

## Insights into the intercultural profession prepared by *Cornelius Grove*

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# Cross-Cultural "Specialized Knowledge"

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Readers with little prior knowledge of the intercultural profession should first read "What Is Intercultural Consulting?" at [www.grovewell.com/pub-cultural-consult.html](http://www.grovewell.com/pub-cultural-consult.html).

**Background:** Early in 1998, Cornelius Grove & Associates was asked by a leading law firm to assist it in preserving a major American corporation's option to use the L-1B visa to relocate to the U.S., and to hire, individuals from abroad with cross-cultural expertise needed by the corporation.

In response, Dr. Cornelius Grove prepared the following attestation for presentation to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. Its purpose is to describe the professional field of cross-cultural (or intercultural) communications, and to demonstrate that the cross-cultural field gathers, develops, and disseminates "specialized knowledge" in a manner that is (a) fully comparable with that of other professional fields possessing specialized knowledge, and (b) consistent with the term "specialized knowledge" as employed in the U.S. government's L-1B visa regulations.

## Characteristics of the Cross-Cultural Field

**1.** The cross-cultural communications field is a professional field that gathers; analyzes, interprets, and expands upon; and systematically disseminates "specialized knowledge." The field has eight characteristics of a professional field, as demonstrated in the attached Appendices to this Attestation (found at the end of [www.grovewell.com/pub-cultural-knowledge.html](http://www.grovewell.com/pub-cultural-knowledge.html)).

**1.1.** The specialized knowledge dealt with by the cross-cultural communications field concerns the implicit assumptions, enacted values, habits of thought, and patterns of behavior of living people who are members of established, daily-interacting human groups ("cultures" & "subcultures").

**1.1.1.** With respect to any given group of living people -- any "culture"-- information about that group's implicit assumptions, enacted values, habits of thought, and patterns of behavior is of practical use to individuals and organizations (from other cultures) that are involved for any reason with members of that culture. Individuals and organizations that understand and make use of cross-cultural specialized knowledge are far better prepared to interact in an effective and productive manner with members of the other culture.

**1.1.2.** Consumers of specialized knowledge about other cultures include businesspeople dealing in both goods and services at home and abroad. Other frequent users include government officials, military personnel, diplomats, educators involved with students from other cultures, missionaries, and relocating families. Catering to these consumers are numerous consulting firms that specialize in the practical application of cross-cultural knowledge. (See Appendix 1)

**1.1.3.** Demand for cross-cultural knowledge began in the 1960s after the first Peace Corps Volunteers were sent abroad. The failures of these PCVs created a demand for information and skills regarding the implicit assumptions, enacted values, habits of thought, and patterns of behavior of the peoples with whom the PCVs were working. Cross-cultural training events and manuals were first commissioned by the U.S. government. Today the government continues to be a major purchaser of such knowledge. (See Appendix 2)

**1.2.** To supply the growing demand for cross-cultural specialized knowledge, a wide range of information is systematically gathered by anthropologically trained researchers and scholars within the field. (See Appendix 3)

**1.2.1.** Cross-cultural researchers and scholars gather specialized knowledge from living people who already possess this knowledge as a consequence of either (a) having being "enculturated," that is, born and raised as members of the cultural group in question, or (b) having been "acculturated," that is, immersed full-time and over a long period of time within the cultural group in question.

**1.2.2.** The only ways to gather accurate, thorough, reliable, up-to-date cross-cultural specialized knowledge are (a) by questioning living enculturated or acculturated people ["informants"], (b) by observing such people as they go about their customary routines within the culture or in interaction with members of other cultures, and (c) by studying their writings and their practical and artistic creations.

**1.3.** To supply the constantly growing demand for cross-cultural specialized knowledge, the information gathered by researchers is systematically analyzed, interpreted, and expanded upon by scholars, theoreticians, and graduate students (especially Ph.D. candidates) within the field.

**1.3.1.** Established and fully accredited institutions of higher education in the U.S. and abroad grant masters degrees and research-based doctoral degrees in the cross-cultural field. Within these institutions, the granting of graduate degrees in cross-cultural specialties is administered by established departments staffed by tenured and tenure-track researchers, theoreticians, and scholars dedicated to furthering the field's specialized knowledge. (See Appendix 4)

**1.3.2.** Established institutes in the U.S. and abroad, some free-standing, others linked with institutions of higher education, provide practical training and specialized education for practitioners in many fields who need cross-cultural information and behavioral skills in order to perform their professional roles more effectively. (See Appendix 5)

**1.3.3.** Established and widely known publishing houses, as well as smaller publishing houses, publish (and have published since the early 1960s) numerous book-length treatises that analyze, interpret, and expand upon the multiple aspects of cross-cultural specialized knowledge and skills. (See Appendix 6)

**1.3.4.** Established and widely known scholarly journals as well as professional and practice-oriented periodicals also routinely analyze, interpret, and expand upon the multiple aspects of cross-cultural knowledge. (See Appendix 7)

**1.3.5.** Established, active professional associations hold annual meetings during which scholarly, professional, and practical presentations and discussions are focused on the analysis, interpretation, and expansion of specialized knowledge within the cross-cultural field; and during which awards are presented for excellence in the field. (See Appendix 8)

**1.4.** To supply the constantly growing demand for cross-cultural specialized knowledge, such knowledge is systematically organized into printed materials and verbal advice and is systematically disseminated by professional consultants, trainers, and practitioners (See Appendix 1). Consumers of this knowledge, skill-development training, and advice are people (usually employees) not in the cross-cultural field nor preparing to join the field. Consumers of this knowledge are in a wide variety of businesses as well as in numerous other fields of endeavor.

**1.4.1.** Cross-cultural specialized knowledge is desired, purchased, and applied for two principal purposes:

**1.4.1.1.** Individuals who are directly involved professionally and/or socially with others from an unfamiliar culture receive practical advice and behavioral skill training from cross-cultural consultants and practitioners. The objective of this advice and training is to rapidly upgrade the individuals' effectiveness and productivity for interacting with the members of the new culture, better enabling them to attain the objectives of the employing organization.

**1.4.1.2.** Individuals and families who are relocating from their home culture to an unfamiliar culture receive practical advice and direct assistance from cross-cultural practitioners. The objective of this advice and assistance is to rapidly upgrade their adjustment to the new culture, which in turn enables them to build effective social and professional relationships with members of that culture.

**1.4.2.** By increasing the effectiveness and productivity of internationally involved employees, and by facilitating their adjustment and that of their families to unfamiliar cultures, businesses and other types of organizations greatly reduce the risk that their employees will fail to attain their goals or ask to be relieved of their assignments due to stress, family crises, or on-the-job frustrations. As a result, the demand for cross-cultural specialized knowledge and consulting assistance has been steadily increasing.

**1.4.3.** When cross-cultural specialized knowledge is disseminated, it principally addresses three types of knowledge:

**1.4.3.1.** What is disseminated concerns explicit knowledge about a wide range of facts about the new culture -- cognitive knowledge answering "what" questions about that culture.

**1.4.3.2.** What is disseminated concerns implicit knowledge about appropriate behaviors in the new culture -- behavioral knowledge answering "how" questions about behavior in that culture. "How" issues constitute the first of two principal emphases in cross-cultural training, leading to a focus on learning to skillfully enact certain behaviors.

**1.4.3.3.** Finally, what is disseminated concerns intuitive understanding of the motives for the appropriate behaviors in the new culture -- affective knowledge answering "why" questions about behavior in that culture. "Why" issues constitute the second of two principal emphases

characteristic of cross-cultural training, leading to a focus on learning to develop an empathetic sensitivity to, and understanding of, unfamiliar behavior and values.

**1.4.4.** When cross-cultural specialized knowledge is disseminated, it is considered excellent practice to involve, as training designers, trainers, or resource people, individuals who have been enculturated or acculturated in the target culture.

**1.4.4.1.** Cross-cultural consulting and training firms commonly engage, at professional rates of pay, individuals with the above backgrounds to actively participate in dissemination by serving as training designers and/or as lead trainers, assistant trainers, or training resource people.

**1.4.4.2.** Cross-cultural consulting and training firms that specialize in a specific nation or world region commonly are owned and operated by people who were enculturated and/or acculturated in that nation or world region.

## **Appendices Supporting the Above Attestation**

Visit Cornelius Grove & Associates's website: [www.grovetwell.com/pub-cultural-knowledge.html](http://www.grovetwell.com/pub-cultural-knowledge.html)