

ENHANCED LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR PHARMACISTS

Background

In order to study successfully in the Bredin Institute's Bridging Program for pharmacists, to communicate effectively in a pharmacy setting, and to ultimately obtain licensure as a pharmacist, IPGs require a high level of language ability. Language proficiency affects performance in the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada's examinations, and communication plays a vital role in successful completion of the OSCE. Furthermore, as pharmacists in the community, IPGs must be able to communicate effectively with clients from diverse backgrounds for reasons of patient safety.

The goal of this module is to enhance the students' communicative ability that will allow them to gain confidence in participating fully in school and workplace settings. The goal of this module is to provide students with focused language practice that will allow the student to understand the materials presented in the bridging program, gain necessary skills to pass required language proficiency examinations, and to communicate effectively in the workplace. Language activities will also be integrated into "real-life" communication scenarios. Communication also relies on a shared cultural understanding, and therefore elements of Canadian culture will be discussed and intercultural communication topics will be broached.

Course Objectives

1. To provide opportunities for students to become active learners by incorporating strategy training for reading and studying.
2. Elevate language proficiency levels to standards set by the Alberta College of Pharmacists. (Equivalent to Benchmark 8 of Canadian Language Benchmarks).
3. Enhance communication skills in a pharmacy and OSCE setting
4. Apply content knowledge and language strategies to integrated pharmacy practice and mock OSCE scenarios.

Specific Outcomes

Following successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Apply reading strategy awareness such as the SQ4R method when studying course textbooks on a weekly basis.
2. Discuss time-management strategies as it relates to preparing for individual examinations.
3. Self-identify specific language challenges and create a learning plan tailored to overcome language obstacles.
4. Review above learning plan and submit on a monthly basis.
5. Gain an understanding of the various language proficiency examinations required by ACP for registration.
6. Discuss and implement test-taking strategies in order to prepare for upcoming examinations.
7. Elevate language proficiency to at least a fluent level of Benchmark 8 on the Canadian Language Benchmarks scale by performing focused and integrated language tasks in all four language skills.
 - a. Reading:

Practice orientating self to text, reading vocabulary in context, improve skimming and scanning skills, identifying main and supporting ideas, summarizing, making inferences and understanding argument and opinion in weekly texts such as newspapers, pharmacy materials, internet readings, and textbooks.

b. Writing:

Completing weekly writing tasks (paragraph and essays) related to pharmacy and healthcare to gain practice in describing trends, summarizing data, describing processes, and presenting arguments. Students will be able to write correct essay form, develop topics and main ideas and develop arguments while managing time effectively.

c. Listening:

Completing weekly listening activities individually or as a group with practice in listening for specific information, identifying detail, and identifying main ideas in pharmacy texts, news programs, television programs and lectures. Focused practice on pronunciation enhancement will also be included using pharmacy texts as models of speech.

d. Speaking:

Completing weekly speaking activities where students can practice producing reasoned responses fluently. Focused practice on pronunciation, especially related to word stress, sentence stress and linking, and thought groups will be emphasized over syllable and consonant stress unless deemed required by the instructor.

8. Augment grammar development and language skills into integrated pharmacy practice and mock OSCE scenarios by developing requisite skills in correct formation of negatives, question forms, adjective clauses, conditionals, passive voice, determiners, phrasal verbs, prepositional use and tense by completing textbook assignments and integrating skills into OSCE scenario practice.
9. Develop and apply idiomatic language and slang, common phrases (hold your breath, blood pressure, etc.), phrasal verbs in a pharmacy setting through case scenarios.
10. Communicate more effectively in a pharmacy setting by learning skills such as establishing rapport with a patient, creating appropriate open and closed ended questions, providing explanations and patient education, empathy, body language, employing patient centred language and assertiveness and applying these skills in frequent mock OSCE scenarios with instructor or with groups.
11. Analyse and apply pharmacy communication skills to specialized demographics such as older adults, to sensitive topics such as mental health issues, and affects such as anger or other emotions and compliance issues in case scenarios.
12. Discuss elements of culture including Canadian politics, rural Alberta, poverty, aging, and cultural groups including Aboriginal culture.

13. Discuss elements of intercultural communication and expectations in a pharmacy setting including cultural values, perceptions and expectations, personal cultural values and intercultural differences.
14. Discuss workplace culture such as personality types (Myers Briggs, Emotional Intelligence, Listening Inventories, and other self-assessments related to Organizational Behaviour relevant to a pharmacy practice setting.)
15. Reflect on own performance in case study presentations.
16. Reflect on experiences in placements/workplace.

Instructional Methods

The instructor is available to facilitate tasks and provide ongoing feedback. Integrated language practice and communication skills will be taught through a combination of didactic lecture, discussion and casework in groups or individually. Content instructors will also take part in integrated language practice sessions. Students will be given an opportunity at the end of each session (1.5 hours) to work on personal learning plan related to language or communication. Students will also go on several field trips throughout the session to various locations such as the Legislature, the Boyle Street Co Op, various hospital and community pharmacies, and to a senior`s association.

Assessment

Students will complete an initial language assessment.

Participation: 15%

This class requires student participation in order to be successful. Therefore, students will be graded on their participation in class as 0 (not at all), 1 (adequate) and 2 (excellent contributions to class). This will be based on number of questions and contributions made to group discussions and completion of activities.

Personal Learning Plans: 10%

Students will complete 4 personal monthly learning plans based on language and communication. They will be evaluated on ability to complete activities assigned to them under the learning plan (reading, writing, listening, speaking, other).

Reflections: 15%

After each field trip and selected topics (aging, Aboriginal Culture, death and dying), students will be given an opportunity to complete and submit a reflection activity on 3 topics. Students will be graded on their ability to articulate how each topic will affect their pharmacy practice.

Mock Communication Scenarios: 30%

Students will be graded on 3 Mock Scenarios or Case Studies. The marks will be based on the attached rubric.

Mid Term: 15%

Students will complete an assessment similar to the initial language assessment.

Final Assessment: 15%

Students will complete an assessment similar to the midterm and initial language assessment.

Successful completion of this module requires a pass of 70%

References

Assorted newspaper articles, online documents – podcasts / streaming videos, PEBC materials, course textbooks, television and radio shows

