

XLAN 1910

Language for Work

Module 5: Intercultural

Communication for Work

Instructor Guide

Integrated Language and Workforce Training

Faculty of Foundational, Career, and Intercultural Studies

Integrated Language and Workforce Training

Module 5: Intercultural Communication for Work

Instructor Guide

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Module 5: Instructor Guide

Module Overview

In this module, students will be introduced to culture for the Canadian workplace and be invited to notice important differences between their first culture and Canadian culture norms. They will begin by identifying what they already know about Canadian workplace culture. Students will be introduced to a definition of culture by using the iceberg metaphor. After this, there will be a discussion of stereotypes and generalizations before looking at the culture of safety. Finally, students will notice examples of culture in videos designed to highlight cultural differences in the workplace. They will compare what they noticed in the video to their first culture and to Canadian culture. As part of the project deliverables, learners must demonstrate increased intercultural communicative competence after this module. What is essential here is that they can discuss cultural similarities and differences using language that doesn't reinforce stereotypes. The needs assessment and post-assessment questions were designed as a way for the instructor to be able to confirm that, in fact, there has been a shift, however slight. Increased intercultural communicative competence can be shown by what the students can say they learned about the Canadian workplace culture. In addition, when they complete the final question related to what aspects of workplace culture in Canada they want to learn more about, they are demonstrating curiosity. This is an essential component of increased intercultural sensitivity.

Module Objectives

- Define **culture** (Class Discussion 1; Learning Activities 1, 2)
- Distinguish between stereotypes and generalizations (Class Discussion 2)
- Compare, contrast, and identify first culture and Canadian cultural norms of safety in the workplace (Video: *The Culture of Safety*, Learning Activity 3)
- Compare, contrast, and identify aspects of workplace culture in Canada with first culture norms (Reading Activity 1; Video: *Culture in the Workplace*)
- Observe and identify cultural orientation of high and low power distance (Reading Activity 1)

Required Resources

1. Access to overhead projector and internet
2. Video 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QiSNcQgHbKo>
3. Video 2: <http://bit.ly/2AtceaV>
4. Tasks and activities included in this module booklet.

Extra Resources for Instructor's and Facilitator's Preparation

Intercultural relations and cross-cultural exchanges are complex and this module seeks to provide opportunities for students at CLB levels 3 to 5 to reflect on this complexity.

The information in *Critical Incidents for Intercultural Communication in the Workplace*, particularly the "Activity Guide" and "Scene by Scene Breakdowns" is highly recommended reading for instructors of this course. It contains fundamental information that will help students to "make distinctions and develop higher degrees of intercultural sensitivity. It looks to help users develop a shared understanding as well as the knowledge, skills and awareness required to communicate effectively in a culturally diverse workplace. The critical incidents will provide access to real experiences with minimal cultural markers and support the development of intercultural competence by developing more complex interpretations and responses to situations."

Reference: *Critical Incidents for Intercultural Communication in the Workplace* online at: <http://bit.ly/2fPl9Zz>

- [Introduction Video](#) (MP4 11Mb)
 - [Activity Guide](#) (PDF 295kb)
 - [Scene by Scene Breakdowns](#) (PDF 403kb)
 - [Video Transcripts](#) (PDF 303kb)
- Note:** The transcripts may be helpful for CLB 3–5 learners.

Other recommended resources for teaching pragmatics or soft skills, entitled *Pragmatic Patterns for Business*, can be found online at <http://bit.ly/2q5OJ3T>. *Teaching Pragmatics Instructor Guide* at <http://bit.ly/22uvmBq> includes lesson plans for apologies, feedback, and complaints. All useful to new trainees in the workplace.

Welcome to the Module on Intercultural Communication!

Needs Assessment

Instructions: Before you begin this module, answer the following question:

1. Write three things you **know** about the culture of the Canadian workplace.

- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Write three things **you want to know** about the culture of the Canadian workplace.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Class Discussion: What Is Culture?

There are many definitions of culture. In this course, we will use the idea of an iceberg to talk about culture. Part of an iceberg is above the water and is smaller than the part below, which is larger. Your instructor will discuss the questions below with you.

Class Discussion

- What do you see above the waterline in culture?
- What do you think is below the waterline?
- How do you know the difference?
- Are the things you see influenced by what you don't see?

Learning Activity 1: Drawing an Iceberg of Culture

During the class discussion, the instructor could first explain what an iceberg is and why it is used to describe culture. Then s/he could elicit examples of cultural elements and write them on the whiteboard either above the waterline (e.g., food, clothing, greetings, music, dance) or below (e.g., community, respect, beliefs, values, independence, power). Once a suitable list has been established, the instructor can write a class definition for culture. It is usually something like:

Culture is the common values, beliefs, and behaviours of a group of people.

Instructions: Draw a picture of the culture iceberg based on what you discussed with the class.

Learning Activity 2: Recognizing examples of culture above or below the water and writing your own example

Instructions: Read each example and then decide whether it is part of the iceberg above or below the waterline. Add one of your own examples in the empty space.

Example	Above or below the waterline? Why?
1. A safety manual (book) about working safely in Alberta.	Above
2. Saying "Good morning" to a co-worker when you get to work.	Above
3. Asking a co-worker for help.	Above
4. Safety is very important.	Below
5. Shaking hands when you meet your new manager.	Above
6. Using your manager's first name and not "Sir" or "Ma'am".	Above
7. Being safe is important for teamwork.	Below
8. Refusing unsafe work is your workplace right.	Above
9. Showing respect for your coworkers is very important.	Below
10. Workers should learn to be independent.	Below

Class Discussion: Defining Stereotypes and Generalizations

Instructions: Look at the following list of statements. Do you have any problems with any of the statements?

Statements	Problems	Stereotype or Generalization
1. Canadians like hockey.		Stereotype
2. <u>Some</u> immigrants don't work safely.		Generalization
3. Chinese students are good at math.		Stereotype
4. Immigrants are taking our jobs.		Stereotype
5. <u>Many</u> Canadians like to watch hockey.		Generalization

In intercultural communication, people use stereotypes and generalizations to talk about members of different cultures. So how are they different? Stereotypes are statements that are made by people outside the group. They are applied to everyone in a group. They are sometimes positive, but are often negative.

Generalizations are statements that people from the culture might use. They are generally true. They apply to many people in the group, but not everyone.

Instructions: Go back to the statements above and identify which statements are stereotypes and which statements are generalizations.

How do you know? Underline the words used when someone is making a generalization.

What are two common stereotypes applied to people from your first country? How do you feel when you hear these stereotypes?

1. _____

2. _____

Video: The Culture of Safety¹

Instructions: Watch the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QiSNcQgHbKo> about an incident that happens at work and answer the following questions.

1. Who is responsible for Clara's injury?

- a. The supervisor
- b. Clara**
- c. Her co-workers

2. Why did Clara not speak up? Check all correct answers.

- She didn't know what to say.
- She needed the job.
- She was a school teacher and now she lives in Canada.
- She didn't have help from her friend.

3. Is Clara's injury because of personality or culture or both?

Both. Clara's culture is likely a high-power culture. Speaking up in front of the team would not be a valued behaviour. Clara also has a personal need to make money and keep her job. She is committed to her work and her new life in Canada. This is a personality trait.

4. If you were in Clara's position, what would you have done?

Answers will vary.

5. Where can you find information about your rights and responsibilities?²

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

¹ Adapted from Holmes, et al. (n.d.):

http://www.awes.ca/site/assets/files/1326/awes_ews_full_version_2017_lr.pdf

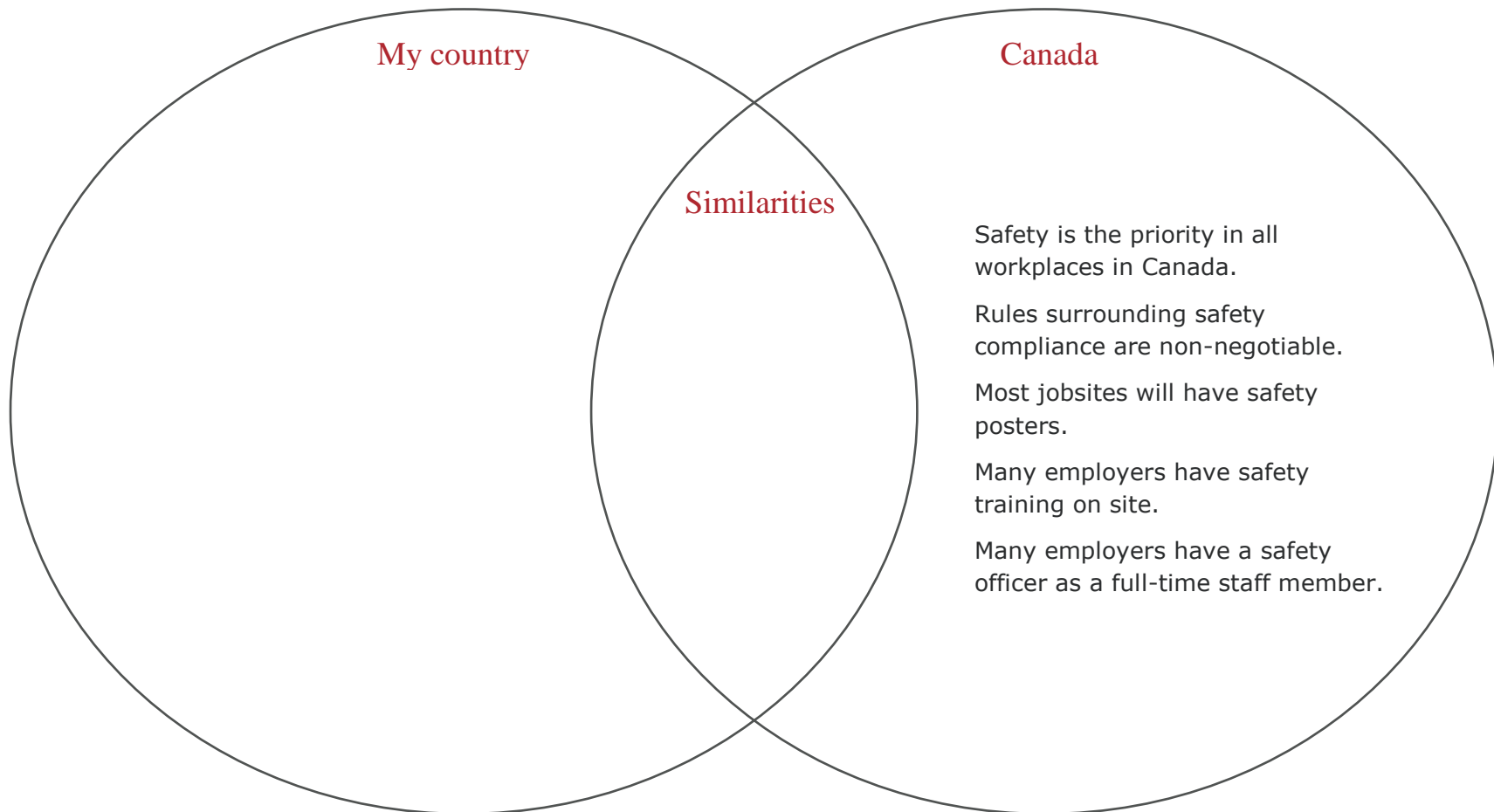
² <http://www.ccohs.ca/>

Learning Activity 3 – Comparing and contrasting safety culture in your country and in Canada

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Write the differences and similarities between your culture and Canadian culture for safety.



Class Discussion: Multiculturalism is an invitation to learn

Instructions: Answer the questions that follow with your partner or group.

1. How often are you invited to a friend's house for a party or dinner?
2. Do you always say "Yes"? Why or why not?
3. Is it rude in your culture to say "No"?

Reading Activity 1: Multiculturalism is an invitation to learn

Everyone talks about culture when you first move to Canada. People talk about how different Canadians are or how things were different back home. Comparing cultures is normal and part of learning to integrate into a new culture. In the community, culture is different from workplace culture. At work, there are more strict rules about how to do things. Safety is important, listening to the boss is important, working well with others is important and, of course, making money is important.

Living in a multicultural society means that we don't always have to follow the new culture's rules. In a multicultural society, we are invited to follow the rules. Sometimes we say "Yes," sometimes "No," and sometimes "Maybe." It takes a lot of energy to always think about culture, so just do your best.

In the following story and video, culture is at the centre of workplace misunderstandings.

The Story of Alfred

Instructions: Read the story and then answer the questions that follow.

One day, Alfred was working as part of a crew of 10 people. He was the only one from another culture. The crew was working outside, digging a ditch for a new electrical line. It started to rain very heavily and the crew didn't want to get out of the truck. The crew boss got out first, picked up a shovel and started digging as fast as he could. He wasn't wearing any rain gear and he got wet in a hurry. Soon after, the rest of the crew started digging as well. Alfred couldn't believe his boss. In fact, when he saw him digging, he got out of the truck and ran up to him. Alfred tried to take the boss's shovel from his hands and told him to go back to the truck. The boss got very angry at Alfred and told him to go and get his own shovel and get to work. Alfred tried again to take the boss's shovel. This time the boss got even angrier. "I'm trying to work here," he yelled. "Go and get your own shovel or get off the jobsite!" Alfred, in shock, went and got his shovel and started digging.

Questions

1. Why did Alfred try to take his boss’s shovel?

Alfred comes from a high-power distance culture. There are high-power and low-power distance cultures. Canada is a low-power distance culture and therefore you will often see bosses working alongside their subordinates to build credibility. Conversely, in a high-power distance culture, a boss would build credibility by delegating and providing oversight. Canadian leaders are often confused by this difference.

2. What should Alfred do tomorrow if his boss takes a shovel again?

Alfred should let his boss do what he thinks is best. Alfred could think about having a conversation with his boss about cultural differences during a coffee break or in the truck during a less busy time.

Video: Culture in the Workplace

Instructions: Watch the following video about culture in the workplace:

<http://bit.ly/2AtceaV>

Fill in the table below with examples from the video of cultural differences.

What I noticed from the video that was cultural...	Same (S) or different (D) in my culture
<p>Answers will vary here. The key is to have a meaningful debrief discussion where students are consciously comparing their cultures to what they see in the video. The instructor can then provide some insights into the Canadian workplace culture</p>	

Final Reflection

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. Write three things you **learned** about the culture of the Canadian workplace.

- _____

- _____

- _____

2. Write two things you **want to learn more** about related to culture in the Canadian workplace.

- _____

- _____
