
Chapter 1

Study Objectives and Background

A note on terminology

The terms “cross-cultural” and “intercultural” are often used interchangeably to describe interactions and situations involving members of two or more cultures. This report uses the term “cross-cultural” predominantly and does not make a distinction between the terms.

The term “culture” in this report is based primarily on the anthropological definition, which describes the total cultural domain of a social group, including social differences stemming from nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, arts, language, gender and generational differences, histories and socio-economic status.

The term “cultural competence” refers to the awareness, knowledge, skills, practices and processes needed by individuals, professions, organisations and systems to function effectively and appropriately in culturally diverse situations in general and in particular interactions with people from different cultures.

The term “cross-cultural training” refers to all modes of training and education aimed at developing cultural competence including workshops, seminars, training courses, coaching, diplomas and degrees. The term “program” in this report refers to a single cross-cultural training workshop, seminar or course.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The three main objectives of the study were:

- To identify and document the nature, extent, status, best practice approaches and effectiveness of cross-cultural training as a strategy for achieving multicultural policy objectives.
- To establish credible data to guide the future policy development and current management decisions of agencies responsible for multicultural affairs, government agencies and community organisations working to implement the *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society*, and cross-cultural trainers, in relation to the justification of the utilisation of resources for cross-cultural training.
- To provide guidelines on the implementation of effective cross-cultural training and the development needs of the cross-cultural training field.

The audience comprised the three tiers of government, contractors to governments, agencies in each jurisdiction responsible for multicultural affairs, community organisations and cross-cultural trainers. For reasons of policy delineation and resource limitations, the project excluded training provided for the private sector, for students, training in indigenous cultures and compliance-based training activity.

1.2 Cross-Cultural Training Issues in Australia

Cross-cultural training (CCT) has been conducted for over 30 years in Australian public sector and community organisations in response to legal, social and economic needs. Although the demand for CCT has grown since the late 1970s, driven by multicultural policy and the need for organisational effectiveness in managing diverse workforces and providing services to a multicultural society, such training has occupied a marginal position in most organisations.

The desirability of cultural competence for public servants is not disputed and has appeared in policy documents in all tiers of government throughout recent decades. However, these skills and attributes comprising cultural competence have rarely been made explicit to the extent that they form part of performance criteria or appraisals. Rather, they are usually implicit in policy frameworks and job specifications and “embedded” in service guidelines, compliance requirements and management frameworks.

Attempts to bring cultural competence into the foreground of organisational and professional development have not generally succeeded. The campaign to add “using cultural understanding” to the Mayer Key Competencies devised in the early ‘90s failed at the national level, although some states adopted versions of cultural competence. The Enterprising Nation report (Commonwealth of Australia, 1995) identified “capitalising on the talents of diversity”, including “utilizing the skills of our multicultural society” as one of the five major challenges facing Australian managers and made specific recommendations for the inclusion of diversity management training, including cross-cultural training, for enterprises. But as research undertaken for DIMIA’s Productive Diversity Program (Hay, 2002) has shown, neither subject is widely taught or understood in business schools or in the human resource development field, though interest and activity is growing.

More recently, the public sector has shown a greater acknowledgement and acceptance of the need for cultural competence due to the requirements and influences of the *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society* (Commonwealth of Australia 1998), departmental codes of conduct, leadership capability frameworks and units of the Public Sector Training Package (PSETA, 2005).

In other training, education and employment skills frameworks, cultural competence is implicit rather than explicit. With the exception of the Public Sector Training Package, neither diversity management nor working with cultural diversity are deemed to be core subjects, despite growing evidence that in diverse societies marked by migration and transnational mobility, social cohesion and leveraging difference are critical factors in organisational effectiveness and societal sustainability and in responding to the growing impacts of migration and globalisation on nation states.

Through informal consultations with and submissions from over 195 public sector executives, managers and training officers in the three tiers of government, community organisations and training providers during the first two months of the project, several common issues were identified.

- While some stakeholders expressed a general uncertainty about the nature, purpose and efficacy of cross-cultural training, many reported substantial qualitative benefits for individuals and organisations
- The position of CCT in training and development frameworks and strategies is not clear and cultural competence is not yet recognised as a generic skill in most industries and occupations
- There is a lack of benchmarks or standards for both CCT training programs and CCT trainers
- Selecting a program or a trainer in the absence of demonstrated capacity and positive referrals from trusted sources presents risks
- For many managers and staff, CCT carries negative connotations of compliance-based or “political correctness” training

Without a common understanding of the nature and relevance of cultural competence or of the criteria for effective cross-cultural training, decision makers report experiencing uncertainty in approving and sourcing cross-cultural training programs. Organisations have often selected safer training options, sometimes requiring that generic courses such as “Dealing with Difficult Customers” include a cultural diversity element. In practice, this usually amounts to trainers who are not experienced cross-cultural trainers making passing references to cultural differences which are often stereotypical and superficial.

Even where consideration for cultural diversity is formally incorporated in training programs such as Front Line Management and in specific units of competency of several of the National Training Packages, the topic is often dealt with superficially due to lack of resources, low levels of trainers’ confidence in dealing with the issues and lack of time to cover the curriculum. However, participant feedback often notes the need for more time to be spent on cultural considerations.

Pressures on organisations and employees to “do more with less” have also tended to reduce the time allocated to training topics. In the case of cross-cultural training, such time limitations reduce the effectiveness of what is essentially an educational process rather than a simple transfer of information. As discussed below, developing cultural competence involves active engagement in a process of cultural self-discovery and interaction with other cultures. Short workshops alone, while effective in the important areas of awareness and knowledge development, are considered largely ineffective in developing practical skills and professional competence.

Although the level of use of CCT in the public sector does not appear to be high, current social trends and policy directions, combined with the recognition of the future challenges presented by globalisation, migration patterns, multiculturalism and commitment to the *Charter for Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society* (Commonwealth of Australia 1998) will ensure continuing and, in many areas, increasing demand for such training.

1.3 Challenges in Evaluating Cross-Cultural Training Effectiveness

Evaluating CCT has always presented challenges for providers, their clients and other stakeholders due to the complexity of the subject and the wide range of approaches, models and styles of training. There is considerable diversity in training program design and delivery, in levels of trainer qualifications and expertise, in evaluation methodology and in program administration. There are no general guidelines for working with trainers and designing programs. The competence of trainers may be inferred from their formal qualifications but is mainly assessed from written testimonials, word-of-mouth reports and training program feedback and evaluations based on a wide range of methodologies, very few of which include long term evaluation of trainee experiences.

Consequently, for most stakeholders, the CCT field in Australia remains largely unmapped territory, lacking any widely accepted benchmarks and performance indicators. This uncertainty may constitute a risk factor inhibiting the introduction of CCT to employees. Another factor is the apparently widespread perception that CCT is a form of compliance-based anti-discrimination or access and equity training, which most public sector organisations have already conducted. Historically, a proactive view of the value of cultural competence and managing cultural diversity to organisational culture and customer service does not appear to have been very common among managers and staff. The reasons for this are complex and may include the fact that CCT is seen as an element of diversity management which in turn encompasses so many dimensions of diversity as to appear too amorphous and daunting to take on. CCT is also insufficiently linked to actual business performance measurements to warrant priority attention. Another reason is that while the personal and business cases for diversity have been established through research and industry case studies, this message has either not reached managers in sufficient numbers or has failed to be convincing enough to motivate engagement with diversity management in general and cultural diversity in particular.

A major research challenge lies in ascertaining and comparing the multiple sets of beliefs, perceptions, needs and purposes regarding culture and cross-cultural training. How are the various approaches and their implications to be recognised and compared? How can we compare the satisfaction ratings of

participants who have never previously received CCT to those who have? What is the relationship between training satisfaction ratings and job performance improvements? How can the results of a 3-hour program be compared to those of a 2-day program? What are the long-term effects of general awareness and communication training compared with ethno-specific training or combinations of the two? How can the return on an organisation's investment in cross-cultural training be measured in terms of improvements to performance or customer satisfaction when the training comprises so few hours attention on such a complex subject and involves so few of the staff?

"The art of evaluation lies in ensuring that the measurable does not drive out the immeasurable."

London Audit Commission, quoted in C. Thornton, *London Evaluation Scheme Law Federation*, London 1992

A comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of CCT must take into account the necessarily subjective nature of cross-cultural experiences and the psychological effects of experiential training. It is far easier to measure outputs such as types and levels of activity than it is to assess levels of awareness and acceptance, perceived relevance to duties, transference of skills and knowledge to the workplace and the influence of CCT on team and organisational culture. What is the "bottom line" value for a team's productivity of one member reporting that as a result of attending CCT they feel "much more relaxed when dealing with customers from diverse cultures"? Surely there is a value in this changed perspective, but what is it and how can it be measured?

The research should also address non-training interventions and experiences that contribute to or hinder the development of individual and organisational cultural competence. For example, what is the impact of organisational culture on the results of CCT? Trainers consulted for this and other projects in recent years commonly state that CCT participants returning to monocultural or assimilationist workplaces in which there is weak support for the training report no significant benefits from the training as there are no or very few opportunities or rewards for applying newly acquired knowledge and skills. Participants returning to multicultural, inclusive workplaces report benefits such as improved customer service encounters and the ability to transfer knowledge and skills to colleagues in order to make adjustments to practices and approaches.

The Stage 1 surveys in this study included several questions relating to these challenges.

Chapter 2

Methodology

Achievement of the research objectives required an assessment of current practice in cross-cultural training in public sector organisations and the investigation of three core research questions:

- What constitutes cross-cultural training effectiveness?
- What are the individual and organisational benefits of cross-cultural training?
- How does cross-cultural training contribute to the achievement of multicultural policy objectives?

A grounded methodology approach comprised qualitative consultations with a cross-section of Australian government, community and training provider organisations, a review of the Australian and international literature, a survey of government and community organisations, a survey of training providers, a pre-training survey of participants, an immediate post-training evaluation and a longitudinal training evaluation survey of participants.

2.1 Project Design

The project comprised two overlapping stages from July 2005 to October 2006.

Stage 1: The Status of Cross-Cultural Training, July – December 2005

Objectives:

- Review and analyse current trends, issues and state and national policies
- Examine and define current practice, content, context and expertise
- Determine the extent of training activity
- Analyse and compare jurisdiction-relevant information and documentation
- Identify organisational approaches to dealing with cross-cultural training

Elements:

- Literature review and stakeholder consultations
- Survey of Current Cross-Cultural Training Practice in the Australian Public Sector 2000-2005
- Survey of Cross-Cultural Training Providers and Trainers

Stage 2: The Effectiveness of Cross-Cultural Training, August 2005 – October 2006

Objectives:

- Provide credible qualitative and quantitative evidence of the effectiveness of cross-cultural training
- Assess the effectiveness of different approaches and applications
- Assess the individual and organisational benefits of CCT applications in terms of awareness, knowledge and skills
- Produce guidelines for implementing cross-cultural training programs

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- Provide recommendations for the development of cross-cultural training and cross-cultural training providers

Elements:

- Cross-Cultural Training Pre-training Survey
- Cross-Cultural Training Evaluation Survey (immediate post-training)
- Longitudinal Cross-Cultural Training Evaluation Survey (3-11 months post-training)
- Development of implementation guidelines
- Recommendations for cross-cultural training industry development.

2.2 Stage 1 Methodology

2.2.1 Literature Review and Stakeholder Consultations

The literature review, summarised in Chapter 3, examined the substantial international and domestic body of work on the subjects of cultural competence, cross-cultural training methodology and the effectiveness of cross-cultural training.

A Discussion Paper based on the literature review and project objectives was distributed to 595 people involved in or responsible for CCT. Informal consultations were subsequently held with 195 individuals across the three tiers of government and in a range of industries including health, police, education and multicultural services.

These consultations and responses to the paper revealed a number of common themes which were borne out in the subsequent surveys.

2.2.2 Survey Design, Sample Selection and Responses

The design of the two Stage 1 surveys was based on the core research questions, advice from the stakeholder consultations, the reference group and the findings of the literature review. To maximise returns, both surveys were designed for on-line mode, utilising Survey Monkey, a commercial service. The surveys and findings are summarised in Chapters 4 and 5 and presented in full in Appendix A.

For Stage 1, the selection of the survey sample included all Commonwealth agencies required to report on progress in implementing the *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society* and state and territory governments, agencies and jurisdictions which are committed to furthering the aims of the Charter and multicultural policy. The sample also included organisations in local government areas with high percentages of non-English speaking background residents, migrant resource centres and ethnic associations and a range of other bodies known to have an interest in cultural diversity issues.

A population listing of 595 organisations across Australia in the categories below were invited to participate in the surveys.

- Commonwealth Government Agencies
- Commonwealth Government Advisory Bodies
- State and Territory Governments
- Local Governments
- State Advisory Bodies
- Community Organisations
- Ethnic Community Councils
- Public and Private Sector Education and Training Providers
- National Training and Professional bodies
- Professional Associations
- Informal cross-cultural trainer networks

The Survey of Current Cross-Cultural Training Practice and the Survey of Cross-Cultural Training Providers and Trainers were conducted over a 10-week period from 16 October to 23 December 2005. (See Appendix B for text of surveys). Email invitations containing links to the surveys were sent to the 595 contact persons on the project databases via the Survey Monkey service. Reminder invitations were sent at 2-weekly intervals.

A total of 203 valid responses were received, representing a return rate of 34.1% of the whole survey population. The Survey of Current Practice in Cross-Cultural Training 2000-2005 elicited responses from 105 representatives of 93 public sector and community organisations that had collectively conducted an estimated 2000 training workshops or courses during the 5-year research period. The Survey of Cross-Cultural Trainers elicited responses from 98 representatives of 76 training provider organisations and individual trainers.

Organisations that used internal training providers responded to both surveys. There were several respondents from some of the larger organisations, representing different divisions or state offices.

The responses to the Survey of Current Practice came mainly from public sector and community organisations, others from non-government and private sector organisations funded to deliver or support public services. While some states and territories were under- or over-represented, there was no intention to achieve proportional representation, and the range and distribution of respondents provided a sufficiently diverse representation of the public sector from which several general conclusions could reasonably be drawn. Appendix C list all organisations that participated in consultations and or surveys.

2.3 Stage 2 Methodology

Stage 2 comprised Phase 1, the manual pre-training and immediate post training evaluation surveys in 2005 and Phase 2, the on-line longitudinal training evaluation survey in 2006.

Through consultation with training providers and other stakeholders, the research team designed a hard copy participant pre-training survey and a hard copy participant immediate post-training evaluation questionnaire in which seven questions regarding cultural competence were directly compared. The evaluation questionnaire asked a further ten questions about the training program. An on-line longitudinal training evaluation survey was designed to be comparable with the 17 pre-survey and immediate post-training evaluation survey questions. The scheme for these comparisons is outlined below (2.4).

The surveys and findings are described in Chapter 6 and the details provided in Appendix B. Sample questionnaires are provided in Appendix E.

2.3.1 Phase 1 Surveys : Pre-Training Survey and Immediate Post Training Evaluation Sample Selection and Responses

Phase 1 was conducted over a 5-month period from August to December 2005. Direct approaches were made to all of the training providers contacted during Stage 1 as well as other trainers with the objective of securing a target sample of approximately 500 participants in 40 cross-cultural training groups scheduled before December 2005. This timing was necessary to allow sufficient time to elapse before commencing the longitudinal evaluation survey in 2006. The urgency of securing these groups in this time necessitated starting the liaison and promotional effort simultaneously with Stage 1 activities. The types of training evaluated included general cross-cultural awareness, ethno-specific cross-cultural awareness and training in working with interpreters and translators.

Detailed instructions for cross-cultural trainers were also produced to guide them in administering the pre-training survey and immediate post-training evaluation surveys. Training participants were invited and encouraged to supply their email address on the pre-training survey form, indicating their willingness to be contacted for the anonymous on-line longitudinal evaluation in 2006. The training evaluation questionnaire was anonymous.

By the end of December 2005, evaluations of 39 training program had been received, involving 515 participants from the health sector, local government, police, higher education and several other government and community services. Reflecting the Stage 1 survey results, the majority of programs were in the general awareness and communication category. Several programs focused on specific occupations such as aged care, international trade, policing and health services. Two of the programs were on working with interpreters and translators. Pre-training surveys were completed by 515 individuals, of whom 511 completed immediate post-training surveys.

The participating organisations and training providers are listed below. Programs in which participants were from multiple organisations or departments of a government are indicated with an asterisk.

Organisations	State	Training Provider
University of Canberra	ACT	University of Canberra
Austrade	NSW	Beasley Intercultural
Australian Quarantine & Inspection Service	NSW & SA	Australian Quarantine & Inspection Service
Department of Community Services	NSW	Department of Community Services
Northern Territory Police	NT	Office of Ethnic Affairs
Centrelink Queensland	Qld	Cultural Diversity Services Pty Ltd
Queensland Government Departments*	Qld	Multicultural Affairs Queensland
Queensland Tertiary Admissions Council	Qld	Multicultural Affairs Queensland
Brisbane City Council	Qld	JWJ Consulting
Gold Coast City Council	Qld	Multicultural Affairs Queensland
Children Youth & Family Services	SA	Migrant Resource Centre SA
Homestart Finance	SA	Migrant Resource Centre SA
Medicare Australia	SA	Cultural Diversity Services Pty Ltd
Family Day Care DECS	SA	Inclusive Directions
City of Charles Sturt	SA	Cultural Diversity Services Pty Ltd
Overseas Trained Nurses*	Vic	Judith Miralles & Associates
After School Carers*	Vic	Judith Miralles & Associates
International Medical Graduates*	Vic	Judith Miralles & Associates
Victoria Community & Government*	Vic	Fitzroy Learning Network/AMES
Victoria Community & Government*	Vic	Australian Polish Community Services Inc
Dept of Immigration & Multicultural Affairs	Vic	National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI)
City of Greater Dandenong	Vic	NAATI
Multicultural Aged Care Service WA	WA	Multicultural Aged Care Service
Western Australia Transport Authority	WA	Centre for Excellence in Rail Training
Edith Cowan University	WA	Edith Cowan University

2.3.2 Phase 2. Longitudinal Evaluation Survey

Phase 2 commenced in January 2006. The on-line longitudinal training evaluation survey was designed after the analysis of the 2005 surveys and was conducted from mid-March to mid-June 2006, three to twelve months after the 2005 training programs.

The objectives of the longitudinal survey of training program participants were:

- To compare immediate post-training evaluation ratings of effectiveness and applicability to occupational functions with ratings given by participants several months after their training
- To ascertain the extent to which training has influenced personal attitudes to working in culturally diverse environments and situations
- To ascertain the extent to which training has influenced personal behaviours when working in culturally diverse environments and situations
- To identify the extent to which participants were able to apply acquired awareness, knowledge and skills to their occupational functions and situations
- To identify the extent to which participants were able to transfer acquired awareness, knowledge and skills to their colleagues and their organisations
- To elicit general observations regarding the effectiveness of cross-cultural training programs
- To elicit recommendations for the improvement of future cross-cultural training programs.

The on-line longitudinal evaluation survey commenced on 13 March 2006 and closed on 16 June 2006, a fourteen-week period during which reminder invitations were sent at approximately two-week intervals. The survey was sent to 346 training participants who had provided their email addresses during 2005.

A total of 145 responses were received, representing 41.9% of the invited training participants and 28.42% of the 515 original training program participants. The number of responses may have been higher but for problems with accessing the internet by some participants, due mainly to organisational IT system blocks on internet access. There were also 32 inaccurately supplied or discontinued email addresses and 26 participants formally declined to undertake the survey. In several cases, staff had been re-deployed, deployed overseas or left the organisation.

2.4 Comparative Analysis of Phase 1 and 2 Responses

The scheme for the comparative analysis of training evaluation data for the three surveys is illustrated below:

Figure 1. Training Data Evaluation Scheme

Pre-Training Survey (Hard copy)	Post-Training Evaluation (Hard copy)	Longitudinal Evaluation (Electronic)
Demographics & contact email addresses		Questions 1-7 Training program details: type, objectives, duration, style, status & date
Questions 1- 3 Previous CCT Experience	Questions 1-4 Effectiveness of design, facilitation	Questions 8-18 Direct comparisons with Training Evaluation Questions 1-11
Questions 5-8 (7 questions) Self-assessment of cross-cultural awareness, knowledge, skill & confidence	Questions 5-11 (7 questions) Direct comparisons with pre-survey Questions 5-8.	
Any other comments	Questions 12-14 & 18 Anticipated applications, effects on performance & benefits to organisation	Questions 19-21 & 25 Direct comparisons with Training Eval. Q 12-14 & 18
	Questions 15-17 Satisfaction with training, best aspects, improvements	Questions 22-24 Direct comparisons with Training Eval Q 15-17
		Questions 26-39 Additional questions on attitudes, demand for further CCT, organisational issues and recommendations. Q 30-35 compared with Current Practice Survey responses.

2.5 Survey Rating Scale

The rating scale used in all surveys was from 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest rating, explained to participants as:

- 1 = lowest rating; e.g. not at all/very poor
- to-
- 5 = highest rating; very/very much/excellent.

In the 2005 evaluation survey report, discussed in Chapter 6 and detailed in Appendix B, the charts for each question present the number and percentage of participants selecting each rating. In the 2006 longitudinal evaluation survey report, also discussed in Chapter 6 and detailed in Appendix B the charts for each question present only the percentage of participants selecting each rating.

The rating scale on all of the charts is presented as:

- 1 = low, 2 = below average, 3 = average, 4 = above average, 5 = high

A percentage scale enables a comparison of questions with different number of alternative answers. It also allows the reader to quickly evaluate the average score on a familiar scale and judge the significance of the differences between the average score, maximum score and minimum score. The average percentage rating scale is constructed so that the maximum score (5.0) equals 100% and the minimum score (1.0) is 0%. The mid-point of the average percentage rating scale is 50%, representing an average score in the middle of the rating score range (3.0). The calculation of the average percentage rating includes an adjustment of the rating scale from an ordinal scale from 1 to 5 to a synthetic interval scale starting at 0, to represent the average score as a percentage of the maximum possible score.

Throughout the report, statements about statistical significance are based on t-tests of difference in average rating scores at 95% confidence level. The average percentage scores and differences between average percentage scores are provided as an approximate indication of the size of the differences.

2.6 Comparison with International Studies

It is difficult to make comparisons between this study and those conducted overseas for several reasons. Primarily, it appears that there have not been any similar studies in the past twenty years, that is, national in scope, focused on public and community sector organisations and directed towards the contribution of CCT to the achievement of multicultural policy objectives. Another obstacle to comparative study is the nature of the known studies. Many focused on specific occupations such as psychology. Most were concerned with training programs for students or employees about to embark on, or currently involved in, overseas sojourns.

A review (Mendenhall et al, 2004) of several studies of the effectiveness of CCT for expatriates and sojourners conducted in the period 1988-2000 provides some useful parameters against which to compare this study. Mendenhall quotes several previous studies that provide evidence that CCT can be effective in various ways but notes that as each study takes a different perspective, the result is multiple partial descriptions of the state of the field. Numerous specialist authors recommend more rigorous research methodologies, including pre- and post-training evaluations, control groups, observation, self-reports and longitudinal studies. Their reports and recommendations reflect the breadth and complexity of the field. The development of a collective, comparable knowledge base will require further research focusing on specific aspects of CCT relating to particular purposes and organisational priorities.

This study's methodology involves all categories except for control groups and observation. A survey of managers' observations was proposed in the project tender but subsequently proved impracticable for numerous logistical and organisational reasons. It was unacceptable to most organisations due to factors including potential interference with performance appraisal processes, protection of trainee privacy and the difficulty of making consistent observations in what can often be a highly subjective training field.

The Mendenhall review classifies the dependant variables addressed by the various training programs into seven categories: knowledge, behaviour, attitude, adjustment, performance, satisfaction and other. The knowledge category yielded the highest number of significant positive results across all the studies, with behaviour and attitude also showing positive results. Half of studies found that CCT contributed to performance but the authors judged the results for this category as "contradictory and scarce...which makes interpretation difficult". While the study reported satisfaction with training to be significant in 75% of the groups studied reported, the authors questioned the relationship between trainee satisfaction and training effectiveness.

This study investigates aspects of all of the above variables except for "adjustment to other cultures", as the focus is on cross-cultural communication in a multicultural domestic setting. In the "other" category, the study investigates organisational climate and support for CCT. In the category of satisfaction, an aim of the longitudinal study was to compare ratings over time and to look for correlations with other ratings of training effectiveness.

Apart from its national scope and its focus on domestic organisations, public sector employees and the role of CCT in achieving multicultural policy objectives, the study may be unique in several other ways. First, the extent of elapsed time between the immediate post-training evaluation and the longitudinal

evaluation appears to be rare. The research team was unable to identify any similar studies in the CCT field and only a few longitudinal skills retention studies in unrelated fields.

Secondly, the study was able to assess the relative perceptions of training participants and managers regarding the organisational climate for CCT.

Thirdly, the study compared the expectations and intentions of participants regarding the transfer of their learning to their workplaces with their actual experiences of doing so.

Fourthly, the study assessed the organisational climate and recent history of CCT by taking measures from samples across the nation to determine the extent to which organisations and their prevailing cultures were able to support the development of cultural competence beyond the limited interventions of CCT programs and comparing these assessments with the perceptions of training participants.

In these respects, the study has contributed to and expanded on the international body of research into the effectiveness of CCT.

Chapter 3

Literature Review: Cultural Competence and the Role of Cross Cultural Training

In order to answer the core research questions it was necessary to address the fundamental elements of the cross-cultural training field, examining through a literature review and consultations the following four questions:

What is culture?

What is cultural competence?

What is cross-cultural training?

What constitutes cross-cultural training effectiveness?

The literature review drew on the substantial international and domestic body of work on the subjects of cultural competence, cross-cultural training methodology and the effectiveness of cross-cultural training. It established that despite some theoretical and methodological differences, CCT practitioners and researchers around the world work with a common body of knowledge and spectrum of approaches and are largely in agreement with the concept of “cultural competence” defined in terms of awareness and effectiveness. However, there are no universal benchmarks in this area due to the highly contextual nature of CCT, including a wide range of contexts and audiences.

The emphasis of the training can differ as widely within countries as between countries, with national, state, regional or industry policies dictating the focus of training in terms of target audiences and social and economic objectives.

The literature review also revealed strong similarities among descriptions of CCT competence and the roles, competencies and professional development needs of CCT trainers. The CCT field worldwide is increasingly engaged in a process of reflection on the roles of CCT in society, systems and organisations.

3.1 Culture and Cultural Competence

A working definition of “culture” that can be derived from the extensive literature would not be dissimilar from the dictionary definition; *the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings, which is transmitted from one generation to another.* (Macquarie 1986)

The term “culture” in this report is based on the traditional anthropological definition, which describes the total cultural domain of a society, including social differences stemming from nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, arts, language, gender and generational differences, histories and socio-economic status. It is through exposure to the cultural domain that individuals learn and share a particular view of the world.

In the literature, there are scores of definitions which expand on this concept of learned and shared behaviour, including phrases such as “patterns of behaviours...shared within a group and communicated to new members of the group in order to serve as a cognitive guide or blueprint for future actions” (Kluckhohn et al 1952), “the collective programming of the mind” (Hofstede 1984), “the pattern of automatic assumptions, unconsciously held and taken for granted” (Schein 1985) or “an all-encompassing form or pattern for living. It is complex, abstract, and pervasive” (Porter and Samovar 1991).

Discussing the evolution of the conceptualisation of culture in the field, Wiseman (2001) notes that “the operationalisation of culture is not where members were born or the colour of their skin, but on the commonalities in and interpretations of their behaviours”. This operationalisation could include age,

disability, sexual orientation, gender or other differences but as Wiseman points out “the problem becomes one of determining sufficient distinctive features to delineate different cultures” (ibid.)

Approaches to defining and describing culture continue to engender debate, whether on the relative merits of particular models that rely on cultural dimensions such as individualism and collectivism, high and low context or the socio-political aspects of power and privilege within and between cultures.

The central influence of culture is accepted in virtually all of the disciplines related to human interaction and social functioning, including the social sciences, anthropology, communication and management. While it is not the aim of this report to expand on this aspect of the study of culture, it is noted that within and between disciplines and professions there are diverse and often divergent discourses regarding the nature and role of culture. Even the limited review undertaken for this project illustrates the enormous complexity, diversity and divergences of the vast and growing body of academic, professional and business literature in the field.

“Culture hides much more than it reveals, and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants. Years of study have convinced me that the real job is not to understand foreign culture but to understand our own.”

(Hall, 1959)

Edward Hall’s comment highlights the difficulty of understanding culture and of establishing what constitutes cross-cultural effectiveness. In recent years the terms “cultural competence” and “cultural intelligence” have become widespread in the cross-cultural communication field. Cultural competence also underpins the concept of “culturally inclusive practice”, referring to the ability to provide services such as health and education appropriately and equitably in a culturally diverse society.

Cross defined cultural competence as:

“A set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency, or amongst professionals and enables that system, agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.... A cultural competent system of care acknowledges and incorporates – at all levels – the importance of culture, the assessment of cross-cultural relations, vigilance towards the dynamics that result from cultural differences, the expansion of cultural knowledge, and the adaptation of services to meet culturally-unique needs.”

(Cross et al, 1989, quoted in Johnstone, 2005)

A recent Australian government guide for the health sector presents a definition that draws on Cross’s definition and expands on it, declaring that cultural competence “is much more than an awareness of cultural differences, as it focuses on the capacity of the health system to improve health and wellbeing by integrating culture into the delivery of health services”. (NHMRC, 2005)

This study has drawn on and synthesised the range of definitions of cultural competence to suggest the following definition for general application.

The term “cultural competence” refers to the awareness, knowledge and skills and the practices and processes needed by individuals, professions, organisations and systems to function effectively and appropriately in culturally diverse situations in general and in particular encounters with people from different cultures.

Because of the often hidden or invisible nature of one’s own culture and the historically tribal, territorial and parochial nature of nations and societies, cultural competence is not an innate characteristic of human beings. The universals of human nature are inherited but culture is learned. Cultural competence is also learned, through experience, education and training. Individuals and organisations need to choose to acquire and place value on cultural competence.

The level or degree of cultural competence required for effective functioning is determined largely by context. It is also largely dictated and measured by the perceptions of individuals in cross-cultural encounters; one person’s idea of the cultural competence required in a situation may be different to another’s.

While the emphasis in descriptions of cultural competence has traditionally been on the individual, models which apply the concept more broadly across organisations and professions are emerging. For example, the concept of diversity management proposes an integrated approach in which responsibility for working with and managing all aspects of diversity, including cultural diversity, is shared among all employees, requiring organisational and individual competencies.

Recent Australian papers and reports (Miralles 2000, Eisenbruch 2004) have proposed a model for increasing cultural competency comprising four dimensions - systemic, organisational, professional and individual cultural competence.

- **Systemic cultural competence** requires effective policies and procedures, monitoring mechanisms and sufficient resources to foster culturally competent behaviour and practice at all levels.
- **Organisational cultural competence** requires skills and resources to meet client diversity and an organisational culture which values, supports and evaluates cultural competency as integral to core business.
- **Professional cultural competence** depends on education and professional development and requires cultural competence standards to guide the working lives of individuals.
- **Individual cultural competence** requires the maximisation of knowledge, attitudes and behaviours within an organisation that supports individuals to work with diverse colleagues and customers.

3.1.1 Systemic and Organisational Cultural competence

As described above, cultural competence can also be seen as a component of system-wide and organisational core capabilities. “Using cultural understanding” was proposed as one of the national key competencies for the Australian education system over ten years ago. Awareness of cultural diversity and understanding relationships in a culturally diverse environment are also implicit and in some areas explicit in the current key competency and employability skills frameworks and units of competency in many industry Training Packages.

In a climate of globalisation, knowledge management, changing labour market demographics and the need for continuous innovation, industries that wish to attract, retain and develop culturally diverse employees must be able to demonstrate competence in working across cultures and managing diversity as a whole-of-organisation strategic capability.

Referring primarily to the need for cultural competence in global organisations, Adler (1997) discusses “corporate multiculturalism” as a management issue of equal importance in domestic organisations. “Cross-cultural management...seeks to understand and improve the interaction of co-workers, managers, executives, clients, suppliers and alliance partners from countries and cultures around the world.”

Cross-cultural training supports an organisation’s ability to deliver services to people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and to effectively manage workforce diversity (Eisenbruch 2004, Nicholas et al 2001). Nicholas (2001) and Sammartino (2001) identify the ability to recognise and capitalise on the potential value of workforce diversity as critical management competency. Diverse workplaces are only effective when the diversity is recognized, factored into planning and supported and rewarded (Sammartino et al 2001).

In the National Vocational Education and Training system, the Public Services (2003), Business Services (2003), Health (2002) and Community Services (2002) Training Packages comprise units of competency for working and managing diversity at all qualification levels. For example, the Public Services Training Package outlines competencies from basic awareness and understanding of obligations and responsibilities to the senior management capabilities in designing, implementing and evaluating a diversity management policy. Cultural diversity issues are considered at every level, or element, of competency. Cross cultural competence is also a significant dimension of diversity management, a management model which is increasingly employed in Australian and overseas organisations.

3.1.2 Individual and Professional Cultural competence

The competencies of individuals and teams are essential to the effectiveness of organisations. The cultural competence of individuals and the effectiveness of cross-cultural work groups have received considerable research attention.

Beginning in the mid-1980s, Milton Bennett developed a framework for conceptualising dimensions of intercultural competence. His model was called the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) is a 50 item (with 10 additional demographic items) measure of intercultural competence. A recent paper by Bennett and others defines intercultural sensitivity as “the ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences” and into cultural competence as “the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways” and argue “that greater intercultural sensitivity is associated with greater potential for exercising intercultural competence” (Hammer et al, 2003).

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity identifies the six phases that most people move through during their acquisition of intercultural competence. Each of the orientations is an increasingly sophisticated one and Bennett makes the assumption that the individual’s potential intercultural competence increases as a result of moving through these processes.

The first three orientations are considered to be more ethnocentric. They are:

- Denial – this is a state where the individual acknowledges only their own culture as being real. The individual has either no knowledge of or no interest in other cultures.
- Defence – in this stage, individuals are aware of the existence of other cultures but see their own as the only valid one. There is a variation of this stage which is called Reversal. This is where an individual adopts another culture and perceives it as being superior to their own (in the vernacular this is often referred to as “going native”).
- Minimisation – in this stage, the threat that an individual felt during the defence stage is neutralised by ascribing universality to elements of one’s own culture. The individual develops a sense that cultural differences can be sublimated to physical and transcendent universalism.

The second three orientations are described as being ethnorelative.

- Acceptance – the individual experiences their own culture as just one of a number of valid world views.
- Adaptation – the development of empathy. An individual is able to perceive and behave in a way that is appropriate to another culture. A deepening of these experiences becomes the basis of biculturality or multiculturality.
- Integration – the stage at which one fluidly moves in and out of different cultural world views.

Bennett does not consider that integration is necessarily better than adaptation in displaying intercultural competence. He uses it as a descriptor for a number of people including “many members of non-dominant cultures, long-term expatriates and global nomads”.

The IDI has been widely taken up and proven useful for assessing training needs, guiding interventions for individual and group development of intercultural competence, contributing to personnel selection and the evaluation of programs.

A higher individual score on the IDI indicates more ethnorelativism, which is associated with a greater degree of cultural competence. The paper suggests that this can be used to predict less cultural stress among sojourners, more satisfaction with living/working in a foreign culture, greater job accomplishment in culturally different environments, lower levels of prejudice and discrimination against culturally different others and less resistance to diversity initiatives in organisations.

The paper refers to a number of landmark studies where the centrality of intercultural competence in “increasing understanding and improving relations across cultures” has been identified. These studies

were from diverse areas such as overseas effectiveness, international management, international study abroad, international transfer of technology and information and domestic intercultural relations.

A literature review (Lloyd et al, 2003) identified three competencies required for effectiveness in culturally diverse teams: dissimilarity openness – the extent to which team members accept diversity, emotion management skills – the ability to recognise one’s own and others’ emotional responses, and intercultural communication competence.

Other writers refer to competencies required for intercultural conflict management such as “face work management” and “cultural empathy” (Ting-Toomey et al 2005) and the recognition of the pervasive role of power relationships (Martin et al 2004).

An examination of “face” in culturally diverse work groups, described as “a person’s self-presentation in a social context” (Earley 1997), analyses the constructs of face in terms of the individual, group and organisational contexts.

At the level of individuals and professions, there are numerous descriptions of what constitutes cultural or intercultural competence. Paige (1993) identified the following common elements of intercultural effectiveness:

- Knowledge of other culture/s
- Personal qualities such as openness, flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity, sense of humour
- Behavioural skills such as communication competencies, culturally appropriate role behaviour and ability to relate well to others
- Self-awareness, especially with respect to one’s own values and beliefs
- Technical skills, including ability to complete a task in a new cultural setting
- Situational factors eg cultural similarity, reception of foreigners, political/economic/social conditions, clarity of expectations, psychological pressures associated with the experience.

Cultural competence has also been described as comprising knowledge, motivation and skills (Spitzberg, 2000).

- Knowledge refers to awareness and understanding of the information needed to be cross-culturally competent and includes the history, politics, key values, similarities and difference between cultures
- Motivation refers to the feelings, intentions and needs to engage in cross-cultural communication. If the feelings and intentions are positive we will be motivated to communicate
- Skills are those required for the performance of effective and appropriate behaviours.

The absence in an individual of any of these three conditions reduces their communicative competence.

Another model of intercultural competence comprises knowledge, conviction and capacity for action (Audigier 1998) in which conviction refers to the ability to move beyond tolerance to see merit in other ways of behaving and capacity for action refers to the ability to negotiate two or more cultures and to use a variety of strategies when dealing with people from other cultures.

Graf (2004) divides the concept of cultural competence into individual, episodic and relational systems. The individual system is further divided into the cognitive domain (knowledge), affective domain (intercultural sensitivity) and the behavioural domain (skills). The episodic system refers to situations in which the individual’s normatively competent behaviour may not necessarily be seen as such by the other person in the exchange. The relational system refers to the competencies required across the entire span of relationships an individual may encounter. Reviewing a wide range of studies from many countries, Graf identifies five skills and attributes comprising cultural competence:

- Intercultural communication skills
- Intercultural sensitivity
- Interpersonal competence

-
- Social problem-solving capacity
 - Self-monitoring.

Another commonly cited skill is the ability to work effectively with interpreters which requires an understanding of cultural variables in discourse patterns and communication styles, values and beliefs regarding disclosure, hierarchy and so on.

Martin and Nakayama (2004) equate cultural competence with intercultural communication skills. They contend that “there are four building blocks of intercultural communication which are:

- culture – deep-seated patterns of learned, shared beliefs and perception; as deeply felt, commonly intelligible, and widely accessible patterns of symbolic meaning; and/or as contested zones of meaning
- communication – a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired, and transformed
- context – the physical and social setting in which communication occurs, or the larger political, social and historical environment
- power – pervasive and plays an enormous, though often hidden, role in intercultural communication interactions. Power relationships, determined largely by social institutions and roles, influence communication.”

The authors emphasise the importance of an individual understanding the role that his/her personal history plays in intercultural interactions. These include childhood experiences, historical myths, language competence and memories of recent political events.

The term “cultural intelligence” has recently emerged, described as “the ability to engage in a set of behaviours that uses skills and qualities that are tuned appropriately to the culture-based values and attitudes of the people with whom one interacts.” (Peterson, 2004). Advocates claim that people with high cultural intelligence “are able to generate new and appropriate responses in unfamiliar cultural contexts.” (Earley & Ang, 2003) However, the competencies listed by these authors are not markedly different to those appearing in the literature.

A difficulty in distinguishing between a specifically “cultural” competence and generic competences of communication and interaction is the embedded nature of culture. As Edward Hall claimed, “Culture is communication and communication is culture. People cannot act or interact at all in any meaningful way except through the medium of culture.” (Hall, 1959) How then can qualities of empathy and awareness of others’ emotions be defined as cross-cultural rather than universal? Are there specifically cross-cultural skills or are there cross-cultural elements of all the generic interactional skills?

The question of whether cultural competence is something that can be definitively achieved remains very much open. The more experienced the researcher or trainer in the field, the less likely they are to claim expertise. An article titled “The Myth of Cultural Competence” (Dean, 2001) questions how one can become competent when culture and individual cultural identity is known to be continually changing. Rather than accepting that anyone can become “competent” in the culture of another, Dean proposes a model based of acceptance of one’s lack of competence in cross-cultural matters.

“With “lack of competence” as the focus, a different view of practicing across cultures emerges. The client is the “expert” and the clinician is in a position of seeking knowledge and trying to understand what life is like for the client. There is no thought of competence—instead one thinks of gaining understanding (always partial) of a phenomenon that is evolving and changing.”
(Dean, 2001).

A definition of cultural competence within a multicultural society must also take into account non-Western, non-Anglo perspectives, the impact of patterns of migration, stages of cultural adaptation, group histories, varying levels of isolation or acceptance, language and literacy skills in first and other languages and other variables.

Given the tremendous diversity of cultures represented in the Australian populace, a working description of a culturally competent individual might read as follows:

A cross-culturally competent person is one who recognises the importance of acknowledging the individuals in an encounter first and foremost, before applying any generalised knowledge of the cultural differences between their supposed groups. A cross-culturally competent person will also be one who comprehends key cultural values but recognises the limits of their knowledge and competence.

In summary, while there are simple, basic definitions of cultural competence, cross-cultural and interpersonal competences are virtually inseparable, and the context dictates the type and degree of competence required for effective interaction. The perceptions of the participants in the interaction will inevitably complicate the outcome.

Organisations considering the relevance and status of cultural competence must examine the ways in which is reflected in policies and practices. A policy may boldly advocate the organisation’s commitment to cultural diversity but delegate all matters pertaining to cross-cultural relationships to a minor office attached to the human resources department or to a specialist unit. Organisations must also identify the points at which cultural competence is most required in its internal and external relationships. Is it sufficient for individuals in certain roles to be culturally competent or is an organisational approach required? Are strategies to account for cultural diversity “bolted on” to the organisation’s key performance areas or “built in” to its culture?

A recent Australian study of health care and nursing in culturally diverse contexts noted that the success of processes and strategies for developing cultural competence depended on “...the will of governments, politicians, and policy makers (including the provision of legislation and mandated policy frameworks backed by appropriate resources) and the effective education and training of *all* stakeholders...” (Johnstone & Kanitsaki, 2005).

3.2 Cross-Cultural Training

3.2.1 Definitions of Cross-Cultural Training

Definitions of cross-cultural training (CCT) reflect the range of perspectives on cultural competence discussed above as well as the context in which the training is provided.

“Cross-Cultural Training enables the individual to learn both content and skills that will facilitate effective cross-cultural interaction by reducing misunderstandings and inappropriate behaviour.” (Black et al, 1990)

“Intercultural training is training that gives people the necessary information, skills and attitudes to enable them to adjust and to function productively in a country other than their own.” (Kohls et al 2003)

Some definitions include reference to broader socio-political issues such as the necessity of ensuring CCT which “protects and preserves the dignity” of individuals and communities (Tan et al 2003).

Some practitioners and researchers prefer the terms “intercultural” and “interculturalist” and make distinctions between these and “cross-cultural” and “cross-cultural trainer”. While there are interesting and significant aspects to these and other terminological differences, this project makes no distinction and adopts the term “cross cultural” as being the most prevalent in the field. Online key word searches conducted in 2005 revealed an 18-to-1 preponderance of “cross-cultural training” over “intercultural training” through the Proquest 5000 search engine and an 11-to-1 preponderance through Google.

In general, cross-cultural training is defined as that which increases the competence of individuals to function in cross-cultural situations domestically and abroad. This definition is broadening to include the organisational and systemic competences as discussed above.

3.2.2 Historical Development of Cross-Cultural Training

Martin and Nakayama (2004) discuss the historical development of cross-cultural training in the United States. The government established the Foreign Service Institute in 1946 in response to the large numbers of Americans who were living and working overseas (both as business and government personnel) and finding that they were ill-prepared to cope with the challenges that they met. Those who had any training for these postings only had language training removed from its cultural context. The government staffed the institute with anthropologists (such as Edward T.Hall), psychologists and linguists. There was very little available in the way of cross-cultural training materials so these early staff members created their own. Thus was born the field of intercultural communication and cross-cultural training.

Hall, in his groundbreaking research, noted that understanding and respecting cultural difference was central to competent intercultural communication. Associated scholars came from a variety of backgrounds and the interdisciplinary focus they brought to this new field continues to be a hallmark of intercultural studies and cross-cultural training today. Linguists assist in the understanding of the importance of language and its role in intercultural interactions and how intercultural competence can be enhanced by learning another language. Anthropologists illustrate the importance of the role of culture in people’s lives and importance of non-verbal communication. Psychologists bring an understanding of issues around stereotyping and the effect of prejudice in intercultural interaction and also how variables such as nationality, ethnicity, personality, and gender influence interpersonal communication.

Bhawuk and Brislin (2000) also give an historical overview of the field of cross-cultural or intercultural training. They commence about half a century ago with Oberg’s work on culture shock and Hall’s research on space and time and its effect on cross-cultural training programs or, as they were originally called, intercultural orientation programs. The change of name was a reflection of the fact of a deeper appreciation of issues involved in living abroad and interacting with other cultures developed as a result of research and the experiences of trainers in the field. The scope of training broadened to not only prepare people for overseas assignments but to also assist them with their transition back into their

home culture and to deal effectively and appropriately in their own country with people who are from another culture.

Until the mid to late 60s, the lecture, or “University” method was the most common approach to cross-cultural training. Two researchers, Harrison and Hopkins (1967), evaluated the effectiveness of these training methods for people who were living abroad and recommended that the experiential model take its place because the lecture method involves passive rather than active learning, while in real-life international experiences, the trainee is responsible for collecting their own information. The lecture method gives participants well-developed problems to solve whereas in the intercultural situation they will have to identify the problem themselves before they can seek a solution. Participants are encouraged to be rational and logical but a sojourner facing difficulties in an unfamiliar environment will often be in a highly charged emotional state and will require the emotional wherewithal to deal with it. The lecture method relies heavily on presenting analytical solutions based on written material but in real-life situations, participants need skills for relating to people. Finally, the focus on written materials does not account for the reality that the bulk of cross-cultural interactions occur through the channels of verbal and non-verbal communication. While their study focused on training for the international experience, the comparison of methodologies applies equally to domestic cross-cultural encounters.

The experiential method has gained enthusiastic and widespread support since that time and has stimulated major methodological innovation in the field but there is still support for the university method not least because it is simple, flexible, and inexpensive.

Culture assimilators describe real-life scenarios of confusing intercultural exchanges between a host national and a sojourner that could lead to misunderstanding because of the cultural differences of the two individuals. The participants are then provided with a number of scenarios for resolving the situation and asked to choose the most appropriate one in the specific circumstance. An explanation is later given for each of the choices as to why it is or is not the most appropriate. This is considered an appropriate tool for self-paced learning and for large groups where individuals are at different levels of cultural sensitivity. A review of the research suggests that this is a cognitively effective method but also has some positive influence on the affective and behavioural domains.

The “Contrast-American” method uses an example of a behaviour that would be encountered in the host culture but is diametrically opposed to anything they would encounter in their own culture. Interactions between participants and actors are and later debriefed. Its advantage is that it “emphasises affective goals through experiential processes”.

The Self Reference Criterion Method, also developed in the 60s, encourages people to recognise their own cultural values, to contrast them with the values of the host culture and to apply the insights received to a culturally appropriate solution of a particular situation.

Bhawuk and Brislin discuss one of the most popular experiential tools which is simulations. They say a successful simulation should have what they refer to as an “aha” moment, the trainee should become emotionally involved and the affective response should be followed by more cognitive processes. They say that simulations are not always successful and cite some research that found that some participants become more ethnocentric after experiencing Bafa Bafa (one of the most common of the simulation games). They theorise that this could be because of premature use and suggest that the participants should be introduced to culture-general frameworks first. The area simulation is where the target culture is simulated in a natural setting and they give the example of Hawaii being used as simulation area for life in the Pacific Islands.

The cultural self-awareness model is based on the premise that one’s own culture is so ingrained that an individual embraces it unthinkingly and has to be prodded into rethinking the assumptions of their own culture. It uses a series of videos where professional actors play the roles of the sojourner and a host national which participants view and then discuss with input from the trainer.

The authors discuss a series of theoretical books and handbooks that were produced in the 1980s. One of the problematic issues for the field of intercultural training to emerge at that time was the divergence between the needs and opinions of researchers and practitioners.

Bennett’s Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity is a good resource for trainers because it means that the programme can be tailored to the participants’ needs. By assessing the stage that

participants are at using the self-administered Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), the trainer can choose the most appropriate methodologies.

A culture-general assimilator was developed by Brislin, Cushner, Cherrie and Yong in 1986. It was more theoretically based than the culture-specific assimilators referred to earlier and was claimed to be appropriate to prepare a sojourner for interaction in any culture. Research supported this claim and a second edition became available in 1996.

The focus of 1990s research has been the evaluation of cross-cultural training programs, the development of criterion measures for use in this evaluation and building theoretically meaningful models.

Behaviour modification training has four central elements: attention, retention, reproduction and incentive. Its aim is to teach behaviours that are acceptable in the host culture and unlearn behaviours that are acceptable in one's own culture but not acceptable in the new culture. However because it is expensive and labour intensive it has not been used very often in cross-cultural training programmes.

A theory-based culture assimilator based on the concepts of individualism and collectivism has been developed. And there is some evidence that other researchers are developing cross-cultural training exercises that are grounded in theory.

In writing about the future of the field, the authors expect experiential methods to continue but to be more innovative and sophisticated. As potential participants become more sophisticated, practitioners will be required to provide newer and more complex training tools.

3.2.3 The Types and Objectives of CCT

In broad terms, CCT programs focus on the following broad categories:

- Managing and working with culturally diverse employees and colleagues
- Working and living internationally
- Designing and delivering products/services to culturally diverse customers

There are four broad categories of CCT program types:

- General awareness and communication training, which focuses on developing generic cross-cultural skills and sensitivity to assist in interaction with any culture the participant may encounter
- Ethno- or country-specific training, which focuses on a single ethnic group or country to increase participants' knowledge, understanding and ability to function effectively in that environment or with that group
- Training in working with interpreters and translators, which focuses on developing the technical skills involved, also includes those elements of cross-cultural communication that influence the process
- Specialised programs focusing on topics such as customer service, health care, community policing, indigenous communities, refugees, survivors of torture and trauma, managing culturally diverse teams in Australia or overseas, living and working overseas and international management

Another important way of learning cultures is through language teaching and learning, which increasingly comprises culture-specific information, cross-cultural encounters and examinations of the central role of language in perceptions of the world and the formation and transmission of values.

3.2.4 Cross-Cultural Training Content and Processes

The content of CCT programs can include the following topics:

- The organisational and individual contexts of cross-cultural interaction
- The nature of culture
- Elements of cross-cultural communication including verbal and non-verbal communication, communication style, attitudes and values
- Cross-cultural comparisons including variables or dimensions such as individualism/collectivism, hierarchical/egalitarian, power distance
- The nature of cross-cultural adaptation, including “culture shock”
- Working with interpreters and translators
- Introduction to the languages of the host cultures
- Working with and managing culturally diverse teams
- Providing services to culturally diverse clients/customers
- Negotiation and conflict resolution

The processes most commonly used include lectures, cultural assimilators (short case studies of problematic situations), the cultural contrasts method which compares behaviours between two cultures, the self-reference criterion method which encourages participants to recognise their own cultural values and contrast them with those of other cultures, and simulations. Simulations are very popular with CCT trainers but are not always successful, often because they are used before participants have been introduced to culture-general frameworks. Anecdotal evidence indicates a growing trend of bringing members of contrast cultures into training workshops. In multicultural Australia, the participants are quite often the trainer’s greatest resource, bringing frameworks and theories to life.

3.2.5 Approaches and Delivery Methods

The two main approaches are the didactic and the experiential, the two extremes of which were recently described as the “sponge method”, relying on absorption of facts and the “hands on method” with a focus on action and experience (Tan, 2003). The purely didactic approach comprises lectures and discussions and the provision of information including checklists and country profiles. The purely experiential approach relies on interactive exercises, simulations, role plays and field trips. Kohls (1994) refers to four traditional approaches: Education, Training, Orientation and Briefing, and recommends combinations of the approaches in program design. In practice, most cross-cultural training programs do combine elements of several approaches in recognition of adult learning principles.

While no single approach is universally ideal, studies by Graf (2004) suggested culture-general training using an experiential approach is more effective in developing cultural competence than didactic and culture-specific approaches.

The most common method of delivering CCT is through training workshops or short courses involving both didactic and experiential approaches. Some training is delivered through distance or e-learning. Trainers and consultants working in the corporate sector report an increase in personal coaching as a preferred method of developing competence. Cultural competence is also being seen as an element of diversity management and international business management, resulting in its inclusion in management consulting and project management services.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that the majority of CCT in Australia is delivered in one day and half-day workshops, while 2-day workshops have become rare in recent years, reflecting a general trend in the training market. This impression is borne out by the findings of the current survey, which show that 69%

of general cultural awareness programs are half a day or less in duration, 22% are one day long and only 9% are conducted over two or more days.

Many writers in the field state that short periods of training are less than ideal. "One should not expect such short programs to achieve anything more than a basic and very incomplete awareness that living overseas will be quite different." (Kohls, 1994) Programs of three days or longer, often with workplace based supporting activities, are considered to be more effective. Academic courses may be much longer but are more likely to be predominantly didactic in approach.

3.3 Cross-Cultural Training Effectiveness

"The purpose of a cross-cultural training program is to provide a functional awareness of the cultural dynamic present in intercultural relations and assist participants in becoming more effective in cross-cultural situations."

(Pusch, 1981)

As with any form of training, cross-cultural training to be effective must meet its intended objectives, include some measure of this attainment, must actively involve the adult learner and should be based on a model or theory of culture that is linked to the objectives. The critical factors in meeting these requirements are effective trainers, good design and suitable resources.

3.3.1 Cross-cultural trainer competence

"Trainers need to have a natural charisma and a human concern for the participants which is immediately apparent to all. They are most generally called Facilitators, indicating their role is to facilitate learning, not to pose as learned scholars who present their vast knowledge in eloquent lectures. The trainer functions more in the role of coach or guide than as leader."

(Kohls, 1994)

"Fundamentally, intercultural trainers are concerned with human relations. Their goal is to promote more effective intercultural interaction between persons and groups by making learners aware of the impact of culture on their lives."

(Paige, 1993)

The most effective trainers in any field possess

"a broad range and flexibility of behaviours - what can convincingly and naturally be done in the communication context - a heightened sensitivity to and awareness of the effects of the trainer's behaviour on the individual learner's experience, and the cohesive organisation of subject material so that...it makes sense and is made relevant"

(Burns, 1996).

The field of cross-cultural training adds some complex dimensions to these characteristics.

"Not only does the trainer impart the 'who, what, when and where' of survival abroad, the competencies in 'how' to be effective and the 'whys' of the cultural environment, but must also attempt to establish in the participants the confidence to take risks, the motivation to develop as a person, the curiosity to dig deeper, and the tolerance of ambiguity to stay sane."

(Bennett, 1986)

While this report does not distinguish between the terms "training" and "education", cross-cultural training has a deeper educative role because of the pervasiveness of culture in all human interaction. In addition to generic trainer competencies, cross-cultural trainers face unique challenges. While all trainers need to be sensitive to the needs of learners, cross-cultural trainers must be able to deal with the intensity of emotions that dealing with cultural differences can arouse in participants, including frustration, defensiveness or anger. Participants are typically faced with information and situations which may

challenge their sense of cultural identity and personal beliefs. The trainer must help participants to understand and recognise other ways of seeing without sacrificing their own integrity, to function effectively in situations demanding accommodation of two or more cultural frames of reference.

Cross-cultural trainers often fulfil other roles, acting as consultants or advisors, curriculum specialists and assessors. They are likely to have had overseas experience or experience of immersion in another culture within a multicultural society, to have qualifications in a related discipline such as linguistics, the humanities or psychology and to have a diverse cultural heritage and cross-cultural relationships. An international survey of 230 “interculturalists” reported that 66% were women, 79% were over the age of 35, over 85% had worked in another field and the majority worked independently (SIETAR, 2004).

Paige (1993) categorises trainer competencies under Cognitive Knowledge, Behavioural Skills and Personal Attributes, stating that no one, no matter how experienced in cross-cultural training, will possess all of these competencies. Paige’s trainer competencies are summarised in some detail below to illustrate the range of factors and issues that will need to be considered at the conclusion of this research project when formulating recommendations for the professional development of the cross cultural training field.

Cognitive Domain

- Knowledge of Intercultural Phenomena
Intercultural effectiveness and competence, adjustment, culture shock, learning about cultures and the psychological and social dynamics of intercultural experience.
- Knowledge of Intercultural Training
Training program assumptions, philosophy, foundations. planning principles, needs analysis, design, pedagogy, evaluation, logistics, key training variables, audience diversity and a realistic understanding of what training can accomplish.
- Trainer-Learner Issues
The social-psychological dynamics of the relationship, nature and sources of learner resistance and reactions, major learner concerns: threat to identity, assimilation issues.
- Ethical Issues in Training
Appropriate management of risks of self-disclosure, failure, faced by learners. Proper handling of transformation, creating supportive rather than destructive learning environment. Trainer is a lifelong learner committed to own and others’ professional development, shares knowledge and skills and is openly self-reflective and critical.
- Culture-Specific Content
Social, cultural, religious factors of target cultures. Situational factors in target culture: host-newcomer expectations and aspirations, openness to outsiders, inter-country relations, predominant values, attitudes and behaviours.
- Trainer Issues
Role of trainer in the learning process. Pressures faced by trainers and methods for coping with them. Recognition of own strengths and limitations as a trainer.
- Multicultural Issues
Cultural pluralism and diversity in the workplace and society. Nature and impact of racism, sexism, prejudice, discrimination. History of oppression and discrimination of trainee group. Psychology of cultural marginality and multiculturalism.

Behavioural Domain

- Intercultural Phenomena
Capacity to promote learner acquisition of skills, knowledge and personal qualities relevant to intercultural experience, to induce a cultural-adjustment experience and provide a culture-general conceptual framework to assist learners cope. Capacity to present theories and concepts: culture shock, intercultural communication, intercultural competence.
- Intercultural Training
Ability to articulate a clear theory and philosophy and statement of central training-program assumptions, to make appropriate claims for what training can and cannot accomplish, to design, implement and evaluate integrated programs with appropriate mix and sequencing of experiential and didactic methods and learning activities.
- Ethical Issues
Capacity to incorporate ethical standards into training.
- Culture-Specific Content
Capacity to obtain appropriate information and resources, to assess situational factors affecting participants and to provide instruction on target culture.
- Trainer Issues
Capacity to articulate, model and orient learners to a clear philosophy of the trainer's role and to serve as a resource. Ability to handle the stress and pressures of training. Ability to conduct training in one's areas of strength and to use skilled trainers for activities where one's skills are limited.
- Multicultural Issues
Capacity to provide instruction about cultural pluralism, diversity, cultural interaction, racism, sexism, prejudice and discrimination, the history of oppression, discrimination and intergroup relations of groups being trained, to provide supportive social and psychological mechanisms for dealing with cultural marginality and multiculturalism.

Personal Attributes

- Tolerance of ambiguity
- Cognitive and behavioural flexibility
- Personal self-awareness and strong self-identity
- Cultural self-awareness
- Patience
- Enthusiasm and commitment
- Interpersonal sensitivity
- Tolerance of differences
- Openness to new experiences and people who are different
- Empathy
- Sense of humility
- Sense of humour

Kohls (1994) recommends that trainers whose focus is on living and working in another country need to have had first hand experience of the target country and fundamental knowledge of the values and assumptions of both the target country and the home country of the participants. They should also have experienced culture shock, have a positive regard for the target country and be as interested in the informational content of their programs as they are in the learning process.

Peterson (2004) summarises the qualities needed in a cross-cultural trainer as overseas experience, academic qualifications, business savvy and education and coaching skills.

From this summary the complexity of cross-cultural trainer competency is clear. Given the potentially transformative nature of cross-cultural training, the nature, skills and role of the trainer is arguably more critical to the success of such training than it is for most other forms of training. This assertion is borne out by numerous comments made during industry consultations during this stage of the project regarding the positive or negative impacts of individual trainers' approaches, knowledge, personalities and skill on the program outcomes.

While many of the competencies described above may have been acquired through broad experience and many of the personal attributes may be innate, the effectiveness of cross-cultural trainers does depend on many field-specific features as described above and a commitment to lifelong learning and professional development. For example, in the Society for Intercultural Education Training and Research (SIETAR) study, 64% had attended a professional program and 48% had a qualification in intercultural or international studies (Berardo, 2004).

3.3.2 Training Program Design

Effective cross-cultural training program design begins with the recognition of adult learning principles, particularly those relating to participants understanding the reasons for learning, being involved in their own learning and being protected from surprises, embarrassment or confusion. Adhering to these principles presents specific challenges when the methodology includes simulations, role plays and training games designed to illustrate the experience of dealing with cultural differences.

Some of the basic criteria for effective program design as reported in the literature are that it should be:

- of adequate duration to meet its objectives
- provided in a timely manner relative to the participant's needs
- tailored to the participants (Graf, 2004).

As discussed above, time constraints are a major concern in the CCT field, with many training providers taking care to establish the limitations of a short program.

Illustrating the close relationship between trainer competencies and program design and delivery, Paige (1993) categorises the consequences of inadequate trainer competence, listing tendencies relating to inabilities in any area. For example, a trainer with an inability to conceptualise learning outcomes will tend to emphasise cognitive learning rather than behavioural or experiential learning. An inability to conceptualise appropriate content tends to result in an over-emphasis on learning facts rather than the process of learning how to learn about cultures. A failure to properly consider the learners can result in the use of inappropriate content and processes and a tendency to underestimate the risks that training activities pose for learners.

Although no one study has been able to determine which method of CCT is most effective or which methods are most effective for particular situations, the literature points to the superiority of the experiential approach over the didactic approach. The lecture or didactic approach is adequate if the only objective is to transmit surface knowledge of the subject. Designing structured experiences and carefully instrumented exercises, paying close attention to the sequencing and mix of activities and allowing learners time to process their experiences in groups are all critical to the success of experiential training. While the didactic, or traditional, trainer's focus on content may serve to allay some of the adult learners' fears, it appears less likely to result in any significant "movement" by the learners in terms of transforming their views of the world.

Another content and process design consideration relates to the relative merits of culture specific versus culture general training. If training is too culture specific participants may feel they are more prepared than they actually are, as the development of self-awareness and intra/interpersonal skills tends to be sacrificed in favour of content such as country information, case studies and culture assimilators (written exercises requiring participants to select from multiple responses to given situations in the host culture.) Culture specific knowledge also has limited transferability to other contexts.

If training is too general, with the objective of developing self-awareness and flexibility in responding to cross-cultural situations in a wide range of contexts, participants may resist because the interactive nature of the program is more threatening and participants may not see the relevance to their specific experiences or anticipated encounters. This implies that effective design, based on an understanding of the participants and the organisation's objectives, should involve balance between the available approaches.

3.3.3 Cross Cultural Training Tools and Resources

The resources available for CCT range from training games to psychometric cultural competence and adaptability assessments, from extensively researched models of culture to personal anecdotes.

The main tools used by cross-cultural trainers in order of frequency of use, as reported in a recent international study (SIETAR 2004), are:

- Models for understanding culture and cultural dynamics
- Case studies
- Exercises and activities
- Simulations and role plays
- Training games
- Profiles (country and culture)
- Checklists and tip sheets
- Assessments of intercultural competence/readiness
- Intensive group sessions.

Other resources and tools include field trips, language training, contact with members of the host culture, storytelling, dance, art, music, journals and the literature of the culture.

The SIETAR (2004) survey reported that 97% of respondents felt that models, simulations, case studies and exercises were effective, while 25% felt that assessments, checklists and profiles were ineffective. The same survey reported strong demand for new resources to be developed in a number of areas, particularly in conflict resolution, working in multicultural settings, the business case and the role of culture in power, politics and influence.

Anecdotal evidence from Australian and overseas trainers, reinforced by participant comments in the Stage 2 training evaluation survey, points to the importance of the facilitator's skills and presentation over and above the quality or extent of the training resources. Two trainers deploying similar resources, designs and strategies are unlikely to achieve identical results, just as the results of deploying these resources by a single trainer with several groups will vary depending on the composition, dynamic and motivation of the groups. "Tried and true" exercises don't always work.

3.4.4 Measuring the Effectiveness of Cross-Cultural Training

If cultural competence is seen as comprising knowledge, motivation and skills (or knowledge, conviction and capacity for action), then the effectiveness of CCT should be measured against these elements of competency. Effective cross-cultural training will therefore be that which increase participants'

knowledge, encourages them to see the personal and organisational benefits of cultural diversity and cultural competence and increases their skills and capacities.

A practical end result for the workplace would be that during an exchange with a colleague or client, participants would be able to:

- recognise any differences arising out of cultural background
- understand their possible impact on the interaction
- negotiate the differences so as to achieve a positive outcome.

In the review discussed above, Bennett and colleagues suggested that a higher degree of ethno relativism among employees would result in the following benefits:

- Less stress
- More satisfaction with living/working in a foreign culture
- Greater job accomplishment in culturally diverse environments
- Lower levels of prejudice and discrimination
- Less resistance to diversity initiatives (Hammer et al, 2003)

Black and Mendenhall (1990) reviewed 29 research papers examining the effectiveness of cross cultural training (positive, non-significant or negative) on three dependent variables: cross-cultural skills development, adjustment and performance.

Cross-cultural skills development was defined as skills related to the maintenance of the self (eg mental health, confidence); skills related to the fostering of relationships with host nationals; and cognitive skills that promote “a correct” perception of the host environment. All ten of the studies that looked at self maintenance found a positive correlation between training and the development of cross-cultural skills. All 19 studies that focused on the development of relationship building skills found a positive correlation between this and CCT, including one longitudinal study that found the relationship to persist over time. All 16 studies that focused on perceptions of other cultures found a positive correlation between this and CCT. A caveat with some of the studies reviewed is that they used self report methods.

Adjustment was defined as developing familiarity, comfort and proficiency in a new culture. Nine studies that focused on adjustment processes showed a positive correlation between adjustment and CCT.

Performance was defined as producing expected outcomes. Of the 15 studies that examined the link between CCT and performance, 11 showed a positive correlation. Four studies indicated a non-significant correlation. No studies found a negative correlation.

The authors raise the question as to **why** CCT is effective and suggest a further competence which is the individual’s motivation to learn and transfer that learning into action.

While Kealey (1996) wrote; “The field of cross-cultural research and training is... in the uncomfortable position of having a product which is acutely needed but still of unproven efficacy”, Bawhuk and Brislin (2000) reviewed field studies evaluating cross-cultural training programs in which participants reported positive feelings about the training received, improvement in their interpersonal relationships, changes in their perception of host nationals, reduction in their experience of culture shock and improvement in their performance on the job

There have been several studies to evaluate the effectiveness of CCT over the last 20 years, most of which found positive results occurring in the areas of knowledge, behaviour, attitude, adjustment, performance and trainee satisfaction. An overview of 29 research papers examining the effectiveness of CCT reported positive correlations between the CCT and participants’ confidence, performance, ability to develop relationships and to adjust to foreign cultures (Black et al 1990).

Several reviews indicate that CCT seems to be effective in enhancing knowledge and satisfaction but much less effective in changing behaviour and attitudes and improving adjustment and performance. Others dispute such findings. One group of reviewers concluded that “CCT is only occasionally effective in changing participants’ behaviour, perhaps because such change is difficult to facilitate via training ...or that it is difficult to measure such change when it does occur.” (Kohls, 1994)

A study of the results of CCT in cross-cultural work groups found that it helped the members understand and respect their cultural differences, develop a common working language, set agreed goals and choose the best leader (Martin and Nakayama 2004). Adler (1997) reports research by Kovach that cross-cultural teams are less effective than single-culture teams unless their cultural diversity is well-managed, in which case they are comparatively far more effective. A review of field studies of CCT found that individuals and organisations reported positive feelings about the training, improvements in interpersonal relationships, changes in their perceptions of others, reduction in experience of culture shock and improvement in job performance (Bhawuk and Brislin 2000).

Recommendations for future research included longitudinal studies, different measure methods, clarity and precision in specifying independent variables, appropriate sample sizes and careful avoidance of bias. Quantitative studies having proven inconclusive, researchers recommended a stronger emphasis on qualitative data and a study of participants at various points in their development of cultural competence.

This study has combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to analyse the perceptions and experiences of client organisations and individual participants. The study has also taken a longitudinal approach, reviewing organisational practice over a 5 year period and trainee evaluations several months after their training.