



# Working with Newcomers

Tips for culturally-diverse  
Canadian organizations

FACILITATOR GUIDE



**Alberta Workforce Essential Skills**

*Skilled people. Safe, profitable workplaces.*

## Working with Newcomers: Tips for culturally-diverse Canadian organizations

- Participant Workbook
- Facilitator Guide
- Companion Resource Guide

Working with Newcomers: Tips for Culturally-Diverse Canadian Organizations is a set of three resources designed to help culturally and linguistically diverse organizations function better. The resource aims to increase an organization's capacity in assisting newcomers with integration. It provides solutions to the most common challenges, and gives understanding to harness opportunities.

This resource will contribute to an increase in quality, productivity and employee satisfaction through:

- fewer misunderstandings
- less workplace friction
- more efficient use of time

To request a workshop, to download the PDF versions, or to order copies of the manuals, please visit the AWES website: [www.awes.ca](http://www.awes.ca)

### Participant Workbook and Facilitator Guide

The Participant Workbook is for participants in a workshop, and it can be supported with the information in the Companion Resource Guide. The Facilitator Guide accompanies both resources as a support for trainers using the materials.

### Companion Resource Guide

This guide can be used together with the Participant Workbook and the Facilitator Guide for face-to-face training in workshops. In addition to supporting the workshops, this guide can also be used for organizations with limited opportunities for training.

## Acknowledgments

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Alberta Workforce Essential Skills (AWES) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building a competent, adaptable and innovative workforce through workplace essential skills initiatives.

# Working with Newcomers

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# Part 1

## Tip Sheets for Working with Newcomers

### Lesson overview

The activities in lesson 1 are designed to open participants to the reality of cultural and linguistic differences through new insights and group discussions. The lesson familiarizes participants with the four “tip sheets” from part 1 of the companion guide. These four tip sheets clearly introduce core skills and attitudes for working effectively in a context of cultural and linguistic diversity.

### Participants

The materials are designed for management teams in a workshop made up of mostly native-born Canadians, or teams that include significant numbers of newcomers in the workshop. When preparing for the workshop, read the key to part 1, found on the next page. This short introduction to the “Developmental Model for Intercultural Sensitivity” will enable you to better gauge where participants are at in their attitudes to difference in the workplace. This will enable you to respond better to questions and issues raised in the workshop.

### Lesson objectives

At the end of part 1, the participants will be able to:

- draw on a user-friendly framework of tip sheets to engage and understand cultural and linguistic differences better at work
- act with a more sophisticated understanding of how cultural differences affect building trust, credibility and rapport among team members
- apply strategies to distribute the four tip sheets within their diverse workplaces

### Pre-activity suggestions for facilitators

As a content-expert or experienced facilitator you will likely have your own approach for engaging participants in the first few moments of the workshop. If not, before launching into the activities in part 1, a good personal story or an anecdote is a way to start. It should support the reality of cultural differences, and easily demonstrate the usefulness of learning to work more effectively with linguistic and cultural differences in the workplace.



### Training space

Large enough to spread out for group work and role plays

### Total activity time

About 90 minutes

### Materials

Flip chart paper and markers

Whiteboard, eraser and dry erase markers (if available)

Tape

## Key to part 1

Be aware that participants are likely at various stages of intercultural development, based on the “Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity.” Each activity, in each lesson, focuses on at least one of the five stages of the DMIS. The activities are designed to nudge a participant towards newer stages in their approaches to cultural differences, although the time associated with this development varies.

Do a Google search for The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI): An Approach for Assessing and Building Intercultural Competence. A good understanding of the DMIS will enable you to respond better to participants. If you are able to tie a question or statement to a corresponding stage, as you are thinking about your response, it will be more constructive.

For example, a statement such as “Why don’t immigrants make the effort to learn English before they come here?” might be originating from a defensive position, from one bad experience. A response highlighting further differences will only aggravate the participant’s feelings. It would be better to get the participant to imagine a reversal of roles, such as the difficulty involved in preparing in Canada to learn and use Arabic for work in Yemen, for example. This focuses on similarities i.e. the common experience of anyone trying to learn a language without immersion or good resources.

Alternatively, a question such as “Isn’t the key to all of this just acting professionally at work?” requires a focus on differences, not similarities. The participant is minimizing differences, which indirectly imposes their norms on someone else, without realizing they have set of norms. No universal work culture exists, even from company to company in one province. A good understanding of the DMIS will help you to support participants where they are at, or quickly defuse any tense moments in a workshop.

In an diverse urban workplace in Canada, assessments suggest the majority in a workshop are often at “minimization” stage, although this should never be taken for granted. As mentioned, an updated version of the DMIS can be found in a Google search for The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI): An Approach for Assessing and Building Intercultural Competence. Older versions of the DMIS had six stages. A facilitator is encouraged to gain a good proficiency in the model to work with newcomer integration issues effectively. A preview of the DMIS stages can be found below.

## Development model of intercultural sensitivity

<b>Denial</b>	<b>Defense</b>	<b>Minimization</b>	<b>Acceptance</b>	<b>Adaptation</b>
Comfortable with the familiar. Disinterest or avoidance of cultures, even unaware.	Strong commitment to own worldview and distrust of other cultural behaviours or ideas. Polarize “us” and “them”, or even see them as a threat.	Recognize but minimize difference by overemphasizing similarities, which projects that culture onto other people’s experience, even reinforcing privilege.	Recognize and respect alternative cultural behaviours. You are aware of own culture as only one way of seeing and being in the world.	Able to take the perspective of another culture to understand or evaluate situations. Able to adapt your behaviours accordingly.
<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Stage 3</b>	<b>Stage 4</b>	<b>Stage 5</b>
Developmental task is to recognize differences.	Developmental task is to see our common humanity, despite differences.	Developmental task is to grow in cultural self-awareness.	Developmental task is to develop deeper and more sophisticated cultural lenses.	Developmental task is to enhance ability to “behaviour shift” to the cultural context.

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## Activity 1 Finding Common Roots

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**Total activity time**  
Discussion 15 minutes  
Debrief 5 minutes

During activity 1, participants build a platform of similarities in the experience of being Canadian by reflecting on heritage and ancestry, through the medium of hockey.

### Objectives

- The purpose of activity 1 is to build a departure base of core similarities between participants which will make discussing differences easier in activities 2 and 3. Working with cultural and linguistic difference can cause degrees of anxiety in some participants for various reasons, such as the imperative to make personal adjustments, the avoidance of uncertainty, wrestling through new complex knowledge, a desire to keep status quo, or in a worst case scenario, the implications to stereotypes.
- The questions also set the stage for discussions about family trees and lineage in activity 2, which begin to unpack culturally-defined ways of building credibility, rapport and trust at work.
- Aim for participants to recognize that the diverse backgrounds of our ancestry pool define Canada. Diversity is in our DNA. Diverse heritage is our common thread. It has continued since the first Europeans had families with the First Nation peoples centuries ago. It is our unique contribution to the world.
- Activity 1 questions may also open up further workshop discussions on immigration and language learning. If this occurs, it is worth going to the FAQs in part 2 of the companion guide. The first two sections – “Making sense of immigration” and “Using English” – may provide answers to any difficult questions participants may want to resolve before moving on.
- On the DMIS scale, activity 1 addresses the Denial and Defense stages. This does not imply that any participants are at stage 1 or 2. However, the intentional developmental progression of activities and lessons is intended to open up discussion at all DMIS stages.

### Instructions

1. Divide the participants into groups of two or three.
2. Ask them to choose a group member to chair their discussions and keep them on track. The person should also take notes in order to share with the other groups later.
3. Ask them to read the short article independently first, and then to answer the questions as a group. Steer the discussions towards ancestry, and commonalities, versus hockey.
4. After about 10 minutes, debrief all groups together.

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## Activity 2 Important Similarities, Significant Differences

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**Total activity time**

Discussion 20 minutes

Debrief 20 minutes

During activity 2, participants explore the idea of cultural difference by comparing how lineage is used in human relationships, and by contrasting how credibility, rapport and trust are built in the workplace.

### Objectives

- The purpose is to move from thinking of similarities to differences and their influences on how people build credibility, rapport and trust at work. When debriefing in the workshop, use the key to activity 2, found on the next page. The chart will help you better explain the answers to question 3 – how credibility, rapport and trust can be culturally defined.
- The activity questions may also open up further workshop discussions on immigration and language learning. If this occurs, it is worth going to the FAQs in part 2 of the companion guide. The last section – “Working Together on a Culturally-Diverse Team” – may provide answers to any difficult questions from the participants.
- On the DMIS scale, activity 2 addresses the Minimization stage. This does not imply that any participants are at stage 3. However, the intentional developmental progression of activities and lessons is intended to open up discussion at all DMIS stages.

### Instructions

1. Divide the participants into groups of two or three.
2. Ask them to choose a group member to chair their discussions and keep them on track. The person should also take notes in order to share with the other groups later.
3. Ask them to read the short article independently first, and then to answer the questions as a group.
4. Put up sheets of poster paper, or use the whiteboard, with three separate sections, one titled TRUST, another CREDIBILITY, and the last RAPPORT. Get the groups to move around the room and write up their answers to question 2.
5. After about 10 minutes, debrief all groups together. Go through each question. For questions 2 and 3, you can use examples in the chart on the next page to help raise awareness in participants of how culture affects behaviours we assume everyone interprets the same way.

## Key to activity 2

### Using the tree metaphor

The key to communicating the concepts in activity 2 lies in a good metaphor, such as a tree and its roots. The image highlights the workplace reality that there are elements of culture that are easy to see and other aspects that are hidden. The tree metaphor can be viewed as three related parts to raise awareness of cultural differences and similarities:

- **Branches, leaves and fruits** – The participant answers to question 1 should be linked to the elements of culture that are easily seen such as sports, food, fashion, traditional dress, heroes, celebrities, holidays, books, symbols, architecture, religion, rituals, educational institutions, and economic and political systems. These are represented by the branches, leaves and fruits of the tree. When people think of culture, they typically start with this easily observed dimension.
- **Trunk** – Explain to participants that people generally share a common desire to build trust, credibility and rapport at work. This is represented by the trunk of the tree.
- **Roots** – The participant answers to question 2 and 3 should be tied to the elements of culture that belong to the hidden dimension – the “unwritten rules” of a culture. The chart on the following page, “Comparing Cultural Ways of Building Trust Credibility and Rapport,” provides some good examples for explaining how people differ in the ways they build trust credibility and rapport at work.



#### **What is seen (observable dimension)**

Sports, food, fashion, traditional dress, heroes, celebrities, holidays, books, symbols, architecture, religion, rituals, educational institutions, economic and political systems, etc.

#### **What is common (universal dimension)**

The shared desire to build trust, credibility and rapport at work.

#### **What is unwritten (hidden dimension)**

How people build trust, credibility and rapport using gesture and touch, space and time, communication and ways of belonging, hierarchy, etc.

## **Comparing cultural ways of building trust, credibility and rapport**

The chart below gives examples to use with participants for answers to question 3 in activity 2. Trust, credibility, and rapport form a very basic introductory lens for thinking about how culture is both present and invisible at work. By giving equally valid, yet contradictory examples, the chart can show participants just how effective culture is at hiding, even from its own people. Participants in workshops regularly bring up the six examples below, although discussions need not be limited to these.

Much of the focus at work is on building trust, credibility and rapport. These are culturally defined behaviours. Both native-born Canadians and newcomers easily overlook this, instead of identifying the differences and then making the necessary adaptations. This is a learned skill in observation and, at times, in value adjustment. It can be true not only for moving into a new country, but also for moving locally into a new company culture, a new occupation, or even a new part of Canada. Think of moving from Alberta to Montreal to Newfoundland to Nunavut. What usually makes the move from one national culture to another more complex is the degree of cultural distance. The cultural distance from Canada to the US is potentially less than from Canada to China or to Somalia, for example. This is not even taking language distance into account.

As a simple example, when building rapport in Alberta, a firm handshake is generally expected, especially for first introductions. In other countries that is considered aggressive. In other parts of the world, men and women don't shake hands. It seems a small thing, but it can make first meetings awkward, or even erode trust at the start. At a more complex level, establishing credibility and trust in a team typically requires give and take in order to reach a consensus. From another cultural perspective, taking a hard stance on issues generates respect from clients and colleagues. Consensus implies weakness and incompetence. Many people assume there is a universal workplace culture. They presume that acting "professionally" is the same worldwide. Trust, credibility and rapport are indispensable in the workplace. Yet, each person needs to understand how these are built and maintained in a culturally and linguistically diverse workplace. Take a look at the chart below.

## Comparing cultural ways of building trust, credibility and rapport

<b>Trust</b>	
Ask when you don't understand. The only dumb question is the one you don't ask. Learn from mistakes.	Alternative cultural view: Watch and listen when you don't understand. Withdraw. Keep quiet. By stepping back the answer will appear. Don't ask, or you will "lose face." It is better to die than to lose face. People always remember your mistakes.
Be on time.	Alternative cultural view: Time bends to the needs of people. Nurture the quality of your human relations. Complete human transactions before job tasks. Human relationships are carried through life, not workplace projects.
<b>Credibility</b>	
Take the initiative.	Alternative cultural view: Wait for your supervisor to tell you what to do. He knows the big picture and what is best for you. It is his job to look after you. It is your job to listen to him.
Respect is earned.	Alternative cultural view: Respect is ascribed. It should always be given when age, gender, education or experience are involved.
<b>Rapport</b>	
Make eye contact when talking to people.	Alternative cultural view: It is disrespectful to make eye contact with those you don't know, who are senior, or are of the opposite gender.
Respect personal space.	Alternative cultural view: Touch people on the shoulder or arm as you talk to show you are listening or to build rapport.

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## Activity 3 Using the Four Tip Sheets

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**Total activity time**

Discussion 15 minutes

Debrief 15 minutes

During activity 3, participants will examine the four tip sheets. They will think about what tips are most relevant to them. They will also discuss how the tip sheets could be used and/or disseminated in their organization to increase capacity to work with difference.

### Objectives

- The purpose is to move from recognizing the effect of culture on behaviours to reviewing better personal strategies to work effectively with cultural and linguistic difference at work.
- Participants are also encouraged to begin planning ways to use the tips sheets in their teams and workplaces. As part of management teams, they are responsible for helping close knowledge and skill gaps in their workplaces.
- Familiarizing participants with the tips sheets sets the stage for lesson 2, in which they will act out and then debrief a role play. The tips sheets (part 1 of the companion guide) and the FAQs (part 2) will be the sources they use to unpack the role play.
- On the DMIS scale, activity 3 introduces participants to addresses the stages of Acceptance and Adaptation. This does not imply that any participants are at stages 4 or 5. However, the intentional developmental progression of activities and lessons is intended to open up discussion at all DMIS stages.

### Instructions

- Divide the participants into groups of two or three.
- Assign each group two tip sheets, either grouping A or grouping B.
- Grouping A – “Bridging Communication Gaps” and “Practicing Cultural Intelligence”, or...
- Grouping B – “Bridging Cultural Gaps” and “Making Sense of Immigration.”
- Ask them to read the tips independently first, and then to engage the questions as a group.
- They should choose a group member to chair their discussions and keep them on track. The person should also take notes in order to share with the other groups later.
- After about 15 minutes, debrief all groups together.

## Part 2

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# Frequently Asked Questions

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### Lesson overview

The activities in part 2 are designed to familiarize participants with the frequently asked questions from part 2 of the companion guide. The FAQs give insights into the motivations and reasons that underpin certain culturally and linguistically diverse behaviours at work. Whereas part 1 opened participants to the reality of difference, part 2 uses interactive role play to enable participants to interpret alternative intercultural behaviour and communication more accurately.

### Participants

The materials are designed for management teams in a workshop made up of mostly native-born Canadians, or teams that include significant numbers of newcomers in the workshop.

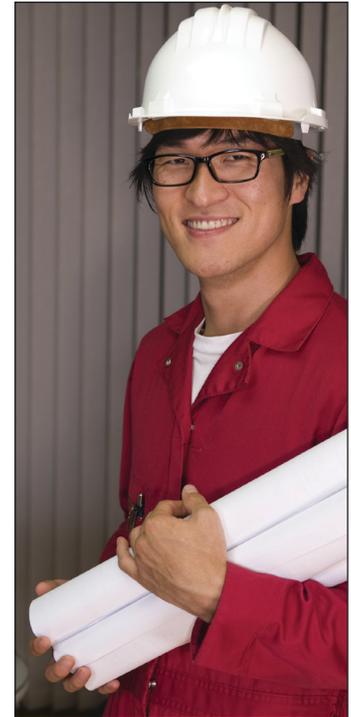
### Lesson objectives

At the end of part 2, the participants will be able to:

- suspend judgement during a cross-cultural encounter to better interpret behaviour and communication
- draw on a user-friendly framework of FAQs to understand and engage the motivations in cultural and linguistic differences at work

### Suggestions for facilitators

Continue to refer to the “Developmental Model for Intercultural Sensitivity” when gauging where participants are in their attitudes to difference in the workplace. This will enable you respond better to questions and issues raised in the workshop.



### Training space

Large enough to spread out for group work and role plays

### Total activity time

About 60 minutes

### Materials

Flip chart paper and markers

Whiteboard, eraser and dry erase markers (if available)

Tape

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## Activity 1 Interpreting Difference

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During activity 1, participants will role play a cross-cultural encounter and debrief the experience.

### Objectives

- The purpose is to move from reviewing better personal strategies to work effectively with difference to practicing those strategies through simulations.
- The aim is to build the ability to suspend judgement and to begin interpreting behaviours. The aim is to adapt personal behaviour so that it is more effective.
- On the DMIS scale, activity 1 addresses the Acceptance and Adaptation stages. This does not imply that any participants are at these stages. However, the intentional developmental progression of activities and lessons is intended to open up discussion at all DMIS stages.

### Instructions

#### Pre-activity

1. Divide the class into two. Send one half of the class outside. Tell them to wait outside, you will be a couple of minutes with the other half. If you know the participants well, select people who are comfortable acting animated and somewhat out-of-character.
2. Ask the half of the class who remain inside to think of the kinds of questions and discussions employees typically have at the coffee station at work. Explain that they are going to meet two new employees while getting a morning coffee. They will need to shake hands, introduce themselves and make some casual conversation while the coffee brews. Get them to talk in groups of three or four for about five minutes to discuss the kinds of questions to ask the new employees.
3. While they are doing this, go to the outside half of participants. Divide them into two groups. Explain to them they are going to be acting one of two cross-cultural types. Explain the coffee station simulation. Tell each group the details of their “type” – the chart for this can be found on the following page.
4. Put them in opposite pairs (a type 1 with a type 2) and get them to practice the coffee meeting in their “types.” They will stay in these pairs when the groups join in the actual role play.
5. Meanwhile, return to the other group inside the training room.

#### Total activity time

About 1 hour:

Pre-activity, 10 min.

First role play, 10 min.

Group discussions and debrief, 20 to 30 min.

Final role play, 10 min.

### First role play

1. Ask the group inside the training room to spread out around the room and take up solo positions at “imaginary” coffee stations in the workplace.
2. Invite the group outside to re-enter the training room and join in their pairs with one of the solo participants. They will introduce each other and chat for about five minutes.

### Group discussions and debrief

1. Get the groups of three to answer the post-activity questions, as well as the brainstorming activity.
2. Then debrief their answers together.

### Final role play

1. Get participants back into their groups of three at the “imaginary” coffee station
2. Ask them to do the activity again, but to adapt their behaviours by responding to the “other cultural type” with exactly the same behaviours as that type.

## Cultural types chart

### Role play

	<b>New Employee Type 1</b>	<b>New Employee Type 2</b>
<b>Handshake</b>	Very strong handshake.	Shakes with both hands.
<b>Personal space</b>	Likes lots of personal space.	Invades personal space. Touches others on arm when talking.
<b>Eye contact</b>	Very strong eye contact.	Avoids strong eye contact.
<b>Communication style</b>	Gives short direct answers.	Gets off topic often. Interrupts often.
<b>Personal disclosure</b>	Avoids sharing personal info.	Very open. Shares lots of personal info on family, life, activities and interests, religion and politics.

## Part 3

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# Strategies for Work Teams

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### Lesson overview

The activities in part 3 move participants from interpreting difference to resolving challenges due to language distance.

### Participants

The materials are designed for participants in a workshop made up of mostly native-born Canadians, or teams that include significant numbers of newcomers in the workshop.

### Lesson objectives

At the end of part 3, the participants will be able to:

- begin adapting their language more, in order to be better understood by non-native speakers when language distance is an issue.
- use a broader range of plain language principles to make adaptations in oral and written communication to be understood more clearly by more people.

### Suggestions for facilitators

Continue to refer to the “Developmental Model for Intercultural Sensitivity” when gauging where participants are in their attitudes to difference in the workplace. This will enable you respond better to questions and issues raised in the workshop.



### Training space

Large enough to spread out for group work and role plays

### Total activity time

About 60 minutes

### Materials

Flip chart paper and markers

Whiteboard, eraser and dry erase markers (if available)

Tape

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## Activity 1 Language and Cultural Distance

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**Total activity time**  
30 minutes

During activity 1, participants explore the challenges and realities of language learning for newcomers.

### Objectives

The purpose is to develop and awareness and empathy in native-speakers of English for the difficulty for newcomers in learning English for work.

### Instructions

1. Divide the participants into nine pairs or nine small groups.
2. Have them answer the multiple-choice questions in those groups.  
The answers are as follows:
  - 1) 7000
  - 2) Mandarin
  - 3) English
  - 4) PNG
  - 5) 4
  - 6) 14
  - 7) 20
  - 8) 250-400
3. Then have them read the short text and answer the three questions that follow.

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## Activity 2 Using Plain Language

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**Total activity time**  
30 minutes

During activity 2, participants will enhance their plain language skills to communicate better in a linguistically diverse workplace. The answer key in the pages that follow is a suggested response. There will be various answers from participants of equal or better quality. The objective is to make time for participants to enhance the skill, versus just practicing it.

### Objectives

- The purpose is to enable participants to recognize where they already practice plain language, and to identify where they can expand that skill.
- The aim is to build the ability to adjust their speaking and writing to their audience to avoid miscommunication, misunderstanding and misattribution.
- Plain language relates implicitly to stages 4 and 5 on the DMIS. The speaker accepts the differences in comprehension skills among an audience and adjusts speaking and writing in order to create an inclusive and effective work culture.

### Instructions

1. Divide the participants into nine pairs or nine small groups.
2. Assign each group one line item number from one to nine e.g. #1 “concrete word choices.”
3. Ask them to work together to identify the words and phrases that need to be put into plain language in the sentence(s).
4. Participants then rewrite the sentences for their group’s one line item e.g. #2 “familiar word choices.”
5. Ask participants to write their plain language translations up on the whiteboard.
6. Ask groups to move around the room and make any effective changes to their translations of their fellow participants.
7. Groups then finish question 10 together (1) sequence ideas logically (2) use markers and (3) eliminate repetition.

## Suggested Answer Key – Activity 2

<b>Use concrete familiar words</b>		
Plain language is not about “dumbing down” English.	Concrete	Plain language is not about over-simplifying English.
It is about simplifying your word choices so that your message is explicit.	Familiar	It is about simplifying your word choices so that your message is clear.

<b>Limit the use of idioms, jargon, colloquialisms, expletives and slang</b>		
It’s not about watering down the message. It is about making sure everyone is on the same page. Plain language principles limit the amount of mental gymnastics a listener has to perform to follow the gist of your speaking.	Idioms	Plain language is not about losing the original meaning in your message. It is about making sure everyone understands everything. Using plain language makes it easier for listeners to follow the main idea of your message.
Without plain language, your use of paralinguistic functions in your oral discourse with other interlocutors is rendered ineffective.	Jargon	Only changing the sound and volume of your voice is not enough. You need to join those changes with plain language.
In any event, plain language does sound “not a bad bit nice.” Or just damn “wicked” as people would say these days.	Colloquialisms Expletives Slang	Plain language sounds better. It is amazing to listen to someone who is really good at using plain language.

<b>Use active, positive language</b>		
Concrete familiar words are a lot more easily processed or brought to mind by coworkers.	Active voice	Listeners process and remember concrete and familiar words more easily.
It is an essential skill when you want to communicate with newcomers with poor levels of English otherwise they will feel excluded.	Positive	Plain language is a very important skill to use with newcomers when their English levels are low. Plain language creates a more inclusive team culture.

<b>Limit complex humour and legalese</b>		
<p>Someone once said a safety supervisor is the only person that can call twenty-pages of guidelines a safety memo. The sarcasm underscores a fact: workplace safety is another arena where plain language can take effect, especially in things like memos and emails.</p>	<p>Complex humor</p>	<p>Plain language is very effective for workplace emails and safety memos. It is a very important skill for safety supervisors to reduce the size of formal safety documents and to make guidelines easier to understand.</p>
<p>Think of the following taken from a safety communiqué as an example of safety legalese: “Eye protection equipment appropriate to the exposure of the sun and in accordance with C.S.A. code Z94.3 shall be worn wherever workers are exposed to the threat of eye injury; as a minimum workers are to wear safety glasses at all times when performing work tasks.”</p>	<p>Legalese</p>	<p>The following eye-safety guideline is an example of safety talk in plain language: “Workers need to wear eye protection equipment, like safety glasses, wherever they are in danger of injuries to their eyes. Eye protection equipment should also protect workers from the harmful effects of working in the sun. As a #1 team rule, workers need to wear safety glasses whenever they are working.</p>

<b>Sequence ideas logically, use markers, and eliminate repetition</b>	
<p>Plain language...</p> <p>Plain language is a very important skill a workplace where some of the employee’s English levels are low. Plain language is not about over-simplifying English and losing the original meaning in your message. Instead, by simplifying your word choices, your message is clearer and everyone understands everything better.</p> <p>First, using plain language makes it easier for listeners to follow the main idea of your message. Listeners process and remember concrete and familiar words more easily. Only changing the sound and volume of your voice is not enough. You need to join those changes with plain language. In fact, it sounds better. It is amazing to listen to someone who is really good at using plain language. In the end, plain language creates a more inclusive team culture.</p> <p>Second, plain language is very effective for workplace emails and safety memos. It is a very important skill for safety supervisors. They need to reduce the size of formal safety documents and to make guidelines easier to understand. The following eye-safety guideline is an example of safety talk in plain language: “Workers need to wear eye protection equipment, like safety glasses, wherever they are in danger of injuries to their eyes. Eye protection equipment should also protect workers from the harmful effects of working in the sun. As a #1 team rule, workers need to wear safety glasses whenever they are working.</p>	<p>Sequence markers Repetition</p>

## Part 4

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# Tips for Management Teams

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### Lesson overview

The activities in part 4 move participants from interpreting difference to resolving challenges due to cultural and/or language distance. Participants use case studies to propose root causes and suggest solutions as more culturally informed managers.

### Participants

The materials are designed for management teams in a workshop made up of mostly native-born Canadians, or teams that include significant numbers of newcomers in the workshop.

### Lesson objectives

At the end of part 4, the participants will be able to draw on the companion guide to get to root issues to resolve cultural and linguistic differences better in their roles as managers.

### Suggestions for facilitators

Continue to refer to the “Developmental Model for Intercultural Sensitivity” when gauging where participants are in their attitudes to difference in the workplace. This will enable you respond better to questions and issues raised in the workshop.



#### Training space

Large enough to spread out for group work and role plays

#### Total activity time

About 90 minutes

#### Materials

Flip chart paper and markers

Whiteboard, eraser and dry erase markers (if available)

Tape

## Activity 1 Case Study: Identifying Causes

**Total activity time**  
30 minutes

During activity 1, participants will analyze a case study in order to apply what they have learned in the workshop.

### Objectives

The purpose is to:

- apply what has been learned in the workshop in order to internalize better strategies for managing performance challenges in their own teams at work
- explore a case study that deals with some of the most common challenges newcomers and their managers experience in integration, namely misunderstanding, miscommunication and misattribution

### Instructions

1. Divide the participants into small groups.
2. Have them read the case study independently.
3. The groups answer activity 1 independently, and then come together to discuss answers.

### Answers

Challenges	Consequences	Causes
<p><b>#1 Misunderstanding</b></p> <p>Not asking for clarification when he doesn't understand.</p>	<p>Limits team efficiency by frequently missing deadlines and not following team procedures.</p>	<p>Cultural concern of "losing face." Limited English, listening skills, and clarification seeking strategies.</p>
<p><b>#2 Miscommunication</b></p> <p>Not adjusting technical language to the listeners.</p> <p>Unclear pronunciation.</p> <p>Ineffective compensation strategies: speaks faster and louder with more jargon.</p> <p>Disorganized messages.</p>	<p>Limits team effectiveness, efficiency and safety.</p>	<p>Limited non-technical English. First language pronunciation patterns limit clear English. Lack of good clarification techniques. Limited English; still uses first language communication style.</p>
<p><b>#3 Misattribution</b></p> <p>Inaccurate understanding of how credibility is built at work.</p>	<p>Limits team confidence and trust in him.</p>	<p>Ascribes credibility to educational achievements and a desire to help others.</p>

## Activity 2 Training and Non-training Solutions for Len

**Total activity time**  
30 minutes

During activity 2, participants use the companion guide and team collaboration to brainstorm solutions to the case study.

### Objectives

The purpose is for participants to recognize that to facilitate integration for newcomers, both training and non-training solutions are usually necessary for the newcomer.

### Instructions

1. Divide the participants into small groups.
2. Have them read the case study independently.
3. The groups answer activity 2 together.

Suggestions for what Len could “Keep-Stop-Start” doing	
<b>KEEP Doing</b>	<p>Technical quality of his work.</p> <p>Friendly and talkative.</p> <p>Participating in company socials, like hockey night.</p> <p>Desire to help others through his skills.</p>
<b>STOP Doing</b>	<p>Pretending he understands.</p> <p>Thinking “I will lose face” when he needs to ask for clarification.</p> <p>Using technical language when plain language would be more effective.</p>
<b>START Doing</b>	<p>Asking for clarification in order to meet deadlines and follow established team procedures.</p> <p>Understanding how credibility is built in his workplace, how face is lost and saved in the Canadian workplace, how to ask questions for clarification to avoid potential mistakes.</p> <p>Setting aside time to learn more English vocabulary for work and improve his grammar.</p> <p>Using more plain language, versus technical jargon.</p> <p>Speaking with clearer pronunciation, especially for cell phone communication.</p> <p>Organizing messages, suggestions and instructions in a clearer, more sequenced and linear way.</p>

Len's non-training solutions	Len's training solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Develop questions and strategies for asking for clarification, by observing how Canadian colleagues do it.</li> <li>9. Write down instructions and other info in a notebook for easy reference and to avoid making repeated errors.</li> <li>10. Work with managers and colleagues to identify technical words that have plain language equivalents. Write them down, refer to them, use them.</li> <li>3. Seek informal feedback and help from trusted and colleagues to improve pronunciation clarity, to speak slower with more pauses, and clearer words.</li> <li>4. Write out the most common suggestions and instructions he has to give to colleagues. Whenever possible, use a pen and paper (notebook) to scribble down main and sub points before communicating, to organize and order thoughts before speaking.</li> <li>12. Have informal talks with team members and managers about how to build credibility at work.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Participate in intercultural workshops open to all employees, if the company is characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity.</li> <li>1. Participate in a customized English in the Workplace course open to all newcomer employees, if the company is characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity.</li> <li>6. Join a Workplace Language Training course, or intercultural course, at an educational institute, outside of work hours. The company might contribute to the tuition fees. This training might be face-to-face, online or blended.</li> <li>7. Match with an experienced workplace mentor who has some understanding of language and cultural challenges for newcomers.</li> <li>8. Provide short, focused, one-on-one coaching with a language/cultural consultant who addresses the critical gaps.</li> <li>11. Download freely available language, cultural and integration resources for self-directed learning, or for working with a mentor/coach.</li> </ol>

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### Activity 3 Training and Non-training Solutions for the Team

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**Total activity time**  
30 minutes

During activity 3, participants use the companion guide and team collaboration to brainstorm solutions to the case study.

#### Objectives

The purpose is for participants to recognize that to facilitate integration for newcomers, training and non-training solutions are usually necessary for managers and teams, especially when there is significant cultural and linguistic diversity..

#### Instructions

1. Divide the participants into small groups.
2. Have them read the case study independently.
3. The groups answer activity one independently, and then come together to discuss answers.

Len’s workplace challenges	Non-training solutions for the team	Training solutions for the team
<p><b>Misunderstanding</b> Not asking for clarification when he doesn’t understand.</p>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>Miscommunication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not adjusting technical language to the listeners.</li> <li>• Unclear pronunciation.</li> <li>• Ineffective clear speech strategies: speaks faster and louder with more jargon when under stress.</li> <li>• Disorganized messages.</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>Misattribution</b> Inaccurate understanding of how credibility is built at work.</p>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>



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