHING!! THE MACHINE IS PREPARING TO START A VISTA LESSON.

STEP 4:

THE SCREEN WILL CHANGE TO:

---

THE SYSTEM STATUS IS SET TO:

- 1) THE PEDAGOGICAL  
INSTRUCTIONAL MODE
- 2) NOT KEEP STUDENT RECORDS

IS THIS WHAT YOU WANT?

\*\*YES\*\*  
\*\*NO\*\*

---

THIS IS THE SETUP THAT YOU WANT. MOVE THE "CURSOR", BY ROTATING THE DIAL ON THE HAND CONTROLLER TO THE "YES". PRESS THE BUTTON ON THE SIDE OF THE HAND CONTROLLER. THIS WILL TELL THE MACHINE THAT YOU WANT THIS SETUP

IF THE SCREEN DOES NOT SHOW THIS EXACT "MENU", THEN TURN TO APPENDIX A FOR INSTRUCTIONS FOR HOW TO RESET THE "MENU".

STEP 5:

THE SCREEN WILL CHANGE TO ASK YOU IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT HOW TO RUN VISTA. IF THIS IS THE FIRST TIME YOU HAVE RUN THE SYSTEM, IT IS STRONGLY ENCOURAGED THAT YOU WATCH THE REVIEW. IF YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH VISTA, YOU MAY BYPASS THE REVIEW AND START THE LESSON.

IF YOU WANT TO REVIEW THE OPERATING PROCEDURES, THEN MOVE THE "CURSOR" TO THE

\*\*YES\*\*

AND PRESS THE BUTTON ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER. THE MACHINE WILL THEN RUN YOU THROUGH SEVERAL SCREENS WORTH OF OPERATING PROCEDURES. MOVING TO THE NEXT SCREEN IS ACCOMPLISHED BY MOVING THE "CURSOR" TO THE LAST LINE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SCREEN AND PRESSING THE BUTTON ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER.

IF YOU WANT TO BYPASS THE REVIEW, THEN MOVE THE "CURSOR" TO THE

\*\*NO\*\*

AND BEGIN THE LESSON.

STEP 6:

AFTER EITHER WATCHING OR BYPASSING THE REVIEW, YOU WILL BE READY TO BEGIN THE LESSON. TO DO THIS, THE MACHINE WILL ASK YOU TO MOVE THE "CURSOR" TO THE BOTTOM LINE OF THE SCREEN AND TO PRESS THE BUTTON ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER. THE SCREEN WILL THEN CHANGE TO:

---

PLEASE WAIT...  
VIDEODISK POSITIONING

---

WAIT FOR 10-30 SECONDS FOR THE MACHINE TO BECOME OPERATIONAL.

STEP 7:

VISTA WILL PRESENT YOU WITH ONE TO FIVE SCREENS WORTH OF INFORMATION WHICH WILL PREPARE YOU AND "SET THE STAGE" FOR THE LESSON YOU WILL SHORTLY REVIEW. WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED READING A SCREEN OF INFORMATION, MOVE THE "CURSOR" TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SCREEN AND PRESS THE BUTTON ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER. WHEN THE INFORMATION IS FINISHED, YOU WILL BE READY TO VIEW THE BEGINNING SEGMENT OF THE LESSON.

BEGINNING YOUR VISTA UNIT TRAINING

\*\*\*\*\*VERBAL ABUSE LESSON\*\*\*\*\*

STEP 1:

PUT THE DISKETTE LABELED "VERBAL ABUSE" INTO DISK DRIVE #2.

PUT THE VIDEODISK LABELED "VERBAL ABUSE" INTO THE VIDEODISK PLAYER.

PRESS "RESET" BUTTON ON APPLE.

STEP 2:

THE SCREEN WILL CHANGE TO:

---

WELCOME TO VISTA  
PLEASE WAIT, PROCESSING

---

WHEN THE "MENU" ASKING FOR INSTRUCTIONAL MODE AND STUDENT RECORD KEEPING APPEARS ON THE SCREEN, IT SHOULD STATE:

---

THE SYSTEM STATUS IS SET TO:

- 1) EXPERIENTIAL  
INSTRUCTIONAL MODE
- 2) DO NOT KEEP STUDENT RECORDS

IS THIS WHAT YOU WANT:

\*\*YES\*\*  
\*\*NO\*\*

---

MOVE THE "CURSOR" TO

\*\*YES\*\*  
AND HIT THE ENTER BUTTON.

IF THE "MENU" DOES NOT MEET THIS REQUIREMENT GO TO APPENDIX A WHICH PROVIDES INSTRUCTION AS TO HOW TO CHANGE THE MENU.

ONCE THE REQUIREMENT HAS BEEN MET, AND YOU ARE IN THE EXPERIENTIAL/NOT KEEPING RECORDS MODE, YOU ARE READY TO START VISTA. YOU CAN EITHER REVIEW THE OPERATING PROCEDURES OR GO DIRECTLY TO THE LESSON.

ONCE YOU HAVE GOTTEN TO THE LESSON, YOU WILL BE PRESENTED WITH BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND THE FIRST SEGMENT OF THE LESSON. YOU WILL THEN BE ASKED TO MAKE A DECISION KNOWN AS A "CHOICE POINT".

AT "CHOICE POINT" #1, YOU WILL BE PRESENTED WITH SEVERAL ALTERNATIVE ANSWERS. YOU WILL CHOOSE

ANSWER #1

MOVE THE "CURSOR" TO ANSWER #1 AND PRESS THE BUTTON ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER.

\*\*\*\*\*STOP FOR DISCUSSION\*\*\*\*\*

AFTER DISCUSSION HAS ENDED, GO TO THE APPLE COMPUTER. ON THE UPPER LEFT-HAND SIDE OF THE KEYBOARD IS THE BUTTON MARKED:

RESET

THIS WILL STOP THE LESSON WHILE RETURNING YOU TO THE BEGINNING OF THE PROGRAM. HERE THE SCREEN WILL TELL YOU THAT YOU ARE STILL IN THE EXPERIENTIAL/NOT KEEPING RECORD MODE -- AND DO YOU WANT TO CHANGE MODES. MOVE THE "CURSOR" TO THE LINE MARKED:

\*\*YES\*\*

AND PRESS THE BUTTON ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER. YOU WILL THEN BE ASKED IF YOU WANT TO REVIEW THE OPERATING PROCEDURES. MOVE THE CURSOR TO THE LINE MARKED:

\*\*NO\*\*

AND PRESS THE BUTTON ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER. THIS WILL BEGIN THE "VERBAL ABUSE" LESSON AGAIN. THIS TIME THERE WILL BE A SPECIFIC SET OF STEPS FOR YOU TO FOLLOW.

THESE ARE THE STEPS TO BE FOLLOWED AT DIFFERENT "CHOICE POINTS":

CHOICE POINT	ANSWER
1	3
2	3
3	2
4	2

AFTER ANSWERING THE FOURTH CHOICE POINT, THE PROGRAM WILL TERMINATE. YOU WILL BE ASKED IF YOU WANT TO RERUN THE PROGRAM OR START A NEW LESSON. YOU WILL MOVE THE CURSOR TO THE LINE MARKED:

RERUN SAME LESSON

AND HIT THE RETURN BUTTON ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER.

THE LAST PRESS OF THE BUTTON ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER RETURNED YOU TO THE MENU CONCERNING INSTRUCTIONAL MODE/RECORD KEEPING. YOU SHOULD STILL BE IN THE PEDAGOGICAL/NOT KEEPING RECORDS MODE. (IF YOU ARE NOT, THEN GO TO APPENDIX A AND CHANGE THE MODE TO MEET THIS REQUIREMENT).

THE "MENU" WILL ASK YOU IF YOU WANT TO BE IN THE PEDAGOGICAL/NOT KEEPING RECORDS MODE. MOVE THE CURSOR TO THE LINE MARKED "YES" AND PRESS THE BUTTON ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER. YOU WILL THEN BE ASKED IF YOU WANT TO REVIEW THE OPERATING PROCEDURES. MOVE THE CURSOR TO THE LINE MARKED "NO" AND PRESS THE BUTTON ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER. YOU ARE NOW READY TO REVIEW THE LESSON.

AGAIN, THE CHOICES BELOW ARE "THE SCHOOL SOLUTION". THESE ARE INCLUDED FOR YOUR INFORMATION ONLY. DO NOT GIVE THESE TO YOUR GROUP. LET THEM DECIDE WHAT SOLUTION THEY WANT TO TRY. THEY WILL LEARN MORE IF THEY MAKE MISTAKES AND LET THE COMPUTER PROVIDE THE FEEDBACK.

CHOICE POINT	ANSWER
1	3
2	2
3	1
4	3
5	3
6	1
7	3
8	3
9	4

THIS CONCLUDES THE "VERBAL ABUSE" LESSON.

THEN, REMOVE THE "VERBAL ABUSE" DISKETTE FROM DISK DRIVE #2  
AND THE "VERBAL ABUSE" VIDEODISK FROM THE VIDEO PLAYER. PUT  
THESE DISKS BACK INTO THEIR SHEATHS.

YOU ARE NOW READY TO RUN THE NEXT LESSON.

\*\*\*\*\*PERFORMANCE COUNSELING LESSON\*\*\*\*\*

STEP 1:

PUT THE "PERFORMANCE COUNSELING" DISKETTE INTO DISK DRIVE #2. PUT THE VIDEODISK LABELED "PERFORMANCE COUNSELING" INTO THE VIDEO PLAYER. HIT THE "RESET" BUTTON. THIS WILL START THE LESSON.

THE SCREEN WILL BE PROGRAMMED TO ASK IF YOU WANT TO REMAIN IN THE PEDAGOGICAL/NOT KEEPING RECORDS MODE. YOU DO. MOVE THE CURSOR TO THE LINE MARKED "YES" AND PRESS THE BUTTON ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER. YOU WILL THEN BE ASKED IF YOU WANT TO REVIEW THE OPERATING PROCEDURES. MOVE THE CURSOR TO THE LINE MARKED "NO" AND PRESS THE BUTTON ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER.

YOU WILL NOW BE PROVIDED WITH BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THIS LESSON. AFTER THE INFORMATION, YOU WILL BEGIN THE LESSON.

AGAIN, THE CHOICES BELOW ARE "THE SCHOOL SOLUTION". THESE ARE INCLUDED FOR YOUR INFORMATION ONLY. DO NOT GIVE THESE TO YOUR GROUP. LET THEM DECIDE WHAT SOLUTION THEY WANT TO TRY. THEY WILL LEARN MORE IF THEY MAKE MISTAKES AND LET THE COMPUTER PROVIDE THE FEEDBACK.

CHOICE POINT	ANSWER
1	3
2	1
3	1
4	1
5	2
6	2
7	3
8	2
9	3
10	2
11	4
12	3

THIS WILL TERMINATE THIS LESSON

REMOVE THE "PERFORMANCE COUNSELING" DISKS FROM DISK DRIVE #2  
AND FROM THE VIDEO PLAYER. PLACE BOTH DISKS BACK INTO THEIR  
SHEATHS.

\*\*\*\*\*MODERATE INSUBORDINATION LESSON\*\*\*\*\*

PLACE THE DISKS LABELED "MODERATE INSUBORDINATION" INTO DISK DRIVE #2 AND INTO THE VIDEO PLAYER. THE SCREEN SHOULD STILL STATE:

RERUN THIS LESSON

RUN ANOTHER LESSON

MOVE THE CURSOR TO THE LINE MARKED:

RUN ANOTHER LESSON

AND PRESS THE BUTTON ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER. THIS WILL RESET VISTA FOR ANOTHER LESSON. (IF THIS FAILS, PRESS THE RESET BUTTON ON THE APPLE KEYBOARD.)

AS ALWAYS, YOU WILL BE QUERIED AS TO INSTRUCTIONAL MODE/NOT RECORD KEEPING FORMAT. THE FORMAT SHOULD STILL STATE PEDAGOGICAL/NOT KEEPING RECORDS. IF THIS IS TRUE, MOVE THE CURSOR TO THE LINE MARKED "YES" AND PRESS THE ENTER BUTTON. (IF NOT, THEN GO TO APPENDIX A FOR INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHANGING THE MENU.)

AGAIN, YOU WILL BE ASKED IF YOU WANT TO REVIEW THE OPERATING PROCEDURES. MOVE THE CURSOR TO THE LINE MARKED "NO" AND PRESS THE BUTTON ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER. YOU WILL THEN BE PRESENTED WITH BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE FORTHCOMING LESSON. AS ALWAYS, MOVE THE CURSOR TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SCREEN TO THE LAST LINE AND PRESS THE BUTTON TO CONTINUE.

AGAIN, THE CHOICES BELOW ARE "THE SCHOOL SOLUTION". THESE ARE INCLUDED FOR YOUR INFORMATION ONLY. DO NOT GIVE THESE TO YOUR GROUP. LET THEM DECIDE WHAT SOLUTION THEY WANT TO TRY. THEY WILL LEARN MORE IF THEY MAKE MISTAKES AND LET THE COMPUTER PROVIDE THE FEEDBACK.

CHOICE	POINTS	ANSWERS
1		2
2		2
3		1
4		1

THIS WILL TERMINATE THE LESSON

REMOVE THE "MODERATE INSUBORDINATION" DISKS FROM DISK DRIVE #2 AND FROM THE VIDEO PLAYER. REPLACE BOTH DISKS INTO THEIR PROTECTIVE SHEATHS.

APPENDIX A

WHAT TO DO IF THE "MENU" IS INCORRECT  
IF THE "MENU" DOES NOT STATE:

---

THE SYSTEM STATUS IS SET TO:

- 1) THE PEDAGOGICAL  
INSTRUCTIONAL MODE
- 2) DO NOT KEEP STUDENT RECORDS

IS THIS WHAT YOU WANT

\*\*YES\*\*

\*\*NO\*\*

---

THEN YOU MUST TAKE CORRECTIVE ACTION.

MOVE THE CURSOR TO THE LINE MARKED "NO" AND PRESS THE BUTTON  
ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER. THIS WILL CHANGE THE SCREEN AND  
PRESENT YOU WITH THE TWO FOLLOWING SCREENS.

OBVIOUSLY, WHATEVER YOU DO TO CHANGE MODES CAN BE USED TO  
CHANGE THEM BACK TO THEIR ORIGINAL STATUS. THIS IS A  
PROCEDURE YOU'LL WANT TO SPEND SOME TIME WITH.

FIRST GOAL: SELECT THE INSTRUCTIONAL MODE. THIS "MENU" WILL  
APPEAR

---

\*\*CHOOSE INSTRUCTIONAL MODE\*\*

I WISH TO USE THE:

PEDAGOGICAL INSTRUCTIONAL MODE

EXPERIENTIAL INSTRUCTIONAL MODE

---

MOVE THE "CURSOR" TO THE LINE STATING:

PEDAGOGICAL INSTRUCTIONAL MODE

AND PRESS THE BUTTON ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER.

SECOND GOAL: SELECT THE APPROPRIATE RECORD KEEPING MODE

THE SCREEN WILL SHOW:

---

\*\*CHOOSE TO KEEP, NOT KEEP STUDENT RECORDS

I WISH TO:

COLLECT DATA ON STUDENTS

NOT COLLECT DATA ON STUDENTS

---

MOVE THE "CURSOR" TO:

NOT COLLECT DATA ON STUDENTS

AND PRESS THE BUTTON ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER.

THE SCREEN WILL CHANGE TO STATE:

---

YOU HAVE SELECTED THE:

- 1) THE PEDAGOGICAL  
INSTRUCTIONAL MODE
- 2) NOT KEEP STUDENT RECORDS

IS THIS WHAT YOU WANT:

\*\*YES\*\*

\*\*NO\*\*

---

MOVE THE CURSOR TO THE LINE STATING:

\*\*YES\*\*

AND PRESS THE ENTER BUTTON ON THE HAND-CONTROLLER

VISTA WILL THEN ASK YOU IF YOU WANT TO REVIEW THE  
OPERATING PROCEDURES OR GO DIRECTLY TO THE LESSON.

APPENDIX B

OVERVIEW OF TRAINING SESSIONS



## OVERVIEW OF TRAINING SESSIONS

1. Each new group which sees VISTA will start with a brief orientation to VISTA.
  - a. What are the training objectives?
  - b. What kind of feedback does the Army want from you?
  - c. How are the sessions to be conducted?
  - d. What are the discussion rules?
2. We will be seeing three VISTA Scenarios.
  - a. Verbal Abuse (Scenario 1, Disc 1)
  - b. Moderate Insubordination (Scenario 5, Disc 5)
  - c. Performance Counseling (Scenario 4, Disc 4).
3. The format for seeing each of the three scenarios will be the same.
  - a. The leader turns on the machine and shows the opening scenes.
  - b. The group will discuss what they think "the problem" is and how they might resolve it.
  - c. The leader will then choose what action the leader in the scenario will take (e.g., ignore the problem, get into an argument with his subordinate, etc.) in the Example he has been provided.
  - d. The group will then discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the approach used in the Example.
  - e. Once the group has seen and discussed two leader-chosen examples, they will see each scenario again and be free to choose which option they feel will be best.
  - f. The examples are to familiarize the group with VISTA before they begin to work in earnest. The examples are not good solutions. They are intended to make teaching points and to spark discussions.

4. Procedure for seeing Scenario 1 (Verbal Abuse).

a. Setting the Scene:

1. Leader turns on the machine and shows the opening scene.
2. The group discusses the "problem," and how they would suggest handling it.

b. Examples.

1. Example 1 (Ignoring the Problem).

- a. Leader selects choices outlined in Example 1 (on attached sheet).
- b. Group discusses what happened and why Example 1 is a good or bad way to handle verbal abuse.

2. Example 2 (Getting into an argument).

- a. Leader cycles the machine back to the opening scene. (Procedures are in the Operator's Manual.)
- b. At the first choice point, the leader selects the options outlined for Example 2 (which is also attached here).
- c. The group then discusses what happened in Example 2, why, and whether they think that is a good or bad outcome.

c. Computer assisted training.

1. Leader changes the computer to the tutorial/pedagogical mode.
2. The group discusses actions to be taken at each choice point and gets feedback from the computer on how "good" their choices were.

5. Procedures for seeing Scenario 5 (Moderate Insubordination).

a. Same format as for Verbal Abuse.

- b. Leader sets the scene, discusses, and follows the outline of Example 3.

c. Leader switches to the tutorial mode and chooses on the basis of the group's opinions. Again, feedback is given by the computer.

6. Procedures for seeing Scenario 4 (Performance Counseling).

a. Same format as for Verbal Abuse.

b. Leader sets the scene, discusses, and follows the outline for Example 4.

c. Leader switches to the tutorial mode and chooses on the basis of the group's opinions. Again, feedback is given by the computer.

7. VISTA Training ends.

8. Training materials are handed out and questions are answered on how to conduct the next session.

9. A short questionnaire is administered to provide feedback on the VISTA/group discussion program.

## TRAINING OBJECTIVES

### Increase in Leader Knowledge of and Skill with:

- Leadership principles for handling common leadership problems.
- . Diversity of views held/experiences in handling these problems.
- . How to conduct discussion groups which lead to sharing of views and increases in group consensus.

### Expected By-Products are:

- . Increase of Unit Cohesion
  - . Improved working relations among leaders.
  - . Improved unit functioning (fewer problems because problems are handled better).
- . Increase in Member Satisfaction
  - . Leaders seem more caring and competent.
  - . The unit seems to run more smoothly.

### Rationale for Expecting Changes in Unit Cohesion

- . Discussion of leadership problems with members of the Chain-Of-Command should lead to better working relationships (Horizontal Bonding among the leaders).
- . Application of good leadership principles should improve unit functioning and thus pride in being a member of the unit (Unit Loyalty/Satisfaction).
- . Member perceptions that the leaders are more competent and caring should lead to greater member satisfaction with the leaders (Vertical Bonding of members to leaders).

Feedback Needed from Participating Units

- . What benefits did your unit get from going thru VUTP?
- . Which kinds of units should see VUTP?
- . Is the content of VUTP equally relevant to all unit leaders?
- . How can the program be improved?
- . Can units run this program without outside resources?
  
- . About COHORT units started from scratch.
  - . Is VUTP suitable for this kind of unit?
  - . Should they see it like you did or in schools prior to starting the unit?

## PURPOSE OF THE DISCUSSIONS

### They are designed to:

- . Increase leader skills in handling common leadership/counseling challenges.
- . Provide an opportunity to exchange views and experiences in handling these challenges.

### They are not designed to be:

- . Blame sessions focused on past unit mistakes.
- . Debates about the inadequacies of current leaders.

## RULES FOR DISCUSSION

### Be respectful of all individuals in your group.

- . Encourage everyone to participate.
- . Listen to the ideas of all members even if you don't agree with them.
- . Restate what a member has said if you don't understand his point of view.
- . If you must challenge what is being said, be sure that it is the idea you are rejecting, not the individual.

### Try to understand both sides of an issue:

- . Bring out all the ideas and facts supporting both sides.
- . Try to pull the ideas together so that they make sense.

### Do not try to force the group to adopt any set solution.

- . Do not mention the school solution to the group--let them discover the solution they prefer.
- . Get the group to spell out why they make the choices they do.

Don't force consensus when none exists.

(It is O.K. for the group to disagree if they understand why they are disagreeing.)

- Make the group focus on what is the best solution rather than trying to win arguments among themselves.
- If they cannot reach a consensus, a majority vote will do to let the group move on the rest of the scenario(s).

## TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED

### When the background has been presented:

- . Do all the members of your group agree about what the leader in the scenario is faced with?
- . What is the nature of the problem?
- . What are the possible outcomes?
- . Which of the outcomes is desirable?
- . What actions can he take?
- . Does the group have an agreed-upon way to solve the problem faced by the leader in the scenario?

### When the group is free to choose solutions:

- . Do the group members see how the choices differ from one another?
- . Do they agree on what might happen following each choice listed?
- . Do they agree on which choice to make?  
(If they disagree do they understand each others' views?)
- . Do they want to try more than one choice? If so, which one do they want to try first?

### When the scenario is over:

- . How satisfied were the group members with the way the scenario came out?
- . Can they think of a better way to handle it?
- . Did they learn anything they want to try in the unit?
- . How did they like the discussion?
- . Would the group like to change the way the discussions are going? If so, how?

Draft Research Report

Volume II

VIDEODISC INTERPERSONAL SKILLS TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT (VISTA):  
TOPICS ANALYSIS AND SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

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FORT BENNING FIELD UNIT

This working draft is an unofficial document and should be treated as such. It is intended for limited distribution to obtain comments. It does not reflect the official position of ARI or Litton and thus should not be used for purposes other than comments to ARI.



U.S. Army  
Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences

November 1982

Table 21  
VISTA 1 Objectives  
Verbal Abuse

1. Don't allow verbal abuse of the troops. Everyone should treat each other with mutual respect.
2. Give immediate feedback, but don't correct a NCO in front of his men.
3. Don't be too hard or too soft.
4. Learn how to prepare for a counseling session.
5. State your policies and enforce them.
6. Address performance problem first, then look for causes (e.g., personal problems).
7. Assess the severity of a personal problem and refer to expert if it is too difficult or too time consuming for you to address.
8. Know the appropriate and available counseling agencies.
9. Be willing to listen, but don't be surprised or offended if your men are reluctant to open up to you.
10. Always follow up a counseling session and a referral.

Table 25

VISTA 5 Objectives

Insubordination

1. On the basis of past history, NCO input, attitude, etc., be able to discriminate between the "salvageable" individual and the individual who deserves a longer punishment.
2. If insubordination is acute and moderate, try to determine the cause of the problem and provide corrective action.
3. Be sure to remind the counselee about the consequences of continued insubordination.
4. If insubordination is severe and/or chronic, take whatever action is necessary.
5. If legal action is implied, know the UCMJ, especially:
  - have a witness present,
  - get statements and accounts from all parties,
  - read the individual his/her rights,
  - state the offenses in a clear and concise manner,
  - realize that the Company Commander is the one who will handle the formal paperwork.
6. Support your NCO's and value their advice.
7. Keep clear records of all counseling sessions.

Table 24

VISTA 4 Objectives

Performance Counseling

1. Get relevant background information on an individual before counseling session (e.g., talk with the Platoon Sergeant, other NCO's, look at record, etc.).
2. Look for trends in performance and counsel accordingly.
3. Try to encourage and motivate the individual, even in a negative feedback counseling setting.
4. Compliment good performance whenever possible.
5. Do not let poor performance go by, you must take corrective action.
6. Plan the counseling session before the individual even arrives.
7. Be firm, prompt, confrontive, and specific in giving both positive and negative feedback. Don't be too hard or too soft.
8. Don't criticize someone for something that is completely beyond his/her control.
9. Use and have your men use, time management techniques (e.g., calendar, checklist, etc.).
10. Give assignments to insure that performance problems have been remedied.
11. Look for deeper reasons for performance problems, but only if strongly suggested.
12. Follow up counseling sessions.
13. Keep written records of all counseling sessions.

APPENDIX C

VISTA UNIT TRAINING PROGRAM (VUTP) QUESTIONNAIRE



VISTA Unit Training Program (VUTP) Questionnaire

The following questions are aimed at finding out your reactions to the VISTA Unit Training Program (VUTP) you have just experienced. Your feedback on the program is critical and we appreciate your honesty.

Please circle the answer that most closely describes your feelings.

1. How much did you like VUTP?

-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
disliked a lot			neither liked nor disliked			liked a lot

2. What percent of the time did you agree with the computer's choice for the best response?

0-20%	20-40%	40-60%	60-80%	80-100%
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3. To what extent did you agree with the solutions of your fellow group members for each of the following scenarios?

a. Verbal Abuse

-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	N/A
strongly disagreed			neither agreed nor disagreed			strongly agreed	Didn't see this film

b. Moderate Insubordination

-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	N/A
strongly disagreed			neither agreed nor disagreed			strongly agreed	Didn't see this film

c. Performance Counseling

-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	N/A
strongly disagreed			neither agreed nor disagreed			strongly agreed	Didn't see this film

4. Given the investment of time you've made here how would you characterize the outcome for you personally?

-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
negative			neutral			positive

5. What effect do you think VUTP will have on your unit as a whole?

-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
very negative			no effect			very positive

6. How helpful has VUTP been in developing good work relationships among the leaders in this unit?

-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
very detrimental			no effect			very helpful

7. How has VUTP made you feel about your ability to deal with situations like those discussed?

-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
much less comfortable			no effect			much more comfortable

8. Would you recommend that the Army have all units go through this program in its current form?

-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
definitely not			no opinion			definitely yes

9. Do you feel that your knowledge of leadership principles for handling common problems has increased or decreased since you took part in VUTP?

-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
greatly decreased			no effect			greatly increased

10. Please list up to 5 leadership principles that you learned during VUTP that you did not know before:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

11. Do you feel that you now know more about the different views and experiences of others in handling these leadership problems?

-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
I know much less			I know neither more nor less			I know much more

12. Do you feel that you now know more about conducting discussion groups which lead to sharing of views and consensus than you did before?

-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
I know much less			I know neither more nor less			I know much more

13. Please list three (3) things you know about leading a group discussion that you did not know before:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

14. Please indicate how useful or detrimental participation in VJTP is for each of the following:

	very detrimental			no impact			very useful
a) Yourself personally	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
b) Company commanders	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
c) First Sergeants	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
d) Platoon Leaders	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
e) Platoon Sergeants	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
f) Squad Leaders	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
g) Team Leaders	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3

15. How do you think VJTP will affect the ability of your unit members to do each of the following in the future:

	will greatly hinder			no impact			will greatly help
a) deal with problems similar to those we have discussed	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
b) come up with a common approach to solving problems	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
c) honestly discuss or air different opinions about how to solve problems	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
d) come up with effective solutions for problems	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
e) work together in a coordinated fashion	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3

16. How did each of the following impact on the effectiveness of training in the module "Verbal Abuse"?

	greatly detracted from effectiveness			no impact		greatly added to effectiveness	
Film content	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Feedback provided on film	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Group discussion leader	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Discussion by peers	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Focus on platoon leader jobs	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3

17. How did each of the following impact on the effectiveness of training in the module "Moderate Insubordination"?

	greatly detracted from effectiveness			no impact		greatly added to effectiveness	
Film content	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Feedback provided on film	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Group discussion leader	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Discussion by peers	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Focus on platoon leader jobs	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3

18. How did each of the following impact on the effectiveness of training in the module "Performance Counseling"?

	greatly detracted from effectiveness			no impact		greatly added to effectiveness	
Film content	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Feedback provided on film	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Group discussion leader	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Discussion by peers	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Focus on platoon leader jobs	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3

19. Please indicate those areas where VUTP should be altered to improve its effectiveness.

a. The pace---how quickly you go through it.  
\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ NO

If yes, how?

b. Number of participants.

\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ NO

If yes, how?

c. Who is included as a trainee in a session.

\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ NO

If yes, how?

d. Topics covered in a training session.

\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ NO

If yes, how?

e. Manner that group leader conducts discussions.

\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ NO

If yes, how?

f. Amount of time spent in training.

\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ NO

If yes, how?

g. The presence of an "outsider" (civilian trainer) to work with the company.

\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ NO

If yes, how?

h. Any other suggestions/comments?

20. To what extent were discussions in your group led so that:

	not at all		to some extent		to a great extent
a. You felt free to offer your own opinion?	1	2	3	4	5
b. Your opinion was considered by the group?	1	2	3	4	5
c. The group discussion focused on the problem at hand ( <u>not</u> personalities)?	1	2	3	4	5
d. You understood the opinions of people who differed from you?	1	2	3	4	5

	not at all		to some extent		to a great extent
e. Group solutions represented the majority opinion?	1	2	3	4	5
f. All members shared their views?	1	2	3	4	5

21. What do you think are the four most likely outcomes of participation in VUTP? (Please check the 4 most likely outcomes.)

- more cohesion in unit
- less cohesion in unit
- no impact on cohesion
- more empathy for leaders
- more critical of leaders
- no impact on feelings toward leaders
- better unit leadership
- worse unit leadership
- no impact on quality of unit leadership
- more effective unit functioning
- less effective unit functioning
- no impact on unit functioning

22. What is your company?

- a. B - 3/60 IN
- b. C - 2/4 Attack Helicopter
- c. C - 2/23 IN
- d. B - 4/23 IN

23. What is your position in the company?

- company commander
- first sergeant
- platoon leader
- platoon sergeant
- team leader
- squad leader

24. How long have you been with this company? \_\_\_\_\_ months

25. How long have you been in your current position? \_\_\_\_\_ months

26. Have you had any other courses which cover topics similar to this one? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

If so, how many? \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX D

SCALE CONSTRUCTION

The VUTP questionnaire was designed to support the objectives of the pilot evaluation: (1) is VUTP needed by Army leaders at the company level?; (2) do those who participate in VUTP consider it good training?; (3) do they derive personal benefits and do they feel that their units will benefit?; and (4) do they have suggestions for how to improve VUTP?

The 64 questions in the questionnaire addressed these four areas. However, we were not sure how many dimensions we had tapped within each of them. This type of exploration is best done via a factor analysis of the questions within each of the four areas plus the questions about the characteristics of the participants themselves.

The need for VUTP training. There were nine questions about the need/appropriateness of VUTP training. Two questions--how many similar course participants had taken previously and whether they would recommend VUTP for all Army units--were kept separated. The remaining seven questions dealt with whether the respondents felt that VUTP training was relevant for various types of leaders in a unit (i.e., the respondent himself, company commanders, first sergeants, platoon leaders, platoon sergeants, squad leaders and team leaders). These seven questions were subjected to a factor analysis to determine whether they formed more than one scale. The results of that analysis (i.e., the questions which loaded on the factors and the size of the loadings obtained) can be seen in Table D1, below.

Table D1  
Relevance of VUTP Training for Company Leaders

Question Number	Description	Loading
14e	VUTP is appropriate for PL Sgts	.92
14c	VUTP is appropriate for 1Sgts	.88
14d	VUTP is appropriate for Pl Ldrs	.88
14f	VUTP is appropriate for Sqd Ldrs	.87
14b	VUTP is appropriate for Co Cndrs	.81
14a	VUTP is appropriate for you-personally	.74
14g	VUTP is appropriate for Team Ldrs	.73

The factor analysis of the seven "appropriateness" questions yielded one factor: "appropriateness of VUTP training for unit leaders." All seven of the questions had at least a .70 loading on this factor indicating that they are all good measures of this concept.

The VUTP experience. The questions about the VUTP experience were divided into two groups which were then subjected to factor analyses. The first group of 19 questions yielded four factors: (1) verbal abuse/moderate insubordination film and discussion, (2) performance counseling film and discussion, (3) focus on the platoon leader's job, and (4) degree of agreement

among participants on how to handle the "problems" presented in the films. Only one item, "extent of agreement with the computer" failed to show a strong loading on a single factor. Since it loaded two factors at the .50 level it was judged to be ambiguous and was eliminated. The items which loaded these four factors and the size of those loadings can be seen in Table D2, below.

**Table D2**  
**Factor Loadings for the "Verbal Abuse/Moderate Insubordination Scenario and Discussion" Scale**

Question Number	Description	Loading
17d	Mod Insubordination Peer Discussion	.80
17b	Mod Insubordination Scenario Feedback	.76
16b	Verbal Abuse Scenario Feedback	.75
17a	Mod Insubordination Film Content	.75
16a	Verbal Abuse Scenario Content	.74
17c	Mod Insubordination Group Discussion Ldr	.73
16c	Verbal Abuse Group Discussion Leader	.70
16d	Verbal Abuse Peer Discussion	.64

**Table D3**  
**Factor Loadings for the "Performance Counseling Scenario and Discussion" Scale**

Question Number	Description	Loading
18a	Performance Counseling Scenario Content	.85
18d	Performance Counseling Peer Discussion	.83
18b	Performance Counseling Film Feedback	.82
19c	Performance Counseling Group Disc. Ldr	.78

Table D4  
Factor Loading for the "Platoon Leader's Job" scale

Question Number	Description	Loading
17e	Focus on Pl Ldrs' Job - Mod Insubordination	.87
18e	Focus on Pl Ldrs' Job - Performance Counseling	.80
16e	Focus on Pl Ldrs' Job - Verbal Abuse	.75

Table D5  
Factor loadings for the "Agreement with Peers" scale

Question Number	Description	Loading
3a	Agreement with Peers' Solutions - Verbal Abuse	.80
3c	Agreement with Peers' Solutions - Peer Counseling	.75
3b	Agreement with Peers' Solutions - Moderate Insubordination	.59

Six questions were asked about the general nature of the discussions. They were: (1) the extent participants felt free to give their opinions, (2) the extent they felt their opinions were considered, (3) the extent they felt the group focused on the task at hand, (4) the extent members shared their views, (5) the extent they felt the group solutions represented the majority view, and (6) the extent to which members understood different opinions. Factor analysis of these six questions yielded one factor: "the nature of the discussion." The loadings of each of these questions on the nature of the discussion factor can be seen in Table D6 below.

Table D6  
Factor Loadings for the "Nature of the Discussion" Scale

Question Number	Description	Loading
20c	The group remains focused on the task	.91
20d	Members understood different opinions	.86
20a	Free to give their opinions	.85
20b	Their opinions were considered	.83
20e	Solutions represented the majority views	.74
20f	Members shared their views	.60

Individual and unit benefits from VUTP. The sixteen questions which dealt with individual and unit benefits were divided into three groups: (1) personal benefits, (2) VUTP impact on the units' working relations, and (3) general unit benefits from VUTP. Each of these three groups was then subjected to separate factor analyses.

The six "individual benefit" questions yielded a single factor: "personal benefits from VUTP." The loadings for each of the six questions on this factor are shown in Table D7 below.

Table D7  
Factor Loading for "Personal Benefits from Participation in VUTP Scales"

Question Number	Description	Loading
7	VUTP helps participants handle similar situations	.87
9	VUTP increases knowledge of leadership principles	.85
12	VUTP increases participant's ability to lead discussions	.84
1	Extent participants liked VUTP	.84
4	Extent VUTP was a good investment of participants' time	.76
11	Extent VUTP increased knowledge of different viewpoints	.73

Since all six questions showed substantial loadings on this factor, they were all considered good measures of the concept and retained in the resulting scale.

Seven questions were asked about how VUTP would improve the working relations among company leaders. The factor analysis of these questions yielded a single factor: "unit working relations." The size of the loadings for each of these questions can be seen in Table D8 below.

Table D8  
Factor Loadings for "Unit Working Relations" scale

Question Number	Description	Loading
15d	VUTP will help unit find good solutions to problems	.89
15e	VUTP will help unit coordinate actions	.88
15a	VUTP will help unit deal with similar problems	.88
15b	VUTP will help unit generate common approaches	.86
15c	VUTP will help unit air differences of opinions	.85
15f	VUTP will have a positive impact on the unit	.82
15g	VUTP will help working relations among unit leaders	.63