Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks
Centre des niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens

RESOURCES FOR COUNSELLING, HIRING, AND WORKING WITH INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED INDIVIDUALS

WORK READY

Work Ready: CLB Resources for Counselling, Hiring and Working with Internationally Trained Individuals

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Acknowledgements

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

An introduction to Work Ready, the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) and general information for counsellors and human resource professionals

What is Work Ready?

Work Ready: CLB Resources for Counselling, Hiring and Working with Internationally Trained Individuals (ITIs) (also referred to as simply ***Work Ready)*** is a collection of language-based tips and resources for employment counsellors and human resource (HR) professionals, to facilitate the successful employment of internationally trained individuals (ITIs).[1]

Work Ready is divided into five sections:

- Section I contains general information about *Work Ready*, the Canadian Language Benchmarks, language assessment and Essential Skills.
- Section II contains information relevant to counsellors as they work with ITIs in the pre-employment stage.
- Section III contains information for HR professionals and employers on hiring and retaining ITIs.
- Section IV contains case studies of employment-based projects where ITIs have received training to help them work successfully in Canada.
- Section V contains additional resources.

Employment counsellors and human resource professionals are encouraged to read all the sections of the kit, and not just the ones identified as being directly relevant, as there is a wealth of information that applies to both groups in all five sections.

Statistics Canada[2] has identified language as a significant factor in ITIs having difficulty finding employment in Canada. This kit provides resources to help break down the language barrier when counselling, hiring and working with ITIs. The CCLB has tested the kit and the materials with HR personnel, counsellors and employers. We interviewed many ITIs to better understand their employment and language needs. Relevant comments from the ITIs interviewed can be found on the online version of *Work Ready*.

In *Work Ready*, we refer to the Canada Language Benchmarks (CLB) when we talk about the language levels of ITIs and the levels of language needed in, and for, the workplace. Resources related to les Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens can be found on language.ca.

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[1] The term ITI is used extensively in this document; however, terms such as immigrant, second-language learner, internationally educated professional and others are also used on occasion.

[2] Statistics Canada. *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, Progress and Challenges of New Immigrants in the Workforce.* (2003).

Work Ready has been developed by the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB), which supports the use of the Canadian Language Benchmarks—national standards of English as a Second Language (ESL) and French as a Second Language (FSL)—in Canada. CCLB worked with sector councils, employers, training organizations and ITIs to find and develop the resources in this kit.

Do You Know?

- In the 1990s, Canada's population grew by 1.4 million, with 70% of the growth made up of immigrants.[1]

- In 2001, 46% of new immigrants over 15 years of age had university degrees and 14% held other diplomas or trade papers.[2]

- **It can "take up to 10 years fo**r the earnings of university-education **immigrants to catch up to those of their Canadian counterparts."**[3]

- Only 44% of immigrants found jobs within six months of arriving in Canada. Of these:
  60% worked in occupational areas that differed from their pre-immigration occupations.
  52% were looking for another job.[4]

- Between 2000 and 2002, 71% of immigration applicants claimed ability in at least one official language (with 29% having no ability in either language) and 10% of the 71% said they spoke both English and French.[5]

- **Language fluency is one of seven "key determinants for successful integration of immigrants … "**[6]

- The Canadian population grew more rapidly between 2001 and 2006 (+5.4%) than in the previous inter-census period (+4.0%). This acceleration was due to an increase in international migration. Two-thirds of Canada's population growth was attributable to net international migration.[7]

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[1] The Canadian Labour & Business Centre. *Towards Understanding Business, Labour, and Sector Council Needs and Challenges Related to Enhanced Language Training.* (June 2004.)

[2] Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *Facts & Figures 2006: Immigration Overview.*

[3] HRSDC Report. *Knowledge Matters: Skills and Learning for Canadians.* Page 51. www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/cs/sp/collaboratives/9999-000106/knowledge.shtml

[4] *Statistics Canada: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada: Process, Progress, and Prospects.* 89-611-XIE.

[5] S*tatistics Canada: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada: Process, Progress, and Prospects.* 89-611-XIE.

[6] HRSDC Report. *Knowledge Matters: Skills and Learning for Canadians.* Pages 52–53. www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/cs/sp/collaboratives/9999-000106/knowledge.shtml

[7] Statistics Canada. *Population and Dwelling Counts.* The Daily (Tuesday, March 13, 2007).

What is the Canadian Language Benchmarks Standard?

The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) standard is a vital tool to help counsellors and HR professionals understand the language levels of adult ITIs whose first language is neither English nor French. In 1996, a Canadian standard for English as a Second Language was developed; it was called the Canadian Language Benchmarks, and was revised in 2000.[1] The French version was developed later.[2] The CLB standard is used to measure adult **ITIs' language** skills to assist with their education, training and settlement needs.

The CLB 2000 covers four skill areas: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and uses real-life language tasks. There are three stages and twelve levels in the CLB 2000.

The Canadian Language Benchmarks standard:

▪ Indicates language level

▪ Lets everyone use the same words when talking about language skills

▪ Helps employers and HR professionals understand the levels of language needed for success in the workplace

▪ Helps workplace trainers develop relevant workplace training programs

▪ Gives trainers clear information about learners' language skills and needs

▪ Provides colleges and other training programs with information on how well a learner might do in a program

▪ Gives learners information about their language skills and how they meet training or employment requirements

You may find CLB scores used:

▪ On assessment reports

▪ As an entry point for training programs

How will I know what benchmark an ITI is?

The ITI may have been assessed using a tool such as the Canadian Language Benchmark Assessment (CLBA) or the Canadian Language Benchmark Placement Test (CLBPT), and may show you an assessment result form.

The chart on the next page illustrates the three stages and twelve benchmarks that are the foundation of the CLB.

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[1] Find out more about the CLB at www.language.ca.

[2] The French benchmarks are called *les Niveaux des compétence linguistique canadien* or NCLC.

CLB Stages and Benchmarks
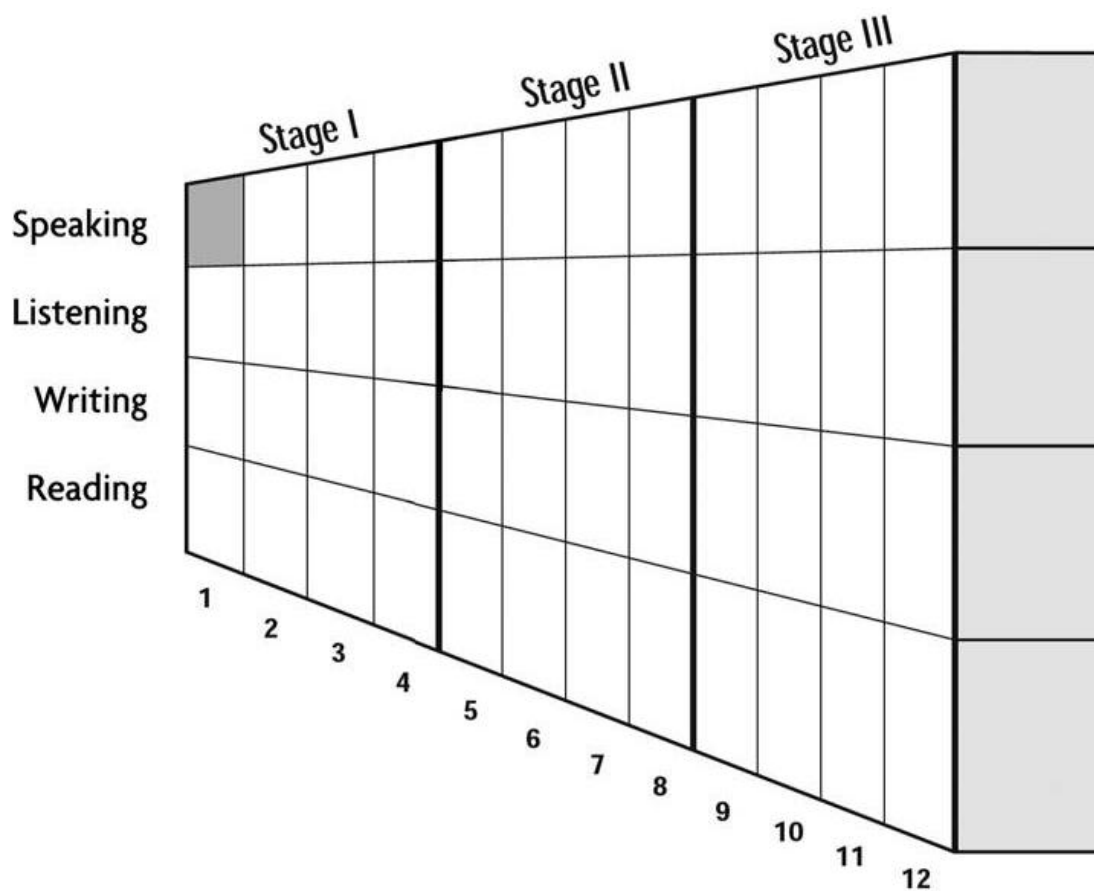
CLB 2000: Chart Overview

The shaded square indicates that a speaker is at CLB level 1 (or CLB 1) in speaking. A newcomer can be CLB 1 in all four skills or may have different levels in each skill.

CLB Competencies and Sample Tasks

The following chart shows what reading and writing tasks an ITI can do at each of the three CLB stages. The chart describes the skill that is being demonstrated, the tasks used to demonstrate competency and how a learner at each of the three stages should be able to address a task.

CLB Competency and Sample Tasks	At Stage I/ Benchmark 1, an ITI can:	At Stage II/ Benchmark 6, an ITI can:	At Stage III/ Benchmark 12, an ITI can:
Competency: *Reading Instructional Texts*	Read very simple, short everyday instructions.	Read short common instructions and instructional texts.	Read extensive, very complex and/or specialized instructions and instructional texts.
Sample Task:	Read one-step instructions in forms (e.g. print, copy, circle, underline, fill in, check, draw).	Explain/give warnings and instructions (e.g. explain chemical product labels on dishwasher detergent containers).	Read selected personnel policy regulations and instructions (e.g. a health and safety manual), and apply the information to a specific situation.
Competency: *Writing and Recording Information*	Copy words and phrases to record short information for personal use.	Reproduce and record simple- to medium-complexity information for various purposes (e.g. take notes, make summaries, and identify main points).	Select and reproduce very complex information from multiple sources in a variety of formats.
Sample Task:	Copy information from a schedule (e.g. name, address, time) into a timesheet.	Take point-form notes from a one-page written text or from a 10–15 minute oral presentation on a practical topic.	Write an article or paper for a public forum, presenting a synthesis or an overview, based on multiple pieces of research or other publications.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Canadian Language Benchmarks Standard

Question: Is the CLB standard equivalent to a grade level?

Answer:

No, the CLB standard is not equivalent to a grade level. It is a standard that describes the communication skills of adult immigrants who have a first language other than English in terms of twelve levels or benchmarks. The CLB uses specific everyday communication tasks to demonstrate a person's language ability. The CLB is a measure of an individual's language proficiency, not intelligence.

Question: Is the CLB standard well researched and documented?

Answer:

The CLB standard is extremely well researched and documented. It is based on a sound theoretical framework. To find out more, read the Theoretical Framework document at language.ca.

Question: Is the CLB standard a curriculum?

Answer:

The CLB standard is not a curriculum; however, the CLB standard can provide a framework for curriculum materials. The steps involved in applying the CLB as a basis for curriculum and course design are outlined in Chapter Six of *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: A Guide to Implementation* (available at language.ca). Using the CLB, curriculum materials have been successfully developed for federally-funded language-training programs as well as for school boards, colleges and private service providers across Canada.

Question: Is the CLB standard a language test?

Answer:

No, the CLB standard is not a language test. It is a framework for describing, measuring and recognizing the language proficiency of adult immigrants who speak a first language other than English. Assessments that test language proficiency against the CLB include the Canadian Language Benchmark Assessment (CLBA) and the Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test (CLBPT).

Question: How does the CLB standard relate to learning levels?

Answer:

The CLB standard provides descriptions of twelve communicative proficiency levels in four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The twelve levels are divided into three stages:

Basic Proficiency (Stage I — CLB Levels 1–4): The ITIs can communicate in common and predictable settings to meet basic language needs and to carry out everyday activities.

Intermediate Proficiency (Stage II — CLB Levels 5–8): The ITIs can participate more fully in social, educational and work-related settings. They can use English more independently in situations that are less familiar and predictable.

Advanced Proficiency (Stage III — CLB Levels 9–12): The ITIs can communicate effectively, appropriately, accurately and fluently in most settings. At this stage, they can demonstrate a sense of audience and can communicate using appropriate style, tone and formality.

Question: How quickly can someone learn English?

Answer:

This depends on the individual. Adult learners progress at different speeds when learning English or other languages. Some factors that may affect language learning progress include:

- Exposure to the new language and the opportunities to practice
- Motivation for learning the language (e.g. for academic or work purposes)
- The teaching method used (e.g. if a lecture method is used, a learner may develop good listening, reading and writing skills but may have poor speaking skills)
- Literacy level in the first language
- Age (i.e. the older the learner, the longer it usually takes to learn a language)

Question: What are Essential Skills?

Answer:

Essential Skills are a set of nine skills that were selected by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) as being closely connected to life and work. The nine skills are: Reading Text, Document Use, Numeracy, Writing, Oral Communication, Thinking Skills, Working with Others, Continuous Learning and Computer Use. Many of the skills have complexity ratings (which are different from CLB levels). The skills are used in Essential Skills Profiles, which describe common job tasks done in specific occupations.

Question: What are the CanDo checklists?

Answer:

CCLB CanDo checklists give a general idea of a learner's English skills at each benchmark. They are meant for the learner's general information only. If a specific benchmark is required for placement, training or other situations, then a formal language assessment should be done by a certified language assessor. The checklists are useful for counsellors to get a general idea of the language tasks that ITIs can do at each benchmark.

Question: What is the purpose of the CLB?

Answer:

The purpose of the CLB is to provide a common standard that:

- Describes the language proficiency of adult ESL learners in Canada
- Provides coordination and consistency in measuring learners' progress in ESL programs throughout Canada
- Recognizes learners' progress in language learning programs throughout Canada
- Assists in developing programs, curriculum and teaching materials for ESL adults
- Allows learners to see where they are in their language learning
- Facilitates movement among ESL programs within and across regions
- Permits greater portability of ESL credentials throughout Canada

Question: Where is the CLB being used?

Answer:

Since the CLB was introduced in 1996, increasing numbers of language training programs have begun applying it when assessing and instructing ESL learners. Existing curricula and classes have been benchmarked and new materials have been developed to assist teachers in applying the CLB. Across Canada, the CLB is used in the following:

- Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs in the Maritime Region, Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan
- All federal/provincial language training programs in British Columbia [English Language Services for Adults (ELSA)] and Manitoba [Manitoba Immigrant Integration Program (MIIP)]
- Several provincially-funded ESL programs in post-secondary and private institutions
- Enhanced Language Training (ELT) programs
- Many Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) teacher-training programs
- Employment and training programs to set standards for access to numerous professional and trade programs
- Colleges and universities to determine the language proficiencies needed for admission
- Over 70 federally-funded national assessment centres

Question: Who developed the CLB standard?

Answer:

The CLB standard was developed by the Government of Canada. In 1993, a National Working Group on Language Benchmarks was set up to guide the design and development of a language proficiency standard. The National Working Group was made up of ESL teachers, learners and academics, along with representatives from federal, provincial and territorial governments.

Language Assessment

This section provides information on where to refer ITIs or employees for a language assessment or to have their educational or training credentials assessed for equivalencies.

Where can a client receive a language assessment?

Assessments may be carried out at assessment centres or through school boards, settlement agencies and colleges depending on the program for which the client is applying. Look on provincial and territorial web sites for a list of assessment centres.

Assessment centres usually use one of the following tools:

- The Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment (CLBA)
- The Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test (CLBPT)
- The Canadian Language Benchmarks Literacy Assessment (CLBLA)

Who qualifies for free language assessments?

Eligibility for free language assessment varies across Canada. Consult your provincial or territorial website for ESL or language assessment information.

Most immigrant service organizations and school boards offering ESL classes can help in finding a Language Assessment Centre or they will carry out the assessment themselves. In some provinces, these are called LINC Assessment Centres. LINC stands for Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada. In BC, the equivalent is English Language Services for Adults (ELSA). In Manitoba, the program is referred to as English as an Additional Language (EAL).

The Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test (CLBPT) can be used to evaluate whether a learner has the required benchmark levels to enter into a bridge-to-employment or workplace-preparation program.

- CLBPT is a streamlined assessment tool that can be used by trained assessors to place adult learners in ESL programs.
- A workplace version of CLBPT that has an employment focus is used for assessing clients for placement into ESL employment preparation programs.

CLBPT can be administered at assessment centres or by trained assessors. A list of fee-for-service providers is available at language.ca.

What is the WLA pre-screening tool?

A new Workplace Language Assessment (WLA) Pre-Screening Tool is available to help counsellors direct clients to appropriate pathways. Contact CCLB to determine if this tool is appropriate for you.

What are the CanDo checklists?

CCLB has developed a series of CanDo checklists, which were originally intended for learners to use as a quick self-assessment of what they can do with language from benchmarks 1–10. These checklists can also help counsellors identify the language competencies of learners at each of these benchmarks. They can help HR professionals identify some of the language requirements of jobs for which they are trying to find employees.

The CanDo checklists can be downloaded free of charge at language.ca.

Literacy and English as a Second Language (ESL)

There is often confusion between literacy and the ability to speak a second language well. Generally, ESL literacy learners are people who are not functionally literate in their own language, for a variety of reasons. An exception may be ITIs who have come from a country with a non-Roman alphabet; they may be literate in their first language but may need literacy support in English. The table below provides some examples of immigrants who may or may not have literacy issues.[1]

The learners may:	Examples:
Be speakers of a language that lacks a written code.	Some people who immigrated to Canada from conflict zones in the late 1970s and early 1980s.
Have had very little education (maybe one or two years) in their home countries. This could be someone who is illiterate but who lives in a literate society.	An individual from an agricultural country who has farmed all his life and has never needed to read and write until coming to Canada.
Have gone to school for up to eight years but with irregular attendance due to family responsibilities, ill health, war, etc. Often these learners lack skills associated with studying.	This could describe an older person who grew up in Europe after the Second World War and reached grade four before quitting school to work. Another example could be a person from a war-torn country who learned to read and write but whose education was continually interrupted by conflict.
Have come from a country with a non-Roman alphabet. They will have difficulties learning to read English, and adjusting to new sounds and structure, but often have developed study skills, which can transfer to a second language situation.	People who come from a country with a non-Roman alphabet may be split into two sub-sections: i) Those who are literate in their own languages but the language uses a non-Roman script, e.g. Russian, Greek, Chinese and Punjabi. These learners can usually learn fairly quickly but need to learn the English writing system. ii) Those who are able to write in their first languages could be anywhere along the literacy continuum.

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[1] Adapted from *Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners.* L. Johansson et al. Note: this publication is available in English and French.

If you believe a client or employee has literacy needs, it may be necessary to consult an experienced, literacy language trainer who will carry out a thorough language and literacy needs assessment.

Literacy and ESL Assessments

Deciding whether an ITI has the language skills for employment is often difficult. There are immigrants who, for a variety of reasons, have few or nonexistent literacy skills.

- The CCLB has developed an assessment for basic literacy, called the Literacy Placement Test (LPT), based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL Literacy Benchmarks.

- Some assessment centres also use the Canadian Language Benchmark Literacy Assessment (CLBLA). Contact your local assessment centre for more information on either the LPT or the CLBLA.

CLB and Essential Skills (ES)

Together, the Canadian Language Benchmarks and Essential Skills support the successful integration of adult newcomers and immigrants into the workforce:

- **Workplace trainers and career counsellors** can use the Canadian Language Benchmarks to understand the language skills needed to perform tasks related to a specific job, and can create appropriate workplace training and development programs

- **Employers, governments and sector councils** can identify and understand the language skills required for success in the workplace

- **Internationally trained individuals** can access Essential Skills resources to see job-specific competencies and requirements, and understand the language levels needed to meet those requirements

The **CLB standard** describes second language proficiency and the ability to communicate in the workplace and in the community. It uses language tasks to demonstrate competencies in listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

HRSDC's **Essential Skills** for the workplace are enabling skills, such as reading and oral communication, which help users participate fully in the workplace and the community. Most of the nine Essential Skills have a scale that describes levels of task complexity.

Essential Skills Profiles describe how specific skills are used in given occupations.

Information on Essential Skills

To find out more about Essential Skills, check the www.itsessential.ca website or search Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's website.

Overview of initial ES/CLB comparisons

Oral Communication:

Essential Skills	CLB SPEAKING	CLB LISTENING
Level 1	CLB 5 & 6	CLB 5, 6 & 7
Level 2	CLB 6, 7 & 8	CLB 7 & 8
Level 3	CLB 9 & 10	CLB 9 & 10
Level 4	CLB 11 & 12	CLB 11 & 12

Reading Text:

Essential Skills	Canadian Language Benchmarks
Level 1	CLB 3, 4 & 5
Level 2	CLB 6
Level 3	CLB 7, 8 & 9
Level 4	CLB 10
Level 5	CLB 11 & 12

Writing:

Essential Skills	Canadian Language Benchmarks
Level 1	CLB 4 & 5
Level 2	CLB 6 & 7
Level 3	CLB 8
Level 4	CLB 9
Level 5	CLB 10, 11, & 12

Document Use:

Essential Skills	Canadian Language Benchmarks
Level 1	CLB 3, 4 & 5
Level 2	CLB 5 & 6
Level 3	CLB 7 & 8
Level 4	CLB 9 & 10
Level 5	CLB 11 & 12

Table: CLB and Essential Skills Fast Facts

Canadian Language Benchmarks	Essential Skills
The CLB standard was developed for people who have English or French as their second (or possibly third or fourth) language.	Essential Skills were developed for people who have English or French as their first language.
The CLB standard describes the speaking, listening, reading and writing language tasks that a person might perform at home, at work or in the community.	Essential Skills describe workplace tasks in terms found in Essential Skills profiles or in the national occupational standards developed by sector councils.
The CLB standard describes specific language tasks separately for speaking and listening.	Essential Skills describe speaking and listening skills as Oral Communication.
The CLB standard describes language task competencies in four skill areas: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The competencies are described over three stages and 12 levels.	Essential Skills have nine skill areas: Reading Text, Document Use, Numeracy, Writing, Oral Communication, Working with Others, Thinking Skills, Computer Use and Continuous Learning. Some Essential Skills have assigned complexity levels to four or five levels (i.e. ES1–ES4/5).
CLB /NCLC are the national standards for English and French proficiency for immigrants in Canada.	Essential Skills are a national standard; they are a framework of skills for life, work and learning.
See *language.ca* for more information on CLB/NCLC.	See *www.itsessential.ca* for more information on Essential Skills.

Some newcomers may have skills that fall below the range of equivalency. See www.itsessential.ca for more information on how to relate CLB to Essential Skills using the Comparative Framework.

Occupational Language Analysis (OLA)

The CCLB has developed a series of Occupational Language Analyses (OLAs). Each OLA provides a description of specific language and occupation-specific tasks based on standardized occupational standards. OLAs are available in English and French.

To find out more about how to use OLAs, watch the OLA Orientation on the *Work Ready* online site. You can also view one of the OLAs from either the online database or from the www.itsessential.ca website in the Language Analyses section.

Twenty OLAs have been developed as of autumn, 2009. The following 14 OLAS, developed for tourism-sector occupations, are available at www.itsessential.ca:

- Bartender
- Cook
- Event Coordinator
- Food and Beverage Server
- Food Service Counter Attendant
- Freshwater Angling Guide
- Golf Club Manager
- Guest Services Attendant
- Hotel Front Desk Agent
- Kitchen Helper
- Line Cook
- Taxicab Driver
- Tour Guide
- Travel Counsellor

The following page shows the first page of an eight-page analysis of the language and Essential Skills required to work as a hotel front desk agent. The complete OLA (and all other OLAs) can be found at www.itsessential.ca.
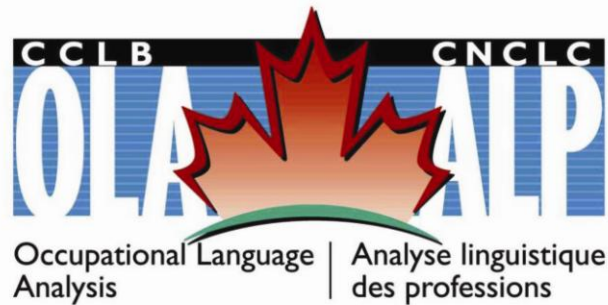
HOTEL FRONT DESK AGENT (NOC # 6435)

Job Definition[1]:

Hotel Front Desk Clerks make room reservations, provide information and services to guests and receive payment for services. Hotel Front Desk Agents typically perform guest functions such as selling rooms; taking, modifying and cancelling reservations; and processing guest arrivals and departures. In addition, Hotel front desk agents are required to manage financial transactions, use technology, communicate well, and oversee areas of guest security and safety. They are employed by hotels, motels and resorts.

Additional Occupational Information[2]:

Hotel front desk agents are at the centre of property operations. They are often the first and last contact with guests; therefore, hotel front desk agents should be outgoing, flexible and able to deal with the public, maintaining their professional composure when resolving problems. They are required to develop guest loyalty by not only meeting but by exceeding guest expectations.

Overview:

This Occupational Language Analysis (OLA) presents Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) competencies and typical listening, speaking, reading and writing tasks performed at a competent level by hotel front desk agents. The tasks are illustrative only, and do not provide a complete sample of what a hotel front desk agent does on the job. Other essential skills such as numeracy and computer skills are beyond the scope of the OLA. The OLA was validated by a panel of people employed in the occupation and by CLB experts. It was developed by CLB experts using three key resources:

- the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000*, Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks and Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- the *National Occupational Standards for Front Desk Agent (2nd Edition)*; Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council
- the *Essential Skills Profile for Hotel Front Desk Clerks (NOC 6435)*, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

For a more complete picture of the competencies that are needed to perform this occupation, refer to the source documents.

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[1] *Essential Skills Profile for Hotel Front Desk Clerks (NOC 6435)*, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, and *National Occupational Standards for the Canadian Tourism Industry: Front Desk Agent (2nd Edition)*
[2] *National Occupational Standards for the Canadian Tourism Industry: Front Desk Agent (2nd Edition)*

WORK READY

SECTION II: INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR COUNSELLORS

Helping ITIs Prepare for Job Interviews

Preparing ITIs for interviews can be challenging. In some countries, job interviews are not usual, so for many newcomers, learning how to respond to interview questions is a new skill that has to be learned. Some of the information that interviewees are typically asked to provide may be considered inappropriate in certain cultures. For example, in some cultures, identifying personality traits or promoting oneself may be seen as impolite, even as bragging. Likewise, identifying a weakness could be seen as *losing face.*

The following is a list of common interview questions, and tips for rephrasing them, when helping ITIs prepare for an interview.

	Question or statement	**What the interviewer wants to hear**	**How the interviewer might rephrase the question**
1a.	Can you tell me your greatest strength?	One good skill or quality and supporting evidence. Note: The word **strength** may cause confusion in this context. Some people find it uncomfortable to talk about themselves in flattering terms for cultural reasons.	Can you tell me your best quality as a worker? How would you describe yourself as an employee? What do you do best at work?
1b.	What are your major weaknesses?	Self-recognition of any problem areas that the applicant may have. Note: Responding to this question may lead to a loss of face.	What do you find most difficult to do at work? Are there any work-related skills that you want to improve?

	Question or statement	What the interviewer wants to hear	How the interviewer might rephrase the question
2.	Why should we hire you?	Why the applicant is special. Characteristics and qualities that the applicant brings to the position. Note: This is a hard question for many people from other cultures because it is not considered polite to talk about themselves in flattering terms or to appear to be providing negative comments about others.	Tell me why I should hire you for this job and not one of the other candidates. What skills or experiences can you bring to this position that other candidates cannot?
3a. 3b.	Are you comfortable: Talking on the telephone? Or Part of the work involves: Talking on the telephone.	That the applicant can carry out that part of the job fairly easily. Note: Some ESL speakers may take this literally and simply answer no. The implied question is sometimes confusing for an ESL speaker.	Are you able to talk easily on the telephone? Do you understand most of what is said on the telephone?
4.	What prompted you to apply for this job?	The reasons for applying for the job. Note: Encourage the applicant to talk about career goals as well as practical circumstances (e.g. the need to support a family).	What interests you about this job? Why does this position interest you? Why do you want to work here?
5.	Where do you see yourself five years from now?	Some sense of duration: permanence and possibly ambition.	What are your future work plans? Are you interested in advancing in this company? What are your long-term ambitions? What kind of position would you eventually like to have?

	Question or statement	What the interviewer wants to hear	How the interviewer might rephrase the question
6.	Tell me about yourself.	Work experience Education Aspirations	Please tell me briefly a little bit about yourself. Can you tell me a few interesting facts about yourself?
7.	Are you a team player?	Whether the applicant prefers to work alone or as part of the group. Note: Being a team player is not a familiar concept in some cultures. Be prepared to rephrase the question. This question needs a strong introduction to set the context for the candidate.	We value people that can work **well with other people** … . In this job, you will be expected to share ideas and work on **projects with others** … . Can you give me some examples of when you worked as part of a _____ (e.g. engineering) team? Do you prefer to work alone or with others?
8.	What qualifications do you have that will help you to be successful in this position?	The strengths and personal traits that indicate that the applicant is right for the job. Note: This is very difficult for some cultures. It is unacceptable to boast. Conversely, individuals from other cultures may not want to lose face so may over-exaggerate abilities.	How will your experience and education help you to be successful in this position? What personal qualities or experience will help you to be successful in this position? What special qualities do you have that will make you successful in this job?
9.	Tell me about your most recent work experience.	Why the applicant has changed jobs or is working in a job unrelated to education or previous work experience. Note: Newcomers may not have had work experience in Canada. It is important to identify what an employer is looking for when asking this question (punctuality, etc.) and to find another way to show the competency required.	Can you tell me about some other jobs that you have had in Canada? What have you learned from other jobs in Canada (that will help you with this position)? Tell me about any work you have done outside Canada.

	Question or statement	What the interviewer wants to hear	How the interviewer might rephrase the question
10.	Do you have references?	Evidence of previous work experience and character references. Note: Newcomers may not have met many people in Canada who can vouch for their work habits; names of teachers, counsellors or others should be accepted. Prospective employees may have a portfolio of achievements highlighting work-related education and experience overseas.	Are you able to give (send) me the names of three people who know of your work abilities (in Canada)? I will need names, telephone numbers and email addresses.
11a.	What is your management style?	How the applicant works with subordinates. How the applicant will fit into the workplace. Note: In many cultures, managers are respected and cannot be criticized. Corporate culture is also very different in many countries and the informal management style of many Canadians is very difficult for newcomers to understand.	Can you tell me how you like to manage a project? A team? What kind of manager works best with you? What qualities should a successful manager have? Can you tell me about someone who is a good supervisor?
11b.	What style of management do you prefer?		
12.	Can you tell me about your hobbies or interests?	How the applicant balances work and home. Note: An ESL speaker may be disturbed by this change in questioning.	What do you like to do when you are not working? Can you describe any special skills or knowledge that you have?
13.	Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty to get a job done.	An understanding of how the applicant will apply him/herself beyond the normal requirements of the job. Note: Idiomatic language may be a problem for some applicants. Be prepared to rephrase the question.	Can you tell me about when you worked extra hard to get a job done? Can you give me an example of how you have shown creativity (or dedication, etc.) in a previous position?

	Question or statement	What the interviewer wants to hear	How the interviewer might rephrase the question
14.	Tell me about a *worst-nightmare* project.	How the applicant handled a very difficult situation. Note: The phrase may need explaining. This scenario may mean a loss of face to the applicant. You may need to break this question into parts.	Can you tell me about the worst problem you have faced at work? Can you tell me about when something went wrong at work and how you fixed it*?*
15.	What do you know about our company?	That the applicant has done some research on the company.	Tell me what you have learned about _____ . Can you describe what you have learned about the industry in Canada?
16.	How have you kept your skills current?	That the applicant is up to date on current trends and knows what is required in Canada. Note: The applicant may have been in a training program, getting settled in Canada or unemployed. However, he or she may have volunteered with an organization, taken a leadership course or found another way to stay current in the field.	How would you find out what is happening in your profession or trade? How did you find out more about your job as a _____ in Canada? As a volunteer/student/co-op student, what skills did you learn that may help you with this position?

In many cases, interviewers will use behavioural or scenario-type questions. These allow the ITIs to explain how they approach specific workplace tasks or to give concrete examples of approaches used in the past. The following three examples are scenarios that could be given to an ITI to practice before an interview.

#1 — Telephone example:

You are a customer service representative and have an angry customer arguing with you on the telephone about a mistake on his bill. How would you solve the problem?

#2 — Medical example:

You are an emergency triage nurse and have three emergency situations at once. One is a four-year-old boy with a broken leg. One is an elderly man complaining of chest pain. The third is a woman who cut her hand with a knife when cooking dinner. How you would prioritize the care of the patients?

#3 — Office example:

You have to do the following by the end of this week:

- Finish a three-page monthly report for a client
- Prepare a budget for a proposal that is due for another client
- Meet with team members to set up a new file-sharing system
- Attend a full-day training session on some new software

What would you do to make sure everything was completed on time?

Helping ITIs to be Successful in the Workplace

ITIs frequently hear, "You need Canadian experience". This can be very frustrating, as it is difficult to get experience without being able to get a job to begin with. Encourage ITIs to build on their existing skill sets and to gain valuable Canadian experience through:

- Volunteering
- Work placements (paid or unpaid) or internships
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

Volunteering

Volunteering can:

- Help ITIs learn the required language and technical skills needed to work in an organization
- Teach ITIs about organization and company culture
- Help ITIs improve their language skills
- Provide ITIs with Canadian work experience
- Provide ITIs with an accepted Canadian reference
- Help ITIs develop connections with other people

How can counsellors help ITIs to access and capitalize on volunteer opportunities?

- List volunteer opportunities in communities or with immigrant-serving agencies
- Show volunteers how they are welcomed and appreciated
- Provide volunteer placements that are learning opportunities
- Give the volunteer opportunities to meet employees

Work placements

For many ITIs, a lack of Canadian work experience is a major issue when trying to gain employment. One solution is to participate in a workplace placement/internship. These are often available through:

- Federal and provincial incentives and employment schemes
- Settlement agencies
- Community colleges and school board training programs
- Bridging and language training programs

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

PLAR is a process to document, prove, assess and recognize applicable learning from all sources. It is a valuable tool to help ITIs identify previous education, training and experience that may be transferable to the Canadian employment sector.

For employers and hiring agencies, ITIs who have done some PLAR preparation may be better able to describe their skills, experiences and knowledge in ways more relevant to the position they seek, and may also be better able to demonstrate the transferable skills that they bring to the Canadian workforce.

CCLB has developed a PLAR checklist that shows how an individual PLAR profile can be created by linking:

- Personal attributes
- Essential Skills
- Canadian Language Benchmarks, and
- Transferable and specific job competencies

ADVISOR CHECKLIST: HELPING CLIENTS DEVELOP A PLAR PROFILE AND PROOF OF LEARNING PLAN

Columns: **INDIVIDUAL PLAR PROFILE** | **ESSENTIAL SKILLS** | **CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS** | **TRANSFERABLE & SPECIFIC JOB COMPETENCIES**

SETTING GOALS & IDENTIFYING JOB OR EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

INDIVIDUAL PLAR PROFILE

☐ Can the client identify and describe their goals (for career, job, education, and life)?

☐ What qualifications, knowledge, skills and language level are required or expected in the job/career or for educational/ occupational/regulatory requirements of their goal?

☐ Is a credential required for the client's goal? If so, do international credentials need to be assessed, and does the client know where this can be done? See www.cicic.ca

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

☐ Does the client know what Essential Skills are?

☐ Is there an appropriate Essential Skills Profile (ESP)?
   ☐ In the ESP what are the 3 most important Essential Skills?
   ☐ Does the client's skills set match?

For further information on Essential Skills Profiles see http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/ES_Profiles_e.shtml

CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS

☐ Can the client articulate clear goals for ☐ work, ☐ education, ☐ language learning, or ☐ personal development?

☐ Can the client also write detailed information about those same goals?

☐ What are the client's professional language learning goals and timelines?

☐ What language skills are needed for educational credit or occupations? E.g. Is there an Occupational Language Analysis (OLA)? (see www.itsessential.ca)? Also refer to the Essential Skills Profile. What are the regulatory or licensing requirements for language proficiency for the occupation?

TRANSFERABLE & SPECIFIC JOB COMPETENCIES

☐ Does the client know what area of work they are looking for, or what educational program or occupational certification they are wanting their learning to be recognized for?

☐ What competencies are required for the sector, the specific job or career path the individual is looking for? Refer to the NOCs for occupational descriptions (see www23.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca), to Sector Council Occupational Standards. (see www.councils.org), or to professional and regulatory bodies certification requirements. What knowledge and skills are required in a course, program or certification an individual is wanting to challenge for credit? Who can they contact to get this information?

PERSONAL COMPETENCY PROFILING

INDIVIDUAL PLAR PROFILE

☐ Has the client reflected on their work and life experiences as well as their credentials or qualifications?

☐ Can the client draw (identify) learning applicable to their goal in the form of knowledge, skills and abilities from their experiences and credentials? Can they identify personal attributes and values? Can they identify their language competency and Essential Skills competencies?

See resources at www.RecognitionForLearning.ca/learner/aboutPLAR.php

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

☐ Which Essential Skills relate to the client's work/life experience and accomplishments? ☐ Oral Communication, ☐ Reading Text, ☐ Writing, ☐ Document Use, ☐ Thinking Skills, ☐ Numeracy, ☐ Computer Skills, ☐ Working with Others, or ☐ Continuous Learning

☐ Can the client identify or be assessed for competency levels of some Essential Skills? (e.g. formal or informal assessments?)

See reference to various tools at: http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/Tools_Apps_e.shtml

CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS

☐ Can the client talk about past experiences and accomplishments (either personal or professional)?

☐ Can the client describe the process of acquiring the English (French) language at home or in the country of origin? When was it learned? How was it learned?

☐ Can the client identify where the target language has been used? (e.g. At school? At work?) How has language proficiency been assessed? When? Where?

TRANSFERABLE & SPECIFIC JOB COMPETENCIES

☐ Can the client identify the learning they have gained on the job, in non-structured learning, and through life experience?

☐ Can the client identify sector specific and job specific knowledge and skills they have gained from education, work related learning and life experience to provide current competency?

MATCHING & GAP IDENTIFICATION

INDIVIDUAL PLAR PROFILE

☐ Do the skills and knowledge of the client match the requirements and expectations of their goal (job or education)?

☐ Does the client know where to find information about where they can learn new skills and knowledge to fill any gaps?

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

☐ What items in the learner profile can be linked to the job tasks on the Essential Skills Profile and to the recognition sought?

CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS

☐ Based on the Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) level required for the occupation or course, what gaps does the client have? E.g. How do the client's CLB levels in Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing compare to the occupation or credit requirements?

TRANSFERABLE & SPECIFIC JOB COMPETENCIES

☐ Do the client's current competencies match the requirements for their goal? If not, how might the gaps be filled?

☐ Does the client know resources available in their area to help fill gaps?

DEMONSTRATING COMPETENCY AND PROVIDING PROOF OF LEARNING

INDIVIDUAL PLAR PROFILE

☐ Does the client know what is required to prove their learning in relation to their goal (education or job)?

☐ Can the client provide evidence of or otherwise prove learning which could meet the requirements of their job or educational goal?

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

☐ Which documents or examples give evidence or demonstrate Essential Skills tasks (possibly related to the target occupation)? Does the goal/credit sought include any specific Essential Skills tasks?

☐ How can the client present the package to highlight Essential Skills needed for educational credit or occupation/job?

CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS

☐ What tasks are required to prove language competency? Refer to the Can Do checklists for suggested language task examples at various levels: http://www.language.ca/display_page.asp?page_id=372

☐ How has or what evidence has the client provided to demonstrate language proficiency (eg. assessment record, completed forms, letters written by the client)? What remediation, supports or referrals are indicated? What language coaching/practice may be required to help the client present the package of evidence?

TRANSFERABLE & SPECIFIC JOB COMPETENCIES

☐ Does the client know the process required to prove competency for a job, or to challenge for educational credit or professional recognition?

☐ Does the client know how to prepare for the process required to prove their competency in the workplace, or to challenge for educational credit? Where can they find additional help to prepare themselves?

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The PLAR checklist can be downloaded at language.ca.

Evaluating Foreign Credentials

Foreign credential assessment services

Lack of foreign credential recognition has been identified by ITIs as a significant barrier to finding employment.

There are various credential assessment service providers across Canada who can help ITIs evaluate their education and training credentials from other countries. The following service organizations examine and verify that education and job experiences obtained outside Canada are equivalent to the standards established for Canadian professionals and tradespeople. These are organizations that provide information on credential evaluation service providers in different regions of the country.

Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC)
Tel: 416-962-9725 Fax: 416-962-2800 Email: info@cicic.ca www.cicic.ca/

Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services Canada	
www.canalliance.org/indexe.stm	
	Manitoba Academic Credentials Assessment Service (ACAS)
	British Columbia International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES)
	Alberta, Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS)
	Québec Centre d'expertise sur les formations acquises hors du Québec (CEFAHQ)
	Ontario World Education Services – Canada (WES–Canada)

Common Workplace Communication Tasks

In this section, we have provided examples of familiar workplace tasks or situations that may prove difficult for newcomers. As a counsellor, you may wish to discuss these communication tasks with your clients. Workplace preparation courses are often available to help ITIs develop better workplace communication skills.

Visit the *Work Ready* online resource at http://elearning.language.ca/ to listen to ITIs comment on how these tasks are difficult for them.

Using the telephone

Using the telephone is often very difficult for ITIs. There are no visual clues or gestures to help; some people speak very quickly; some take a long time to get to the point. Leaving a message on an answering machine can also be unnerving when the person does not know the audience.

Some workplace language tasks related to using the telephone are:

- Taking messages
- Leaving messages
- Setting up and confirming appointments
- Listening to recorded public transportation schedules
- Setting up a voice mailbox
- Using help lines

Some HR personnel use telephone interviews to pre-screen candidates for an employment position. This may be difficult for ITIs and you may want to encourage your clients to request a face-to-face interview or to practice telephone interview techniques.

Comparing and contrasting information

In an interview, a prospective employer might say, "*Give me one example of how things in this occupation are done differently in your country than they are in Canada. Also, please tell me which method you prefer and why.*" This is an example of a question that requests an applicant to compare and contrast information.

Some authentic workplace language tasks where comparing/contrasting are used are:

- Comparing two processes, ideas or things
- Contrasting how two things are different
- Analyzing and making decisions
- Persuading or convincing others of opinions
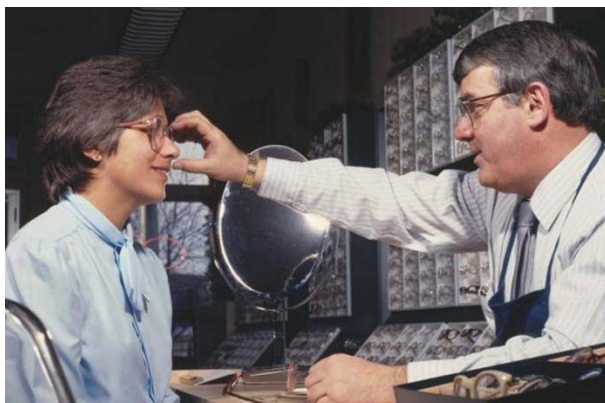
Giving an opinion

For cultural reasons, some ITIs may be reluctant to give an opinion or offer a suggestion to a superior. The North American style of open discussion may cause concerns for some ITIs. It may be necessary to encourage participation in discussions, especially in interviews, using questions and statements like:

- What do you think?
- Give me your opinion, please.
- I would like to hear your viewpoint.
- Please share your thoughts on this matter.

Understanding Workplace Language Requirements

Language tasks related to understanding everyday and employment-specific language include:

- Reading job advertisements
- Writing letters of application
- Taking part in interviews
- Asking for clarification
- Carrying out employment-related tasks
- Providing reports or information
- Filling in forms or time sheets

Giving and receiving instructions

Most jobs require the employee to receive and sometimes give instructions. Many North Americans are linear (i.e. direct) communicators, while people from other cultures may have a more circular style. In linear communication, the speaker provides all the information necessary to reach a conclusion; in circular communication, the information is contained within a story and the conclusion is implicit. These differing communication styles can create problems in the workplace unless clear guidelines are established.

Some issues are:

- Asking for clarification
- Comprehending sets of instructions or directions
- Giving instructions or directions to others

Handling a problem

Some ITIs worry about handling conflict or challenges in the workplace. You may want to discuss possible conflicts or challenges with your clients. The ITIs that the CCLB interviewed for *Work Ready* identified the following areas of concern:

- Making a complaint
- Resolving a conflict
- Dealing with harassment

SECTION III: INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTITIONERS

The following section discusses resources that can assist HR practitioners and employers in the recruiting, interviewing, hiring and successful employment of ITIs.

Why Hire Internationally Trained Individuals?

Canada has increasingly turned to immigration as a source of skills and knowledge. Census data show that immigrants who landed in Canada during the 1990s, and who were in the labour force in 2001, represented almost 70% of the total growth of the labour force over the decade. Between 2001 and 2006, the number of employed allophones (someone whose mother tongue is neither English nor French) aged 15 and over rose to 600,000, from 17% to 19% of workers. In 2006, 57.3% of immigrants who had come to Canada in the previous five years were in the prime-working age group of 25 to 54.[1]

Canada needs to attract and retain ITIs to sustain economic and industrial growth, and must compete for this talent with other industrialized countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia.

The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration has identified the following areas of concern for new immigrants to Canada:

1. Employment (priority)	5. Financial stability
2. Language (priority)	6. Cultural integration
3. Better information and guidance	7. Emotional and social support
4. Initial orientation	8. Health and housing [2]

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[1] Canada Census. (2006).

[2] Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. TESL Canada Conference. October 20, 2006.

Why Hiring Internationally Trained Individuals Makes Good Business Sense

ITIs bring skills, talents, resources and opportunities to the companies that hire them. The following two articles provide examples of how ITIs make a positive contribution to the workplace.

In the first article Donald H. Oliver, in the *Ivey Business Journal* (March/April 2005), demonstrates that hiring ITIs makes good business sense. He compares advantages that companies hiring ITIs have over their competitors:[1] In the second article, Maha Surani discusses the barriers that ITIs face as they try to find employment in Canada.

1. **Enhanced innovation and decision-making** — Having a multicultural workforce encourages innovation and new ways of looking at business challenges. For example, Xerox Canada's research centre has over 150 employees from 36 different countries working together. A Conference Board of Canada study found that diverse teams of employees tend to perform equally well in the areas of process and performance, but achieve better results when presenting opinions and generating alternatives.

2. **A powerful magnet for attracting employee talent** — Occupations are becoming increasingly creative, and successful companies/regions should encourage diversity. Smart, creative people want to work in places where they are accepted and can work with other smart, creative people.

3. **Diverse and inclusive workplaces** — Companies should adopt three approaches to developing an inclusive, diverse workplace. Firstly, companies must evaluate their corporate approach to see if they provide inclusive recruitment and retention policies, and therefore better avoid high turnover. Secondly, companies need to implement regularly reviewed diversity processes that include the whole company. Thirdly, companies must move to implement diversity policies in a meaningful, realistic way, demonstrated through executive commitment within the organization.

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[1] Adapted from Hon. D.H. Oliver. *Achieving Results through Diversity: A Strategy for Success*. Ivey Business Journal. (March/April 2005). Pages 1–6.

Internationally trained individuals in the Canadian workplace

By Maha Surani[1]

ITIs are highly educated immigrants who bring diverse international experience and a global perspective to the Canadian workplace. Canada welcomed over 250,000 immigrants in 2006; Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) approved a new target of up to 255,000 immigrants for 2007. Many of these immigrants are highly educated and well-qualified, but they struggle to be successful.

ITIs face systemic barriers that include difficulties in getting security clearance, non-recognition of foreign credentials, lack of Canadian work experience, language challenges, a lack of networking experience and reluctance from some employers to hire immigrants. It is a frustrating situation for everyone involved. Canada is facing labour shortages and has a pool of immigrants readily available but some linkage has to occur to facilitate the employment of ITIs to fill the gaps. Stakeholders in the settlement and employment sectors need to work with employers to overcome the systemic challenges to fill the labour shortages expected across many sectors and within all provinces, and to ensure successful workforce integration for ITIs.

The November 2006 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) policy brief focused on local innovations in five OECD countries, including Canada. It emphasized that most countries provide specialized support to immigrants on arrival, particularly language training, but after this initial period, immigrants are generally felt to be the responsibility of the general labour market and education programs. In Canada, regional branches of employment services have developed some solutions for the successful employment of ITIs. However, the most important stakeholders, with capacity to provide real change, are employers, human resource managers, workplace trainers, and organizations such as colleges, which help to provide a link between unemployed immigrants and local employers. What more should we be doing to successfully utilize the skills and talents that ITIs have?

The Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks discussed tools and strategies for assessing and recruiting ITIs with Kamran Niazi, Division Director and Official Spokesperson for Robert Half (an international recruitment and placement agency).

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[1] Since arriving in Canada, Maha Surani has specialized in the field of skilled worker integration and retention. She has lived in Asia, the United States and the Middle East. She can be reached at maharsurani@yahoo.com.

Mr. Niazi provided the following pointers for the successful recruitment, hiring and retention of ITIs:

1. Analyze the skill sets you need.
2. Look carefully at the key skill sets that the ITI has to offer.
3. Determine if these match some of the skill sets needed for the position you have to offer.
4. Recognize the value of those who have international experience.
5. **Highlight ITI's experience, skills and com**petencies rather than credentials.
6. Use assessment rather than credentials to determine if the candidate is suitable.
7. Look at language as a tool for communication; provide training if the candidate needs it.
8. Remember that acronyms, idioms and workplace-specific language can be learned, often by day-to-day interaction.
9. Provide mentoring or coaching if it is required.
10. Build a workplace culture based on using the best person for the job.
11. Encourage employers and human resource professionals to do a needs analysis to determine what credentials and skill sets are required for the workplace.
12. Tell ITIs how to update their credentials or skill sets in order to meet the gaps in the workplace.

Attracting, Hiring and Retaining Internationally Trained Individuals

The Canadian workplace is often an unfamiliar environment to ITIs. The whole process, from the job search through to retention and promotion, involves many linguistic and cultural challenges. Hearing ITIs talk about interviews and workplace culture yields valuable insights into factors that affect hiring and employment in Canada. They describe things that are very different from their home countries.

Learning that job interviews are largely unknown in some countries provides a very different perspective on how an ITI might perform in an interview. Understanding that it might be culturally difficult for an immigrant to *sell* him/herself may influence the forming of interview questions. Understanding different work practices, even those as simple as having an office and working independently, may reveal a need to provide more mentoring.

Knowledge is a key component of successful hiring, training and retaining practices. Use *Work Ready* to increase your knowledge of how to utilize the skills and training that ITIs bring to the Canadian workplace.

Ten Ways to Hire, Train and Retain Internationally Trained Individuals

HR practitioners can also refer to the *10 Ways to Hire, Train and Retain Internationally Trained Individuals* checklist that is available free of charge from the CCLB.

The CCLB has developed an information checklist (downloadable from the online version of *Work Ready* at www.language.ca/display_page.asp?page_id=831) that provides advice on attracting, hiring, integrating and retaining employees.

The Hiring Process

One of the challenges that an HR practitioner may face is finding suitable ITIs for positions advertised. For many ITIs, the job application process is a huge challenge. They may also be unfamiliar with techniques for finding jobs through advertisements, job postings and recruitment agencies.

Many ITIs rely on community media (e.g. newspapers, television and radio programs) in their first language to find jobs. If you want to attract ITIs, use a variety of media, including community media, to advertise a position.

Settlement agencies play a key role in providing employment information and potential employment to ITIs. They often provide free or low-cost employment advertising.

Advertising a job

Keep the following in mind when developing job postings from which you want to attract a wide range of knowledgeable applicants, including ITIs:

1. The importance, level, type and frequency of communication needed for the position. For example:

    ▪ Does the job involve using the telephone with a variety of users?

    ▪ Does the job require document writing rather than just the completion of forms?

    ▪ Does the job require strong oral communication skills (e.g. presentations, sales, leading meetings, etc.)?

    ▪ Does the job require extensive reading (e.g. manuals, blueprints, process documents, etc.)?

2. The amount of interaction required. Will the ITI work:

    ▪ With a multi-national team or multi-gender team?
    ▪ Largely alone?
    ▪ By telecommuting?
    ▪ In a small or large organization?
    ▪ Closely with external clients?
    ▪ With co-workers from the same linguistic background?

3. The language used by those applicants that you wish to attract. For ITIs, use plain language:

    ▪ Use active verbs to describe requirements
    ▪ Remove acronyms and jargon
    ▪ Clearly state requirements
    ▪ Provide clear instructions on how applicants should respond to the posting

4. Where applicants might find information about the position. Consider posting through a wide variety of media and recruitment services, such as:

    ▪ Canadian and immigrant media

- Settlement agencies
- A selection of recruitment agencies
- Language or training programs
- Company bulletin boards, intranet and employee referral programs

Reading letters of application

While speed and efficiency are important in the screening process, it is also important to keep in mind the following:

- The process of writing a cover letter and curriculum vitae (CV) is often unfamiliar to ITIs.

- Many cover letters and CVs are professionally written or the writer has received assistance in preparing them. These documents may not fairly represent the applicant's language skills. You may need to confirm an ITI's writing skills during the interview process.

- ITIs from some cultures may not be used to the idea of promoting themselves, so their CVs may not include details of how they meet **a position's** requirements.

- Some ITIs do not recognize the importance that North Americans attach to soft skills, so therefore may provide a CV that notes just technical skills.

- Some ITIs appear over-qualified for positions for which they are applying. It is often difficult for newcomers to find positions that match their skills. Many are grateful for a chance to demonstrate how they can perform in the Canadian workplace and will accept lower-level positions, hoping to progress within the organization.

- In many cultures, names are very different from those commonly found in western cultures. You may not be able to tell:

    o The applicant's gender based on the name
    o How to pronounce the applicant's name correctly
    o Which part of the name is the correct part to use

Most people do not mind being asked about their name, but may be sensitive to being addressed incorrectly.

Cross-cultural interviewing

You may find the following tips helpful when you are interviewing ITIs:

Interview Preparation

▪ Consider whether telephone screening will assist you in deciding whether or not to interview a candidate. Remember that a telephone interview may be a challenging task for ITIs and may give a false impression of actual abilities.

▪ Use plain language when setting up an interview appointment:

- o Confirm the correct mode of address and pronunciation of the ITI's name.
- o Inform the ITI of the interview format.
- o Clarify that the ITI is clear on the date, time and location of the interview, and knows your name and telephone number.

▪ Refer to the section on rephrasing interview questions **in the counsellor's section of** this book when preparing your interview questions.

▪ Include a practical activity in the interview, which will allow candidates to demonstrate that communication skills meet the requirements of the position. For example, ask them to do one of the following tasks:

- o Write an email or memo
- o Take a recorded telephone message
- o Describe a process
- o Role play a work-related scenario

Interview and Selection

▪ Rephrase an interview question if you get a short or inappropriate answer.

▪ Say, "Tell me more about … " or "How did you … ?"

▪ Invite candidates to take notes during the interview. Provide a pen and paper.

▪ Be aware that some ITIs may be afraid to pause and think about a response to a question. One way to reassure them may be to say, "You might want to take a minute or two to think about how you would answer this next question."

▪ If the ITI has the right skill set but has weaker communication skills than expected, consider whether your organization might provide support, such as training or a mentor, during an upgrading process.

Good examples of how to rephrase interview questions were provided earlier in this section.

Cross-Cultural Interviews
By Neil Payne [1]

The increase in cross border human traffic has meant that companies are no longer dealing with a homogenous native community from which they recruit their staff. Companies are now facing cross-cultural challenges in how they recruit, manage and develop a multi-cultural staff.

One area of note where HR and management are finding difficulties is in the interview room.

With companies recruiting from a pool of candidates from different nationalities, cultures and faiths the cross-cultural interview is an area that must be analyzed properly if recruiters wish to capitalize on the potential available to them. This is necessary to ensure that candidates in cross-cultural interviews are not discriminated against through misperceptions and poor judgments.

Interviews could be described as being similar to a play. All actors know their lines, cues and the appropriate corresponding behaviours. Interviewers expect model answers, so questions are anticipated and revised for by interviewees. However, the play only makes sense, in terms of getting the best out of the interview, when the actors involved share a similar culture. When interviews take on a cross-cultural element, differences in how to act can cause misunderstandings. Such misunderstandings may unfortunately lead to interviewers wrongly rejecting candidates.

All recruiters share a common goal in wanting to hire the best candidate. However, when cross- cultural misunderstandings occur in interviews they hinder the process of recruiting the best staff for the company. Learning to work with cross-cultural differences in interviews ensures you get the best out of a candidate and do not allow cross cultural misperceptions to impede your judgment.

The basis of incorporating a cross-cultural framework of understanding in interviews is in overcoming 'assumptions'. Assumptions refer to several inter-related elements. Interviewers assume what should or should not happen, what is normal and abnormal, and what is correct or wrong. Assumptions also refer to what someone's physical appearance says about them, what their body language says about their confidence, how people communicate and how they present themselves.

For example, a cross-cultural interview is taking place between an English interviewer and an internationally trained interviewee. Fairly early on in the interview the interviewer starts to make assumptions regarding the person's character, personality and suitability for the post based on misperceptions of the candidate's appearance,

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behaviour and communication style. Although the interviewee may seem rather high-brow, blunt in conversation, formal and academic in demeanour this does not mean that he/she is rigid, inflexible or reserved as the interviewer might assume. Rather, this is how the play may be **acted out in the interviewee's country** of origin. If the interviewer had been a bit more aware of theatre (i.e. cross culturally aware), then possibly such assumptions would not have been made.

As we can see from the above example, assumptions can lead to interviewers making the wrong decision based on their culturally insensitive assumptions. In this case, they could have potentially lost a genuinely positive addition to their company.

In addition to the areas mentioned in the example above, interviewers must also be aware of culturally ingrained assumptions made about areas such as eye contact, tone of voice, gestures, posture, showing emotions, the giving out of information and the use of language to name but a few. All have a cross-cultural element that needs to be understood properly.

Language also plays a crucial role in cross cultural interviews. Where the interviewee's English is not strong, the use of metaphors, proverbs and colloquialisms may confuse them. Similarly, technical terms are not always valid across borders. Where lengthy pauses are made by interviewees, rather than assume they are playing for time or do not know the answer, the interviewer should assume they are searching for a word, phrase or merely digesting the information contained within the question.

The key point is that assumptions must be overcome if recruiters are to do their job effectively. All the above examples of misperceptions are based upon cultural assumptions as to what things mean. It is therefore critical that recruitment staff start to assess, analyze and overcome cultural assumptions through greater cross-cultural awareness if they wish to do the best for their companies.

Today, organizations and companies need the creative and dynamic input from a culturally diverse staff. The only way to achieve this is to ensure that employees are not being improperly discounted for positions due to cross-cultural misperceptions. Once this is taken on board and acted upon, the play will again start to make sense to all involved.

How can I determine whether or not an ITI has enough English to do the job?

Increasingly, employers are turning to ITIs to meet demands for highly-trained and skilled workers. Over 40% of immigrants arriving in the 1990s had at least one university degree, compared to 22% of Canadians. This is good news for Canada as our reliance on immigration grows. In fact, immigrants are expected to **account for 100% of Canada's net labour force growth by 2011 and 100% of net** population growth by 2031.

There are credential assessment services available to help employers determine the Canadian-**equivalent levels of an ITI's education and training.** A frequent question for **employers is, "What about language proficiency?" How much English does one need for** a particular job?

Language is one of the most significant challenges facing newcomers. Employers have limited means of practically and fairly dete**rmining language proficiency. "The tests** used in the present system are often based on generic or academic content, and do not reflect the language demands of their professions or trades. Although internationally-educated professionals may have the language proficiency relevant to their specific profession or occupation, they may not be able to pass the required language tests. In other cases, candidates are set up for possible failure in the workplace, as they meet the language requirements but do not have the language **skills needed in their specific professional context."**[1]

There are two primary approaches that can be taken:

Option 1: A long-term solution is to have an expert in English as a Second Language (ESL) conduct a language benchmark analysis of key occupation(s) within the company, to determine the level of speaking, listening, reading and writing required to carry out the tasks related to the job. There are models for this using the Canadian Language Benchmarks, the national language standard for describing, measuring and recognizing language proficiency for adult immigrants. The ESL expert would typically analyze the position by:

▪ Reviewing a detailed job description to identify key tasks and job activities

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[1] Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks. *Developing an Occupation-Specific Language Assessment Tool using the Canadian Language Benchmarks – A Guide for Trades and Professional Organizations.* (2004). Page 4.

- Examining samples of texts, documents and other materials used in the job

- Job-shadowing to observe and record communication activities carried out over the course of a day

- Meeting with the supervisor and those currently performing the job to seek information on the communication demands of the job

This analysis would result in a determination of the Canadian Language Benchmark levels required for the job. The expert could provide recommendations as to how a **candidate's** CLB level could be determined (e.g. through an existing CLB assessment tool or through the development of an occupation or sector-specific assessment tool). An example of this would be the language benchmarking of the nursing profession in Canada and the development of the Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN). For more information, visit www.CELBAN.org.

An alternative methodology is to develop an Occupational Language Analysis (OLA), based on language benchmarking of occupation-specific Essential Skills profiles developed by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). To see examples of OLAs for tourism occupations, visit www.itsessential.ca.

Option 2: A more immediate solution is careful planning and preparation for the interview process. It is important that ITIs are interviewed in ways similar to Canadian-born professionals. The following suggestions would apply equally to all applicants being considered for a position, whether internationally-educated or Canadian-born:

1. Carefully review the job description and identify key or primary tasks related to the position. What language skills are necessary to carry out these tasks—speaking, listening, reading or writing?

2. Determine what language skills are required to do the job well. Is it more important that the person have excellent speaking and listening skills in order to consult with clients or lead project team meetings? Will he or she be expected to write lengthy business proposals or reports? Does the job require referencing complex texts and documentation?

3. Plan to include questions that address key communication requirements in the interview. This will allow you to determine whether or not responses meet company standards or reasonable expectations. For example:

   - If writing plays a large part in carrying out the job duties, ask candidates to provide samples of the types of texts that may be required, or develop an activity for them, such as writing a memo or an executive summary of a report.

   - If spoken language is most important to successful performance on the job, include a role play or scenario. For example, if the position involves leading a project team, candidates could be asked what they would say to a member of the team who was repeatedly missing deadlines. Or they might be asked to role play talking to a supervisor to explain what is wrong with a piece of equipment, and the time and cost involved in repairing it.

Tips for Working with ITIs
by Nancy Mark[1]

1. Communication Styles differ – Many people think that we are very direct in Canada while other cultures are more indirect. This is not always true; many native speakers of English use inferences and assumptions that may not get the required response from an ESL colleague. Here is an example of a conversation between a supervisor and an employee. What will be the outcome? How could the employer be clearer?

   Ms. Jones: It looks like we need some more time to prepare this part of the project.

   Mr. Kim: I see.

   Ms. Jones: Can you stay after work tomorrow so we can take care of it?

   Mr. Kim: Yes, I think so.

   Ms. Jones: That'll be a great help.

   Mr. Kim: Yes, tomorrow's a special day, did you know?

   Ms. Jones: How do you mean?

   Mr. Kim: It's my son's birthday.

   Ms. Jones: How nice. I hope you enjoy it very much.

   Mr. Kim: Thank you. I appreciate your understanding.

2. **Use "Case study" types of interview questions such as, "Tell me about a situation when….", "How would you……?" to get important information about an ITI's** interpersonal and social skills.

3. Interviews that cover both technical (hard) and soft (communication) information are often most useful. (Refer to the interview questions on page 26 for more ideas)

4. Effective Canadian non-verbal communication (eye contact, voice tone, hand shake) may provide good measures of successful adoption of the Canadian communication style. However, a very recent newcomer to Canada may not have had the opportunity to learn the Canadian conventions but may be able to adjust quickly. You may have to adjust his/her interview style or expectations.

5. Humour, company sector jargon and acronyms can be challenging for some ITIs. Awareness of instances where these are used will be helpful in orientation and **successful integration. Lack of knowledge of these should not hinder someone's** chances of employment.

6. Tracking the use of company or sector specific jargon in an interview will let you **see the ITI's level of understanding and a**lso see if the individual asks questions **to clarify things. (i.e., "I am not sure what you mean by AGM").**

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[1] Nancy Mark is an Ottawa, Ontario, based educator, trainer and coach, providing a full range of intercultural services. She has over twenty years of experience working with individuals and groups from over 110 countries. She may be contacted at nmark11@aol.com.

7. ITIs often have many questions in the early months of new employment. Formal **or informal mentoring or "buddy" systems provide a structured way to** field questions and assist in a smooth transition to the workplace. You may have to define mentoring to new employees; it will be important to define expectations with both the mentors and mentees. Be aware that new employees may feel that being assigned mentors means that their skill sets and/or language skills are being questioned. Be as specific as possible about the reasons why your company provides mentors for new ITIs. It may be that skills like communication and language need improvement for some ITIs. If this is the case, then let the ITIs know what you hope that they will get from the mentoring experience. Choosing the right mentors is also important. Some companies assign mentors from the same cultural background as the new employees but this may or may not be a good idea – if new hires need to improve their English it may be better to pair them with someone who does not have the same first language.

8. Early clarification of job expectations is a key factor in effective job performance. You may need to state the job expectations differently as they may contain **assumptions not shared by all ITIs. For example, "I'd like you to be more of a team player" could be more clearly stated as, "I would like to see you meet** /speak with your team each day for the first week of this project to confirm that **you all have the same understanding of tasks and deliverables"**

9. **Building effective relationships is also a key factor in facilitating an ITI's** adaptation to the workplace. The relationship between supervisor and employee may be quite different in Canada from that in other countries. This is especially true for employees who come from a culture where respect for the supervisor is very important. For example, weekly (formal or informal) meetings in which the **supervisor initiates discussions about key elements of the employee's job (hard** and soft skills) will provide an opportunity to understand expectations and the means to meet them. It will also allow the employee to understand that, in Canadian culture, it is appropriate to discuss employment related issues with **one's superior.**

10. Supervisors should establish effective feedback mechanisms so that the ITI receives support in the early days of a new job. It is often difficult for some foreign trained employees to ask questions and to receive criticism as they may interpret criticism as a loss of face. Others may not be used to receiving direct criticism of their work. Explaining that asking questions and getting constructive **feedback is the "norm" in the Cana**dian workplace and showing that these are procedures which apply to all new hires will make this easier for the new employee to accept.

11. Quite often, an ITI leader emerges in an office or team: management should tap **into that person's strengths and res**ources and to use as an interface between them and the other ITIs in the office or team.

Straight Talk about Language Training at Work

There are many misconceptions about occupational language training. This section reviews some of the more common questions that HR practitioners and employers raise.[1]

1. Is workplace language training the same as ESL or English for Academic Purposes (EAP)?

Answer: Language training at work is a specialized type of language training that differs from a regular ESL class or EAP in several ways:

- There is usually a strong need to improve communication skills related to specific job tasks (e.g. writing emails, giving presentations, improving sales techniques, etc.).
- Language training at work can be conducted for employees at various levels of proficiency in English, often in a group with mixed levels or on a one-on-one basis.
- In academic programs, there is often more emphasis on essay writing, test taking, and improving study skills in the second language, whereas in workplace language programs, the activities are work-related, such as completing functional forms, report writing, email correspondence and other job tasks.
- While language training at work can occur in a classroom, it often occurs in a cafeteria, boardroom, or office.

2. Does workplace language training teach only technical language?

Answer: Occupational language training usually includes work-related vocabulary (which may be different from the terminology used in the employee's first language) and may also include everyday language required to communicate with colleagues. Some of the language training will be related to practicing and demonstrating appropriate communication skills for specific workplace tasks and situations.

3. Do many workplace language training programs use a specific textbook?

Answer: The thorough needs assessment done by the language training provider before training determines the materials to be used. In some cases, it may include a textbook; it usually includes authentic workplace materials (HR forms, memos, templates, etc.) and targeted language task practice.

4. Can any teacher develop and teach ESL in the workplace?

Answer: ESL teachers are trained in linguistics, adult learning principles and second language acquisition teaching methodologies. Teachers who develop and/or teach in ESL workplace programs have additional expertise in the following:

- Doing needs assessments with employees, supervisors and HR personnel
- Designing appropriate courses and materials within the limitations of the program
- Adapting lessons to the specific needs of employees

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[1] Questions 1–4 are adapted from *Effective Practices in Workplace Language Training: Guidelines for Providers of Workplace English Language Training Services.* Joan Friedenberg, Deborah Kennedy, Anne Lomperis, William Martin, and Kay Westerfield (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Inc.). (2003.) Page viii.

- Assessing progress throughout the course

5. How quickly can employees improve their language skills?

Answer: Adult learners progress at different speeds when learning English or other languages. Some of the factors that may affect language learning progress include:

- Exposure to the new language and opportunities to practice
- Motivation for learning the language (e.g. for academic or work purposes)
- Teaching methods used (e.g. in some regions, a lecture method is used that may mean a person develops good listening, reading and writing skills but has poor speaking skills)
- Literacy level in the first language
- Age

All of these factors will influence the rate at which learners move from one benchmark to another. However, support from a mentor at work, and from supervisors, can help reinforce the new communication skills that the employee has been learning.

6. Why should I offer language training to an employee?

Answer: Many sectors across Canada are facing critical personnel shortages. If you have an employee who requires some language support, it makes good business sense to invest in language training or up-skilling as part of their training plan. The return on investment may include:

- More confident employees who are better prepared to participate in the business and deal with clients/customers
- Less chance for miscommunication between employees, co-workers, management and clients
- Empowered employees who can take control of their professional needs and daily activities
- Higher satisfaction among employees, leading to greater retention
- More employees able to take a leadership position in the company

CLB Occupational Language Assessments

The CCLB can help you to develop occupation-specific assessment tools. *Developing Occupation-Specific Assessments* is a guide for developing an occupation-specific language assessment tool for trades and professions.

CELBAN is an example of an occupational language assessment. It is used nationally to assess the language abilities of internationally educated nursing applicants. Visit www.CELBAN.org to find out about:

- Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN)

- CELBAN Readiness Self-Assessment tool

The CCLB is currently developing other tools that will be of use to counsellors and HR practitioners. They are:

- A Canadian Language Benchmarks Online Self-Assessment (in English and French) that will help ITIs to determine their language proficiency levels in two skills, i.e. reading and listening

- The National Assessment Framework booklet that explains all the assessments and their uses

- A new Workplace Language Assessment (WLA) that will be used for entry into employment-related language training programs

- A Workplace Language Assessment (WLA) and a WLA Pre-Screening Tool to guide selection of appropriate pathways with clients or employees

Working with ITIs

A positive corporate culture that recognizes the value of employees should be the goal of all companies. Factors that support successful employment and retention are:

- Orientation

- Mentoring

- Corporate policies (including inclusive communication and cross-cultural codes of practice)

- Training, reviews and opportunities to grow

Orientation

Every company should provide an orientation and company manual to all new employees. These are particularly useful for ITIs who are not familiar with working in Canada. They help to:

- Set the groundwork for the 3Ps—protocols, procedures and processes
- Foster positive feelings about the organization, its products and activities
- Minimize questions and misunderstandings, and save time

Ask yourself if your company manual includes the following items:

- An organizational chart
- The names of supervisors
- A corporate telephone directory
- A site or building map
- Health, safety and emergency procedures information
- Vacation and other HR policies
- Recreational activities
- Acronyms and/or corporate glossary

Other questions to ask about your orientation information:

- Is all the orientation material written or given in plain language?
- Is there sufficient opportunity for employees to ask questions?
- Is there an employee notice board?
- Are new employees teamed up with a mentor or buddy?

Mentoring:

- Helps newcomers to improve their language skills
- Offers existing employees a chance to get to know new employees
- Teaches newcomers about the company culture
- Provides opportunities for the organization, mentors, community partners and ITIs to benefit from closer cooperation

Good mentoring practices:

- Pair new employees with experienced employees
- Match someone whose English needs improvement with a good English speaker, and preferably not with a speaker who has the same first language
- Develop a business case for your organization to get buy-in from management and potential mentors
- Implement train-the-trainer sessions to inspire managers and others to become mentors

Corporate Initiatives

Policies

Consider whether your organization:

- Implements a cross-cultural code of practice across all departments, in order to provide a fair and equitable workplace environment for all employees
- Has developed cross-cultural policies
- Keeps an inventory of all languages spoken by employees
- Considers opportunities for using employees' linguistic skills when dealing with clients or customers
- Makes celebrations and events multicultural

Useful websites are:

www.employment.alberta.ca

www.hrpld.ca/pages/diversity.html

Corporate communications

Consider whether your organization:

- Evaluates corporate forms or templates so that they conform to plain language principles, including cultural assumptions

- Offers ongoing workshops or mini-workshop sessions to all employees on communication tasks, such as writing emails and reports, using the Internet, giving presentations and other relevant tasks

Training plans/evaluations

When reviewing employees or developing training plans, consider whether you have:

- Reviewed and congratulated employees on, and noted on personnel files, improvements
- Evaluated annual review methods and asked if supervisors are considering all accomplishments of employees, including communication successes
- Provided training to supervisors on how to address communication issues
- Recognized that often communication and other soft skills improve gradually with training, ongoing support and practice
- Made good communication a priority in your organization

Useful websites are:

www.mser.gov.bc.ca

www2.gov.bc.ca

Communication Challenges and Solutions

When hiring new employees, there are always challenges; these challenges may be increased when the employee is new to the Canadian workplace.[1] CCLB asked HR professionals to identify some of these challenges and we have provided some solutions:

Challenges	Solutions
Skilled immigrants may not have strong enough communication skills to work effectively.	A good occupation-specific and workplace-specific language assessment[2] will ensure that businesses hire immigrants who have sufficient communication skills for the job. A CLB level is an important piece of information in determining job-readiness.
Other employees may not understand the ITI working with them.	Ensure that all employees recognize that everyone has an accent. Emphasize that clarity is most important; seek advice from English as a Second Language experts if necessary. There are many issues regarding accents that can be improved with specialized training. (Note: It is important not to disregard or filter out ITI job candidates or employees because of accents. Having a strong accent does not imply a low language level.)
The ITI may not understand how we work in Canada.	Build on the transferable skills that the ITI brings to the Canadian workplace. Recognize that the ITI has already demonstrated flexibility, risk-taking and a desire to learn new things by moving to a new culture. Provide workplace orientation and mentors to all new employees. Provide cross-cultural training for all employees in order to promote an inclusive workplace.

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[1] Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. TESL Canada Conference. (October 20, 2006.)

[2] A workplace-specific assessment tool is specific to one particular company. An occupation-specific assessment tool relates to the needs of an occupation. For example, CELBAN is an example of an occupation-specific assessment tool for nurses. A small manufacturing business is unlikely to use such a rigorous or expensive tool, but, with help, could develop and use a short, reliable workplace-specific assessment tool.

Challenges	Solutions
The ITI may not fit in and may be resented by other employees.	Recognize and promote diversity in the workplace. Promote the fact that Canada is multicultural; provide training for all employees in this area. Organize focus groups to talk about and ease concerns. Get a competitive business edge by using ITIs' knowledge and experience to serve diverse local and international markets.
I don't know how to access ITIs for hiring opportunities.	There are many organizations that specialize in working with ITIs or that provide referrals to agencies: www.careerbridge.ca www.ottawa-worldskills.org www.skillsforchange.org www.skillsinternational.ca www.hireimmigrants.ca www.atwork.settlement.org
How can I find out what an ITI's language skills are?	If the employee has a CLB assessment report, the employee has been assessed using a test that references the CLB. The report provides CLB levels in speaking, listening, reading and writing. CLB assessment reports are valid for six months. The employee may have other assessment reports or you may want to consult with a language expert.

Communication in the Workplace is a Two-Way Street
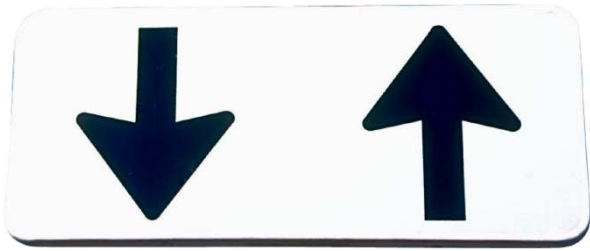
To build on the skills and resources that ITIs offer a workplace, it is essential to develop an inclusive environment. Unfortunately, workplace communication often presents challenges to ITIs and may make them feel excluded. Think about your own workplace: Are your organization's in-house language and terms user-friendly? Are acronyms and idioms frequently used in meetings? Does everyone understand them? Do information posters contain difficult technical and non-technical language? Are many cultural references used in the workplace?

It is often useful to stand back, and watch and listen to other people as they communicate. Review your own speech, emails and documents. Are they clear and easy to understand?

Here are a few tips to make communication easier for everyone:

- Give all new employees a glossary of corporate acronyms.

- Have a team of reviewers check corporate communications.

- Encourage feedback on language and communication issues.

- Make it easy and non-threatening for ITIs to raise communication issues.

- Provide communication skills training for all employees who need it, and not just for second-language speakers.

- Use *Clear Speech* or *Plain Language* to facilitate good communication. Both terms describe how to use language in writing and speaking, so that everyone can easily understand what is being said.

- Practice what you preach. Set a good example by always reviewing your own communications and having a colleague proofread your documents.

Code of Practice for Communicating with Limited English Speakers

A good place to review your corporate communication is with the following communication code of practice taken from Dini Steyn's *Walk a Mile: The Immigrant Experience in Canada*. This code of practice includes points that might seem very obvious but that are often overlooked.

1. Provide Clear Instructions

Use short sentences.

Use words that describe a sequence: First, Second, Third…

Use gestures or actions to illustrate a point.

Avoid long, embedded sentences with before, after, if (conditional), therefore, etc.

Avoid the passive voice, e.g. "The work was completed".

Rephrase complex sentences using different words.

Check frequently for understanding, and break instructions into small fragments.

Use visuals to illustrate the text (maps, diagrams, pictures, etc.).

Write new words down and discuss meanings in context (keep paper and pencil handy at all times).

Avoid idioms, jargon, slang. Summarize at the end of a discussion to ensure mutual understanding of main points.

2. Check for Understanding

Don't just accept a "yes" or "no" answer or a nod when asking, "Do you understand?"

Don't ask questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no".

Ask for verbal feedback:

(a) "What did I ask you to do?"
(b) "What did you understand?"
(c) "Can you repeat what I said?"
(d) "How should you….?"
(e) "Where, when…?"
(f) "Can you show me?"

Model polite "interruption phrases" ...

(a) "Excuse me, could you please repeat that word/sentence/instruction?"
(b) "I didn't understand that. Could you repeat it, please?"
(c) "What was that you said?"
(d) "I'm sorry. I didn't get that. Could you slow down?"
(e) "Could you speak more slowly, please?"
(f) "Could you please explain what _____ means?"
(g) "Could you repeat that last instruction/word/sentence/question?"

Be sensitive to non-verbal clues that indicate confusion or frustration.

Give a limited English speaker a chance to explain further. Ask for more information if necessary. Be patient and allow more time (you may be tempted to interrupt and fill in the gaps).

Try to make the employee aware of making a language mistake by repeating the incorrect word (providing an opportunity to self-correct) or by correcting the mistake if it changes the meaning of the message.

3. Communication Do's and Don'ts

Don't be concerned by a lack of eye contact. In many cultures, it is a sign of respect.

Do be aware that common, everyday gestures used in Canada may mean something different to newcomers and immigrants.

Do be aware that your personal space requirement might be larger or smaller than is comfortable for the person you talk to.

Do be aware that physical contact is an important part of communication in some cultures.

Don't be offended by laughter. In many cultures, laughter shows embarrassment or uncertainty.

Do be aware that language that sounds rude or abrupt may just be a direct transfer of the intonation from the other language.

Do try to pronounce the person's name correctly and don't give English nicknames unless requested.

Do learn something about the person's culture.

Don't stereotype. [1]

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[1] Walk a Mile: The Immigrant Experience in Canada. Dini Steyn.. © 2000. Open Learning Agency.

Unfamiliar words and phrases

Many of us speak without thinking about the listener. We are busy and forget that our language often represents our culture and our expectations.

A few years ago, a manufacturing company was encouraging teambuilding activities. The company was growing rapidly and a large number of employees were ITIs. One **lunch time, an announcement came over the loudspeaker: "***There's a scavenger hunt right now.***"** Hundreds of workers watched, uncomprehending, as a handful of colleagues dashed around solving clues and collecting articles. The teambuilding exercise failed miserably.

Can you think of times when you have used idioms or North American expressions that may have left your audience confused? There are many everyday language expressions used in workplaces that can be very confusing to ITIs:

- Get out of here!
- pot-luck
- way to go
- on the double
- double-double
- TGIF
- I need it yesterday

Think about expressions, idioms or acronyms that are frequently used in your organization/sector. Are they easily understood by everyone? How can you make communication clearer?

Corporate slang

The use of corporate slang or **buzz words,** such as **paradigm shift, critical mass, it is what it is, low-hanging fruit** and **700 lb gorilla** are annoying for many listeners but can create more confusion for listeners for whom English is a second language.

Two hundred and fifty advertising professionals and marketing executives recently listed their most annoying examples of corporate slang:

- Integrated solution
- Momentarily
- CRM (customer-relationship management)
- Customer-centric
- Make it pop
- Break through the clutter
- Take it to the next level
- Free value
- Organic growth

Review your corporate communications frequently to ensure that they are readable and stand the test of time.

Dave Willmer, of The Creative Group, **noted that "….the strongest communicators keep their message simple"** and that "direct concrete statements are the most powerful and persuasive."[1]

Pronunciation

Accents and pronunciation can create difficulties in the workplace; even regional accents of the same language create problems. It is important not to disregard or filter out ITI job candidates or employees because of accents or pronunciation. Having a strong accent does not imply a low language level; however, pronunciation can impede communication.

If necessary, seek the advice of second language experts to work with clients or employees; there are many issues with accents that can be improved with specialized training.

Remember that we all have an accent. Make clear communication the focus of all workplace activities. Make team meetings an opportunity to demonstrate good practices and to encourage colleagues to ask for clarification.

Some ITIs may feel held back by an *accent ceiling,* which is when ITIs feel that their accents are affecting their progress in the workplace. In these cases, accent reduction classes may be helpful. For the majority of adult ESL speakers, however, such classes will not eliminate an accent.

There are many courses, tapes and texts available to help ITIs improve speech clarity.

The following links may provide pronunciation help:

www.international.ouc.bc.ca/pronunciation
www.speech.cs.cmu.edu/cgi-bin/cmudict
www.cooldictionary.com
www.englishclub.com/pronunciation/index.htm
www.merriam-webster.com/help/audiofaq.htm

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[1] *Recycle old buzzwords when they pass best-before dates.* Business Edge News Magazine. (January 26, 2007.) Vol.3. No.2.

Social Interactions

Whether at the water cooler, en route to work or in the lunchroom, there are times when employees need to interact socially. For ITIs, developing good social interaction skills can improve their chances of being hired or of retaining their jobs.

You may want to provide opportunities for employees to learn more about each other. Lunch-and-learn programs are often a great way to expose employees to other cultures.

Small talk is an important aspect of social interaction. In Canadian culture, it is safe to discuss the weather, sports, current events or traffic. In other cultures, it may be acceptable to discuss things like a person's wages, prices and personal questions, such as marital status. Most ITIs may appreciate your suggestions about appropriate topics for discussion, and about subjects to avoid.

The benefits for ITIs able to use small talk include generating trust, building relationships and increasing their comfort levels. The benefits do not apply to ITIs only. A Stanford University study[1] of MBAs, a decade after graduation, found that the best indicator of success was their ability to converse, not their marks at school.

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[1] Described in an article on small talk taken from the CNN website, Careerbuilder.com. www.cnn.com/2005/US/Careers/03/03/small.talk/index.html.

Communication Best Practices

The following pages describe some best practices to use in the workplace. Although these are intended to support work with ITIs, they are relevant to all employees.

Making a presentation

Confucius said, "*I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.*"[1] This is a good best practice to follow for all presenters, and especially helpful for second-language speakers.

A visual image "speaks a thousand words" to clarify your message, while performing a demonstration provides a further opportunity to get the message across clearly.

Refer to the following set of guidelines to improve all your presentations to all employees, including those whose second language is English.

Do:	Do not:	Comments:
Make presentations short, with opportunities to demonstrate, show examples or try things out. Incorporate graphics or other forms of visual displays. Provide handouts. Give definitions of terms or acronyms used during the presentation. Ask employees to demonstrate the procedures being presented as part of the assessment.	Have long, lecture-type presentations. Use text-only methods of presentation. Use lots of technical language or jargon. Base assessment of training on a written or computerized assessment only.	Doing presentations is the number one fear for many people.[2] Graphics often make it easier to understand a message. Remember the saying that "*a picture speaks a thousand words*." Listening is often difficult for second-language speakers, so provide handouts to help them to recall main points, to refer back to later or to find out what some words may mean.

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[1] The Quotation's Page. www.quotationspage.com/quote/25848.html.

[2] *How Fear of Speaking Can Make You a Better Presenter.* Larry Tracy. (2003.) www.web-source.net/web_development/public_speaking.htm.

Using the telephone

Refer to this set of guidelines to improve the telephone skills of all employees, including those whose second language is English.

Do:	Do not:	Comments:
Speak slowly and clearly. Provide message pads. Spell your name and other details of your message if required. Ask speakers to spell names and addresses if necessary, and then read the information back to ensure accuracy. Include telephone use training as part of the orientation for all employees; include role plays. Provide scripts as examples of appropriate voice mail messages or protocols for answering the telephone. Provide guidelines and clear written instructions for setting up mailboxes.	Speak quickly. Give telephone numbers, addresses or other details only once. Ask new employees to set up voice mail without training or help from a co-worker or mentor.	When talking on the telephone with someone whose first language is not English, remember that they do not have your facial expressions or gestures to help them understand the message. The sound on the telephone may be unclear and ITIs may find it difficult to distinguish between similar words over the telephone. Speaking fast will make it much harder for others to understand information, such as telephone numbers, when taking messages. Setting up voice mail and accessing messages can be challenging for newcomers. (We asked 15 newcomers to set up a mailbox for voice mail. Every person had difficulty with the task; however, when we mentored them on the task, it became easier.)

Clarifying and confirming

There are many situations where it is important to double-check information. This is especially true at work, where major health, safety or other issues can result from not clarifying or confirming instructions, directions or information received from a co-worker. Here are some best practices to follow to ensure that your written and spoken communications are understood.

Do:	Do not:	Comments:
Speak at a moderate speed and be prepared to rephrase terms if required. Write instructions down, or provide them as follow up in an email, so that others are clear on what to do or what is expected. Use plain language. Ask listeners to repeat information, to show comprehension of your message. Ask for demonstrations of procedures or processes that the company expects employees to follow (e.g. International Organizational Standards (ISO) procedures).	Speak quickly and say things only once. Give only spoken instructions. **Ask, "Do you understand?"** without waiting for a reply. Accept a nod of the head as confirmation that your message or instructions were understood.	Refer to the communication best practices provided in this book. Remember that non-verbal language often has different meanings in other cultures. In several cultures, head gestures used to show agreement and disagreement are the opposite of those used in North America.

Giving and receiving instructions

We give or receive instructions all the time. If we buy a new appliance, for example, we receive instructions on how to install or use it. If there is a new procedure for a work task, employees need instructions on how to do the task.

In some occupations, the employee must also provide instructions to others. For example:

▪ A nurse gives a patient instructions on how to take care of a surgical wound

▪ A technical support person gives telephone instructions to a customer on how to connect to the Internet

▪ A gas station attendant may give directions to a tourist attraction

▪ A team leader emails the approval process for a particular project to the team

Do:	Do not:	Comments:
Speak slowly and clearly. Provide written instructions. Remember that doing two tasks (e.g. reading and listening) at the same time can be very difficult for some people. Ask the employee to repeat instructions. Set up a process for a supervisor or mentor in the organization to proofread any important correspondence (e.g. reports, letters, etc.). Encourage the use of spell/grammar checking tools, but remember that these tools miss some errors.	Speak quickly or give only verbal instructions. Expect listeners to take notes and write or read information at the same time during a presentation or meeting. Ask, **"Do you understand?"** without waiting for a reply. Forget to build in time for review of products, designs or reports that are to be distributed outside the team or to customers as part of your quality review process. Hand in or send business correspondence, reports, etc. without a final edit/review. Rely only on software spell and grammar checking tools.	Ensure that instructions are clear and concise. Take into account that, in some cultures, time is viewed in a different context, and people from some cultures may not be as punctual as is expected in North America. State clearly the deadlines, i.e. date and/or time for completing the work. This way, it is clear what the time limitations are for all involved personnel.

Handling a problem at work

The following table provides information about what to do and not do when dealing with problems at work. Remember that some internationally trained employees may take a slightly different approach to handling problems because of their cultural training. Some examples of problems at work might be:

- Personality conflicts between co-workers
- Dealing with difficult customers or clients
- Misunderstandings on the format to be used when writing reports
- Gender conflicts (e.g. a male resenting having to report to a female manager)

Do:	Do not:	Comments:
Provide training or strategies on how to handle difficult situations (e.g. irate customers). Often role playing will provide an opportunity for practicing the strategies. Provide training on how to participate in and run meetings; emphasize the roles of each person. Develop and inform employees of rules for interactions. Refer to the communication best practices earlier in this book. Promote the code of practice at all levels in the company. Develop a template for completing various types of reports, including incident or accident reports. Train employees on how to complete various reports and forms. Provide good examples to which an employee can refer (e.g. in an orientation binder or on the intranet). Encourage teamwork and compromise. Provide training and a workplace culture that promotes inclusiveness and respect for all. Contact a professional to help with cross-cultural sensitivity training, or resolution if a problem persists.	Expect an employee to deal with customers alone on the first day. Ask new employees to chair or organize a meeting. Show disrespect to a manager, co-worker or other person, or permit others to do so. Ignore a problem and hope that it will go away.	In some cultures, men may not be used to reporting to a female supervisor. Involve and introduce the manager to candidates during an interview, or discuss the composition of the team, e.g. "Our department is made up of three men and two women who report to Mrs. Jane Brown." Many bridging or training programs may help newcomers to realize that men and women are equals in the Canadian workplace. In some cultures, there are strict social rules related to how men and women can interact, even at work. For example, it might be uncomfortable for a female and male co-worker to work together in a room without others present. If travel is a job requirement, make sure to mention this in the job posting or during the interview to avoid problems later.

Using email

The following are suggested best practices for writing and sending email correspondence, as well as some ideas about how files should be shared on a corporate network.

Do:	Do not:	Comments:
Provide network, file storage, email training, online messaging/chat policies and other Information Technology (IT) procedures/policies during the orientation period. This is something a mentor can help with. Provide training on email etiquette for all employees. Use a clear subject line to indicate the main purpose of the email. Inform employees that emails are documents that employers have the right to view or monitor. Remind them that this also applies to computer use. Raise awareness that emails are public documents that can be sent and re-sent repeatedly, once released. Remind employees that emails are legal forms of correspondence. This is important when corresponding with customers, clients, etc. Remember that sending an email as soon as you write it can lead to errors or consequences later, e.g. noticing that it was sent to the wrong person, finding spelling/grammatical mistakes, forgetting to add an attachment. Avoid using all capital letters, which is the equivalent of shouting. Remember that each paragraph should cover one main idea or topic. Ask yourself whether each paragraph has an introduction, supporting sentences (1 or 2) and a concluding sentence. Keep the message brief and to the point.	Tell the employee to start using your **company's messaging** software without training. Use acronyms or jargon in emails. Use smiling or happy faces. Reply to all, including those who do not need to see a response. Leave the subject line blank. Assume an email is private. Send legal, very personal or confidential details or information in an email. Send an email as soon as you write it. Use all capital letters in words or sentences.	Many email users use a level of informality in personal emails in their corporate emails as well. Having clear protocols for email use is important for all employees. Remember, each employee represents your organization and this is reflected in how written messages are handled. It may be useful for ITIs to have a set of guidelines to help them with business writing tasks, such as emails and reports. Writing styles vary from culture to culture. In North American culture, we tend to be direct and to the point. Our writing expectations reflect this, especially in business. In other cultures, more time is spent building up to a point or digressing into related topics before getting to the main idea. This often transfers over into a second language speaker's English writing. Having a mentor or counsellor proofread important pieces of written work can be useful and can become a learning experience for an ITI. Proofreading of important documents should be a corporate policy.

Holding or attending a meeting

The following table contains some best practices for participating in and managing meetings.

Do:	Do not:	Comments:
Train employees on how to take part in a meeting, whether as the leader, the note taker or as a participant. Manage the meeting. Limit the number of speakers or the time that a person has to speak. You may want to use a timer. As chair, invite all members of the meeting to participate, especially quieter ones. Have an agenda and take brief minutes. Enforce a policy of no personal electronics (e.g. cell phones, Blackberries, etc.) during a meeting. Hold meetings only when you have business to discuss or review, so that everyone takes them seriously. Have stand-up or hallway meetings if appropriate (as long as discussions do not interfere with the work of others).	Sit quietly without participating. Talk too much at a meeting. Run a meeting without a clear purpose or goal. Have long, ineffective meetings. Hold meetings for every little thing. Use your Blackberry, laptop or cell phone during the meeting. Make sarcastic or inappropriate remarks. Tolerate bad language or rudeness.	Enforce good meeting management practices for everyone in the company. Make sure the company language trainer includes participating in and conducting of meetings as part of company training for ITIs.

Making requests

The following are some best practices when making requests at work.

Do:	Do not:	Comments:
State what you want clearly (e.g. ask to see a report/budget this afternoon at 2 p.m.). Request politely but firmly what you want from a co-worker/supervisor or employee. Provide assertiveness training to all employees, using role plays, videos and analysis of scenarios. In the training, discuss the differences between assertiveness, aggressiveness and passivity, and how these characteristics may be demonstrated in North America. Allow a reasonable amount of time for a request to be completed before following up. Provide enough notice to complete a task.	Make veiled requests (e.g. **"Is your report ready yet?"** or "Did you get a chance to look over the draft I sent you?") Coerce or bully a co-worker, employee or supervisor. Wait for people to voluntarily hand in something if they have not previously been given a deadline. Speak louder to a second language speaker with limited skills than you would to someone who speaks English fluently.	In western cultures, directness is important in most interactions and communications at work. In some cases, a newcomer may sound blunt due to a lack of understanding of the nuances of English. Sometimes a request will sound like a command. Refer to the Communication best practices earlier in this book for tips on clearer communication.

New employee orientation

The following are some suggested best practices for new employee orientation.

Do:	Do not:	Comments:
Provide new employees with initial orientation to the organization, co-workers, products, key personnel and their roles, etc. Use a mentoring model, pairing the new worker with a more experienced employee. Consider using a mentor who does not speak the same first language, which will encourage the new employee to speak English. Provide an opportunity for questions and answers on orientation materials. Offer training on using your telephone system as part of the orientation. Set up a place where common work procedures are available for new employees to read (e.g. a binder, intranet, etc.). Train all employees on what the company does to avoid knowledge gaps. (This could be a part of the mentoring activities.) Walk through the facility and provide a simple map. Introduce the new employee to existing employees. Inform new hires about house league sports or other activities that the company offers (e.g. hockey, volleyball, dragon boat tournaments, etc.) and invite them to join. Give the new employee a list of vital acronyms or corporate terms. Introduce the new employee to an assigned mentor or buddy. Assist if there are any questions or situations that require help.	Put a new employee to work without some orientation. Forget to inform new employees of special rules, safety requirements or procedures. Provide product presentations or online training without any process for assessing comprehension of the content. Sit the new employee at a desk with a pile of procedures, company policies and other information to read, without providing support. Expect new hires to immediately know where everything is in your organization. Forget to offer ongoing orientation to new employees.	Providing a well thought out orientation for new employees can make the transition into the new workplace easier for both the new hire and the company.

Documentation

The following table has suggested best practices for creating or revising written documentation for the Internet and for business documents.

Do:	Do not:	Comments:
Use easy-to-read font types (e.g. Arial, Garamond or Verdana). Include simple graphics and charts. Ensure that graphics and charts are clearly identified and readable. Follow clear communication and plain speaking rules. Have a company style guide that includes protocols for email, business letters, reports and presentations, as well as website font sizes, etc. Have a process for final editing of materials before they are published. Apply this policy to materials that are translated as well.	Use very complicated, artistic fonts, or fonts that look like handwriting. Use a lot of complicated graphics/charts. Use lots of jargon, uncommon terms, acronyms or complicated sentence structures. Let employees send anything out that does not follow corporate styles. Publish or print anything without editing it.	Keep written communication as simple and as uncluttered as possible.

WORK READY

SECTION IV: CASE STUDIES

On the following pages are case studies from across Canada that show innovative and successful programs, practices and workplace interventions for ITIs.

Find out how hiring immigrants has been a win-win situation for all concerned.

NorQuest College Engineering English in the Workplace for Internationally Trained Professionals

Overview

The purpose of NorQuest College's Engineering English in the Workplace for Internationally Trained Professionals was to broaden the interpersonal communication skills of ITIs Its purpose was also to develop the skills needed for these ITIs to work effectively in a multicultural environment.

This 10-month innovative project sprang from a routine work-experience placement at an engineering company for a NorQuest College student. The company identified company-specific language and cultural issues that needed to be addressed. The friction was affecting employee relations as well as client interactions. The company approached NorQuest College for assistance in meeting the needs of its internationally trained engineers, which was 10% of its total workforce.

Program objectives

- Conduct a needs assessment that would accurately assess the specific communication skill gaps experienced by internationally trained engineers

- Develop programming referenced to CLB, including specific tasks and activities to address the gaps

- Deliver the programming onsite at the engineering company in 40 sessions

- Encourage a high degree of employee participation in self-evaluation of language need

- Raise awareness of how increased language proficiency would enhance work performance, job satisfaction and job maintenance

- Accelerate the acquisition of both workplace culture and language

- Facilitate greater comfort and understanding, maximize the extensive experience of internationally-trained engineers and place them on a more even playing field with their colleagues

Skill objectives

Oral Communication:

- Speak with proficiency/fluency to be understood with less effort by peers, leads, management and clients

- Use interpersonal communication skills that will enhance occupation-specific skills

- Communicate in routine work and social situations

- Use ongoing self assessment tools/methods/checklists

Written Communication:

- Write to be clear and concise, coherent, objective and subjective

- Apply self-editing skills to future work

Working Effectively in a Multicultural Environment:

- Integrate multicultural sensitivity and competence
- Communicate easily with colleagues/clients in informal/formal work settings
- Be comfortable in a variety of workplace environments
- Seek clarification for understanding
- Speak with confidence
- Offer opinions and comments
- Pursue resources needed for enhancing performance

Project activities

- Conduct organizational and individual needs assessments including Step One – Consultation, Interviews and Focus Groups; Step Two – Job Shadowing; Step Three – CLB Assessment; Step Four – Employee Self-Identification Questionnaire; Step Five – 360° Feedback Survey; and, Step Six – Video and Voice Interviews
- Develop instructional materials
- Deliver instruction
- Perform student and program evaluations

Learning activities

- Provide or ask for details/procedures regarding a work task
- Provide or ask for multiple opinions/options regarding a work task
- Plan a work schedule to coordinate teamwork assignment
- Respond to or make a minor complaint
- Solve a controversial cultural problem in a group
- Explain a complex procedure/process
- Explain a complex structure
- Tell a story, including an anecdote
- Give an oral public report on a conference attended
- Use knowledge of occupation-specific content (e.g. technical terms, standards) to give a demonstration/briefing about a program/product/service/issue in a department
- Compare and contrast, make analyses, present trends/scope/hypotheses with a graph about an issue/development in contemporary engineering
- Contribute or co-manage a small work meeting/discussion
- Invite, decline and show appreciation for an offer/invitation
- Leave a detailed voice-mail message for a routine business call
- Deliver or troubleshoot a negative message

- Make or cancel an appointment/arrangement

- Take live telephone messages with five to seven details

- Carry on a brief telephone conversation in a professional manner

- Give clear detailed oral information to someone so he or she can carry out complex multi-step instructions for a familiar technical process/procedure

- Order parts of a short and long formal technical report

- Solicit/give information to solve a technical engineering problem

- Negotiate and persuade through informal debate on a topic affecting engineering

- Respond to a request for counsel or advice on a personal problem

- Research and inform a colleague on professional development opportunities in the company

Achievements

- English in the workplace and intercultural training was made a regular part of the **company's training and professional d**evelopment, and was expanded into another joint-venture company.

- Intercultural training was provided for native-born Canadians employed at the company.

- Three annual, 36-hour language-training sessions were offered at the company, as part of the professional development opportunities for internationally graduated engineers.

- Language and intercultural training was provided for spouses of internationally graduated engineers.

Benefits

- Internationally graduated engineers integrate more smoothly into the organization and therefore employee retention is higher.

- Conflicts resulting from miscommunication or cross-cultural misunderstanding were reduced.

- Managers are more inclined to promote and mentor internationally graduated engineers due to the established training program that is in place.

- The classroom provides a non-threatening arena for open dialogue between instructors and internationally graduated engineers on topics the students may not feel comfortable talking about in a typical workplace environment. This therefore allows discussion of the often-ignored internal dialogue about challenges and negative judgments, which are part of the settlement and integration processes.

Large Manufacturing Organization

Overview

Elena was employed in a large manufacturing company in Ottawa. She was hired as a junior administrative assistant in the human resources department and impressed her supervisor with her enthusiasm and hard work. When an opportunity arose, Elena was promoted to a position where she reported directly to the departmental manager and where she spent much of her time communicating on the telephone and in-person with employees and government agencies.

Within a very short time, Elena and her manager were very frustrated. Elena was finding it difficult to communicate effectively, especially over the telephone. Messages were transmitted incorrectly and her manager lacked confidence in Elena's ability to do her job. Fortunately, the company had used the services of an English as a Second Language (ESL) trainer of in the past and sent out a call for help.

Objectives

The trainer went to the company and met with Elena and her manager to discuss the situation, and to conduct language and needs assessments. The language assessment, coupled with job-specific information supplied by the manager, showed that Elena needed to improve her listening and writing skills to perform her job better. She was given a three-month probationary period to improve her skills so that she could retain the new position.

Skill objectives

The trainer job-shadowed Elena for a day prior to setting up a training plan. At the end of the day, some practical steps were put in place to help Elena to do her job better while she worked on her English.

Oral Communication:

- The manager got into the habit of confirming with Elena that she understood what it was that the manager required her to do.

Written Communication:

- Elena began taking a notebook when meeting with her manager so that she could record what she had to do. Previously, she had relied on her memory because she thought it would be considered unprofessional to be writing while her manager was talking.

- She and the trainer set up a customized message pad so that Elena could write messages more clearly.

Learning activities

- ESL classes were held twice weekly. Each class was two hours long. The first hour, which Elena did before she was due to be at work, was unpaid. The company paid her while she did the second hour of training.

- The course used authentic workplace materials in every class. Elena practiced using the telephone, transmitting messages and reporting on meetings.

- Her manager played an active role in supporting and following up on the training.

Achievements

After three months, Elena successfully completed her probationary period; she continued her ESL training in a group class held at the company outside work hours.

Benefits

The company was able to retain a more confident employee able to deal with specific job tasks that, without the extra targeted training, might have left her unable to pass her probationary period. The company also implemented a group training opportunity for other employees outside work hours.

The CCLB gratefully acknowledges the cooperation of ASTEC Inc. in producing this case study.

| **ELT for Police Project** |

Overview

Enhanced Language Training[1] (ELT) for the Police Project is a result of a partnership between Graybridge Malkam, the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) and the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). It is part of a joint effort to recruit more immigrants for the OPS and the OPP in order to reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the city's population. Both the OPS and the OPP offer extensive support to the delivery of the program (e.g. presentations, mentoring, physical preparation tests, visits to a police station, ride-alongs). Graybridge Malkam's partnership with the OPS and OPP has evolved during the course, **and without the police services' extensive support, the delivery of the program would** not be possible; they are an integral part of the program.

The project, with its recognition of community-specific needs, is action-oriented, and it develops an awareness of police matters, preparing participants for policing tasks/activities and demands. Most of these tasks can be applied to police services in general. The program deals with authentic workplace issues, case studies and simulated work tasks. Language and study skills, as well as a cultural component, are part of the program. The complexity of the language training corresponds to Canadian Language Benchmarks 8–9.

Objectives

- Provide a customized language training program to immigrants who are interested in a policing career and whose language competencies are above benchmark 7

- Improve language and employment readiness skills, and assist in developing contacts and networking opportunities with the police

- Promote partnership at the community level, and provide support for inclusion and for creating shared points of contact

- Strengthen social cohesion within the community and improve communication channels between the community and the police by breaking down barriers. This provides a better understanding of police in the community

- Contribute to developing a police force that is representative of the city's and province's population, and increase police credibility with different immigrant groups

- Help new immigrants acquire a higher level of job-specific language ability, and increase their chances of reaching their social and economic potentials

- Help maximize the labour force and social contributions of immigrants

Skill objectives

- Language skills development (all four competencies)

- Presentation skills development (video-taped and reviewed in class)

- Workplace-specific language skills development (police-specific)

- Clarity of speech (pronunciation, stress, accent)

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[1] The **Enhanced Language Training Initiative** is a federally-funded initiative by Citizenship and Immigration Canada to provide higher–level occupational ESL training to immigrants to help fast-track their entry into various occupations and professions.

- Cross-cultural competence development

- Learn about the role of police in Canada

- Study skills (multiple choice, police-specific tests)

Learning activities

- Practice for physical preparation test

- Meet police representatives to network and learn about the application process

- Ride-along with police officers

- Attend the OPP camp in Orillia for a week

- Interview candidates (by police recruiting officers) to assess their aptitudes and interest in working in the police service

- Visit the main OPS station and OPP detachment units

- Write quizzes at the end of each unit and practice individual online police tests

Achievements

- The participants acquired a higher level of ability to use job-specific language and have better chances of reaching their social and economic potentials.

- The project has kept channels open between Graybridge Malkam, the OPS, the OPP and learners; changes have been made to the curriculum as needed.

- The project took into account the OPS and the OPP organizational cultures and integrated them into the learning process. Police representatives and ethnic groups' representatives participated in developing assessment and training materials.

- The project has provided proof that a partnership model is an efficient way of integrating immigrants into a community.

Benefits

- The partnership with the OPS and OPP has had a positive impact on the immigrant community in Ottawa. It promotes good relations and trust at the community level, and provides support for inclusion and for creating shared points of contact. The partnership has developed police service relationships with Ottawa ethnic communities.

- The OPS, OPP, Graybridge Malkam and the immigrant community have developed their own solutions, which respond directly to local needs and make the most of local strengths. The partnership has strengthened social cohesion of the community and has improved communication channels between the community and the police.

- Since January 2004, Graybridge Malkam has worked with five groups of students.

Mentoring

Overview

Since 2005, the North American Association of Asian Professionals (NAAAP-Toronto) has run a community-based mentorship program. One of its target groups is internationally trained professionals seeking to gain relevant work experience to re-establish themselves in the career for which they were educated before coming to Canada. Although internationally trained professionals are one target group for the Mentorship Program, other groups being mentored include university students, recent graduates, aspiring entrepreneurs and working professionals contemplating a career or job change.

Alice Zhang is a success story from the NAAAP-Toronto Mentorship Program. She is a single mother in her forties, and is a highly educated and experienced foreign-trained professional with a Masters in Engineering and many years of experience in China. Arriving in Canada in the late 1990s, she was unable to find work in her field, and worked in unrelated low-paying jobs.

Objectives

The objectives of the mentorship program for internationally trained professionals are to promote understanding of the Canadian workplace and to develop employability skills through access to role models. These objectives are fulfilled through a combination of:

- Job shadowing and attending staff/client meetings

- Attending professional association meetings/events

- Helping mentees to set short- and long-term goals

- **Pointing out mentees' strengths and areas for improvement**

- Recommending and/or creating learning opportunities

- Helping mentees to enlarge their personal networks

NAAAP-Toronto has made the Mentorship Program accessible to individuals who may have been too intimidated to take steps to participate in a mainstream mentorship program because they feel that their command of the English language is poor. Application forms ask both mentors and mentees about languages spoken; mentees who feel more comfortable speaking Mandarin or Cantonese have been matched with mentors who speak their dialect.

Activities

Through the mentorship pilot program, Alice was matched with a mentor that had connections in her field. The mentor uncovered potential contract opportunities with the City of Toronto. At the same time, Alice identified a job opportunity with a company in Boston. Her mentor worked with her to enhance her résumé and interview skills, and answered **Alice's** many questions through the entire process. In the end, Alice accepted an engineering job with the company in Boston. Alice said, "I have never had anyone help me so much before!"

Benefits

Through the Mentorship Program, internationally trained professionals have the opportunity to leave low paying jobs unrelated to their skills and education, and to access the guidance and networks of an experienced professional in their fields.

Mentorship programs are a cost-effective vehicle for developing talent and transferring knowledge to enhance the pool of skilled workers available to Canadian organizations, which leads to increased employment, stronger companies and reduced dependency on social services.

The CCLB gratefully acknowledges the cooperation of Sandra Lim in producing this case study.

VoiceJob/SpeedJobbing

Overview

VoiceJob is a Montréal-based recruiting company that specializes in dealing with immigrants. It is the first and only service in Canada connecting employers and job seekers through SpeedJobbing™ **and the use of** curriculum vitae (CV) videos. The company deals with the following sectors:

- Customer service

- Sales

- Banking and finance

- Insurance

- Telemarketing

- Administration

- Health

- Engineering

- Information technology (IT)

The company uses two methods of filling employers' needs:

- CV videos — An online video format where candidates can introduce and sell their skill sets to employers, complementing their written curriculum vitae (i.e. résumés)

- SpeedJobbing — A pre-selection event that allows candidates to express themselves and employers to validate the interpersonal skills of future employees

Objectives

VoiceJob provides an online introduction service for employers and candidates as part of a panel of innovative recruitment solutions for occasional needs, massive recruiting, pre-selection of candidates and annual recruitment strategies.

Activities

The formula is simple:

- A candidate makes an appointment to have a CV video done in the VoiceJob office

- The candidate is pre-screened and submits a paper résumé

- Employers have the opportunity to visualize each candidate in the VoiceJob database

- Employers can post an unlimited number of job offers

- Candidates receive job alerts by email

SpeedJobbing is an opportunity for candidates to meet employers in a controlled environment. The process is as follows:

- Employers arrive at an event (i.e. in a restaurant or hotel) and each is seated at a *speed table*

- Each employer meets with a pre-screened candidate who matches or exceeds the **employer's** criteria

- Each candidate has eight minutes to introduce him/herself and to talk about skills and abilities with the employer

- After eight minutes, a bell rings and another candidate **moves to the employer's** table; the process is repeated

Achievements

- VoiceJob reports approximately a 70% success rate in placing candidates, with both CV videos and SpeedJobbing.

- The company is currently opening an office in Paris, France to help those looking for a position in Québec with the preparation of a CV video.

- Plans are underway to expand the service to other provinces in Canada.

Benefits

- Candidates can show employers some of their personality and demonstrate their language abilities (in English and/or French) in the CV videos, while highlighting their occupational skills and experience.

- Employers save time screening applicants and setting up interviews.

The CCLB gratefully acknowledges the cooperation of VoiceJob in producing this case study.

> ### *English in the Workplace* and *Welcome Home to Canada:*
> ### Programs for Newcomers to Halifax

English in the Workplace (EWP) is a program run by the Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre. Operating since 1993, it is jointly funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration. The mandate is to support employed and self-employed immigrants in their workplaces, teaching them the language skills they need to work as effectively as possible. Up to 15 different workplaces can be accommodated for training at a time. Since September 2005, language training has been provided at Pier 21 in Halifax, which is an immigration museum and the location of the first point of entry for immigrants coming to Canada between 1928 and 1971.

The Welcome Home to Canada program is a project funded both federally (Service Canada Skills Link and Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and provincially (Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, and Community Services). Through this program, Pier 21 offers each newcomer a six-month work term, providing a job placement, Canadian work experience, professional and personal development, exposure to Canadian work culture and an opportunity to practice English language skills. Since many of the newcomers have no Canadian work experience, this work placement is invaluable. English in the Workplace supplements the work placement through courses that focus on specific work-related language skills and provide a cultural framework for the newcomer's experience of the job.

Objectives of English in the Workplace

- Provide customized, work-specific language and culture training

- Improve the employment integration of newcomers

- Support the welcoming nature of workplaces to newcomers by providing advice and resources

Objectives of Welcome Home to Canada

- Overcome barriers to employment that are experienced by newcomers, such as the lack of Canadian work experience and work references, and a lack of understanding about the Canadian work environment

- Provide an opportunity to gain work experience, improve language and communication skills, develop professional networks and be exposed to new business opportunities

Activities

Newcomers at Pier 21 perform duties throughout the facility, from tour guide and office clerk to workshop coordinator and research assistant. Since June 2004, over 50 newcomers to Canada have gained Canadian work experience at Pier 21 through the Welcome Home to Canada program. Another 15 newcomers are currently in the program.

English in the Workplace courses are 12 weeks long, with two 90-minute lessons per week. To date, seven courses have been offered to 31 newcomers at Pier 21. Training

includes development of communication skills, such as asking for clarification, paraphrasing and customer service language; development of listening, reading and writing skills; as well as cultural training, such as codes of conduct in the Canadian workplace. The courses are tailored to the needs of the participants.

Achievements

Of the over 50 participants who have completed the Welcome Home to Canada program, more than 75% have either found meaningful employment or returned to school to further their education. One of the participants is now employed at the Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre.

Benefits

Newcomers are more prepared for the labour market, which allows the labour market to fully benefit from their skills and experience. They have Canadian work experience, at least one Canadian work reference, more awareness of Canadian workplace culture and codes of conduct, and more developed language skills. These newcomers can move forward with confidence, whether furthering their training or seeking full-time employment in their areas of expertise.

The CCLB gratefully acknowledges the cooperation of the Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre and Pier 21 in producing this case study.

NBELT – New Brunswick Enhanced Language Training Program

Overview

With a population of approximately 125,000[1], Greater Moncton is one of the smaller metropolitan areas of Canada. Even though immigration numbers are perceived to be miniscule in relation to levels experienced by larger centres, new arrivals are definitely increasing. Moreover, given recent provincial initiatives, the figures are projected to escalate significantly within the next few years.

Because of a limited immigration recruitment capacity in the Greater Moncton Area, the Multicultural Association of the Greater Moncton Area (MAGMA) has had to be innovative in its approach, by offering training to internationally trained professionals and entrepreneurs in diverse sectors through a case management process.

Currently in its fourth intake, the New Brunswick Enhanced Language Training program (NBELT) consists of 16 weeks of full-time specialized upper-level English language training, orientation to the Canadian labour market, interview and employment preparation, job search assistance and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) training through portfolio development and information technology training. This is followed by paid work placements in a participant's field of expertise.

NBELT is jointly funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and by New **Brunswick's Department of Post**-Secondary Education, Training and Labour. The program is coordinated locally by MAGMA and provincially by the New Brunswick Multicultural Council (NBMC).

Objective

The NBELT program aims to help participants find and maintain professionally satisfying employment, commensurate with their skills, education and work experiences.

Learning activities

PLAR Training and Employment Counselling:

- Intake assessment of a participant's education/employment/training experience, interests and employment readiness needs

- PLAR profile development through the process of identifying, assessing and recognizing formal and informal prior learning

- International credential recognition

- Portfolio assembly, including evidence of learning, résumés, cover letters, interview practice and learning narrative compositions

- Public speaking, introductions and questions and answers with a guest speaker, to develop increased fluency and ease of communication in English

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[1] Statistics Canada. *Moncton, New Brunswick* (table). *2006 Community Profiles*. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007.

- Facilitation of training, networking, employment opportunities and work placements

Information Technology Training:

- Training in current commercial and open-source applications, including word processing, database, spreadsheet and presentation software

- Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), which concentrates on reading, writing, pronunciation and listening appropriate to a participant's skill level

- Hybrid online/offline instruction, covering a variety of topics (such as Canadian geography, history, government and culture) to help facilitate integration into Canadian society

- Online employment skills training

- Sector-specific software training

- ePortfolio creation

Enhanced English Training:

- Discussions and role plays examining workplace issues (e.g. dealing with complaints, health, work-related rights and obligations, telephone communication and etiquette)

- Daily opportunities to practice and enhance professional sector-specific English language fluency

- Teamwork and problem solving using workplace scenarios, awareness of domain issues in dealing with superiors and subordinates, Canadian workplace expectations

- Giving and receiving feedback in formal and informal work situations, including group interactions; contributing to work discussions

- Strategies for handling inappropriateness/cultural differences

- Summarizing, restating ideas, reviewing work, using comparisons, opposites and analysis to ensure understanding and communication of ideas through presentations

- Discussions and debates on issues, **such as cultural differences, Canada's** multicultural policy, culture shock and settlement issues, and workplace barriers

Achievements

- Successful delivery of NBELT program to four consecutive intakes

- Increased participant English proficiency from CLB 6–7 to CLB 7–8

- 96% participants successfully completed the classroom component

- 89% of participants have found professionally satisfying placements

- HR professionals are responsive to the newcomer placements and have subsequently offered permanent positions

- A mentorship support component is currently being developed and will be implemented in the upcoming programs

- The PLAR component has developed to incorporate the electronic version of the professional portfolio

- Partnerships are established in the business community

- Provincial nominees are assisted with entrepreneurial initiatives

Patti McNeil, District HR with Kent Building Supplies, speaks of an NBELT III participant from China:

"We really enjoy our placement. The employees here like him and they want him to work in their own departments. He has started to make announcements on the intercom. He makes our customers feel comfortable. We have been considering ways to promote him. I interviewed him with the Manager to see what kind of upcoming **positions we could offer him. He has a great attitude and work ethic. He's doing very well here."**

Benefits

- Employers have increased awareness of local workforce diversity challenges and solutions.

- Recruiters are more inclined to develop diversity in the workplace policies after participating in the program.

- The major barriers faced by newcomers when accessing the workforce are diminished.

- Participants form strong friendships and lasting support groups to assist in their settlement acclimatization and retention.

- **Program assessments indicate significant increase in participants' confidence and** motivational levels concerning language, workplace readiness, information technology and goal setting.

Manitoba Nurses Union

Overview

The Manitoba Nurses Union (MNU) offers support to internationally educated nurses (IENs) through programming and the creation of a specialized resource centre. Programming is developed around core materials created for Canadian culture and communication for nurses. This cultural communications program is designed specifically for practicing nurses and those seeking employment as nurses. Support and training are provided through a combination of online learning and face-to-face workshops and tutorials **offered onsite at MNU's resource centre.**

Manitoba has increasingly looked to immigration as part of the solution to meeting labour market shortages in health care facilities. MNU recognizes that support is needed for both internationally educated nurses and their employers in order to ease the transition as the immigrant nurses adapt to a new working environment. The program works with approximately 45 nurses per year, and continues to grow and expand its services. To support the educational staff and further development of programming at the resource centre, and to increase their ability to provide support within workplaces and regional communities, the union has now created a diversity coordinator position.

Program objectives

- Help internationally educated nurses make a smooth transition into the Canadian health care system

- Help internationally educated nurses communicate more effectively with clients, colleagues and employers through use of language, development of soft skills and knowledge of Canadian culture

- Increase knowledge of nursing-specific vocabulary and jargon

- Provide access to resources and develop basic computer skills

- Connect and network with other IENs to create a support system

- Improve employability prospects and boost confidence

Skill objectives

Nurses participate in the program work through lessons and workshops that focus on cultural communication and speaking skills, while also helping to increase grammar and writing skills. Those choosing to work through the core curriculum cover a range of skills presented within six themes:

- The Basics of Enquiry

- Therapeutic Communication

- Being Empathetic

- Assertive Communication

- Consolidation

- Functional Communication

Nurses with specific needs attend individualized tutorials and can receive support online and over the telephone. In these cases, individual objectives are set, depending on the unique challenges that the nurse is experiencing.

Learning activities and achievements

Case Study #1:

An out-of-town participant had difficulty communicating with her colleagues at work. She could not seem to present information or feedback in a way that colleagues could accept positively. She often received a defensive reaction when she spoke at meetings. Despite the distance from the resource centre, she was able to receive support through telephone conversations, email and online chats. Through these discussions, she was able to better understand the cultural context of these misunderstandings. Special attention was focused on developing a repertoire of phrases that would soften her tone and allow her to be assertive without being thought of as aggressive. She spent time working through the Assertive Communication section of the core curriculum. Her tutor helped her develop personalized strategies that she could apply to situations in the workplace.

Before getting support, this nurse felt pessimistic about her future in the workplace, and was considering quitting her job. After receiving support, she felt much more positive about her rapport with colleagues, and can note specific incidences where her softened tone and word choices have improved interactions and made work relationships more positive.

Case Study #2:

The resource centre can support participants at every stage of their integration. Another nurse approached the centre for help in the process of getting employment. By working through the core curriculum, she was able to improve her communication skills and understanding of cultural expectations; this both increased her employability and her confidence. Through individualized tutorials, the tutor was able to spend time reviewing interview questions specific to the industry, explaining protocol and working on after-interview letters.

The nurse successfully attained employment at a hospital. She continued to receive support from the tutors at the resource centre as she entered the workplace. She developed her communication skills throughout the transition into work. The ongoing support prevented challenges from arising and allowed issues to be addressed as they arose. The centre also recommended reading resources that she could use as she adapted to the Canadian health care setting.

Program benefits

- Nurses become more efficient in the workplace

- Better interpersonal communication with and among employees and employers

- Reduction in cultural- and language-related misunderstandings

- Increased confidence and integration of employees

- Higher employee retention

- New pool of nurses to fill shortages

- Improved computer and telephone skills

- The variety of learning options in the program, including the flexibility of distance education and face-to-face tutorials; study options that accommodate those who work shifts, study in full-time programs or have childcare demands

- **Access to the union's onsite** labour relation officers who offer career advice and support

Loewen Windows Pilot Project: New Employees' English Language Training Program

Overview

Loewen Windows (LW), the largest manufacturing company in southeast Manitoba, needed more workers for their expanding production of doors and windows. A worker in the plant approached the human resources manager to inform her that there were eight new families in his church, newly arrived from Germany; all these families had members who needed work. These men and women were skilled and employable, but not proficient in English—definitely not proficient enough to be safe in the workplace. The trainer assessed them at CLB 1 or 2, whereas a level of CLB 3 in listening, speaking and reading would seem to be a minimum requirement for functioning in the Loewen plant.

The human resources team initiated a pilot project in which eight men from these families, and an additional seven men, were given an offer of employment with the understanding that they take English training for the first 1½ hours of every shift for 25 weeks—a total of 150 hours of instruction. LW would provide the training onsite.

To ensure that the English instruction would provide language for transfer to the worksite, an instructor was contracted to prepare LW-specific content. The workers would be evaluated at the end of the training period on their integration into the worksite and on their English proficiency. Their continued employment at LW depended on this evaluation.

Objectives

The instructor and the HR department together determined the main goals of the pilot project. They determined that the goals of the course were primarily as follows:

- The trainees would be able to read safe work procedure documents and discuss them

- The trainees would be able to understand oral and written instructions related to their job

- The trainees would learn the language of LW culture: tools, procedures, products and LEAN manufacturing principles

- The trainees would be able to communicate orally with their co-workers and supervisors, and especially about safety and problem issues

- The trainees would be able to fully participate in LW production, using English when following and giving instructions, communicating and solving problems, making suggestions, using documents and participating in seminars and training sessions

Learning activities

The language instructor designed 15 units of study built around LW content, with specific skill development and language competency objectives for each unit. All the materials were created around texts from LW documents and pictures from the actual worksite.

Each unit had a series of learning activities and tasks that were interactive and mirrored the use of language in the worksite. The primary skills focused on were listening, speaking and reading.

The socio-cultural elements describing the appropriate way to ask for things, to accept and refuse requests, to ask for clarification or repetition, etc. were important elements of each unit.

Achievements

All of the workers have improved their English skills. All of the supervisors have reported that these trainees function in English in their departments.

The trainees commented in writing on their achievements as well. One wrote that he can now understand and follow instructions. Another commented that it makes for good teamwork if he can talk with his co-workers: he is pleased to be able to have conversations with them in English. All of the men can now read work instructions, work orders, safe work procedure documents and notices. They can talk, not only about the tools and machines used in the plant, but also about the parts of a window and the process of assembling them. Two other trainees stated how pleased they are to be able to appropriately ask for help and state that they have a problem. Another stated that he can talk to his team leader about his job and the working process. Three of the men are considering other job options within the company, and are also thinking of applying for further training in the field.

The success of this pilot project prompted LW to hire another 16 workers to be part of a second group being trained using the same curricula, materials and methodology as the first group. Reports of the achievements of these workers are also very good.

Benefits

This was a win-win situation for both the employer and the employees. The employer was able to hire skilled workers immediately and at the same time be certain that they were receiving appropriate language training for the worksite. The employees not only gained immediate employment, and thus were able to support their families, but also obtained workplace-specific English training onsite and during work hours, which helped to empower them and to allow them to function appropriately in English on the job.

SECTION V: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CCLB has created tools for professionals in the employment sector (community and social services sector), HR/recruitment, settlement, and education and training who work with older immigrant workers and immigrants preparing to work in non-regulated skilled or semi-skilled occupations.

The communication tools are:

Case Studies (pg. 92)

Tools for those working with mature workers (pg. 96)

Tools for those working with immigrants preparing to work in non-regulated skilled or semi-skilled occupations (pg. 138)

These tools are also available on CCLB's website:
www.language.ca

Disclaimer:

Although the Work Ready: CLB Resources for Counselling, Hiring and Working with Internationally Trained Individuals website may include links providing direct access to other Internet resources, including websites, the CCLB has not necessarily participated in the development of these other sites and does not exert any editorial or other control over these sites. The CCLB is not responsible for the accuracy or content of information contained in these sites. These site links are provided for information only for counsellors and HR professionals and were accessible at the time of publication.

WORK READY
Tools

Case Studies

• Overcoming Underemployment as a Mature Worker
• Moving up from an Entry Level Job
• Transitioning to a New Occupation as a Mature Worker

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canadiens

Overcoming Underemployment
as a Mature Worker

Overview: Ahmad Ali moved to Canada three years ago. He is a foreign trained professional in his fifties with a Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Cairo, Egypt. He has extensive experience in developing and delivering training programs for both the medical and banking industries. In his role as a trainer he was required to develop many kinds of multimedia tools to create effective training for both industries in his country. He had taken courses in graphic design, film directing and multimedia in Egypt which enabled him to create professional training and promotional resources such as training films, training guides and e-learning tools.

Obstacles: After three years in Canada, Ahmad Ali had still not found a job in his field of expertise. He had applied for several positions as a graphic designer or multimedia specialist and found that most employers were looking for young talent who had mastered both official languages. Most of the multimedia samples in his portfolio were created in Arabic which was not well received by Canadian employers. He was also faced with a three-year employment gap in his field since his arrival in Canada.

Activities: Ahmad Ali started ESL courses shortly after his arrival in Canada and improved his skills in both oral and written English. He also attended a Career Transition Program to assist him in evaluating which skills would best serve him in finding employment in Canada. He applied for educational equivalency to validate the diplomas and certifications he had obtained in Egypt. In the meantime, he volunteered for a local Social Enterprise by providing some of his e-learning and multimedia services, such as inserting Arabic subtitles into English training videos. His portfolio was revised to include mostly English samples of his work including the recent experience he had acquired as a volunteer. He was also coached in CV, cover letter and interview skills to assist him in understanding the Canadian job search process.

Outcomes: Ahmad Ali acquired recent Canadian experience in a Social Enterprise by volunteering onsite. He was then able to present this recent experience combined with his newly recognized certification and previous experience to potential employers. During the interview, he focussed on what he has done and the skills that he brings to the job rather than his age. This helped him acquire a temporary contract position as a project officer developing e-learning and multi-media tools. Although Ahmad is not doing the same level of work as he was in Egypt, he is now working in his field with the possibility of contract renewal.

Moving up from an Entry Level Job

Overview: Iman arrived in Canada in 2000 with three small children. She had finished high school in Sudan but had no work experience. For her first few years in Canada Iman improved her language skills by attending a Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program that had daycare for her children. As soon as she was eligible Iman became a Canadian citizen.

When her children started school Iman needed to find a job to support her family.

Objectives: Iman needed to:

- Explore her options
- Learn how to write a resume
- Identify any transferable skills she might have
- Practise interview skills
- Find a job where she could get Canadian work experience

Activities: Iman met with an Intake and Assessment Counsellor at a local settlement agency. The initial 45 minute interview explored Iman's employment goals and needs. After the interview the counsellor referred Iman to several employment services for which she was eligible. These included:

- Career Access for Newcomers – this service included individual counselling sessions, job search tips, interview preparation coaching and networking events.
- A resume clinic that provided Iman with one-on-one assistance with writing resumes and cover letters.
- Access to the Employment Resource Centre where Iman had access to computers, fax machines, photocopying and printing for job search purposes.

Outcomes: Iman obtained an entry level job as a cashier in a supermarket. She soon demonstrated good people skills and an aptitude for figures. She was promoted to a higher-skilled position as head cashier and enrolled in a bookkeeping course at a local community college to improve her skills further.

Lessons Learned: The Career Access for Newcomers workshops really helped Iman identify skills she did not know she had. She had successfully managed her household budget, she was able to complete fairly complex forms, she could work with figures with ease and she liked talking to people. Iman was grateful for an entry level unskilled job. Since she had no work experience, she was happy to be able to demonstrate her skills knowing that if she continued her education or training she could obtain a more skilled position.

Appreciation: The CCLB would like to thank Astec Inc. for this contribution.

Transitioning to a New Occupation
as a Mature Worker

Overview: Mohammed arrived in Canada from Afghanistan six years ago with his wife and four children. In his early fifties, Mohammed had been a teacher in Afghanistan and had some status in the community. He quickly realized that he would not be able to work as a teacher in Canada. His age and his poor English language skills were significant barriers; however, he needed to work to support his family and for his own self-esteem. As soon as his family was settled, Mohammed visited an immigrant settlement office near his home in Ottawa for help and advice. His counsellor discussed next steps with Mohammed. The reality was that there were many barriers but also many positive steps that Mohammed could take to establish himself in Canada.

Objectives: Language was the first barrier that Mohammed had to overcome. His counsellor sent Mohammed to the nearest assessment centre. As Mohammed was a fairly recent landed immigrant he was eligible for a free assessment and free language training. Mohammed enrolled full-time in a Language Instruction for Newcomers (LINC) program especially for older students.

Age was another barrier but only really in Mohammed's head. In Afghanistan Mohammed was regarded as a very old man because of life expectancy, but as he learned more about Canada he realized that in Canadian society being 50 is not old.

Pride was another barrier Mohammed had to overcome. He was fortunate that two of his children were working and were able to support the family but it was very hard for Mohammed to be dependent on them. He had had a good position in society but now had to look for less skilled work.
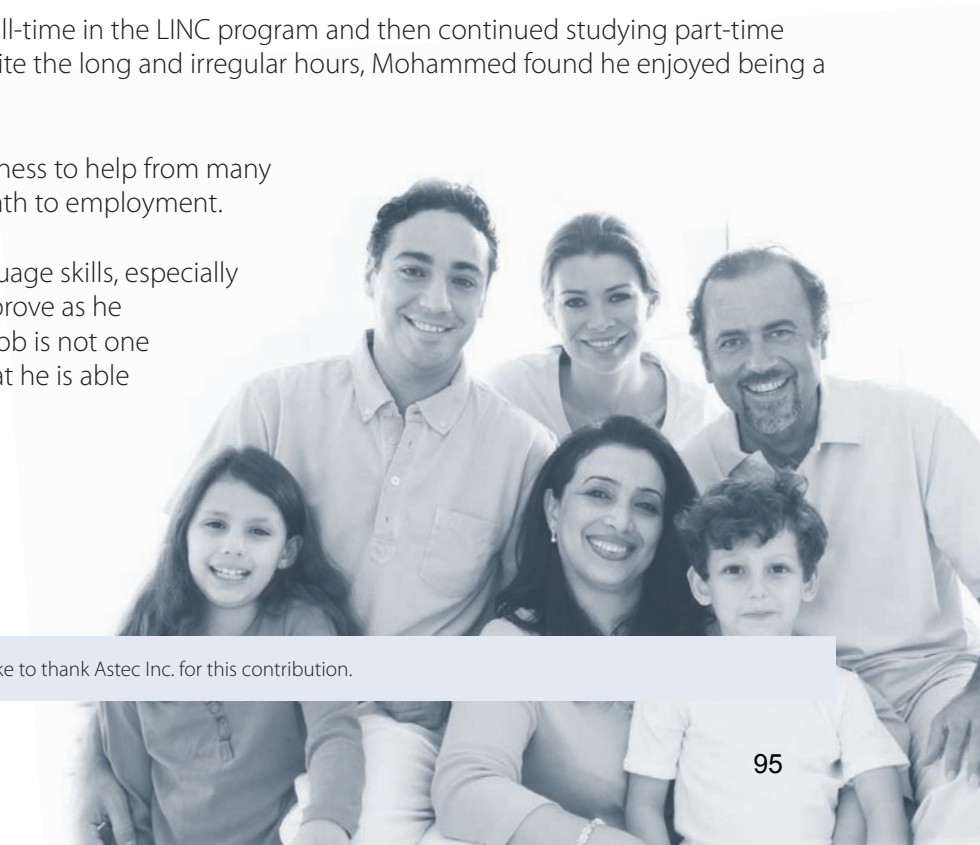
Activities: Mohammed really wanted to work so his teacher worked with him to determine what transferable skills he had. Together they found that he was good with people, was used to driving different kinds of vehicles, was willing to work odd hours and loved hard work.

Mohammed's teacher arranged for guest speakers to talk to the students about their jobs; one speaker was a taxi driver. Mohammed was interested so the teacher contacted Mohammed's counsellor who arranged for Mohammed to have an interview with a local taxi driving company. He found out the steps required to get his license and special courses to help him succeed.

Outcomes: Mohammed spent two years full-time in the LINC program and then continued studying part-time once he got a position as a taxi driver. Despite the long and irregular hours, Mohammed found he enjoyed being a taxi driver, especially talking to new people.

Lessons Learned: Cooperation and willingness to help from many different people facilitated Mohammed's path to employment.

Benefits: Mohammed feels useful. His language skills, especially his Speaking and Listening, continue to improve as he practices them daily at work. Although his job is not one that he ever expected to do, he is proud that he is able to support his family again.

Challenges Faced
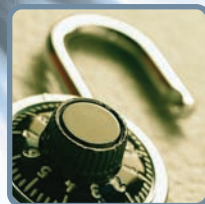by Mature Workers
Looking for Employment (p. 2)

Benchmark
Checklists (p. 11)

WORK READY Tools

Mature Workers

Decoding
Job Ads (p. 20)

Interview Skills for
Mature Workers
(p. 28)

Additional Resources
and Glossary (p. 37)

The Mature Workers document suggests resources and activities that can be used with mature second language clients. There are pages for practitioners (Practitioner in top right corner) and pages for clients (Worksheet in top right corner). Additional information is included in text boxes. At the end of this tool you will find some additional resources for practitioners and employers, including articles, videos and more.

Throughout these resources, **'practitioner'** is the term used to describe a group that might include counsellors, human resource professionals and bridging program coordinators (including program instructors). The term **'client'** also includes participants, learners and students.

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Challenges Faced by Mature Workers
Looking for Employment

Challenges Faced by Mature Workers Looking for Employment

This tool will help practitioners explain real and perceived job search challenges to their mature second language clients and help these clients develop strategies to overcome the challenges. Mature immigrants face the same challenges as all newcomers looking for work, as well as the additional one of age. Mature workers can be defined as those over 50. Mature immigrant workers include:

- Those who may be new to Canada;

- Those who have been here for a while but are now looking for work for the first time; and

- Those who have been employed but are now unemployed, laid off or underemployed.

The challenges faced by newcomers are lengthy. Table 1 represents the most commonly perceived challenges for mature immigrant workers.

Table 1: Examples of Challenges Faced by Mature Immigrant Workers

Culture shock (not understanding or coping with the transition to Canadian culture)	Unaware of available services	No Canadian experience
Change in family dynamics	Lack of financial resources	Language (language development may have ceased to evolve or Benchmarks may not match the requirements within an occupation)
Isolation/separation from family	Difficulty accessing the hidden job market	Unrealistic expectations
Loss of community status	Unfamiliar with job search process including appropriate resumes, cover letters, applications, and interviews	Not aware of the importance of soft skills in the hiring process
Loss of occupational recognition	Depression and anxiety	Economic downturns
Credentials not aligned with Canadian occupational requirements	Discrimination and stereotyping (such as, people thinking they are unable to adapt to new things or that they are not up to date with the latest technological advances)	Not having a network

Some of the causes of these challenges are out of the control of an individual (such as difficult economic times, a recession, or major shifts in government spending) but most can be overcome through training, support and a sharing with newcomers of the "unwritten knowledge" that many Canadian-born individuals have. For example, most Canadians understand the importance of networking, recognising that many employment opportunities come from networks.

Age challenges may be real or perceived by either employers or the workers themselves. In many cultures being over 50 can be seen as being very old; in Canada one cannot be discriminated against for age; however, ageism may still be an issue for a job-seeker. Perceived age challenges may include:

- Memory loss and recall issues;
- Physical health issues (strength and flexibility);
- Perceived slow pace of work;
- Failing vision and hearing;
- Health and safety concerns;
- Perceived learning and adaptability (time and ability issues).

Cultural differences with respect to age and gender roles

1. Many newcomers come from countries where the oldest person in the room is the authority, has the most power and demands the most respect. In Canada this is often quite different. An employee may be supervised by someone much younger than they are or supervise an older individual. This is an area that may need individual coaching. Mature workers may have an unrealistic expectation of how they will be treated in the workplace. Neither age nor education gives anyone preferential treatment in the Canadian workplace.

2. Beliefs and values regarding the role of women and work may be a barrier to success. The following situation presents the story of a new immigrant who was a participant in Options, a Bridging Program offered by CET (Centre for Education and Training) in partnership with OACETT (Ontario Association for Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists), Mississauga, Ontario. Options was developed specifically to "fast track" engineers into the Canadian workplace. Content focussed on the soft skills required by employers in Canada, including communication, attitudes and behaviours:

An engineer, a new immigrant, was hired and fired within six weeks of starting work in his dream job. He was fired not because of his professional work (hard skills) but because he would not/could not report to his female manager. He consistently went over her head to communicate progress and ask questions. In his 20 years of work he had never worked with a woman. He was not able to get past his cultural values and beliefs and it cost him his job. The work team he was part of asked the owner to let him go because he was negatively affecting the effectiveness of the team.

Some mature newcomers may never have worked with women or with women in positions of authority.

Working with the Worksheet "Strategies for Overcoming Challenges"

1. Read and discuss the chart on pages 6 and 7 with the client.

The practitioner chart includes only a selection of the challenges discussed on page 3. You may want to have clients think about how they might approach other challenges. This can be done individually or in a group setting. A group brainstorm often generates a breadth of possibilities and helps you pinpoint moments for coaching clients or teaching learners.

If you are working in a group setting, one idea is to give out a slip with one challenge written on it and to have individuals research the issue and then share strategies with the group.

2. Read and discuss **"Understanding Successful Job Search Strategies"** with the client.

3. Have the client complete the worksheet **"Strategies for Overcoming Challenges"**.

Strategies for Overcoming Challenges (Examples)

Challenge	Strategy
Understanding workplace culture	Search for workshops or classes that include workplace culture and workplace communication in the course outline.
	For interesting videos about what is different about working in Canada, see www.settlementatwork.org/_news_/94010.
Insufficient language skill level	Have clients complete the online self assessment at www.clb-osa.ca to get a general idea of their Benchmarks.
	Have them check their Benchmarks against the tasks required to be done in their occupation. Search the Essential Skills Profile at www10.hrsdc.gc.ca/es/English/SearchMain.aspx. You will be able to access descriptions of tasks related to language skills.
Lack of occupation specific information/ professional recognition	Have clients: look up information about their occupation; find professional associations related to their occupation, where possible; and talk to people who are working in the field. (Information interviews can be useful.)
Perceptions about age	Have clients find out about functional resumes. These will allow them to emphasize skills and experience while avoiding including dates.
Loss of professional status	Newcomers, even those who are experienced and qualified, may have to start at a position that is ranked significantly lower than the position they held in their country of origin. This can be difficult at first, so be sure to remind clients to have confidence in their abilities.
Equitable workplace expectations	Remind clients that in most Canadian workplaces, hierarchy is informal; managers, owners and supervisors are often called by their first names. In other words, rank does not determine the level of respect that is paid to a worker; all workers are treated with the same level of respect. Some clients may feel uncomfortable doing this but it is the norm in Canada.

Challenge	Strategy
Networking/ accessing the hidden job market	Talk to clients about how *anybody* they know may be a contact for a job. They may not always think of certain contacts on their own, but once put in the frame of a conversation, they may find themselves remembering that their neighbour works for a company they would like to work for or that he works in the same occupation. Remind newcomers that many Canadians use these connections to help them get jobs.
Small talk	Usually the interview process begins by small talk or some everyday conversation. Make sure clients are ready for small talk at the beginning of an interview. Have them practice their handshake and if for cultural or religious reasons they will not shake hands, have them develop a strategy ahead of time so that they do not embarrass the interviewer. This strategy may simply be to state at the onset that they don't shake hands. But, let them know what an important business custom it is in Canada.

Please see the Additional Resources and Glossary section for links to more tools, information and resources.

Understanding Successful Job Search Strategies

Jobs can be advertised in the 'visible' market, which includes government websites, online job search sites, newspapers, community papers and job boards in employment and community service centres. These are important options to explore, however, nearly 80% of Canada's jobs are part of a 'hidden' market[1].

Accessing the Hidden Job Market

Most job openings are not advertised, creating what seems like a hidden job market. It includes jobs that are available, but might not be advertised in traditional ways such as newspaper ads and online job listings. Information about available work is circulated through a network of managers, co-workers, business associates, friends and acquaintances.

How can you find out about these jobs?

- Networking
- Information interviews
- Cold calling

What is Networking?

Networking is sharing information and resources with others. It means talking to people who can support you in your job search.

Sometimes this means people who can give you advice about your job search, such as where to find more information about a company or introduce you to someone else who can help. It also means talking to people who have similar jobs, interests or who work in the sector where you want to work.

In Canada, **who** you know can be as important as **what** you know when you look for work. As you learn more about the job you wish to have and talk to more people, you will learn more about organizations, associations and individuals who can help connect you to others in your area of interest. In some cases, there are formal groups set up to network, share information and resources and meet on a regular basis. You can make personal contacts through volunteer work, community involvement, going to an ethno-specific organization, taking an educational class, cooperative education, joining a club or child-parent program, social activities, and so on.

In some cases, you will find that there are ethno-specific groups and groups for newcomers that meet to support each other and share information. You may want to consider joining a group like this for support and advice.

Successful networking can help you to access the hidden job market. In many cases, employers contact someone they already know to ask if they know anyone who might be right for the job. If you have made an impression through your networking or when you interviewed with someone, you might be contacted about a job.

The information on networking has been modified from:
www.settlement.org/sys/faqs_detail.asp?k=WORK_CUL&faq_id=4001193.

[1] This figure comes from an article published online by Canada Wise and is available at the following link: www.canadawise.com/canadas-hidden-job-market. Canada Wise has been successfully relocating and training individuals, skilled professionals and executives since 2001.

Information Interviews

An information interview can be a useful way to find out more about the kind of industry or company you would like to work for. An information interview is not an actual interview for a job. It means contacting an organization in an industry that interests you and finding out about what they do and about how their system works. You can do this by scheduling a phone call or a face to face meeting. This is a chance for you to meet people in an area that interests you and to learn about what an organization does. While this technique is not designed for finding a job, the contacts you make may lead you to job openings.

Visit these sites to learn more about information interviews:
Service Canada: http://www.jobsetc.gc.ca/pieces.jsp?category_id=420
Quintessential Careers: www.quintcareers.com/informational_interviewing.html

Cold Calling

Cold calling means calling companies and organizations that interest you without an appointment and trying to talk with a manager or a person who can hire you. It is a chance for you to find out if there are any job opportunities and to expand your network.

For more information on cold calling, including Dos and Don'ts and scripts, please see the following links:
University of Ottawa: www.sass.uottawa.ca/careers/tools/cold_calls.pdf
Seneca College: http://www.senecac.on.ca/student/careerservices/students/finding-a-job/cold-calls.html

Strategies for Overcoming Challenges

Everyone looking for work faces challenges; mature second language newcomers face even more. The best strategy is to think of a response to the challenge ahead of time. The checklist below can help you do this. Look at each obstacle and develop a strategy. Talk to the person who gave you this sheet, if you need examples of what could go in each section.

Challenge	Strategy
Understanding workplace culture	
Insufficient language skill level	
Lack of occupation specific information/ professional recognition	
Perceptions about age	
Loss of professional status	
Equitable workplace expectations	
Networking/ accessing the hidden job market	
Small talk	

Benchmark Checklists

Benchmarks Checklists

Purpose

The following checklists help to identify whether or not a client has the language skills needed for the workplace. It uses workplace language tasks that the client can use to describe his or her ability, "I can…"

Each example task has been given a Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) from 4-8 in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Benchmarks 4-8 are often the levels required for work.

This tool can also be used by counsellors and employers:

• A counsellor can identify skills that the client has, "(Client's name) can …"

• An employer can identify skills required for a specific occupation, "I need my worker to be able to…"

Instructions for Use

For the client: Ask the client to put a checkmark (✔) beside the tasks that he or she is able to do in English most of the time.

For the counsellor/practitioner: Put a checkmark (✔) beside the tasks that you think your client is able to do in English most of the time.

For the employer: Put a checkmark (✔) beside the tasks that you think you need your worker to do in English most of the time.

Feedback

At the end of the tool you will find an evaluation section and some suggestions for self-help activities. The evaluation is designed to quickly see where the strengths and weaknesses are and the results can be used to set goals for learning. The self-help activities relate to practicing specific language skills.

When you review what the client or worker is able to do, it would be useful to ask for a demonstration of the task. For example, elicit from the client how they would ask a supervisor for time off, demonstrating appropriate levels of politeness when making a request. Should they have difficulty being able to demonstrate the task, this will identify areas needing coaching.

What is Fossilized Language?

A communication issue that may surface, especially in older clients, is fossilized language. This happens when a client no longer progresses in learning the language and their ability stagnates.

This happens for a number of reasons, but generally occurs because of lack of exposure to and practice in the second language. Fossilization can affect newcomers as well as immigrants who have been in Canada for a number of years. For example, people who work with colleagues from the same first language group and who have limited and predictable interactions with customers tend to speak only in their first language, which means their English skills do not improve and sometimes regress.

This is a difficult and touchy discussion to have with clients. They may not be aware of the problem, as they have been understood in their workplace enough to be successful. In a layoff situation, they may be at a disadvantage because their language is not acceptable in a new position. A language assessment will be an important step in helping them prepare a realistic plan for looking for work. Language training may be necessary.

CLB 4-8 Listening

Put a checkmark where applicable.

CLB 4	CLB 5	CLB 6	CLB 7	CLB 8
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Get facts from simple communication, such as listening to a colleague talking about plans for the weekend.	☐ Identify feelings, such as when colleagues talk about which shift they prefer to work.	☐ Understand the reason for something, such as why a manager is cancelling scheduled overtime.	☐ Understand meaning and intent, such as listening to team members talking about what might happen because of delays in a project.	☐ Identify mood and attitude, such as when a manager is discussing the possibility of layoffs in the company.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Follow straightforward instructions for familiar tasks, such as how to make a photocopy.	☐ Understand directions, such as following safety procedures at work.	☐ Understand the steps required to carry out a task, such as viewing an instructional video and responding with appropriate actions.	☐ Respond to moderately complex directions, such as responding to a safety expert describing a safety procedure.	☐ Understand detailed oral instructions, such as from a supervisor about a familiar but complex issue and take appropriate action.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Find out information, such as listening to a phone message from work about a shift cancellation.	☐ Identify the main idea and details, such as in a phone message from a co-worker asking to switch shifts.	☐ Follow instructions over the phone for a moderately difficult task, such as treating a burn.	☐ Interact in person or over the phone, such as with suppliers to place a typical order for supplies.	☐ Follow extended instructions on the phone, such as from a technical assistant to resolve a simple computer software issue.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Get the main ideas from a short descriptive talk, such as what safety equipment to wear at work.	☐ Understand information, such as listening to an announcement about a training workshop at work to decide whether to attend.	☐ Understand group discussions, such as at a team meeting to share information with an absent colleague.	☐ Identify factual information and opinions, such as in an occupation-specific talk about new projects.	☐ Understand 20-minute presentations, such as those on work-related topics.

CLB 4-8 Speaking

Put a checkmark where applicable.

CLB 4	CLB 5	CLB 6	CLB 7	CLB 8
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Make simple phone calls, such as leaving a short voicemail message for a co-worker.	☐ Take part in very short phone calls, such as those requesting information on business opening and closing hours.	☐ Take part in short phone calls, such as making a call to set up an appointment.	☐ Take part in routine phone calls, such as leaving a detailed telephone message giving the time, place and directions to an interview.	☐ Take part in brief, professional phone calls, such as a responding to non-routine requests for information.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Give a short set of instructions, such as how to print a file from the computer.	☐ Provide instructions and directions, such as giving a client clear directions to the business/company.	☐ Give instructions for a broad range of everyday activities, such as telling a co-worker what to do if the fire alarm rings.	☐ Give instructions for tasks, procedures and processes, such what to do if there is a minor chemical spill at work.	☐ Give a range of technical instructions, such as how to install new software.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Make and respond to a request, such as from a colleague asking to switch shifts.	☐ Make suggestions, such as advising a co-worker to take a day off for illness.	☐ Persuade and give reasons, such as when asking the boss for a pay increase.	☐ Express opinions, such as how to solve a problem or make an improvement at work.	☐ Propose a solution, such as to a problem with a new program, machine or procedure.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Give information about everyday needs and feelings, such as when talking about a possible job change.	☐ Provide information or opinions, such as when planning a company event.	☐ Give detailed information, such as when taking part in a team meeting to start a new project.	☐ Give presentations, such as ones to new employees about company benefits.	☐ Make formal business presentations, such as to recommend a new product or new supplier.

CLB 4-8 Reading

Put a checkmark where applicable.

CLB 4	CLB 5	CLB 6	CLB 7	CLB 8
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Understand personal messages, such as reading an email from a co-worker that includes a personal up-date.	☐ Identify the purpose, such as when reading an email message about a company fundraising event to decide whether to participate.	☐ Understand facts and implied meaning, such as in an email which cancels a planned workplace event to understand why it is cancelled.	☐ Understand feelings, such as dissatisfaction when reading email from a co-worker talking about not getting a promotion.	☐ Assess a situation, such as using information from a workplace policy manual to address a customer's complaint.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Understand short, simple instructions, such as how to remove temporary internet files from a computer.	☐ Follow instructions for multistep procedures, such as unclogging a drain using a commercial product.	☐ Follow specialized instructions, such as security and safety regulations at work.	☐ Follow technical instructions, such as diagrams on how to assemble a piece of equipment.	☐ Follow established procedures, such as how to program an electronic appliance using a diagram.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Get information, such as basic workplace safety rules from a workplace poster.	☐ Use several pieces of information, such as from a work schedule to see who should be working.	☐ Get detailed information from business materials, such as product specifications to determine suitability for use.	☐ Evaluate, such as when reading a workplace performance review.	☐ Get information on regulations, such as the Material Safety Data Sheet to identify hazardous reactions and emergency procedures.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Understand the purpose and main idea of a workplace bulletin.	☐ Access information, such as employment standards.	☐ Compare information, such as about a familiar workplace problem from two different online sources.	☐ Interpret information, such as that found in a table or Gantt chart for a group project.	☐ Present information in tables and graphs in an alternate form, such as presenting data from a table in a paragraph.

CLB 4-8 Writing

Put a checkmark where applicable.

CLB 4	CLB 5	CLB 6	CLB 7	CLB 8
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Write a short, personal message, such as to thank a co-worker for switching shifts.	☐ Reply to an invitation, such as an email party invitation from a co-worker.	☐ Apologize, such as to a supervisor for missing a meeting.	☐ Express satisfaction or dissatisfaction, such as to a work team at the successful completion of a project. Explain why the project was successful and the positive impact it will have.	☐ Clarify, such as explaining to your supervisor why you and a co-worker were disagreeing.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Copy information for personal use, such as from catalogues to decide what to buy.	☐ Write information from a phone message, such as who called and when, to give to a colleague.	☐ Take brief notes, such as from a short workplace training course.	☐ Take notes and make a summary, such as to give to a co-worker who missed a presentation.	☐ Write a procedure from a demonstration, such as to share it with the rest of the team.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Send a short business message, such as to a supervisor about a medical appointment.	☐ Fill out a form, such as an accident report form.	☐ Make a request, such as to a supervisor asking permission to work from home next week.	☐ Pass on information, such as completing an incident report form, including a narrative about the incident.	☐ Make a request, such as to a project manager explaining why the team needs another person.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Describe, such as providing facts about a past job in a short paragraph.	☐ Report events or incidents, such as a workplace accident.	☐ Compare, such as to make a comparison of a company's services with those of a competitor.	☐ Give a detailed account of events, such as a brief production report on work stoppage times and reasons.	☐ Analyze, such as to review a procedure and present opinions.

Evaluation

This tool will help identify strengths and skills that need to be improved. Total the checkmarks in each language skill to see which skill contains the most.

I or my client seem(s) to be best at:

☐ Listening

☐ Speaking

☐ Reading

☐ Writing

I or my client should work on:

☐ Listening

☐ Speaking

☐ Reading

☐ Writing

Links for Self-Help and Practice

Activities for all skills can be found at www.language.ca and www.itsessential.ca.
The following links and tips allow clients to practice their Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills.

Listening Practice

www.cbc.ca/ottawa/esl/

www.eslgold.com/speaking/clarifying.html

www.theglobeandmail.com/

Tip: Listening to audio books, or other high-quality audio recorded by native speakers helps you practice your listening skills. A good technique to develop concentration is to listen to a sentence; hit the 'pause' button; then repeat aloud what the speaker said. You don't have to say exactly the same words, instead focus more on the meaning and pronunciation.

Speaking Practice

http://www.eslgold.com/

www.eslgold.com/speaking/clarifying.html

www.cbc.ca/ottawa/esl/

www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/english/frameset.html (for pronunciation)

http://www.merriam-webster.com/ is an interactive Canadian site to help distinguish between vowel sounds and consonant sounds in English. Pressing a pronunciation button allows you to listen to the correct pronunciation of a word.

Reading Practice

www.eslgold.com/

www.cbc.ca/ottawa/esl/

www.theglobeandmail.com/

Writing Practice

www.eslgold.com/

www.writingcentre.uottawa.ca/hypergrammar/

www.termiumplus.gc.ca/site/termium.php?lang=eng&cont=050

The following video, **Oral Communication Video - An Essential Skill in the Canadian Workplace**, is an excellent demonstration of the contrast between a newcomer struggling in an interview and succeeding in one. The video can be ordered at this site:
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/learning.shtml.

TRIEC (Toronto Regional Immigrant Employment Council) has developed a series of videos for employers on recruitment, retention and teamwork. They are available online with a downloadable training guide. While they target skilled workers, the content is relevant for workers with a variety of skill levels.
www.triec.ca/find-solutions/for-employers/learning/training-videos/

Decoding Job Ads

Decoding Job Advertisements: An Overview

Job advertisements can be confusing for newcomers. A city manager in Mississauga once told a newcomer class of engineers that the hard skills on a resume will get them an interview, but the soft skills that they demonstrate and articulate during the interview will get them the job. Newcomers often miss the soft skills identified in the job advertisement because they do not know how to recognize them.

Canadian Workplace Expectations for Workers

Employers basic expectations for employees:

• Qualifications (degrees, certifications, licensing, etc.)

• Experience in the occupation (preferably Canadian experience)

• Technical skills (both occupational and computer)

• Attitude of the worker (professional and positive)

• Strong communication skills (including non-verbal and para-verbal communication. Para-verbal includes tone, pitch, stress and pacing of our voices. It is *how we say something*, not *what we say*.)

• Soft skills (such as conflict resolution or use of diplomacy)

• Health and safety awareness

• An understanding of how things work in Canada (both in the job search process and workplace culture/ expectations)

• Flexibility

• Ability to work well with others as well as independently

• Knowledge of the company or organization

• Transferable skills

For a more complete overview of employer expectations, view the Conference Board of Canada's brochure at www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/learning-tools/employability-skills.aspx.
It outlines critical skills needed in the workplace and workplace expectations. Notice the value put on soft skills.

To read personal stories that you can share with clients of how soft skills have helped people get jobs in the past, visit the following link: www.cnmag.ca/issue-17/93-your-soft-skills-will-get-you-there.

Please see the Additional Resources and Glossary section for links to more tools, information and resources.

> Once a client has researched their occupation and identified skills and attributes needed by employers, the next step is interpreting the requirements described in a job advertisement. **Examples 1 and 2 - How to Read (Decode) a Job Ad** are worksheets to use when decoding a job-ad and the worksheets, **Examples 1 and 2 - How to Organize Job Ad Information,** are organizing tools. You can use one or all examples as a coaching/teaching tool.

Example 1 - How to Read (Decode) a Job Ad

Help Desk Representative: Canadian Bank (a partial job ad)

Responsibilities

- manage the Information phone lines to provide appropriate support — **Hard skills**
- manage and track website and telephone inquiries from the general public, front line sales and external stakeholders — **Hard skills**
- capture all external/internal inquiries and referrals (e.g. Internet Application, CSERVMailbox - POS) — **Hard skills**
- perform DNCL scrubbing as requested by sales staff as per procedure — **Hard skills**
- maintain the New Hire Tool — **Hard skills**

Additional Responsibilities

- manage frequently changing decisions and expectations of clients and other business partners — **Flexibility- soft skills**
- deal with multiple priorities — **Manage time and work – soft skills**
- comply with all applicable policies, guidelines and controls — **Knowledge**

Requirements:
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- developed interpersonal skills to establish and maintain good relationships with external and internal customers and colleagues — **Interpersonal skills - soft skills**
- actively listen and share information in a timely, open and honest manner — **Active listening - soft skills**
- demonstrate empathy for others, diffuse emotions and respond calmly — **Empathy - attribute**
- provide, receive and act on feedback — **Communication - soft skills**
- basic sales skills to identify customer needs, sales opportunities — **Knowledge/ experience**
- developed problem solving and decision making skills to identify and resolve problems, generate solutions and decide on a course of action — **Problem solving, decision-making skills - soft skills**
- basic communication skills sufficient to initiate conversation with clients, quickly develop a rapport, uncover their needs, identify opportunities — **Work with others - soft skills**
- developed general understanding of Mortgages business/process computer — **Knowledge/ experience**
- be able to understand and comply with Bank policies and procedures — **Knowledge/ experience**
- ability to manage multiple project and changing priorities often within tight deadlines — **Manage work - soft skills**
- manual dexterity to operate a personal computer — **Manual dexterity - attribute**
- mental effort required to perform tasks as required (e.g. working toward fixed deadlines, established productivity standards, frequently changing priorities or interruptions) — **Thinking Skills - soft skills**

Example 1 - How to Organize Job Ad Information

Education/Experience

"comply with all applicable policies, guidelines and controls"

"basic sales skills"

"general understanding of Mortgages business"

"general understanding of process computer"

"understand and comply with Bank policies and procedures"

Hard Skills

"manage the Information phone lines"

"manage and track website and telephone inquiries"

"Internet Application, CSERV Mailbox - POS"

"perform DNCL scrubbing"

"maintain the New Hire Tool"

Soft Skills

"manage frequently changing decision and expectations of clients and other business partners"

"deal with multiple priorities"

"developed interpersonal skills to establish and maintain good relationships with external and internal customers and colleagues"

"actively listen"

"provide, receive and act on feedback"

"problem solving and decision making skills"

"initiate conversation with clients, quickly develop a rapport"

"manage multiple project and changing priorities"

"mental effort required to perform tasks"

Attributes

"demonstrate empathy"

"manual dexterity"

Example 2-How to Read (Decode) a Job Ad

Office Manager Position (Advertising Agency)
The ideal candidate comes from a background in an Advertising, Public Relations or Marketing Agency. In this role, you are responsible for the development and implementation of human resources strategy that supports the overall business plan and environment. The successful candidate is a strong Office Administrator/Manager who is comfortable sitting at Reception and understands that first impressions are lasting.

	Education/experience
	Hard Skills
	Hard Skills

Experience with Project Work
- greet and direct all visitors — **Hard and Soft Skills**
- answer and direct all phone inquiries in a professional manner — **Attributes/Soft Skills**
- sort and distribute incoming mail and faxes — **Hard Skills**
- manage the meeting room and kitchen
- update and maintain a listing of client and supplier contact information — **Hard Skills**
- assist accounting with various tasks — **Hard Skills**
- manage the couriers and taxi reconciliation in coordination with the finance department — **Hard and Soft Skills**
- work with Human Resources with the coordination and organization of staff and social events — **Hard and Soft Skills**
- assist with business travel details for employees — **Hard Skills**
- develop new processes or procedures and ensure daily operations run efficiently
- manage company
- assist and coordinate the Health and Safety Committee — **Hard Skills**
- maintain office supplies inventory — **Hard Skills**
- manage cost for office supplies, including supplier contracts — **Hard Skills**

What you Should Ideally Bring to this Role!
The individual in this role will have the maturity and confidence to multi-task and prioritize their work with little supervision. You should be able to make sound judgment calls and problem solve independently.

	Attributes
	Soft Skills
	Soft Skills

- a minimum of 3 years of experience in an administrative or office management position — **Education/experience**
- experience working in a creative environment is a requirement, ideally Marketing, Advertising or PR — **Education/experience**
- excellent communication skills, both written and verbal — **Soft Skills**
- strong customer service skills — **Hard skills**
- excellent time management and organizational abilities — **Soft Skills**
- strong computer skills, particularly with Microsoft Office programs — **Education/experience**

Experience with Company Project Work
- the ability to take initiative and be proactive is essential — **Soft Skills**
- the ability to think critically and plan ahead is an asset — **Soft Skills**

Are you energetic and enthusiastic about creative work and team oriented environments? — **Attributes/ Education/experience**

Do you thrive on interacting with people from all walks of life? — **Soft Skills**

If you are looking to play a critical role in helping to organize a fun, young and dynamic up and coming agency then this position probably makes sense for you!!

Example 2-How to Organize Job Ad Information

Education/Experience

background in Advertising, Public Relations or Marketing

3 years experience in administrative or office management position

experience working in a creative and team environment

strong computer skills; Microsoft Office

Hard Skills

develop and implement human resource strategy

reception desk responsibilities

direct all visitors/phone enquiries

sort and distribute incoming mail and fax

update and maintain a listing of client and supplier contact information

assist accounting, manage couriers and taxi reconciliation

coordinate and organize staff and social events

assist with business travel details

assist and coordinate Health & Safety Committee

maintain office supplies inventory

manage cost for office supplies, including supplier contracts

strong customer service skills

Soft Skills

greet all visitors

coordinate with finance

multi-task and prioritize

work with little supervision

problem solve independently

excellent communication skills

strong customer service skills

time management

organizational abilities

take initiative

think critically

interact with people

Attributes

professional phone manner

maturity

confidence

proactive

energetic, enthusiastic

How to Organize Job Ad Information

Step 1: Find a job posting that is suitable for your skills and experience.

Step 2: Highlight everything in the advertisement that the company says they are looking for. Make sure to include the soft skills requirements outlined in the advertisement.

Step 3: Organize everything highlighted into the correct column in the chart.

Education/Experience

Hard Skills

Soft Skills

Attributes

Step 4: Customize your resume to match the job requirements, where possible. Write a cover letter and talk about the soft skills you have that match the requirements.

Interview Skills for Mature Workers

Interview Skills for Mature Workers

Most clients have access to job search resources and support where they get help with resume writing, cover letters and practice in responding to the most common interview questions. Some also get coaching on interview behaviour and appropriate language. Some get to experience a mock or simulated interview and are given feedback on their performance. Often the feedback skips over para-verbal (para-verbal includes tone, pitch, stress and pacing of our voices. It is *how we say something*, not *what we say*) and non-verbal communication missteps as well as personal information regarding presentation (how we dress). Newcomers often miss the para-verbal and non-verbal nuances of Canadian English communication. Eye contact is an excellent example of non-verbal communication which has different meanings to different cultures. In Canada, making eye contact is usually expected and not making eye contact is seen as rude or demonstrating indifference; however, in many cultures, including some of Canada's aboriginal population, making eye contact can be seen as showing a lack of respect or as being aggressive. It is important to share these "unwritten rules" or nuances with newcomers.

Table 2 below is a quick overview of the three parts of communication.

Table 2: Overview of the Three Parts of Communication

Verbal *(What we say)*	Para-verbal *(How we say it)*	Non-verbal *(What we say without saying anything)*
Words Word choice	Tone Pitch Pacing Stress Volume Rate of speech Verbal sounds *(hmmm, uh, eh)*	Facial expressions Posture/Stance Gestures Eye contact Appearance

Please see the Additional Resources and Glossary section for links to more tools, information and resources.

Mature Workers and Difficult Questions

There are a number of potential questions that can be uncomfortable for clients in an interview setting. Table 3 looks at some of these and suggests possible answers. Please see the Work Ready resource kit published in 2009 and available at www.language.ca for additional interview questions.

Table 3: Difficult Questions

Difficult Questions for Mature Workers	Preparation for Strategic Responses
What is your level of proficiency with computers and technology? **Are you proficient with most Microsoft applications, such as Word, Power Point and Excel?**	Almost all jobs in Canada require some computer use. Have clients list all computer and technology skills that are related to the job being applied for. If they have limited experience with computers, help them find ways to gain experience. Experience can be acquired informally or formally by taking courses, depending on the needs of the job. Computer use is one of the Essential Skills defined by HRSDC. Essential Skills are the skills needed for the workplace. To learn more about Essential Skills, please see: www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/definitions/definitions.shtml
Give us an example of a situation where you had to adapt to change?	Have clients provide specific examples of adapting to new situations, such as a new boss, a new country, changes in technology. Make sure they outline the situation and clearly describe how they dealt with it.
Do you consider yourself a life-long learner? **Can you give us an example of when you had to learn something new?**	Have clients speak about any conferences, workshops, membership in organizations, or volunteering to show willingness to learn new skills and keep up with the sector. Try to have clients find examples that focus on professional development and continuous learning in their field of work, rather than in their personal life, such as their hobbies.
What experience do you bring to the job? Why should we hire you?	Remind clients to stress what they have achieved and emphasize transferable skills that they bring to the position. Transferable skills include any skill that can be applied in a different context from the one in which it was learned. For example, a soccer coach who plans a season of training for the players probably has skills in long term goal-setting and establishing timelines that can be transferred to many occupations. It is important when thinking about transferable skills that clients think about skills acquired in all aspect of their life.

Difficult Questions for Mature Workers	Preparation for Strategic Responses
Tell us about a situation in which you worked effectively to contribute to a team.	Make sure clients are specific when presenting the situation. Make sure they understand that the interviewer is interested in their role in the project or on the team.
Have you ever worked in Canada? **Tell us about your work experience in Canada.**	Remind clients to include volunteer experience here. Suggest that another way of handling the question could be, "While I have yet to work in Canada, I understand that some things are different in workplaces here. I am currently taking a course in Workplace Communication. I want to learn as much as I can about working in Canada."

Give the worksheet **"Answering Difficult Questions"** to the client. Have the client respond to each question on his or her own. In a group setting, clients could share and critique responses with input from a practitioner.

Answering Difficult Questions

Difficult Questions for Mature Workers	Preparation for Strategic Responses
What is your level of proficiency with computers and technology? **Are you proficient with most Microsoft applications, such as Word, Power Point and Excel?**	
Give us an example of a situation where you had to adapt to change?	
Do you consider yourself a life-long learner? **Can you give us an example of when you had to learn something new?**	
What experience do you bring to the job? **Why should we hire you?**	
Tell us about a situation in which you worked effectively to contribute to a team.	
Have you ever worked in Canada? **Tell us about your work experience in Canada.**	

Evaluating Interview Skills

When there is not enough time for practitioners to spend one-on-one time with clients to complete mock interviews you might try Triad Interviews. Triad Interviews involve three clients working together to learn and practice interview skills.

1. Assign three clients to work together. Each finds a job posting in which they are interested.

2. Clients complete their own resumes and cover letters.

3. Each client gives their partners a copy of the job ad. Client A will be interviewed by clients B and C. Clients B and C work together to develop interview questions and an interview is set up. The interviewee should dress appropriately for the occasion and act as if in a real interview. Clients B and C complete the evaluation form and give client A feedback. See Diagram 1 below.

This should be repeated for clients B and C.

4. If technology is available and if clients are comfortable, you could film each interview for additional learning opportunities. Filming an interview allows clients to see how they presented themselves. It allows them to do a self-evaluation, which can sometimes be easier than accepting critical feedback from others.

CLIENT A	**CLIENTS B AND C**	**CONDUCT INTERVIEW**
• Finds Job Ad	• Review Job Ad	• Give feedback to Client A
• Gives copy of ad to Clients B and C	• Prepare interview questions	
• Tweaks resume	• Have practitioner review	
• Hands to practitioner for editing	• Review Feedback form	

An excellent article that could provide a starting point for discussion about how to approach an interview as a mature worker: **Top Ten Tough Interview Questions for Experienced Workers** can be found at www.experienceworks.ca/pdf/interviewquestions.pdf.

Chart for Evaluating Interview Skills

First Impressions

Dresses appropriately for the position	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴
Smiles and makes eye contact	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴
Has a firm handshake	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴
Demonstrates good posture (confidence)	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴
Punctual	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴
Appropriate personal space (arm's length)	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴
Is comfortable with everyday conversation	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴

Interview Behaviour

Documentation (extra resumes, copies of references, business cards)	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴
Makes eye contact appropriately	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴
Has question(s) prepared for the interviewer	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴
Does not discuss salary	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴
Shakes hands and thanks interviewer at the end of the interview	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴

Circle one: 🟢 Great, 🟡 Good Enough, 🔴 Needs Improvement

Interview Language

Uses active listening (nods, leans forward slightly)	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴	
Uses appropriate level of formality	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴	
Asks for clarification when a question is misunderstood	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴	
Speaks clearly	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴	
Stays on topic	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴	
Does not speak too quickly	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴	
Uses examples from work experience when answering questions	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴	
Changes tone of speech	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴	
Appears interested or enthusiastic about the job/position	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴	
Uses appropriate non-verbal communication	What to change:	🟢 🟡 🔴	

Circle one: 🟢 Great, 🟡 Good Enough, 🔴 Needs Improvement

Worksheet: Evaluating Interview Skills can be used by an interviewer in a mock interview to give feedback. It can be used by a client to self-evaluate their own performance and bring the results to you for coaching. It can be used by a client after each job interview to assess their performance and make adjustments as necessary.
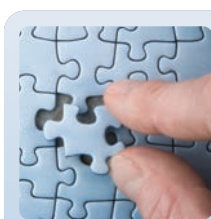
The interview is a communicative process from beginning to end. After the first impression (about 15 seconds) the process leans heavily on an interviewee's communication skills and how these skills meet the interviewer's expectations, expected greetings, small talk, clarity of response, active listening, tone and register, etc.

> **i** Additional interview questions can be found on page 17 of the
> Work Ready resource published in 2009 found at www.language.ca.

Additional tips for interviewing strategies can be found in another tool available at www.language.ca, called Non-Regulated Skilled and Semi-Skilled Occupations. It includes the STAR approach briefly described in the table below. More information about the STAR approach can be found at: www.quintcareers.com/STAR_interviewing.html.

Situation or **T**ask	Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not give a general description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. This situation can be from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.
Action you took	Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what you did – not the efforts of the team. Don't tell what you might do, tell what you did.
Results you achieved	What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?

Additional Resources and Glossary

Additional Resources

Targeted Initiatives for Older Workers

Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW) provides employment assistance services and employability improvement activities, such as skills upgrading and work experience, to assist unemployed workers aged 55 to 64 with their return to work.

Provinces and territories are responsible for the design and delivery of projects aimed at unemployed older workers in cities and towns that:

  • Have a population of 250,000 or less; and

  • Are experiencing ongoing high level of unemployment; and/or

  • Have a high degree of reliance on a single industry affected by downsizing or closures.

To be eligible, participants must:

  • Be aged 55 to 64*;

  • Be unemployed;

  • Be legally entitled to work in Canada;

  • Require new or enhanced skills to successfully transition into new employment opportunities; and

  • Live in an eligible community.

*In some circumstances, unemployed workers aged 50 to 54 or 65 and over may also participate.

For more information go to:
www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/employment/employment_measures/older_workers/index.shtml

Songs of Experience: Mature Workers and Labour Market Transitions

This report includes case studies of individuals who made transitions into different occupations as a mature worker. Although the individuals are not newcomers, the strategies are still useful. In the back of the report you will find "Best Practices for Mature Workers."
www.workforceinnovation.ca/research/songs-experience-mature-workers-and-labour-market-transitions

Career Resource Guide

This short guide covers most aspects of the job search process. Ranstad is a well-known Canadian employment agency. The Booklet is free to download.
www.randstad.ca/finding_jobs/career_tools.aspx

Wright, Daisy. **No Canadian Experience, EH? A Career Survival Guide for New Immigrants**. WCS Publishers. 2007

Interviewing Resource

Order the Literacy and Essential Skills Tools DVD (WP-122-08-09) from

Publications/Distribution Unit
HRSDC Communications Branch
140 Promenade du Portage
Place du Portage, Phase IV, Level 10
Gatineau, Québec
K1A 0J9

It includes Oral Communication Video – An Essential Skill in the Canadian Workplace, an excellent demonstration of a newcomer failing an interview and succeeding at an interview. The individual is an experienced newcomer.

Websites

Career Information
www.quintcareers.com/older_worker_strategies.html

Resources for Older Workers
Experience Works: www.experienceworks.ca
Top Employers for Canadians over 40: http://www.canadastop100.com/older_workers/

Networking
www.networksforimmigrants.ca

Mentoring
www.thementoringpartnership.com

Video links

TRIEC (Toronto Regional Immigrant Employment Council) is an organization that creates solutions to better integrate skilled immigrants, specifically in the Toronto Region labour market. They have developed a series of videos for employers on recruitment, retention and teamwork. The videos are available online with a downloadable training guide. While they target skilled workers, the content is relevant for all newcomers.

Please see the following link to access all TRIEC resources:
www.triec.ca/find-solutions/for-employers/learning/training-videos

More videos and self-study guides are available for newcomers and employers at:
www.hireimmigrants.ca/resources-tools/videos

Glossary

Active Listening: Active listening is a communication strategy that can enhance the understanding between a listener and speaker. By paying attention to verbal, para-verbal and non-verbal messages the listener makes a concerted effort to hear and understand the speaker. The listener may paraphrase and repeat back what they have heard, ask for additional clarification or verification that they have understood. The listener does not need to agree but in active listening they must understand the speaker's message.

Ageism: According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC), ageism is a socially constructed way of thinking about persons based on negative stereotypes about age. It is considered discrimination.

Attributes: Attributes are personal qualities or personal characteristics of an individual. Attributes include qualities such as enthusiasm, dependability, honesty and flexibility; all qualities Canadian employers would appreciate in an employee.

CLB: The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) are recognized as the official Canadian standard for describing, measuring and recognizing the language proficiency of adult immigrants and prospective immigrants in English. CLB describe language in three stages and 12 benchmarks. More information can be found at www.language.ca.

Credentials: Credentials are the documents that prove a person's qualifications, such as degrees or certificates that are earned after the completion of university or college training. Credentials also include abilities, achievements, training and experiences that make a person suitable for a particular job or activity.

Cold Calling: Cold calling means calling companies and organizations that interest you without an appointment and trying to talk with the manager or the person who can hire you. It is a chance for you to find out if there are any job opportunities and to expand your network.

Discrimination: Discrimination is usually described as making stereotypical assumptions based on a person's presumed traits instead of assessing the unique merits, capacities and circumstances of a person. Discrimination includes excluding someone, denying benefits or treating an individual or group of individuals differently than other employees. (Ontario Human Rights Commission)

Essential Skills: Essential Skills are the skills needed for the workplace as captured through research by the Government of Canada. They include the following nine skills:

- Reading
- Writing
- Document Use
- Numeracy
- Computer Use
- Thinking
- Oral Communication
- Working with Others
- Continuous Learning

Essential Skills Profiles: Essential Skills Profiles describe how workers in various occupations use each of the key essential skill listed above. Each occupational profile includes:

- A brief description of the occupation
- Examples of tasks that illustrate how each essential skill is applied
- Complexity ratings that indicate the level of difficulty of the example tasks

Profiles can be found at: www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/profiles/profiles.shtml

Ethno-Specific: This describes something, such as an organization, that is centered around one ethnic group.

Eye Contact: To make eye contact means looking someone directly in the eyes. In Canada, eye contact is generally perceived as honest, with nothing to hide, self-confident and interested. In some situations in some cultures, making eye contact is perceived as showing a lack of respect.

Hard Skills: Hard skills are usually related to professional knowledge, tools, or techniques that allow us to work within an occupation. Examples of hard skills are plumbing a sink; developing software; applying taxation laws; and injecting a vaccine.

Hidden Job Market: The hidden job market is a term used to describe jobs that aren't advertised publicly. Job seekers find and explore the hidden job market using network contacts of co-workers, business associates, friends and acquaintances to help find unadvertised job openings.

Information Interview: The information interview is a job search tool. It is used to find out more about an occupation or career sector by talking to people already working in the occupation or sector. Information interviews can be done by telephone or face to face. This is not an opportunity to ask for a job. It is an opportunity to collect information. www.jobsetc.gc.ca/pieces.jsp?category_id=420

Mock Interviews (simulated): A mock interview, also known as a practice interview, is a simulation of an actual job interview. It provides an opportunity to practice for an interview and receive feedback.

Networking: Networking is sharing information and resources with others. A network represents an individual's contacts.

Non-Verbal Communication: Non-verbal communication is the process of sending and receiving wordless messages between people. The most common non-verbal strategies include:

- Gestures
- Body language
- Facial expressions
- Eye contact

Para-Verbal: Para-verbal is *how* we say something, not *what* we say. It includes tone, pitch, stress and pacing of our speech.

Small Talk: Small talk is a type of conversation that is informal, and topics are unimportant (weather, sports etc). Canadians use small talk to establish contacts, find commonalities, and fill silences between individuals or in groups. It is important to understand the importance of small talk in networking and communicating with co-workers.

Soft Skills: Soft skills are the complete collection of our social, communication, and self-management behaviours. These are the skills that enable us to work effectively and "fit in" the workplace. Examples of soft skills are: demonstrating integrity and ethical behaviour; being motivated and having a positive attitude; and critically analyzing information. (Ryerson University)

Stereotyping: Describing all people of a common group as having the same characteristics, regardless of individual difference, is called stereotyping. An example: To say that men never ask for directions when they are lost is a stereotype because it implies all men never ask for directions without exception and that is simply not true.

TIOW: The Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW) provides employment assistance services and employability improvement activities, such as skills upgrading and work experience, to assist unemployed workers aged 55 to 64 with their return to work.

Transferable Skills: Transferable skills are skills that you can take with you from one situation to another and from one job to another. www.ceswoodstock.org/job_search/resumeskillshidden.shtml

TRIEC: The Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) is a multi-stakeholder council that brings leadership together to create and champion solutions to better integrate skilled immigrants in the Toronto Region labour market. www.triec.ca/about-us/

Unwritten Knowledge: Unwritten knowledge includes the cultural knowledge related to attitudes, language etc. that Canadian born individuals have. For example, most Canadians understand the importance of a firm handshake and making eye contact in a job interview. Newcomers may come from countries where interviews need different behaviour.

Visible Job Market: The visible or open job market includes job postings that are public and are usually available on government websites, online job search sites, in newspapers, community papers and on job boards in employment and community service centres.

Volunteering: Volunteering is unpaid work. Many employers accept volunteering as valid Canadian work experience. Volunteer work is an excellent way to gain Canadian experience and Canadian references.

Workplace Culture: Workplace, or organizational, culture is described in the same way as personal culture: the values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour of a group of people. Each workplace has written and unwritten rules, expectations, and ways of doing business that will be unique to that organization. www.businessdictionary.com/definition/organizational-culture.html#ixzz1qGwFTUQm

Learning about an
Occupation (p. 2)

Benchmark
Checklists (p. 20)

WORK READY
Tools

Non-Regulated Skilled
and Semi-Skilled Occupations
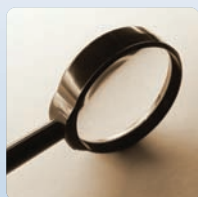
SWOT Analysis
(p. 29)

Best Practices
(p. 40)

Additional Resources
and Glossary (p. 46)

This tool suggests resources and activities that can be used with newcomer clients preparing to work in non-regulated skilled and semi-skilled occupations. There are pages of activities for practitioners (Practitioner in top right corner) and pages for clients (Worksheet in top right corner). Additional information is included in text boxes. At the end of this tool you will find some additional resources for practitioners and employers, including articles, videos and more.

Throughout these resources, **'practitioner'** is the term used to describe a group that might include counsellors, human resource professionals and bridging program coordinators (including program instructors). The term **'client'** also includes participants, learners and students.

Ontario

Centre for
Canadian Language
Benchmarks

Centre des niveaux de
compétence linguistique
canadiens

Learning About an Occupation

Learning About an Occupation

Learning About an Occupation provides information on terms, resources and tools for practitioners to use with clients. This section talks about different types of occupations in Canada and provides links to resources where a practitioner can learn more. It also provides information about language training programs and workplace-specific programs. There is a tool that can also be used with clients to guide them through their job research process (see Tool to Use with Clients to Learn About an Occupation on page 10). Having clients research potential occupations is an important step in helping them make informed choices about their path to employment.

An Overview of Occupations in Canada

In Canada, occupations are considered to be either regulated or non-regulated and can be classified as skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled. Trades can be either regulated or non-regulated occupations. These terms are further explained below.

Occupations are furhter classified into categories. The NOC code (National Occupation Classification) organizes Canadian job titles into occupational group descriptions. It is used daily by thousands of people to compile, analyze and communicate information about occupations, and to understand the jobs found throughout Canada's labour market. It is used to manage the collection and reporting of occupational statistics and to provide understandable labour market information. The NOC code is assigned using a numerical coding system to categorize jobs based on skill level and type.

For a detailed matrix of the NOC system that illustrates how jobs are classified, please visit: www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2011/Matrix.aspx

To check the NOC code and to access information about a specific occupation, visit: www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2011/SearchIndex.aspx

Using the NOC code to access information about an occupation is an important first step in assessing how a client's education, skills and training match the requirements of that occupation. Not only does the NOC provide a list of job titles that can be used to describe an occupation, but it also describes the duties, responsibilities, and educational requirements for a given occupation. For example, patient care aides are found under the NOC code 3413. They are part of a group defined as nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates; there are 84 job titles in this category.

Clients should be made aware of the various job titles within a given occupation suitable for their skills and qualifications in order to be able to thoroughly conduct a search for a potential job.

An important second step will be to find out if the occupation is regulated or not. To do so, you or the client should use the tool at the following link: www.workingincanada.gc.ca/content_pieces-eng.do?lang=eng&cid=1

Select a location and generate a report. The report will provide a snapshot of the occupation in Canada including whether or not it is regulated. It also lists job postings by location. For example, generating a report for patient care aides shows that these jobs are not regulated and that job prospects are good.

Regulated Occupations

A **regulated occupation** is one that is controlled by provincial, territorial and sometimes federal law and governed by a professional organization or regulatory body. To work in a regulated occupation and use a regulated title, one **must** have a license or certificate or be registered with the regulatory body of the occupation. Some occupations are regulated in some provinces and territories and are not regulated in others.

About 20 per cent of Canadians work in regulated occupations including veterinarians, electricians, plumbers, physiotherapists, medical doctors, and engineers. The system of regulation is intended to protect the health and safety of Canadians by ensuring that professionals meet the required standards of practice and competence. Newcomers with education and experience in a regulated profession in their country of origin may need to work in a related non-regulated profession while pursuing licensure or accreditation.

Non-Regulated Occupations

A **non-regulated occupation** is an occupation for which there is no legal requirement or restriction on practice with regard to licences, certificates, or registration. The vast majority of occupations in Canada (about 80%) fall into this category. For some of these occupations, certification/registration with a professional body is available on a voluntary basis, whereas for others there is no certification/registration available.

In general, applicants for non-regulated occupations have to demonstrate to their potential employers that they possess the experience and training required for the job. Even when an occupation is not regulated, employers may still require that an applicant be registered, licensed, or certified with a relevant professional association.

For example estheticians are currently regulated only in Manitoba, but some employers in other provinces may require prospective employees to have esthetician certification, electrologist certification or membership in a provincial or national electrolysis association (www.fceaontario.org – Federation of Canadian Electrolysis Associations – Ontario Chapter).

Unskilled, Semi-Skilled and Skilled Occupations

Occupations can be classified as **unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled**. Skill is the ability to perform a task or set of tasks, as acquired through formal or informal education and/or training, work and life experience, or other means. It is identifiable in an occupation specific context, and measurable through a variety of instruments.[1]

An employee in an "unskilled" job needs little or no training or experience. Workers should be able to perform simple duties and responsibilities satisfactorily. The work may include a certain amount of physical exertion and it may also require a worker to be familiar with a category of goods or services or a particular work environment. Examples of unskilled jobs include: cleaner, furniture packer, and restaurant dishwasher.

Semi-skilled workers require more training, skill and experience to handle more complex tasks. Examples of semi-skilled jobs include: retail salesperson, machine operator, home support worker, food and beverage server, office administrative assistant and carpenter.

Skilled workers require education, training and experience to handle complex tasks. Examples of skilled jobs are computer technician and dental assistant.

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[1] http://www.cicic.ca/410/guide-to-terminology-usage-in-the-field-of-credentials-recognition-in-canada.canada

Trades

A **trade** is an occupation generally requiring one to three years of post-secondary education at a community college or university, two to four years of apprenticeship training, two to three years of on-the-job training, or a combination of these requirements. Some trades are also regulated which means that a license/certificate is required.

Some trades are referred to as Red Seal Trades: this means that the provinces and territories have agreed on standards for entry into the occupation allowing for the portability of qualifications across Canada. A list of designated Red Seal Trades is available at http://www.red-seal.ca/w.2lc.4m.2@-eng.jsp.

For complete definitions and additional information regarding these terms, please see the following sites: www.workingincanada.gc.ca/content_pieces-eng.do?cid=723

> For complete descriptions of these occupational groups go to:
> www.cicic.ca/en/prof.aspx?sortcode=2.19.21

Additional Terms and Information

Clients new to Canada will benefit from the following information as part of their journey to employment or to pursuing re-employment.

Essential Skills

The Government of Canada has determined nine essential skills needed to work successfully in Canada. These skills are used in nearly every job and throughout daily life in different ways and at different levels of complexity. The nine essential skills are:

- Reading
- Writing
- Document Use
- Numeracy
- Computer Use
- Thinking
- Oral Communication
- Working with Others
- Continuous Learning

These skills are documented in Essential Skills Profiles to describe how workers in various occupations use each of the key essential skills. Workers may demonstrate different levels of complexity for these skills and skills are used in different combinations depending on the occupation. The profiles include:

- A brief description of the occupation;
- Examples of tasks that illustrate how each essential skill is applied; and,
- Complexity ratings that indicate the level of difficulty of the example tasks.

There are more than 350 Essential Skills Profiles and they can be accessed at the following site: www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/profiles/profiles.shtml.

To learn more about Essential Skills, please visit: www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/index.shtml.

Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)

The CLB are recognized as the Canadian standard for describing, measuring and recognizing the language ability of adult immigrants and prospective immigrants in English. CLB describe language in three stages and 12 benchmarks.

Language Assessment

A Canadian Language Benchmark assessment will help you and your client make decisions about whether or not they have the language skills required for a certain occupation.

Your client may need to have a formal language assessment. To help the client find an **assessment centre** nearby, visit www.language.ca and click on Assessment. You will find a list of assessment centres by province. There are eligibility requirements for free assessments but some provinces, including Ontario, also offer a for-fee service.

In order to be eligible for a free language assessment at a Language Assessment Centre the client must be:

   • A permanent resident of Canada, or Convention Refugee; and

   • Of legal school-leaving age in the province (18 in Ontario).

Language Training

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)
LINC, funded by the Government of Canada, offers language classes at no cost to eligible adult learners.

LINC offers both full-time and part-time classes for Benchmarks 1-7 but not all centres offer programs for all Benchmarks. Many centres offer free child minding to clients while they attend classes and may offer other supports such as transportation allowances.

The Ministry of Citizenship and Internatioanl Trade (MCIIT) Programming
MCIIT offers a variety of adult language training classes to help newcomers develop the English language skills they will need to work and live in Ontario. English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are offered through local school boards. Newcomers can learn or improve their English in classes at their level – from beginner to advanced. Classes are held during the day, at night, and on weekends.

To be eligible, newcomers must be someone whose first language is not English or French, and be:

   • A Canadian citizen or

   • A permanent resident or

   • A convention refugee or

   • A refugee claimant or

   • An approved Provincial Nominee or

   • A foreign domestic worker admitted under the Live-In Caregiver Program

Ontario programming includes job specific language training classes and bridge training programs.

For more information about the Ontario programs, including access to an online search tool for language classes, please visit:
www.onlinetools.ontarioimmigration.ca/esl/wizard/index.aspx?culture=en.

Enhanced Language Training (ELT)

These training programs provide job-specific, advanced level English language training to adults. The goal of ELT classes is to help an individual develop the language skills to enable them to find a job in their field and to understand the expectations of the Canadian workplace.

ELT curricula are developed for individuals at Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) levels 7-10. Some ELT programs may include a mentorship program, work placement and other employment help.

Occupation-Specific Language Training (OSLT)

OSLT programs help newcomers learn the job-specific vocabulary they need to work in their field. OSLT is particularly useful for internationally-trained professionals. Some programs, such as those run by Colleges Ontario, also provide information about the socio-cultural skills needed in Canadian workplaces: http://www.co-oslt.org/.

Most information in this section is adapted from the following site where you will find more information about programs and language training for newcomers: www.settlement.org/sys/faqs_detail.asp?k=ESL_ADULT&faq_id=4001176.

Credentials

Clients may be asked to provide English versions of original documents to potential employers. Some employers may also require equivalency of qualifications and education. To help clients learn where and how to get their credentials assessed, refer them to: www.cicic.ca/415/credential-assessment-services.canada. This web page lists organizations that can help with assessment of credentials by province.

For videos to share with employers, please refer to the following site:

http://www.credentials.gc.ca/media/roadmap.asp

Topics include: Why Hire Internationally Trained Workers; Recruitment; and Assessing and Selecting Internationally Trained Workers.

Workplace-Specific Programs

There are many different full-time and part-time language programs available. Remember that immigration status may impact a client's eligibility for some programs.

Workplace specific training is primarily provided by school boards, community colleges and community organizations. Training may be offered at all levels of language benchmarks; it may be specialized with a language skill focus (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing), or focussed on the language of an occupation (specific purposes). Some programs are free, others have a fee.

Job Search Workshops

These programs include training and support for those preparing for work. The following website includes links to workshops offered across the province: www.jswontario.org/EN/index.php

Bridge Training Programs

Bridge training programs help skilled newcomers get their license or certificate in their profession or trade to enable them to work in a province. Employers, colleges and universities, occupational regulatory bodies and community organizations deliver bridge training programs with support from provinces.

For information about the program or to find programs go to: www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/keyinitiatives/bridgetraining.shtml.

Tools to use with Clients to Learn About an Occupation

New immigrants or immigrants changing jobs will need to research occupations that they are interested in. Begin by having the client complete the Client Profile (next page).

The research activities can be done over a number of sessions if you are coaching the client, or over time if they are working on their own to complete these worksheets. You may decide to use just one research tool with your client. Clients will need access to a computer and the Internet.

You may wish to have clients complete their own employment research as a group activity. Some may need support navigating the web pages and targeting key information. Some of your clients with lower benchmarks may need more support in reading and copying the information.

For a refresher on using the NOCs, there is a free tutorial on the following site: www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/noc/english/noc/2011/Tutorial.aspx.

The Career Handbook provides global ratings assigned to occupations to further define skills, worker characteristics and other indicators related to occupations that are important for career exploration and informed career decision-making. This counselling resource is used by a wide range of professionals for many applications, and by individuals engaged in self-directed career planning.

The Career Handbook is available at the following site: www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/noc/english/CH/2001/Welcome.aspx.

CLIENT PROFILE

Client Name: _____

Client Occupation: _____

Regulated ☐   Non-regulated ☐

Description of occupation: _____

_____

_____

NOC Code: _____

Relevant LMI (labour market information): _____

Resume template Canadian ready*: _____

Documents to be translated: _____

Does client have: SIN number? ☐   Driver's Licence? ☐

Credentials to be assessed: _____

Canadian equivalency: _____

Canadian work experience or equivalent (may include volunteer work)? _____

_____

_____

CLB test results: ☐ Speaking ☐ Listening ☐ Reading ☐ Writing

Name of test: _____

Enrolled in training? _____

Other relevant information: _____

_____

_____

*A Canadian-style resume includes a career profile (a profile is used by experienced individuals, a career objective for those new to work), education, experience, qualification or skills, honours, related activities, and professional memberships. It is generally 2 pages long and is customized for the job posting. Both paid and unpaid experience is included. For additional information on resume norms in Canada, please see www.settlement.org/sys/faqs_detail.asp?faq_id=4001064.

Using NOC Codes

One of the steps in searching for a job is learning more about the occupation in which you want to work. NOC codes can help you.

What are NOC Codes?

In Canada, almost every job has a National Occupational Classification (NOC) code. They are numbered codes used to organize and reference thousands of job titles in Canada. NOC codes are used to describe job tasks, education, and experience needed in a particular job. An important tool is the National Occupational Classification (NOC) website. To learn about specific jobs, visit the NOC site at: www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2011/SearchIndex. aspx.

The following activities show you three critical sources that clarify skills, education, and additional qualifications needed for a job. By completing the activities, you will learn about the language used to describe tasks, and what to say and how to say it when writing your resume and preparing for an interview. The activities will also give you an understanding of additional job titles, the future outlook for an occupation and other expectations. The research needed may also help you understand the language required to complete tasks related to the occupation. You may need additional language training to be successful in your chosen occupation.

How to find NOC Codes

Follow the instructions to explore the occupation in which you want to work.

National Occupational Classification Code:
www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/noc/english/noc/2011/SearchIndex.aspx.

1. Click on the link above.

2. On the page you will see

Select Search type ▾ **Next**

3. Click on the arrow pointing down. Several choices will appear. Click on **Descriptions** then click on **Next**.

4. You will see:

*Keywords or numerical

Type your occupation or job title into the box and go to: **Select a section you wish to search**. Choose and click on: **All**. Then click on: **Search**.

5. The information that appears may include more than one NOC choice. For example, if you type in Cashier, there are two NOCs plus an additional three that are similar. Select the one closest to your occupational experience and click on it.

6. You will see the following sections:

- Brief description of occupation
- Example titles
- Main duties
- Employment requirements
- Additional information
- Classified elsewhere
- Similar occupations classified under different codes

Using the NOC Codes Worksheet

Use www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/noc/english/noc/2011/SearchIndex.aspx to learn about your occupation. It will give you information about working in your occupation in Canada. The chart below will help you organize the information you find.

Occupation: _____

NOC Code: _____

NOC Information

Example or Alternative Job Titles

Main Duties

Employment Requirements (Education and Additional Qualifications)

Employment Requirements (Certification/Professional Memberships – you may or may not find this information depending on whether or not it is a requirement)

Work Locations/Environment (Sometimes people in the same occupation can work in different environments. For example, a patient care worker can work in a hospital, in a home for seniors or in a client's home.)

Collecting Information

How to Find Out About Non-Regulated Professions

Follow the instructions to explore the occupation in which you want to work.

Occupation Information:
www.workingincanada.gc.ca/content_pieces-eng.do?cid=1&lang=eng

1. Click on the link above.

2. You will see

Job Bank Search

Job Title, Keyword or NOC

City, Province/Territory

Search

3. Under **Job Bank Search** type in a NOC code or job title. Then in the **City, Province/Territory** box, type in where you want to work. Click **Search**.

4. This will take you to the **Working in Canada Report**. You will be able to choose from a number of information areas, including:

- Job Postings
- Wages
- Outlook and Prospects (Will there be jobs in the future?)
- Main Duties
- Licence and Certification
  (Whether it is a regulated or non-regulated occupation)
- Job and Skills Requirements
- Further Assistance
- Education and Training

Additional information is available by scrolling through the various pages and sections. Additional information includes associations and unions, municipal links, OntarioImmigration.ca, and Service Canada locations.

Worksheet - Collecting and Organizing Information About an Occupation

Using the website to learn about your occupation. The chart below will help you organize the information you find.

Occupation: _____

NOC code: _____

Occupation Information
www.workingincanada.gc.ca/content_pieces-eng.do?cid=1&lang=eng.

Average Wage (This may not be available)

Outlook and Prospects (This may not be available)

Regulated/Unregulated (In the Licence and Certification section)

Main Duties

Job & Skills Requirements

Education and Training (Include additional qualifications needed or required after education and certification, if possible)

Essential Skills and Canadian Language Benchmarks

Newcomers will most certainly have some degree of all nine essential skills (ES), but may lack the English language skills to demonstrate them to the best of their ability. Since the CLB provide a framework for describing and learning language, they can also be used to support how ES are demonstrated and developed in an individual.

As mentioned on page 6, one of the main uses of essential skills are in Essential Skills Profiles. The profiles list the typical and most complex tasks for an occupation. The essential skill range is 1 to 5. Notice that all occupations have tasks at 3, 4 and 5. See page 6 to learn more about essential skills and how they are used.

Remember that a Canadian Language Benchmark level is not the same as an essential skill level. Clients will perform tasks at a variety of ES levels demonstrating a number of CLB competencies. For example, nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates read signs and symbols, such as Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) symbols. This is an Essential Skills level 1 task. The client needs a least CLB 3 to attempt this.

To illustrate the relationship between the CLB and ES standards, the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks published a document in 2005 entitled *Relating Canadian Language Benchmarks to Essential Skills: A Comparative Framework*. To access the document online, go to www.itsessential.ca. The table below shows the correlation between CLB skills and four of the nine Essential Skills.

ES Oral Communication		1	2	3	4
CLB Speaking		5-6	6-8	9-10	11-12
CLB Listening		5-7	7-8	9-10	11-12
ES Reading	1	2	3	4	5
CLB Reading	3-5	6	7-9	10	11-12
ES Writing	1	2	3	4	5
CLB Writing	4-5	6-7	8	9	10-12
ES Document Use	1	2	3	4	5
CLB Reading & Writing	3-5	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12

Using Essential Skills

An Essential Skills Profile will quickly enable you to learn the specific skills required to successfully perform a job.

What are Essential Skills Profiles?

Essential Skills Profiles describe how the nine essential skills are used by workers at work to different degrees. They include:

- A brief description of the occupation;
- A list of the most important essential skills;
- Examples of tasks that show how each essential skill is applied.

To learn more, visit http://www.rhdcc-hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/profiles/profiles.shtml.

How Do We Use Essential Skills Profiles?

Essential Skills Profiles are written for any person who works or plans to work in Canada, not just for newcomers. They are descriptions of an occupation that can be used to tailor a resume and cover letter or to find out more about job roles and responsibilities in a Canadian workplace. The profiles help workers learn about the expectations needed to perform a job and they can give you the right language to show that you have those abilities.

Activity: Follow the instructions to explore the occupation in which you want to work.

Essential Skills Profiles (ES Profiles):
http://www10.hrsdc.gc.ca/es/English/SearchMain.aspx

1. Click on the link above.

2. There are many ways to search the ES Profiles. **Click here to view the list**. There are six more options at the bottom of the page, including: occupation, key word and NOC.
You will need to know the NOC (National Occupational Classification) code to use the NOC option.

3. Click on the word **Occupation** and enter an occupation at the bottom of the page for which you wish to search.

Using Essential Skills Worksheet

Use the website to learn about your occupation. The chart below will help you organize the information you find.

Occupation: _____

NOC code: _____

Essential Skills Profiles Information http://www10.hrsdc.gc.ca/es/English/SearchMain.aspx

Most Important Essential Skills

Task Complexity Levels (Look at each ES area and find the levels at the end of the tasks.
You will see (1), (2), (3), (4) or (5). Make a note of the numbers beside the task area.
For example, all cashier reading tasks are levels (1) and (2).

Reading

Document Use

Writing

Numeracy

Oral Communication

Thinking Skills

Computer Use

Working with Others

Continuous Learning

Some Examples of Work Tasks for Most Important Essential Skills

Other Information For example, this might include future trends, physical requirements (bending, lifting) and attitudes.

Benchmark Checklists

Benchmarks Checklists

Purpose

The following checklists help to identify whether or not a client has the language skills needed for the workplace. They use workplace language tasks that the client can use to describe his or her ability, "I can…"

Each example task has been given a Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) level from 4-8 in Listening, Speaking, Reading or Writing. CLB 4-8 are often the minimum levels required to work.

This tool can also be used by counsellors and employers:

- A counsellor can identify skills that the client has, "(Client's name) can …"
- An employer can identify skills required for a specific occupation, "I need my worker to be able to…"

Instructions for Use:

For the client: Ask the client to put a checkmark (✔) beside the tasks that he or she is able to do in English most of the time.

For the counsellor/practitioner: Put a checkmark (✔) beside the tasks that you think your client is able to do in English most of the time.

For the employer: Put a checkmark (✔) beside the tasks that you think you need your worker to do in English most of the time.

Feedback

At the end of the tool you will find an evaluation and some suggestions for self-help activities. The evaluation is designed to quickly see what the strengths and weaknesses are and the results can be used to set goals for learning. The self-help activities relate to practicing specific language skills.

When you review what the client or worker is able to do, it would be useful to ask for a demonstration of the task. For example, elicit from the client how they would ask a supervisor for time off, demonstrating levels of politeness when making the request. Should they have difficulty being able to demonstrate the task, this will identify areas needing coaching.

What is Fossilized Language?

A communication issue that may surface, especially in older clients, is fossilized language. This happens when a client no longer progresses in learning the language and their ability stagnates.

This happens for a number of reasons, but generally occurs because of lack of exposure to and practice in the second language. Fossilization can affect newcomers as well as immigrants who have been in Canada for a number of years. For example, people who work with members from the same first language group and who have limited and predictable interactions with customers tend to speak only in their first language, which means their English skills do not improve and sometimes regress.

This is a difficult and touchy discussion to have with clients. They may not be aware of the problem, as they have been understood in their workplace enough to be successful. In a layoff situation, they may be at a disadvantage because their language is not acceptable in a new position. A language assessment will be an important step in helping them prepare a realistic plan for looking for work. Language training may be necessary.

CLB 4-8 Listening

Put a checkmark where applicable.

CLB 4	CLB 5	CLB 6	CLB 7	CLB 8
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Get facts from simple communication, such as listening to a colleague talking about plans for the weekend.	☐ Identify feelings, such as when colleagues talk about which shift they prefer to work.	☐ Understand the reason for something, such as why a manager is cancelling scheduled overtime.	☐ Understand meaning and intent, such as listening to team members talking about what might happen because of delays in a project.	☐ Identify mood and attitude, such as when a manager is discussing the possibility of layoffs in the company.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Follow straightforward instructions for familiar tasks, such as how to make a photocopy.	☐ Understand directions, such as following safety procedures at work.	☐ Understand the steps required to carry out a task, such as viewing an instructional video and responding with appropriate actions.	☐ Respond to moderately complex directions, such as responding to a safety expert describing a safety procedure.	☐ Understand detailed oral instructions, such as from a supervisor about a familiar but complex issue and take appropriate action.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Find out information, such as listening to a phone message from work about a shift cancellation.	☐ Identify the main idea and details, such as in a phone message from a co-worker asking to switch shifts.	☐ Follow instructions over the phone for a moderately difficult task, such as treating a burn.	☐ Interact in person or over the phone, such as with suppliers to place a typical order for supplies.	☐ Follow extended instructions on the phone, such as from a technical assistant to resolve a simple computer software issue.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Get the main ideas from a short descriptive talk, such as what safety equipment to wear at work.	☐ Understand information, such as listening to an announcement about a training workshop at work to decide whether to attend.	☐ Understand group discussions, such as at a team meeting to share information with an absent colleague.	☐ Identify factual information and opinions, such as in an occupation-specific talk about new projects.	☐ Understand 20-minute presentations, such as those on work-related topics.

CLB 4-8 Speaking

Put a checkmark where applicable.

CLB 4	CLB 5	CLB 6	CLB 7	CLB 8
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Make simple phone calls, such as leaving a short voicemail message for a co-worker.	☐ Take part in very short phone calls, such as those requesting information on business opening and closing hours.	☐ Take part in short phone calls, such as making a call to set up an appointment.	☐ Take part in routine phone calls, such as leaving a detailed telephone message giving the time, place and directions to an interview.	☐ Take part in brief, professional phone calls, such as a responding to non-routine requests for information.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Give a short set of instructions, such as how to print a file from the computer.	☐ Provide instructions and directions, such as giving a client clear directions to the business/company.	☐ Give instructions for a broad range of everyday activities, such as telling a co-worker what to do if the fire alarm rings.	☐ Give instructions for tasks, procedures and processes, such as what to do if there is a minor chemical spill at work.	☐ Give a range of technical instructions, such as how to install new software.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Make and respond to a request, such as from a colleague asking to switch shifts.	☐ Make suggestions, such as advising a co-worker to take a day off for illness.	☐ Persuade and give reasons, such as when asking the boss for a pay increase.	☐ Express opinions, such as how to solve a problem or make an improvement at work.	☐ Propose a solution, such as to a problem with a new program, machine or procedure.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Give information about everyday needs and feelings, such as when talking about a possible job change.	☐ Provide information or opinions, such as when planning a company event.	☐ Give detailed information, such as when taking part in a team meeting to start a new project.	☐ Give presentations, such as ones to new employees about company benefits.	☐ Make formal business presentations, such as to recommend a new product or new supplier.

CLB 4-8 Reading

Put a checkmark where applicable.

CLB 4	CLB 5	CLB 6	CLB 7	CLB 8
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Understand personal messages, such as reading an email from a co-worker that includes a personal update.	☐ Identify the purpose, such as when reading an email message about a company fundraising event to decide whether to participate.	☐ Understand facts and implied meaning, such as in an email which cancels a planned workplace event to understand why it is cancelled.	☐ Understand feelings, such as dissatisfaction when reading email from a co-worker talking about not getting a promotion.	☐ Assess a situation, such as using information from a workplace policy manual to address a customer's complaint.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Understand short, simple instructions, such as how to remove temporary internet files from a computer.	☐ Follow instructions for multistep procedures, such as unclogging a drain using a commercial product.	☐ Follow specialized instructions, such as security and safety regulations at work.	☐ Follow technical instructions, such as diagrams on how to assemble a piece of equipment.	☐ Follow established procedures, such as how to program an electronic appliance using a diagram.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Get information, such as basic workplace safety rules from a workplace poster.	☐ Use several pieces of information, such as from a work schedule to see who should be working.	☐ Get detailed information from business materials, such as product specifications to determine suitability for use.	☐ Evaluate, such as when reading a workplace performance review.	☐ Get information on regulations, such as the Material Safety Data Sheet to identify hazardous reactions and emergency procedures.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Understand the purpose and main idea of a workplace bulletin.	☐ Access information, such as employment standards.	☐ Compare information, such as about a familiar workplace problem from two different online sources.	☐ Interpret information, such as that found in a table or Gantt chart for a group project.	☐ Present information in tables and graphs in an alternate form, such as presenting data from a table in a paragraph.

CLB 4-8 Writing

Put a checkmark where applicable.

CLB 4	CLB 5	CLB 6	CLB 7	CLB 8
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Write a short, personal message, such as to thank a co-worker for switching shifts.	☐ Reply to an invitation, such as an email party invitation from a co-worker.	☐ Apologize, such as to a supervisor for missing a meeting.	☐ Express satisfaction or dissatisfaction, such as to a work team at the successful completion of a project. Explain why the project was successful and the positive impact it will have.	☐ Clarify, such as explaining to your supervisor why you and a co-worker were disagreeing.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Copy information for personal use, such as from catalogues to decide what to buy.	☐ Write information from a phone message, such as who called and when to give to a colleague.	☐ Take brief notes, such as from a short workplace training course.	☐ Take notes and make a summary, such as to give to a co-worker who missed a presentation.	☐ Write a procedure from a demonstration, such as to share it with the rest of the team.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Send a short business message, such as to a supervisor about a medical appointment.	☐ Fill out a form, such as an accident report form.	☐ Make a request, such as to a supervisor asking permission to work from home next week.	☐ Pass on information, such as completing an incident report form, including a narrative about the incident.	☐ Make a request, such as to a project manager explaining why the team needs another person.
I can, my client can, my worker needs to…				
☐ Describe, such as providing facts about a past job in a short paragraph.	☐ Report events or incidents, such as a workplace accident.	☐ Compare, such as to make a comparison of a company's services with those of a competitor.	☐ Give a detailed account of events, such as a brief production report on work stoppage times and reasons.	☐ Analyze, such as to review a procedure and present opinions.

Evaluation

This tool will help identify strengths and skills that need to be improved. Add the checkmarks in each language skill to see which skill contains the most.

I or my client seem(s) to be best at:

☐ Listening

☐ Speaking

☐ Reading

☐ Writing

I or my client should work on:

☐ Listening

☐ Speaking

☐ Reading

☐ Writing

Links for Self-Help and Practice

Activities for all skills can be found at www.language.ca and www.itsessential.ca.
The following links and tips allow clients to practice their Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills.

Listening Practice

www.cbc.ca/ottawa/esl/

www.eslgold.com/speaking/clarifying.html

www.theglobeandmail.com/

Listening to audio books in English, or other high-quality audio recorded by native speakers helps you practice your listening skills. A good technique to develop concentration is to listen to a sentence; hit the 'pause' button; then repeat aloud what the speaker said. You don't have to say exactly the same words, instead focus more on the meaning and pronunciation.

Speaking Practice

www.eslgold.com/

www.eslgold.com/speaking/clarifying.html

www.cbc.ca/ottawa/esl/

www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/english/frameset.html (for pronunciation)

http://www.merriam-webster.com/ is an interactive Canadian site to help distinguish between vowel sounds and consonant sounds in English. It has a pronunciation button to listen to the correct pronunciation of a word.

Reading Practice

www.eslgold.com/

www.cbc.ca/ottawa/esl/

www.theglobeandmail.com/

Writing Practice

www.eslgold.com/

www.writingcentre.uottawa.ca/hypergrammar/

www.termiumplus.gc.ca/site/termium.php?lang=eng&cont=050

The following video, **Oral Communication Video - An Essential Skill in the Canadian Workplace**, is an excellent demonstration of the contrast between a newcomer struggling in an interview and succeeding in one. The video can be ordered at this site: www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/learning.shtml.

TRIEC (Toronto Regional Immigrant Employment Council) has developed a series of videos for employers on recruitment, retention and teamwork. They are available online with a downloadable training guide. While they target skilled workers, the content is relevant for workers of a variety of skill levels. www.triec.ca/find-solutions/for-employers/learning/training-videos/
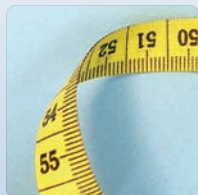
SWOT Analysis

SWOT: An Overview
of a Strategic Planning Tool

An Overview

A SWOT is a way for the client to identify his or her Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). It is a strategic planning tool and can be used to help clients as they market themselves, and try to successfully overcome challenges to unemployment or underemployment. This section demonstrates how a SWOT is done and is followed by a practice example to use before having the client complete one themself.
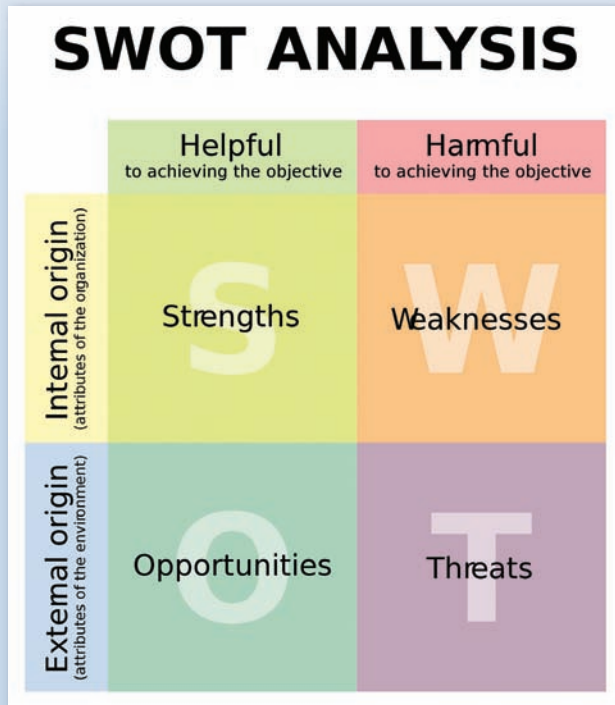
Strengths: characteristics of the individual that gives the client an advantage over others

Weaknesses (Challenges): characteristics that place the client at a disadvantage relative to others

Opportunities: external chances to improve performance (e.g. success in job search)

Threats: external elements in the environment that could be obstacles for the client in the job search

Tips for the SWOT

• Although the acronym SWOT uses the W for weaknesses, encourage your clients to use the term 'challenges' when communicating with others. It is a subtle way of moving interviewers away from a negative word to a more positive one.

• Encourage clients to complete the SWOT on their own. The coaching will then likely take less time and be more targeted.

• This may be a difficult process for many clients because of language barriers. There will be clients who will need to work with you to complete the process. The activity may need to be split up into a number of shorter sessions, perhaps covering one area per session, then take a session to complete the action plan.

• The SWOT could also be developed into a workshop to be offered to clients in a group setting.

> Did you know that the SWOT is used by workplace teams as part of their project planning? Clients will therefore not only use SWOT as a personal planning tool, but they will also acquire a skill that may transfer to the workplace.

Adapted from Wikimedia: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SWOT_analysis.

Using a SWOT

In order to complete the SWOT, clients will need to have researched their target occupation. They need to be willing to take a hard look at what makes them stand out and this may include hard and soft skills, personal attributes and life experiences. The SWOT will provide a starting point for setting employment goals and support them in answering difficult interview questions by enhancing communication skills.

Case Study

Let's look at part of Carla's SWOT. She is looking for work in Hospitality, an area that includes Accommodations, and Food and Beverage Services. Carla may have completed the research worksheets in this document and she will use any information from that research when completing her SWOT.

Carla's SWOT:

Strengths	Weaknesses
• I ask the right questions ("How can I help you", "Please tell me what happened", are examples of questions Carla could ask). I clarify information (Do you mean…?) and actively listen to solve customer issues • I completed Smart Serve training in Ontario • I have 10 years experience in a resort in a number of functions (wait staff, front desk agent, reservations) • I have received three commendations based on customer feedback	• My CLB level in speaking is 6. It is sometimes a challenge for me to communicate clearly • I have no direct Canadian work experience although many resort clients were Canadians • My family responsibilities limit availability to work overtime • My education has not been assessed to a Canadian equivalency • I'm not certain of my career goal
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Hospitality remains fairly stable in Ontario and the number of people employed remains the same • The food service sector has high turnover so there are jobs available • I live near the airport where all the hotels are located • My neighbour works at the Hilton • The college has a free Enhanced Language Training (ELT) Hospitality program with a work placement	• The state of the economy worries me. I am afraid jobs will disappear • There are many people competing for the same jobs • I may not be accepted for the ELT program to enhance my language skills

When Carla finishes her SWOT, she can develop her strengths and minimize the weaknesses and threats in order to maximize her opportunities. The results will suggest areas for practitioners to emphasize in coaching and training situations.

The research that Carla completes will generate a few NOC codes and broaden her opportunities, based on her experience, in a number of hospitality occupations. The Essential Skills Profiles will give her examples of tasks that she would be required to do and indicate oral communication, reading and writing tasks that would help Carla decide if she needed additional language training. As indicated in the SWOT, she located a possibility for further language training in an ELT program that is occupation-specific. She also identified the need to get her educational qualifications assessed.

Action Planning

Clients can be encouraged to think about their long term and short term goals based on their SWOT. To complete the action plan they will need to think critically, problem solve and prioritize tasks; all of which are essential skills required in today's workplace.

The following web sites might be useful when you are working with clients.

Sector Councils:
The Alliance of Sector Councils represents various employment sectors, such as hospitality, retail, grocery etc. You can obtain a full list at the following address:
www.councils.org/sector-councils/list-of-canadas-sector-councils/
Most sector councils have a job board or links to employers.

Language Classes:
Visit www.onlinetools.ontarioimmigration.ca/esl/wizard/index.aspx?culture=en to find a language class near you (in Ontario).

SWOT

What's A SWOT?

A SWOT is a tool that can help you organize your strengths, weaknesses (challenges), threats and opportunities. A SWOT is always pictured like this:

S **Strengths**	W **Weaknesses**
O **Opportunities**	T **Threats**

Before you begin to work on your SWOT, there are two areas to discuss: **transferable skills** and **personality traits**.

Transferable skills are the skills that you have developed through life experience. These are skills that you can transfer from one area of your life to another area, including from your personal or academic life to your professional life and from one occupation to another. For example, if you have managed a household budget, you may have transferable skills in money management. If you have ever coached or been a member of a sports team, you may have transferable skills in short and long term goal setting. If you were an extremely organized student, who participated in many extracurricular activities, you may have transferable skills in time management. Canadian employers value the ability of an employee to be able to describe their transferable skills. It shows initiative, which is a trait that is highly valued in the Canadian workplace.

Examples of transferable skills needed in many work activities include:

- Decision implementing
- Cooperation
- Policy enforcing
- Punctuality
- Time management
- Attention to detail
- Goal setting and reaching
- Organization
- Decision making
- Teamwork

Personality Traits are those traits or characteristics that make us unique. It is the way we think, feel and behave. These are distinctive traits. For example, being considered social (enjoy talking to people), can be a very helpful characteristic when applying for a job in sales, but may not be seen as an important trait for a computer technician. Think about the words you and others use to describe **you** and which ones are best for the job that interests you.

Getting Started

Use the questions to start thinking about your SWOT. You will need to gather information and research. As you reflect on your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, complete the SWOT worksheet called
"Creating a SWOT".

Strengths

Think about knowledge, skills and attributes that make you an excellent employee.

• Education, additional training, special courses or workshops

• Work experience

• Do you have letters of commendation, letters of reference, awards?

• Transferable skills

• Hard skills (technical e.g. if you are an Admin Assistant what software are you familiar with?)

• Soft skills (e.g. works well with others, good communication skills, etc.)

• Personality traits such as:
   - Attitude
   - Optimistic
   - Energetic

• Who do you know? Contacts both professional and personal

• Are you or have you been a member of an association related to your occupation?

• Do you have any volunteer experience? Coaching experience?

• Other _____

Weaknesses

(Depending on your answers some of these could be moved to Strengths)

• How good are your English language skills? Do they match the needs of your occupation?

• Do you have Canadian work experience?

• Are your training/education transcripts translated or not?

• What is your level of proficiency with computers? What software are you comfortable with?

• Are you familiar with Canadian job titles, the interview process, the hidden job market, the job search process?

• Are you dealing with stress, depression, lack of confidence?

• Are your family members and friends supporting you in the job hunt?

• Are you over the age of 50? Age may be a barrier to finding employment (because of real or perceived challenges, by either employers or by yourself). Do you have any poor work habits? What are they?

• Other _____

Opportunities

• Do you have flexibility in moving to a new location (city, province)?

• Does the future outlook seem good for your occupation? Is the industry growing or declining?

• Is training available to help you improve certain skills and overcome weaknesses?

• Are your skills up-to-date?

• Is there work available in your occupation in your location?

• Are there training programs with work placements?

• Do you have contacts or a network of people who do what you want to do?

• Is there a need for your skills?

Threats

• What barriers do you face right now?

• Is there a lot of competition in your field?

• Is your occupation changing? (e.g. technology used in reservations management or inventory control?)

• Are any of the weaknesses also a threat to your job search?

Creating a SWOT

Take the answers to the questions from the **"Getting Started"** worksheet and transfer them to the SWOT chart below.

Your Strengths	Your Weaknesses

Opportunities in your Occupation	Threats to your Employment/Occupation

Action Plan

Use your SWOT to Answer the Following Questions:

1. What changes can you make to your resume and cover letter so that they are more effective?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Think about the different ways in which you can find opportunities for work. Where can you begin your search? Is there an organization you can join? Is there training you can take?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. You may have no control over some of the things you listed in the SWOT. For example, if the economy is bad, there are fewer jobs. However, your ability to use computers, a skill almost everyone needs in a Canadian workplace, is something you can change. If you don't have computer skills, you can take a course and turn this into a strength. What steps can you take to turn each threat to a positive strength?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Action Plan Table (Example)

Long Term Goal Statement:

To gain employment with a company or institution that offers me opportunities to use and enhance my skills and knowledge.

Goal	Steps to meet my goal	What resources do I need to reach my goal?	How do I know if I've reached my goal?	Done ✔
Increase my English language skills	**1.** Have my language assessed **2.** Find a class **3.** Practice, practice, practice	**1.** Settlement service organization for information and help **2.** Time for appointments and classes **3.** Money to live on **4.** Support from my family	**1.** Formal assessment **2.** Self-assessment (Anecdotal information: people less frequently ask me to repeat myself)	✔ (date)
Add ten people to my employment related network	**1.** Find networking opportunities: e.g. volunteer for an event or agency/ organization **2.** Attend an event related to my occupation **3.** Talk to friends and families; ask for contacts **4.** Set up information interviews **5.** Join an organization related to my occupation	**1.** Settlement service organization for information and help **2.** Time and opportunities to volunteer **3.** Information about organizations	I have 10 solid contacts in my network list	✔ (date)

Action Plan Table

Long Term Goal Statement:

Goal	Steps to meet my goal	What resources do I need to reach my goal?	How do I know if I've reached my goal?	Done ✔ (date)

Best Practices

Best Practices: Working with Clients in Skilled and Semi-Skilled Non-Regulated Occupations

Whether looking for work in a Regulated Occupation or a Non-Regulated Occupation (once licensing is considered), the job search processes are remarkably similar. However, a licensed occupation may require a more complex resume and cover letter, a larger interview panel, a number of interviews for a position, and additional translation of documents etc. Despite the differences, all newcomers will need coaching in the same topic areas.

Interview Strategies

One of the most difficult questions to answer in an interview is *Do you have any Canadian experience?* If your client says no, the conversation stops there. It is really important therefore to discuss transferable skills with the client well before any interview.

Encourage clients to talk about what they know, rather than limit themselves to what they have experienced. A client with hospitality sector experience in another country could respond: *I am actually very familiar with Canadian customer service expectations because Canadians represented 36% of our resort business.*

One approach to share with clients is described as the STAR approach. This outline is from www.quintcareers.com/STAR_interviewing.html.

Situation or **T**ask	Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a general description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. This situation can be from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.
Action you took	Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what you did – not the efforts of the team. Don't tell what you might do, tell what you did.
Results you achieved	What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?

A broad range of interview questions clients can use to practice answering questions can be found in the Work Ready resource kit published in 2009 and downloadable at www.language.ca/display_page.asp?page_id=708.

Included with the questions is a description of what the interviewer actually wants to hear as well as examples of rephrasing of the same or similar questions.

Interviews are a concern for many unemployed and underemployed newcomers. Coaching and interview teams are two strategies that can be used to enhance client performance.

Oral Communication Video - An Essential Skill in the Canadian Workplace is an excellent demonstration of the contrast between a newcomer struggling in an interview and succeeding in one. This video can be ordered free-of-charge at www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/learning.shtml.

Interview Dos and Don'ts

Language and how we use it is extremely important in interview situations. Refer to the table below[2] for some quick tips on what **to do** and what **not to do** in an interview.

Dos	Don'ts
• **Do** say the name of the country where you worked or use *"In my last position I..."*	• **Don't** begin to answer a question with *"Back home I..."* it can be negatively perceived. It sends the message that you are not committed to staying here.
• **Do** use *"I am an aesthetician and am interested in working for your organization"*.	• **Don't** use the past tense: *"I was a..."* or *"I used to be a..."* If you worked as an aesthetician, you are still an aesthetician.
• **Do** prepare and practice for the interview and practice answering questions.	• **Don't** memorize or over-rehearse your answers.
• **Do** make sure you know exactly where you are going and how to get there. Plan to arrive 10 minutes early.	• **Don't** arrive late. Leave lots of time to get to the interview.
• **Do** dress appropriately. The general rule is dress for the job above the one you are applying for.	• **Don't** wear anything new that might prove to be uncomfortable. e.g., new shoes.
• **Do** greet the receptionist or assistant with courtesy and respect. This is where you make your *first* impression.	• **Don't** chew gum during the interview.
• **Do** bring extra resumes to the interview.	• **Don't** say anything negative about former colleagues, supervisors, or employers.
• **Do** shake hands firmly. If you don't shake hands for religious reasons, tell them immediately with an apology.	• **Don't** bring up or discuss personal issues or family problems.
• **Do** remember body language and posture: sit upright and look alert and interested at all times.	• **Don't** fidget or slouch or avoid eye contact.
• **Do** turn off (or set to silent ring) your cell phone and/or pager.	• **Don't** ever not ask any questions – it shows a lack of interest. Just avoid questions about benefits, salaries etc.

[2] Dos and don'ts adapted from information at www.quintcareers.com/printable/interviewing-dos-donts.html. You will find more dos and don'ts on this site.

Transferable Skills

Transferable skills are developed through life experience. These are skills that you can transfer from one area of your life to another area, including from your personal or academic life to your professional life and from one occupation to another. Clients need to be encouraged to examine the skills they have to see how to apply them to a Canadian context. Refer above to the tool titled 'SWOT' for more information and examples about transferable skills.

An interesting online self-evaluation of transferable skills can be found at www.jobsetc.gc.ca/toolbox/checklists/employability.jsp.

"Transferable skills are skills that you can take with you from one situation to another, from one job to another. The skills below are important to employers. www.ceswoodstock.org/job_search/resumeskillshidden.shtml.

If you have access to a computer lab, have clients complete the online survey at www.jobsetc.gc.ca/toolbox/checklists/employability.jsp. When they submit their answers they receive a personalized report.

Give clients a number of transferable skills and ask them to think about what they might say to an interviewer. Suggested skills include: communication, decision making, adapting to new/different situations, learning quickly, handling complaints. Other skills and descriptions can be found at www.ceswoodstock.org/job_search/resumeskillshidden.shtml.

Volunteering

Volunteering enables an individual to use their skills, gain experience in the Canadian Workplace, and understand work expectations and rules. It can be used to show an employer "Canadian experience".

Direct Benefits of Volunteering:

Volunteering can help newcomers:

- Learn the required language and skills needed to work in a Canadian organization
- Learn about how organizations work
- Get practical knowledge of the Canadian workplace
- Improve language skills by practicing English
- Earn an accepted Canadian reference
- Increase their network by making new friends and contacts
- Get job leads
- Take on new responsibilities (to add to resume)
- Develop new skills (interpersonal, communication, public speaking)
- Get Canadian work experience
- Increase knowledge of local community

An excellent resource for information on volunteering to share with clients is www.settlement.org. There are relevant pages covering many employment related issues including questions and answers common to newcomers. The following excerpt shows individuals the potential benefits of volunteering.

Does Volunteering Qualify as Canadian Experience?

Yes. Many employers accept volunteering as valid Canadian work experience. Volunteer work is an excellent way to gain Canadian experience and Canadian references, which are required for most jobs.

Most employers will ask clients about their Canadian experience. Even if they are qualified, if they don't have Canadian experience, it can be difficult to get a job. This is unfair, but it is a reality that they may face.

For additional information, have clients visit: www.settlement.org/sys/faqs_detail.asp?faq_id=4001089. There are links to volunteer centres as well as one link to an online tool that helps an individual decide the type of volunteer they are.

Mentoring

According to www.ontarioimmigration.ca/en/working/OI_HOW_WORK_MENTOR.html, "mentoring or coaching programs help you meet people in your profession and learn more about Ontario's workplaces". Finding a mentor is an excellent way for the client to gain valuable knowledge and advice on pursuing a career in their field. This web site also has links to a variety of mentoring programs in Ontario.

One such program is The Mentoring Partnership, offered by of TRIEC (Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council: www.triec.ca). TRIEC is a partnership of stakeholders who are concerned with integrating immigrants in the Toronto Region labour market. Mentoring Partnership was set up to partner a newcomer with an established skilled immigrant. The partnerships are occupation specific. The website www.thementoringpartnership.com has an online application process for finding a mentor.

"Mentoring is meaningful for me because I can share what I have experienced with other skilled immigrants," says Taofeeq Olatinwo, former mentee and Senior Manager of SAP at Hewlett-Packard. "My mentor explained Canadian culture and the workplace. I believe this insight has been essential in helping me integrate in all the jobs I've had since."

Taofeeq is one of 13 former mentees being recognized for returning to the program to become mentors.
www.thementoringpartnership.com

Mentoring does not have to be a formal situation. A mentor is defined as someone who gives help and advice to someone with less experience. Many individuals have informal workplace mentors: a person who can steer them away from misunderstandings. A client could be encouraged to develop a mentor relationship with someone who is successfully working in a similar occupation in a Canadian workplace.
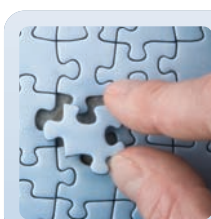
Additional Resources and Glossary

Additional Resources

Web Links

An excellent free workbook, *Guide to Working in Canada* is available to download at:
www.workingincanada.gc.ca/content_pieces-eng.do?cid=884

Planning to Work in Canada? is an excellent downloadable workbook for newcomers:
www.credentials.gc.ca/immigrants/workbook/index.asp

Information Booklets for language for living and working in Canada; for both learners and practitioners to download:
www.language.ca/display_page.asp?page_id=572

This website includes videos of people talking about their occupations. You can search by industry or education level:
www.vector.cfee.org/english/explorevideo.php

Online learning activities (employment related):
eslcorner.settlement.org/employment-and-education/employment

To Recommend to Employers

To explore strategies for recruiting and hiring internationally trained workers:
www.hireimmigrants.ca
www.thinktalentthinkglobal.ca/talent-acquisition

Transferable Skills

Community Employment Services:
www.ceswoodstock.org/job_search/resumeskillshidden.shtml

Job search resource site:
http://www.quintcareers.com/transferable_skills_set.html

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Goldman, Lynda. *You're Hired...Now What? An Immigrant's Guide to Success in the Canadian Workplace*. Oxford University Press. 2010

Laroche, Lionel and Don Rutherford. *Recruiting, Retraining, and Promoting Culturally Different Employees*. Butterwort-Heinemann. Oxford. 2007

Wright, Daisy. *No Canadian Experience, EH?* A Career Survival Guide for New Immigrants. WCS Publishers. 2007

Video Links

Lionel Laroche works in cross-cultural and diversity training and has presented at a number of settlement and English as a Second language conferences. The video can be found at:
www.settlementatwork.org/_news_/94010.

For a series of excellent videos that can be ordered or downloaded from TRIEC, including Finding Talent, Integrating Talent, and Cross-Cultural Teamwork visit:
www.triec.ca/find-solutions/for-employers/learning/training-videos.

Glossary

Assessment Centre: Assessment centres are located in almost every province of Canada. The assessment centres employ certified CLB assessors to administer a variety of standardized language assessments based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks.

The CLB assessors test learners' language skills and recommend placement in an ESL program suitable to the learners' abilities, interests and needs.

To locate an assessment centre, visit: www.language.ca. For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit your local Language Training Service provider.

Bridge Training Programs: Ontario Bridge Training programs help skilled newcomers get their license or certificate in their profession or trade, so that they can work in Ontario. Employers, colleges and universities, occupational regulatory bodies and community organizations deliver bridge training programs with support from the Ontario government.

For more information on Ontario's bridging programs, visit: www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/keyinitiatives/bridgetraining.shtml.

CLB: The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) are recognized as the official Canadian standard for describing, measuring and recognizing the language ability of adult immigrants and prospective immigrants in English. CLB describe language in three stages and 12 benchmarks. More information can be found at www.language.ca.

ELT: Enhanced Language Training (ELT) programs provide job-specific, advanced level English training to adults. The goal of ELT classes is to provide language training that helps an individual find a job in their field of experience and understand the expectations of a Canadian workplace.

Essential Skills: Essential skills are the skills needed for the workplace as captured through research by the Government of Canada. They include the following nine skills:

- Reading
- Writing
- Document Use
- Numeracy
- Computer Use
- Thinking Skills
- Oral Communication
- Working with Others
- Continuous Learning

Essential Skills Profile: Essential Skills Profiles describe how workers in various occupations use each of the key essential skills listed above. Each occupational profile includes

- A brief description of the occupation
- Examples of tasks that illustrate how each essential skill is applied
- Complexity ratings that indicate the level of difficulty of the example tasks

Profiles are found at: www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/profiles/profiles.shtml.

Fossilized Language: Fossilized language happens when a client no longer progresses in learning the language and their ability stagnates.

LINC: Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) offers language classes at no cost to eligible adult learners by the Government of Canada. LINC programs can also assess a client's current language skills to find out which training program would be best for them.

Mentoring: Mentoring or coaching programs help you meet people in a profession and learn more about Ontario's workplaces. Finding a mentor is an excellent way to gain valuable knowledge and advice on pursuing a career in your field. To learn more about mentoring programs in Ontario, visit: www.ontarioimmigration.ca/en/working/OI_HOW_WORK_MENTOR.html.

Non-Regulated Occupations: A non-regulated occupation is an occupation for which there is no legal requirement or restriction on practice with regard to licences, certificates, or registration. The vast majority of occupations in Canada (about 80%) fall into this category.

NOC: In Canada, almost every job has a National Occupational Classification (NOC) code. They are numbered codes used to organize and reference thousands of job titles in Canada. NOC codes are used to describe job tasks, education, and experience needed in a particular job. To access information about a specific occupation, visit: www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2011/SearchIndex.aspx.

OSLT: Occupation-Specific Language Training (OSLT) programs help newcomers learn the job-specific vocabulary they need to work in their field. OSLT is particularly useful for internationally-trained professionals. Some programs, such as those run by Colleges Ontario, also provide information about the socio-cultural skills needed in Canadian workplaces. For more information visit: http://www.co-oslt.org/.

Personality Traits: Personality Traits are those traits or characteristics that make us unique. It is the way we think, feel and behave. These are distinctive traits. For example, being considered social (enjoy talking to people), can be a very helpful characteristic when applying for a job in sales, but may not be seen as an important trait for a computer technician.

Red Seal Trades: Some trades are referred to as Red Seal Trades. These trades, for which all the provinces and territories have agreed on standards for entry into the occupation, allow for the portability of qualifications across Canada. For a list of designated Red Seal Trades, visit: http://www.red-seal.ca/w.2lc.4m.2@-eng.jsp.

Regulated Occupations: A regulated occupation is one that is controlled by provincial, territorial and sometimes federal law and governed by a professional organization or regulatory body. To work in a regulated occupation and use a regulated title, you must have a license or certificate or be registered with the regulatory body of your occupation. Some occupations are regulated in some provinces and territories and are not regulated in others. For more information, visit: www.cicic.ca.

Regulatory Body: A regulatory body exists for each regulated occupation. A regulatory body is a non-governmental organization that regulates an occupation. They are found in each province and territory in Canada. For a list of regulatory bodies in Ontario go to: www.accesscentre.ca/regulatory-bodies-ontario.

Sector Councils: According to HRSDC (Human Resources and Skill Development Canada), sector councils are national partnership organizations that bring together business, labour and educational stakeholders. Operating at an arm's length from the Government of Canada, sector councils are a platform for these stakeholders to share ideas, concerns and perspectives about human resources and skills issues, and find solutions that benefit their sector in a collective, collaborative and sustained manner. A list of sector councils can be found at: www.councils.org/sector-councils/list-of-canadas-sector-councils/.

Semi-Skilled Occupations: Semi-skilled occupations require workers to have additional training, skill and experience in order to meet some of the task requirements. Examples include retail salesperson, machine operator, home support worker, food and beverage server, office administrative assistant and carpenter.

Skilled Occupations: Skilled occupations require education, training and experience to handle complex tasks. Examples of skilled jobs are architect, dentist, and writer.

SIN: A Social Insurance Number (SIN) is a nine-digit number that you require to work in Canada or to receive government benefits.

Smart Serve: Smart Serve is a training and certification program. Anyone who serves or handles alcohol in a licensed establishment in Ontario must be certified by Smart Serve. www.smartserve.ca/en/about.

STAR: STAR is an acronym that stands for Situation, Tasks, Actions and Results. It is a system of organizing answers that job seekers find useful when preparing for behavioural interviews.

SWOT: SWOT is an acronym representing four words: Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Challenges. A SWOT is a strategic planning tool.

Trade: A trade is an occupation generally regarded as requiring one to three years of post-secondary education at a community college or university, two to four years of apprenticeship training, two to three years of on-the-job training, or a combination of these requirements. Some trades are regulated which means that a license/certificate is required.

Transferable Skills: Transferable skills are skills that you can take with you from one situation to another, from one job to another. www.ceswoodstock.org/job_search/resumeskillshidden.shtml.

Unskilled Occupations: These jobs need little or no training or experience. Workers should be able to perform simple duties and responsibilities satisfactorily. The work may include a certain amount of physical exertion and it may also require a worker to be familiar with a category of goods or services or a particular work environment. Examples of unskilled jobs include: cleaner, furniture packer, and restaurant dishwasher.

Volunteer Work: Volunteering is unpaid work. Many employers accept volunteering as valid Canadian work experience. Volunteer work is an excellent way to gain Canadian experience and Canadian references, which are required for most jobs.

WHMIS: Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) is part of Federal health and safety legislation for handling hazardous materials in the workplace.