

Workplace



# INTEGRATION

A DESK REFERENCE FOR NEWCOMERS TO CANADA

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WORKBOOK

Paul A. Holmes



This resource equips internationally-educated professionals with tools for integration for their Canadian workplaces. It is part of a set of three learning resources that include a corresponding workbook, and a guide for mentors and managers who work with newcomers. The three texts build capacity and support for the workplace integration process.

The resources can be used independently for self-directed learning, or as an interdependent set in coaching/mentoring scenarios, training workshops, or related courses. They can be used in business organizations by employers, employees and trainers, or in educational settings such as schools, colleges or community agencies.

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### **About the Writer**

Paul Holmes, of *Anthony & Holmes Consulting*, designed and wrote the working drafts and produced the final document. He has a multi-faceted background that spans three continents and twenty years of working in language and intercultural contexts. He arrived in Canada from South Africa, via the UK, in 1997. He has collaborated extensively with newcomer workplace integration since 2004. He led and initiated pioneering projects with the federal and provincial governments with multiple industry partners. This included some of the first extensive company-wide work to equip English-speaking, Canadian-born employees to work effectively with newcomers to Canada. He has significant expertise in the domain of newcomer integration, having worked with more than 40 organizations in multiple sectors from energy, construction and manufacturing to public municipalities, law-enforcement, defense agencies, and provincial health authorities. He served as the Manager of Corporate Partnerships at the intercultural department for an Alberta-based college, leading the expansion of language and intercultural initiatives into the heart of the private sector. He has presented at numerous conferences, including the 2008 Alberta Congress Board. He holds a Master of Arts in International Relations. He resides in Calgary, Alberta, with his wife and two daughters. Paul continues to specialize in designing and delivering innovative solutions for the multicultural Canadian workplace.



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# How to Use this Workbook



## Overview

Each of the twelve sections in the workbook correlate with the twelve sections in the desk reference.

## Purpose

The focus on these training resources is on workplace integration for newcomers. Integration is a broad topic that encompasses English language training, intercultural skills and a deeper knowledge of Canadian workplace culture, communication abilities, certain life skills etc. Therefore, the resources are not designed to replace conventional language training programs. They are best used to augment traditional training, or as core resources in conjunction with other relevant texts.

There will always be an exception to everything inside these resources. The goal is to raise integration awareness in newcomers, not to provide academic solutions to what is essentially a non-academic context i.e. the workplace. The desk reference and workbook are a departure point, not a “one-size-fits-all” solution. These learning tools are meant to be highly practical. They have been designed through careful observation of newcomers in the workplace and interactions in the classroom.

## Instructional Approach

Each of the twelve sections in this workbook is designed to expand on the corresponding sections in the desk reference. Each section either reviews the content in the desk reference or explores a particular topic more deeply. In addition, the workbook introduces three models through which to understand integration more clearly - the DMIS, the Culture Shock Model, and Maslow's Model of Human Needs. Integration is also explored from departure to settlement to economic and workplace integration, using Tan Le's story from TEDTalks.

## Learning Scenarios

The workbook is used together with the desk reference. The resources are utilized best in a community context, such as a classroom or coaching scenario. However, both can be used independently for self-directed learning. They can act as an interdependent set in coaching/mentoring scenarios, training workshops, or related courses. They can be used in business organizations by employers, employees and trainers, or in educational settings such as schools, colleges or community agencies.

## Answer Key

Some of the questions and tasks are closed-ended - the answers are at the back of this resources in the Answer Key. Other activities are open-ended without any pre-determined answers. They require more personal or reflective responses from the users.



# Principle 1

## Have a game plan

### Contents

#### Integration Journey Departure

##### Part 1 The Story of Tan Le

#### Section 1 - Be clear on what integration is.

- Review

#### Section 2 - Maximize your day of small beginnings.

- Review
- Learning Through Sean's "Foot-in-the-Door" Job

#### Section 3 - Expand your enabling skills. Advance your technical expertise.

- Review
- Self-Evaluation with the 28 Articles



### Learning Outcomes

1. Raise awareness of the "push" and "pull" motivators to identify where they hinder or help with integration.
2. Consolidate the learning for Principle 1 in the desk reference.
3. Compare two contrasting approaches to "foot-in-the-door" jobs to highlight strategies for maximizing early career opportunities.
4. Identify strengths and areas for development using the 28 Articles.

## Introduction to the Integration Journey

Integration into Canadian society and the workplace is not an event; it is a journey.

The purpose of this section, "Integration Journey", is to give you knowledge and tools to bring understanding to the integration journey for newcomers to Canada. Instead of walking without direction or understanding, the four parts on the Integration Journey in this workbook will give you more insights into the common feelings and experiences that immigrants have. It will also give advice on how to manage the journey skillfully.

Integration into Canadian society and the workplace is a journey. It is not a single event. You don't wake up one morning and think "I am integrated". Although there are real events and milestones along the way, the destination - a sense of achievement and belonging - is often experienced by hindsight. At various moments, an immigrant looks back on the months or years and realizes that although he is not where he ultimately wants to be in his new country, he has come a long way from where he was. This is hopefully motivating. An immigrant also realizes that the more she understands integration, the easier and more rewarding the journey.

### The Story of Tan Le

The immigration story of Tan Le is an excellent tool to reflect on your own integration journey in Canada. Using Tan's story, you will listen, read and respond to questions and tasks at the beginning of each of the four principles. Although every newcomer's journey is unique, there are always common integration stages and life lessons to learn from other people. Her story can be found online at Ted Talks. Here is her bio from the Ted.com website.

Tan Le is the co-founder and president of Emotiv Lifescience. Before this, she headed a firm that worked on a new form of remote control that uses brainwaves to control digital devices and digital media. It's long been a dream to bypass the mechanical (mouse, keyboard, clicker) and have our digital devices respond directly to what we think. Emotiv's EPOC headset uses 16 sensors to listen to activity across the entire brain. Software "learns" what each user's brain activity looks like when one, for instance, imagines a left turn or a jump.

Le herself has an extraordinary story -- a refugee from Vietnam at age 4, she entered college at 16 and has since become a vital young leader in her home country of Australia.



Source [http://www.ted.com/speakers/tan\\_le.html](http://www.ted.com/speakers/tan_le.html)

## Instructions

Follow these instructions to complete the activities using Tan's story.

1. Go to Ted.com for Tan's immigration story. The direct link is [www.ted.com/talks/tan\\_le\\_my\\_immigration\\_story.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/tan_le_my_immigration_story.html) or do a search on the site using "Tan Le My Immigration Story".
2. Listen to the talk online. It is about 12 minutes long. We will only follow her talk up to 9:13. A part of the script has been cut and pasted below for our learning purposes. You can read Tan's entire script by clicking on the "Show Transcript" icon, just under the video streaming on the Ted site.
3. After listening to the talk, read through the excerpt from the online script in this workbook. It has been organized into four general stages: Departure - Settlement - Economic Integration - Workplace Integration.
4. Respond to the questions attached to each stage.

## Departure



### What is departure?

Departure relates to how immigrants leave their first countries. The reasons for which they leave. The personal drives that will motivate them in the coming years. The dreams that will sustain them when the journey gets tough. The success that results from perseverance.

### Why we leave.

- Student
- Refugee
- Economic Opportunities
- Quality of Life
- Family
- Adventure

### What we take with us.

Hope.

### Excerpt 1 TEDTalk

How can I speak in 10 minutes about the bonds of women over three generations, about how the astonishing strength of those bonds took hold in the life of a four-year-old girl huddled with her young sister, her mother and her grandmother for five days and nights in a small boat in the China Sea more than 30 years ago, bonds that took hold in the life of that small girl and never let go - that small girl now living in San Francisco and speaking to you today? This is not a finished story. It is a jigsaw puzzle still being put together. Let me tell you about some of the pieces.

Imagine the first piece: a man burning his life's work. He is a poet, a playwright, a man whose whole life had been balanced on the single hope of his country's unity and freedom. Imagine him as the communists enter Saigon, confronting the fact that his life had been a complete waste. Words, for so long his friends, now mocked him. He retreated into silence. He died broken by history. He is my grandfather. I never knew him in real life. But **our lives are much more than our memories.** My grandmother never let me forget his life. My duty was not to allow it to have been in vain, and my lesson was to learn that, yes, history tried to crush us, but **we endured.**

The next piece of the jigsaw is of a boat in the early dawn slipping silently out to sea. My mother, Mai, was 18 when her father died -- already in an arranged marriage, already with two small girls. For her, life had distilled itself into one task: the escape of her family and a new life in Australia. It was inconceivable to her that she would not succeed. So after a four-year saga that defies fiction, a boat slipped out to sea disguised as a fishing vessel. All the adults knew the risks. The greatest fear was of pirates, rape and death. Like most adults on the boat, my mother carried a small bottle of poison. If we were captured, first my sister and I, then she and my grandmother would drink.

My first memories are from the boat -- the steady beat of the engine, the bow dipping into each wave, the vast and empty horizon. I don't remember the pirates who came many times, but were bluffed by the bravado of the men on our boat, or the engine dying and failing to start for six hours. But I do remember the lights on the oil rig off the Malaysian coast and the young man who collapsed and died, the journey's end too much for him, and the first apple I tasted, given to me by the men on the rig. **No apple has ever tasted the same.**

## Questions Departure

1. Tan's family left Vietnam as refugees to start a new life in Australia. What was the reason(s) that made you decide to immigrate to Canada?
  - a. **Student** e.g. to study here, and then apply for residence.
  - b. **Refugee** e.g. religious, political, conflict reasons.
  - c. **Economic Opportunities** e.g. skilled worker, temporary foreign worker, entrepreneur.
  - d. **Quality of Life** e.g. to experience a better standard of living/education for yourself and family.
  - e. **Family** e.g. to follow and/or reunite with family living in Canada
  - f. **Sense of Adventure** e.g. a desire to experience life in a different country.
  - g. **Other** e.g. marriage



2. Each person brings an inheritance to Canada. This inheritance includes among other things, a language and culture, as well as individual and family histories. Immigrants also bring a variety of personal motivators e.g. Tan brought the goal not to allow her grandfather's life to have been in vain (paragraph 2).
  - a. What inheritance have you brought with you e.g. cultures, languages, personal experiences, family histories?
  - b. What personal motivators have you brought with you?



## How to Apply Tan’s Departure Experience to Your Life

The integration experiences of other immigrants can be a source of strength and encouragement to you. It is reassuring to know that other newcomers to Canada go through similar experiences and thoughts to you. Many newcomers find the case studies in the desk reference interesting because it is possible to learn through someone else’s mistakes and victories. It is good to know you are not alone in the journey. Tan’s departure experience from Vietnam raises the reality of “push” and “pull” motivators.

### Recognize Your “Push” and “Pull” Motivators

The reasons immigrants leave their countries to live in a new culture strongly influence their integration journeys. Tan and her family were “pushed” out of their country through conflict, whereas other immigrants are “pulled” out of their countries e.g. by the appeal of opportunities abroad. The “pushed” likely don’t choose to go. They have to. The “pulled” choose to go. They wanted to.

People who are “pushed” out of their home countries by conflict, economic hardship, human rights violations, or even by the desires of their family members, can sometimes take longer to come to terms with the integration journey in Canada. Those immigrants who feel “pulled” to a new country, e.g. for better job or educational opportunities, can also go through emotional “ups-and-downs” on their integration journey. Sometimes even the most positive newcomers can feel homesick when they hit an obstacle in the journey, e.g. feeling stuck in an entry-level job.

Although Tan’s family never chose to leave their country, they didn’t define their lives by their memories (feeling homesick), but rather by a steel-like ability to never give up. To endure. To adapt. As Tan’s says “our lives are much more than our memories” i.e. we have a future that we are responsible for.

### Questions

1. Did you leave your country for “push” or “pull” reasons, or both?
2. Do those reasons hinder or help you with integration?
3. Is there anything from your first culture/country that you sense you should give up, stop doing or perhaps adapt slightly for life in Canada?
4. Is there anything from your first culture that is especially important to keep? Something that is essential to your identity and heritage?
5. In ten years time, do you think you might feel different about your answers to 3 and 4? Explain your answer.
6. Imagine you are explaining your motivators to a Canadian coworker. Write down what you would say.



## REVIEW

### 1. COMPREHENSION

Check (✓) whether these 5 statements are True or False.

1. To integrate into the Canadian workplace you have to lose your first culture and language.  T  F
2. Adapting to Canadian workplace culture means adding new ways of behaving, communicating and thinking, not losing your first culture.  T  F
3. Workplace norms are the mainstream ways of behaving, communicating and thinking in an organization.  T  F
4. Everyone from a particular culture follows the workplace norms all the time.  T  F
5. Workplace norms are tendencies i.e. they tend to be true most of the time.  T  F



### 3. Analysis

#### Compare and Contrast

Five points are listed for “How to think about integration” (p.17-19). If Canadians emigrated to your first country, would these five points be similar for them to follow? Or would the points be different? Are there additional points that would be included?

### 2. Application

#### Case Study with Carlos

Read through the bold points and info in UR#1 (p. 20), which states a newcomer should use an evolving set of career expectations. Respond with answers to the statements and questions below.



1. Give an example of how Carlos recognized that change is a normal part of life.
2. Give an example of how Carlos set accurate expectations for his career.
3. In what ways did Carlos allow his career expectations to evolve?
4. Carlos was ready for change. What do you believe is important to help you manage change in your new life and career in Canada?

### 4. Synthesis

#### Create Meaning

Integration has been called a “two-way street” (p. 17) between newcomers and their workplaces (employers and colleagues) i.e. both groups are expected to make changes.



1. What would you estimate is the percentage split i.e. how much do newcomers adapt compared with employers? Is it 50/50 or a different ratio?
2. Newcomers are advised to add new ways of behaving, communicating and thinking in their Canadian workplaces? What kinds of changes do you think employers could make?



## REVIEW

### 1. COMPREHENSION

Check (✓) whether these 5 statements are True or False.

1. To “maximize your day of small beginnings” means putting a lot of value on your first job in Canada back in your career, even if the job is less than you wanted.  T  F
2. Your “foot-in-the-door” job is important because it is your first work reference of Canadian experience to apply for future jobs.  T  F
3. When your emotions go up and down, spend time with people that like to complain about life in Canada, and who feel they should never have left their countries to come here.  T  F
4. Working “smarter not harder” means making sure you are the first person at work in the morning and the last to leave work.  T  F
5. “10-10-10 Thinking” can help you to stay positive.  T  F



### 2. Application

**Case Study** with Carlos



The fourth paragraph in the case study, entitled Motivation, looks at how Carlos stayed motivated, or positive, in the first months in his new job. Read the paragraph and then answer the questions below.

1. Give two examples of how Carlos applied “10-10-10 Thinking” (UR#2) to stay positive.
2. Which of the following words best describe Carlos’ attitude to dealing with the difficulties of his first job in Canada?
  - (a) Practical and Upbeat
  - (b) Pessimistic and Defeatist
  - (c) Realistic and Organized
  - (d) Both a and c

### 3. Analysis

**Select and Reorder**

In the case study, Carlos took 10 positive steps to help his career. They are listed in the right-hand column in random order. Read through the list and number them from 1 to 10 in a way that is useful to you. For example, to help your career in Canada, what would you do first, second etc.

- ..... Set clear and specific, short and long-term goals.
- ..... Accept the need to learn and change to find career success.
- ..... Research what training opportunities were available.
- ..... Identify personal language, cultural and other skill gaps.
- ..... Use the right timing to talk about future career opportunities with supervisor.
- ..... Choose to exceed expectations in current job.
- ..... Select the right training programs to close gaps.
- ..... Comfortable asking for help from trainers, coworkers and supervisors.
- ..... Use 10-10-10 Thinking.
- ..... Utilize a notebook at work to record new learning.



### Learning through Sean's Foot-in-the-Door Job

Sean left a good job to immigrate to Canada. He was single, in his early thirties, with few responsibilities. He took a year of English studies for newcomers. Then he transferred into a high impact, government-funded bridging program for new Canadian professionals to get back into his career. He did everything the program's career advisor suggested to showcase his skills in his resume.

He did well in a job interview and obtained a six-month work placement with a small Canadian company of about forty employees. This was a foot-in-the-door job, meaning it was a small opportunity that could lead to permanent work, Canadian experience and better future opportunities.

His team of instructors were excited for him. They regarded Sean as a nice guy, good at taking directions, with strong technical skills. However, within a couple of months, the company cancelled his work placement. All the work his instructors and career advisor had invested was lost. The potential for the company to hire future newcomers from the bridging program was also lost. Sean eventually left Canada and returned to his previous country.

#### Feedback from the Company

What happened, you ask? The career advisor did a follow-up interview with the company supervisor to find out the challenges that Sean had. She asked the three questions below. The company's responses about Sean are paraphrased afterwards.

1. *Were there concrete examples of Sean not giving his best?* "Sean's initial efforts were good but regressed over time. His progress in understanding the work regressed as well. We stressed that copying work from other projects was unacceptable. As his efforts dropped, copying became more of a problem. I asked him to try and use English in the office, instead of his first language. Instead, he used that first language most of the time with the other two employees from his country. They both complained to me that they usually used English, but with Sean, it was easier to speak in his Asian language because he didn't always understand coworkers and clients in English. Sean made no effort to develop his English.

When I asked him about this, he said that he thought his English was good enough for the job, otherwise we would not have given him the work placement. He said he would learn more English when he got a promotion to a more demanding job. He didn't seem interested in learning anything. I observed many moments when he was simply sitting idle, staring out the window, listening to his iPod, leaving for lunch early, on his cell phone, or browsing the web during business hours."

2. *Did you, as his supervisor, explain your expectations to him?* "I did. He initially responded to not copying down work. But after some time he slid back into old habits. We stressed that he needed to ask for more instruction and we would get mentoring for him. He did not seem to follow this advice. I left it at that. I did not tell him to work harder. It's his responsibility to give full effort, to take ownership. Our time is too valuable to set a precedent for babysitting."
3. *Would you rehire him if we coached him some more?* "In our office, I would not rehire him. A larger office, where tasks are more menial and personal initiative is not as important might be better for him."

#### Feedback from Sean

When the team followed up with Sean his explanation was simple. He was bored. The work was too easy and repetitive. He said that no one followed up with him to tell him what to do next. He lost interest in work that less experienced workers did in China. Sean could have cherished his day of small beginnings. He could have maximized it.

#### Question

1. Did Sean see the foot-in-the-door job as half full or half empty? What evidence suggests your conclusion?
2. Carlos, from the case study on page 16, approached his foot-in-the-door job differently to Sean. If you compare the two men, what are the significant differences in their approaches?



## Task

1. Sean approached his first career opportunity very differently to Carlos, whom you read about in Principle 1, page 16 in the desk reference. Reread how Carlos maximized his “day of small beginnings” i.e. the entry-level job in the engineering company.
2. Then read through Sean’s story again. In that early part of their careers, the only real control Sean and Carlos had was the control over their attitudes and time. Their thinking affected their actions and how they used their time. Both of their actions were noticed by their employers, which led to two very different career paths.
3. Match the numbers in the boxes to the chart below. Write the numbers in the blank space in the chart.

1. His work exceeded expectations. Employer noticed.	2. Gave up. Lost interest.	3. Returned to his home country to start again.	4. Felt underutilized. Wanted to quit.
5. Found out about learning opportunities. Took in-house language and intercultural training. Took the coaching opportunity. Half-full attitude i.e. I will maximize what I have.	6. Opted for first language at work whenever possible. Became isolated. Wasted time i.e. idle, stared out window, surfed the net, took long lunches etc.	7. Started positively, with a short term perspective. “I will put in extra effort when i get a better job.”	8. Waited until the perfect timing i.e. he had already exceeded expectations, which his supervisor had recognized.

### How Carlos Maximized His Opportunity

### What Sean Did with His Opportunity

<b>Backgrounds</b>	Engineer. Masters Degree.	Engineer. High-Impact Bridging Program.
<b>Opportunities</b>	Full-time in entry-level job.	Work placement in entry-level job.
<b>Beginnings</b>	Started positively, with a long-term perspective. “If I do well now, better opportunities will open up for me later.”	
<b>Turning Points</b>		Was bored. Lost interest in the work.
<b>Personal Strategies</b>	Set goals.	
<b>Result of Strategies</b>		His work regressed. Employer noticed.
<b>Approach to Learning</b>		Didn’t initiate and take ownership of anything. Didn’t consider looking for outside training. Never followed up on the mentoring offer. Entitlement mentality i.e. I am entitled to a better job.
<b>Integration</b>	Asked coworkers to correct his English and pronunciation. Used English at work. Realized need to understand culture and the Canadian communication style.	
<b>Asking for Promotion</b>		Said he would learn more English once he got a better job that required more skills.
<b>Career Outcome</b>	Achieved goal of becoming project manager. Mentors other newcomers.	

## REVIEW

### 1. COMPREHENSION

Check (✓) whether these 5 statements are True or False.

1. Technical skills are also called soft skills.       T    F
2. The enabling skills in one culture are basically the same in another culture.       T    F
3. Strong enabling skills help to open up more career opportunities for people.       T    F
4. Enabling skills are defined as the cultural norms in a particular workplace.       T    F
5. Employers more commonly refer to enabling skills as soft skills.       T    F



### 2. Application

**Case Study** with Carlos



Answer the following questions about Carlos from the case study.

1. From the beginning, Carlos decided to exceed expectations in the quality of his work. Do you think “exceeding expectations” is:
  - (a) a cultural norm?
  - (b) a personal norm i.e. more of an attitude in certain people, regardless of culture?
2. Explain your answer choice to question 1.
3. Which of the following are enabling skills that Carlos recognized he needed to learn and adapt to.
  - (a) Learning Strategies: choosing the right way to read engineering blueprints.
  - (b) Dealing with Mistakes: choosing the right English words to tell coworkers they have made a mistake.
  - (c) Pronunciation: speaking more clearly by losing his accent.
  - (d) Both b and c

### 3. Analysis

**Distinguish**

Some of the information in the Desk Reference requires you to adapt culturally. Other information suggests you change a personal habit. In the right-hand column is a list of 8 points taken from from the “The Twenty-eight Articles”, Part 2 in the Desk Reference. Determine whether each one is more of:

- a cultural norm that requires you to adapt your own cultural habits.
- a personal norm that requires for you to change your own personal habits.

Write either C for “cultural” , or P for “personal” norm on the dotted line of each point.

- ..... Using a notebook to write down what you learn.
- ..... Understanding how credibility is built.
- ..... Being aware of non-verbal communication.
- ..... Avoiding knee-jerk reactions.
- ..... Being prepared for meetings.
- ..... Staying positive.
- ..... Dealing with a coworker’s mistakes.
- ..... Adapting to how power (hierarchy) operates.



**3. Synthesis**

**Create Your Personal Case Study**

As the case study shows, Carlos used an evolving set of career expectations, he maximized his day of small beginnings, and he expanded his enabling skills. Use these three strategies, along with the story about Carlos, to write a short case study about your own experiences.

- Base your case study on your own real experiences, or on how you imagine your career life to unfold over the next 3 years.
- Integrate as much as you can from what you have learnt from the three sections in Principle 1.
- Write it in a positive and constructive way that could help other newcomers reading your case study.
- Write as if the case study is going to be included in the monthly newsletter that goes out to your local ethnic community.

**CASE STUDY**

Integration in process

Name .....



## Self-Evaluation with the 28 Articles

### Instructions

This is a self-evaluation of the 28 Articles that start on page 8 of the Desk Reference. The purpose of this self-evaluation is to help you identify specific areas you should learn more about, and likely adapt to for workplace integration.

The more specific you can be about areas for development, the better your integration journey will be. Remember, these 28 were identified by documenting the most common challenges newcomers experience. They may not all apply to you, but some will be relevant. In fact, you may not even know they are relevant to your own integration journey.

**Self-Evaluation** Follow these simple instructions:

1. Read through the four descriptors below: “consistently” “often” “sometimes” “not yet”.
2. Read each statement related to each of the 28 articles on the following two pages.
3. Choose which descriptor best fits that statement for you on your integration journey. The descriptor doesn't have to fit you perfectly.
4. Then, put a check mark (✓) in one of the four boxes (C-O-S-N) to indicate how well you believe you practice the article. Use your best guess if the information in the four descriptors doesn't exactly match your thoughts. If necessary, feel free to make notes (directly on the page) that better describe your thoughts on the article(s).
5. Make sure you reread the descriptors when you are unsure or forget them.
6. If you are unsure about an article, go back in the Desk Reference and reread the specific article on pages 8 to 14.
7. In the boxes at the end, make a note of the articles you have marked S or N. These are the ones you should probably focus on to support your workplace integration.

**Peer Evaluation** To obtain a more accurate evaluation of your strengths and areas for growth, you could do the evaluation with a Canadian coworker, a close friend, mentor or supervisor. They will probably be able to give you feedback about your strengths or areas for development that you were unaware of. You could do it face-to-face with them. You could ask them to do it on their own time, and then sit down with you to discuss it. You may even want them to do it anonymously. Ask them how they would like to do it. Feedback from trusted colleagues or supervisors can be extremely valuable for your future career growth.

### Descriptors

#### C - “consistently”

I consistently demonstrate the article. I know exactly when it is and isn't necessary. I could help others to understand it and adapt to it at work.

#### O - “often”

I often demonstrate the article. I recognize its value in the workplace. I am learning to know when it is and isn't necessary. I am in the process of integrating it into my work life.

#### S - “sometimes”

I sometimes demonstrate the article. I understand it but I didn't realize it was so important. I sometimes feel the article is hard to accept as true. I find it difficult to apply the article at work.

#### N - “not yet”

I am not yet unable to demonstrate the article. I wasn't aware of it before. I don't fully understand it at this stage. I don't know exactly how to apply it at work.

# Section Three

## Expand your enabling skills

### Self-Evaluation with the 28 Articles

Fundamentals of Workplace Integration for Newcomers	C	O	S	N
1 I have a game plan to adapt and integrate into my Canadian workplace.				
2 I use a notebook to record everything important that I am likely to forget.				
3 I build my credibility the preferred Canadian way.				
4 I am confident to ask when I don't know.				

**Which article(s) do you need to focus your growth on? What are your strategies to grow? Write out two criteria that will indicate you are growing in that article.**

Fundamentals of Workplace Integration for Newcomers	C	O	S	N
5 I am aware of non-verbal communication as I speak and listen to others.				
6 I am aware of cultural differences in the workplace. I don't minimize their reality.				
7 I suspend judgement when confronted by cultural differences. I first try to understand.				
8 I am aware of how culture affects power, and I use the preferred Canadian way at work.				
9 I am aware of "cultural clocks". I use time the preferred Canadian way.				
10 I am aware of key cultural sensibilities. I work within the preferred Canadian norms.				
11 I use only English for all communication in the Canadian workplace.				
12 I don't feel I need perfect grammar to communicate effectively and confidently.				
13 I use initiative whenever its effective and efficient.				
14 I bring up problems to my supervisor and/or team as soon as possible.				
15 I am comfortable admitting my mistakes. I learn from them and avoid making them again.				

**Which article(s) do you need to focus your growth on? What are your strategies to grow? Write out two criteria that will indicate you are growing in that article.**

# Section Three

## Expand your enabling skills

### Self-Evaluation with the 28 Articles

Fundamentals of Workplace Integration for Newcomers		C	O	S	N
16	I deal with coworkers mistakes the preferred Canadian way.				
17	I use the Canadian communication style of clarity, coherence and conciseness with softeners.				
18	I use intercultural communication in speaking and listening when it's expedient or effective.				
19	I am prepared for meetings, which means I am able to focus more on improving my communication.				
20	I speak up, contribute and participate at work.				
21	I maximize my day of small beginnings.				

**Which article(s) do you need to focus your growth on? What are your strategies to grow? Write out two criteria that will indicate you are growing in that article.**

Fundamentals of Workplace Integration for Newcomers		C	O	S	N
22	I use an evolving set of career expectations.				
23	I seek feedback from others in order to grow in my skills, attitude, behavior and communication.				
24	I have taken ownership of learning English. I am actively growing in my use of the language.				
25	I am proud of my accent. I am adjusting my pronunciation in order to speak more clearly.				
26	I realize the value of being good at working with human difference. I continue to grow in this area.				
27	I take active steps to belong at work. I don't isolate myself.				
28	I tend to look for the positives, instead of focusing on the negatives.				

**Which article(s) do you need to focus your growth on? What are your strategies to grow? Write out two criteria that will indicate you are growing in that article.**



## Principle 2

# Upgrade Your Communication Skills

### Contents

#### Integration Journey Settlement

Part 2 The Story of Tan Le

#### Section 4 - Speak with clarity coherence and conciseness.

- Review
- Exploring Clarity
- Exploring Coherence
- Exploring Conciseness

#### Section 5 - Build consensus with softeners

- Review
- Exploring Softeners

#### Section 6 - Be prepared for meetings

- Giving Quick Updates
- Give a Quick Update



#### Learning Outcomes

1. Use Maslow's Theory of Human Needs to understand and manage thoughts and feelings in settlement stage, and develop further on in the integration journey.
2. Consolidate the learning from Principle 2 in the desk reference.
3. Transition more easily to the Canadian communication style by understanding the rationale and the exceptions.

## Instructions

Follow these instructions to complete the activities using Tan’s story.

1. Go to Ted.com for Tan’s immigration story. The direct link is [www.ted.com/talks/tan\\_le\\_my\\_immigration\\_story.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/tan_le_my_immigration_story.html) or do a search on the site using “Tan Le My Immigration Story.”
2. Listen to the talk online. It is about 12 minutes long. We will only follow her talk up to 9:13. A part of the script has been cut and pasted below for our learning purposes. You can read Tan’s entire script by clicking on the “Show Transcript” icon, just under the video streaming on the Ted site.
3. After listening to the talk, read through the excerpt from the online script in this workbook. It has been organized into four general stages: Departure - Settlement - Economic Integration - Workplace Integration.
4. Respond to the questions attached to each stage.

## Settlement

### What is settlement?

Settlement is the first few months in Canada when you find accommodation, schools, health care etc. It is the time of finding your feet, which means finding stability. Becoming familiar with day-to-day life in Canada.

### Includes

- Making a new life together
- Making a home
- Working “survival” jobs
- Studying English
- Getting further education



### Excerpt 2 TEDTalk

After three months in a refugee camp, we landed in Melbourne. And the next piece of the jigsaw is about four women across three generations shaping a new life together. We settled in Footscray, a working-class suburb whose demographic is layers of immigrants. Unlike the settled middle-class suburbs, whose existence I was oblivious of, there was **no sense of entitlement** in Footscray. The smells from shop doors were from the rest of the world. And the snippets of halting English were exchanged between people who had one thing in common, **they were starting again**.

My mother worked on **farms, then on a car assembly line**, working six days, double shifts. Somehow she found time to **study English** and **gain IT qualifications**. We were poor. All the dollars were allocated and extra tuition in English and mathematics was budgeted for regardless of what missed out, which was usually new clothes; they were always secondhand. Two pairs of stockings for school, each to hide the holes in the other. A school uniform down to the ankles, because it had to last for six years.

And there were rare but searing chants of “slit-eye” and the occasional graffiti: “Asian, go home.” Go home to where? Something stiffened inside me. There was a gathering of resolve and a quiet voice saying, “I will bypass you.” (\* see note below for commentary on this paragraph)

My mother, my sister and I slept in the same bed. My mother was exhausted each night, but we told one another about our day and listened to the movements of my grandmother around the house. My mother suffered from nightmares all about the boat. And my job was to stay awake until her nightmares came so I could wake her.

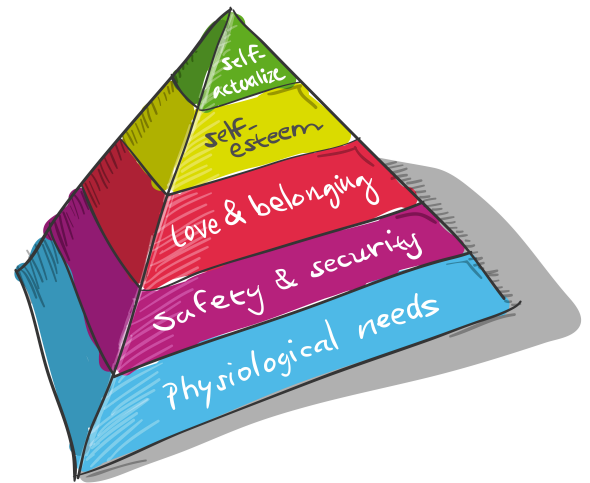
\* Go to

## Understanding Settlement through Maslow's Needs

The stage of settlement is best understood through Abraham Maslow's 1943 theory about human needs. Maslow organized 5 basic human needs into a hierarchy, as in the image on the right.

Although Maslow's theory was a breakthrough in the study of human motivation, the idea of placing the needs in a hierarchy has changed. People don't always start with the bottom need and move step-by-step to the top. Instead, needs change depending on the person and situation. A brief description of each need is explained below:

- ▶ **Self-actualization** e.g. to accomplish and become everything one can be
- ▶ **Self-esteem** e.g. confidence, achievement, respect, self worth
- ▶ **Belonging** e.g. friendship, family, community, intimacy
- ▶ **Security** e.g. security of person, home, employment, education, health
- ▶ **Physiological** e.g. air, food, water, sleep



During the settlement stage and during integration, immigrants will usually experience strong needs for security, belonging and self-esteem because, like Tan's family, they are "starting and shaping a new life together".

## Task 1 Settlement using Maslow's Needs

During their first years in Australia, Tan's family went through the settlement stage, as in Excerpt 2 from Tan's TedTalk. Tan's family experienced strong human needs for **security** and **belonging**. Put each of the family's six experiences (listed below) into one of Maslow's categories. In the box, write either **B** for belonging or **S** for security.

1. We settled in (found a home) ... a working class suburb.
2. My mother worked on farms, then on an assembly line.
3. There was no sense of entitlement ... working six days, double shifts.
4. She found time to study English and gain IT qualifications.
5. My mother, sister and I slept in the same bed.
6. We told one another about our day.




## Task 2 Understanding Settlement using Maslow's Needs

At times in the integration journey, human needs can cause people to do things that are counterproductive to their new lives in Canada. The more you understand Maslow's Needs and how they affect daily life, the more effective you can be at making good choices. Read through the examples of counterproductive action that newcomers sometimes take to meet a core human need. Then read through the examples of better ways in the right column. Match the better ways to one of the three needs.

Maslow's Needs	Counterproductive Action	Examples of Better Ways
<b>A. Security</b>	For job security, a person might try to build their credibility with colleagues as he would in his first culture e.g. asserting his expertise, education, previous experience at every opportunity. This doesn't work in the Canadian workplace. He will appear to be a domineering showoff.	1. Find a balance by connecting with different kinds of communities in the workplace - people from your first culture, English-speaking coworkers, and colleagues from other cultures. Use English whenever possible so that your belonging is built on a common language, not a language that excludes other people. When you do need a break from English, use your first language in a place where you don't exclude others.
<b>B. Belonging</b>	To feel a sense of belonging to a community, the person tends to spend time with coworkers from her first culture, speaking her first language in the workplace at various moments during the day.	2. Build credibility the Canadian way by applying the knowledge in this desk reference. Maximize the day of small beginnings. Use an evolving set of career expectations etc.
<b>C. Self Esteem</b>	The person may feel depressed because he wants to be doing exactly the same job at the same level as in previous country. He feels undervalued because he has so much underutilized talent he wants to offer his company. He might become defensive and argumentative if coworkers tell him he made a mistake in part of his job. He becomes defensive as a way to protect his self-esteem.	3. Build confidence by intentionally trying to exceed expectations in your current job. Do your job with excellence, not matter what you do. Grow your confidence in new skills that the Canadian workplace values e.g. by being flexible, by showing that you want to learn from mistakes, by avoiding the same mistakes next time.

**REVIEW**

**1. COMPREHENSION**

Match the four concepts to their definitions. Write the concept in the left column.

**CLARITY    CONSENSUS    CONCISENESS    COHERENCE**

	Focuses on the correct word choices.
	Relates to the organization of a message.
	Indicates the amount and specificity of information.
	Explains how trust and respect are built.



**2. Application**  
**Case Study with Yue**

Read through the case study on Yue and then complete the following task: sequence the specific steps Yue took to solve his communication challenges? The steps have been listed below. The first and last steps have been marked for you.

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 1  | Understood his strengths e.g. good English and clear pronunciation.  |
|    | Recognized and accepted he was not communicating effectively e.g. clients didn't understand him.                               |
|    | Asked for help from someone with knowledge in the area he wanted to develop i.e. Canadian colleague who had worked in Asia.    |
|    | Figured out his own strategies to improve his communication e.g. thinking in English.  |
|    | Asked for feedback from someone who heard him speak regularly i.e. supervisor.   |
|    | Recognized a norm from his first cultural was negatively affecting his communication in English e.g. ending with a main point. |
|    | Took advantage of the available training opportunities e.g. Toastmasters.  |
|    | Overcame the awkwardness of adapting e.g. noticed the positive reaction from his coworkers towards his communication.          |
|    | Took ownership of the solution e.g. used the internet to find information.   |
| 10 | Continued to find and use new ways to enhance his communication e.g. writing ideas down in point form before meetings.         |

### 3. Analysis

#### Compare and Contrast

- Self Evaluation** In the case study, Yue knew his strengths e.g. good pronunciation. What are your communication strengths? One of the most common communication scenarios at work are meetings e.g. with teams or clients. In what area(s) of communication do you recognize that you need to develop to enhance how you present information and ideas at meetings? Read through the suggestions below. Check (✓) the boxes most applicable to you.
- Peer Evaluation** To obtain a more accurate evaluation of your strengths and areas for growth, you could do the evaluation with a Canadian coworker, a close friend, mentor or supervisor. They will probably be able to give you feedback about your strengths or areas for development that you were unaware of. You could do it face-to-face with them. You could ask them to do it on their own time, and then sit down with you to discuss it. You may even want them to do it anonymously. Ask them how they would like to do it. Feedback from trusted colleagues or supervisors can be extremely valuable for your future career growth.

Clarity	Coherence	Conciseness
<input type="checkbox"/> Include less jargon, less academic speak. Only use technical terms when they are effective.	<input type="checkbox"/> Frontload main point (but embed and/or soften negative news if necessary).	<input type="checkbox"/> Avoid unnecessary repetition of words or ideas.
<input type="checkbox"/> Use uncomplicated word choices to explain complicated topics.	<input type="checkbox"/> Have clear sub-points.	<input type="checkbox"/> Get to the point quicker. Avoid general wordiness.
<input type="checkbox"/> Use simpler sentence structures and shorter thought groups.	<input type="checkbox"/> Use transition words e.g. first, next, also, third, last.	<input type="checkbox"/> Stay on topic. Avoid explanation that doesn't directly support the main point.
<input type="checkbox"/> Use more plain language. Difficult words do not make people smarter, only harder to work with.	<input type="checkbox"/> Organize points in linear and logical progression.	<input type="checkbox"/> Avoid using too many cultural examples, storytelling or proverbs to demonstrate your point e.g. an old South African proverb says....
<input type="checkbox"/> Decide from the start what listeners need to know or to do.	<input type="checkbox"/> Restate the main point at the end again - what listeners should do and/or know.	<input type="checkbox"/> Avoid unnecessary elaboration. Not everyone needs to know everything. Certain discussions don't need to include certain people and can happen at a different time. Respect other people's time.
<input type="checkbox"/> Recognize how my first culture, or my own personal style, influences my definition of clarity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Recognize how my first culture, or my own personal style, influences my definition of coherence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Recognize how my first culture, or my own personal style, influences my definition of conciseness.
<input type="checkbox"/> Adapt my communication style to my current cultural context.	<input type="checkbox"/> Adapt my communication style to my current cultural context.	<input type="checkbox"/> Adapt my communication style to my current cultural context.



### 4. Synthesis Create Meaning

In the case study, Yue used various steps (as listed in #2. Application on the previous page) to improve his communication. Read through those steps again to identify which would be an effective strategy for you to use at this stage of your development on clarity, coherence and conciseness.

### Exploring CLARITY

The ability to speak with the simplest words and the least amount of complexity.

Show your expertise in the results of the work you produce, not by trying to use unnecessarily complex English. Your credibility is boosted when you put complex-complicated ideas into simpler expressions that everyone can understand.



- 
1. Which one of the following talks is the most clear, example 1 or 2?

#### Example 1

“Power distance is a ubiquitous workplace reality and is predominantly defined as the extent to which less powerful members of organizations expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.”

#### Example 2

“Hierarchy is a reality in every workplace. In the intercultural field, hierarchy is termed power distance. Basically, it describes the power relationships between subordinates and their superiors.”

2. Underline any word(s) that are jargon from example 2.
3. Underline any words that are overly academic or unnecessarily complicated words from example 2.

“Hierarchy is a reality in every workplace. In the intercultural field, hierarchy is termed power distance. Basically, it describes the power relationships between subordinates and their superiors.”



### When to use more complicated language.

You can use complicated words and complex sentences with people who also know and use them, like other experts. You could use it when you are communicating with someone from a culture where complex language is a demonstration of intelligence. They can also be used in some writing e.g. in the deeper, more technical, parts of a formal report.



### Why the second speaker is not as clear.

The speaker uses unnecessarily complicated language:

1. **Long Sentences** - too much information packed into a single sentence with no pauses.
2. **Jargon** - special words used in a specific field of study that some in an audience don't understand.
3. **Academic Words** that do not work well for everyday speech.

In your first language, in the workplace, do people tend to use long sentences, jargon and academic words? Explain your answer? Why do they do use these? In what ways do you need to adapt your communication in English to be more clear?

### Why some newcomers communication styles follow Example 2.

They believe they are building credibility and being professional. They believe:

- Jargon could show expertise in a field of study.
- Academic words could show a higher level of intelligence/education.
- Long sentences could show a strong command of English





## Exploring COHERENCE

The ability to organize your ideas into linear points, frontload the main point, and transition clearly between points.

In the Canadian workplace, you hold an audience's attention by departing from a point, not by building up to a point. The audience wants to know why they need to listen. They want to know what you want them to know and/or do. Frontloading the main point makes it easier for listeners to follow the logical steps of your message. Frontloading also shows respect for your audience's time - they know at the start if the message is important to them, and how much attention they need to give. Not everyone needs to listen to you all of the time.



1. Which one of the following talks is the most coherent?

### Example 1

“As a supervisor, power distance is important to understand because it greatly affects the expectations and behaviors of the people you oversee. For example, people from backgrounds of high power distances between supervisor and subordinate tend to feel they shouldn't have ambitions beyond their rank. In the Canadian workplace, it means some newcomers may not show enough initiative on the team.”

### Example 2

“People from backgrounds of high power distances between supervisor and subordinate tend to feel they shouldn't have ambitions beyond their rank. In the Canadian workplace, it means some newcomers may not show enough initiative on the team. So, power distance can greatly affect the expectations and behaviors of the people you oversee.”

### When to embed.

If your main point is negative, you can embed it towards the end of the message. In this way, you can soften criticism or bad news. It is easier for listeners to receive.



2. Why is the second speaker less coherent? Choose the correct answer.

- (a) The speaker puts the main point at the end of the message, instead of up front.
- (b) The listeners don't know why or what they should be listening for.
- (c) The speaker's example should go after the main point, not at the start, because it explains the main point.
- (d) All of the above.

### Credibility is the Outcome

The outcome of being more clear, coherent, and concise is more credibility with colleagues and clients. Credibility is part of your foundation for career success. Building and keeping credibility is culturally defined. It is not built exactly the same way in Canada as it is in China, Russia or the US or any other country. As a newcomer, the quicker you understand and act upon how credibility is built at work, the more credibility and respect you will have. Everything in this desk-reference is meant to inform you about building credibility and trust in your Canadian workplace.

Credibility is a combination of your reputation and other people's trust in your abilities. Your education and other background qualifications form the baseline for your credibility. Good communication - clear, coherent and concise - will boost your credibility. It will enable you to communicate your expertise properly. Even if your spoken English is not grammatically perfect, colleagues and clients will listen and understand you perfectly.

Good grammar does matter, especially in your written communication. But clarity, coherence and conciseness matter much more in your oral and written communication. In writing, you usually have time to rewrite and edit. However, when you speak, first aim to be clear, concise and coherent, instead of first aiming to be perfect. If you are constantly enhancing your English skills, perfection can come. Also, make sure consensus - using softeners - is part of your communication style. It is the centerpiece to Canadian workplace communication. These four building blocks of communication will increase other people's trust in your technical abilities and interpersonal skills.

### Why some newcomers communication styles follow Example 2.

In certain languages and cultures, frontloading a main point can sound disrespectful or too forceful. It can also show a lack of eloquence. In fact, in some cultures, the best communication style is to hold the attention of the audience by building up to a main point at the end. And everybody expects this. In Canada, you are expected to frontload, unless it is bad news.



## Exploring CONCISENESS

The ability to get to the point quickly, eliminate the unnecessary and stay within the acceptable time.

Be concise in work-related communication, whether presenting at a meeting, giving an update or talking one-on-one with a colleague. Ask yourself, what does the listener need to know or do? Then build your words, sentences and ideas around that. Coffee and lunch breaks or social events can be different. You could use a more casual, less “tight”, conversation style. But your work communication should be clear, coherent and concise.



1. Which one of the following talks is the most clear?



### Example 1

Similarly, as a newcomer, understanding power distance is key to meeting the unwritten expectations in your organization. For example, if you are used to working with a high power distance between you and your supervisors, you may need to adjust your behavior such as speaking up more in meetings. Alternatively, if you are used to very low power distance, you may need to use more softeners in your speech.

### Example 2

Similarly, if you are new to Canada, understanding power distance is key to meeting and following the unwritten expectations in your organization. Historically, we have seen that attention has not been given to properly preparing newcomers for the workplace by explaining power distance. I don't want more people coming to Canada and not being able to meet expectations. If you are used to working with a high power distance between you and your supervisors, you may need to adjust your behavior, such as speaking up more in meetings. Alternatively, if you are used to very low power distance, you may need to use more softeners in your speech.

2. Why is the second speaker less concise? Choose the correct answer.

- (a) The speaker uses unnecessary repetitions.
- (b) The use of strong subjective opinion limits the speaker's credibility in this context.
- (c) The speaker is not objective and to the point.
- (d) All of the above.

### Why some newcomers communication styles follow Example 2.

In some first languages and cultures, being wordy and going off topic are effective ways to emphasize a fact or persuade listeners. The speaker may use metaphors, proverbs and other storytelling strategies. This generally doesn't work in the Canadian workplace.

### When to speak more casually.

For informal conversation between friends, and other contexts where more subjective and personal opinions are effective.

## REVIEW

## 1. COMPREHENSION

Check (✓) whether these 5 statements are True or False.

1. Consensus is a defining characteristic of the mainstream Canadian communication style.  T  F
2. Consensus, in the Canadian communication style, is not the act of agreeing on everything. Instead, consensus is the term used to explain how friction is avoided or limited in communication.  T  F
3. Softeners are specific language that make a speaker's message easier to receive in Canadian workplace discussions.  T  F
4. In the professional Canadian workplace context, softeners usually make the speaker appear weak, uncertain and unprofessional to most other speakers.  T  F
5. In the professional Canadian workplace context, softeners usually make the speaker appear collaborative, objective and less confrontational.  T  F



## Exploring Softeners

Using softeners is similar to playing chess. Your words are the game pieces. You use your words strategically, like chess pieces. “Softeners” are the pawns in the game. They are usually the first pieces that you move forward.



In Tasks 1 and 2 on the following pages you will explore the use of softeners through a conversation between work colleagues. The dialogue takes place at an imaginary workplace meeting. The meeting participants are trying to develop an action plan that will help teams work together more effectively. The company has had a sudden increase in cultural diversity in its workforce. There has been an increase in miscommunication and misunderstanding between people. A few employees have resigned due to interpersonal conflict. Three different managers present their ideas about how to deal with the company's challenges.






- Speaker 1 - John is from the training department, and has expertise in the field of intercultural studies.
- Speaker 2 - Teri is from workforce planning department, with expertise in research and strategic planning.
- Speaker 3 - Eva is also from workforce planning.



## Task 1

Read through the first half of the dialogue between John and Teri. The two columns below showcase two different ways of saying the same dialogue. The left column uses softeners (which are highlighted in bold for you). The right column is the same dialogue without softeners. Your task is to match the sentences A to E with the right column. The first one has been done for you.

### With Softeners

1.  **Speaker 1**  
**One option we could consider** is to set up an intercultural advisory committee.
2.  **Speaker 2**  
 John, **I am not sure I follow**. Could you explain a bit more?
3.  **Speaker 1**  
**I am not sure what everyone else thinks** but an intercultural advisory seems to have worked for a few other organizations. It is something we **should perhaps consider** as a first move.
4.  **Speaker 2**  
**I hear what you are saying**, but we should **probably consider** some kind of assessment to identify the root causes of what is going on.
5.  **Speaker 1**  
**From my experience**, an intercultural advisory committee is **often** good for any organization, such as ours, defined by diversity. I say this because **I had the opportunity** to be part of an intercultural committee with a previous employer.

### No Softeners



- A. "I think we need to set up an official intercultural advisory committee in our organization."
- B. "You are wrong, I think. What works in one company won't necessarily work in another. Before we look at solutions, let's figure out the root causes."
- C. "Teri, an intercultural advisory has worked for other organizations. I think we need to move on this option soon."
- D. "That is not the answer, John. We don't even know what the real issues are or what is causing them."
- E. "My field of expertise is intercultural studies so I know what I am talking about. And second, an intercultural advisory committee is always good for any organization, such as ours, defined by diversity. I speak from first-hand experience. I was part of an intercultural committee with a previous employer."








As you read and contrast the two dialogues, take note of the highlighted words in the left column. These "softeners" allow the speakers' opinions to start softer, as suggestions. As the speakers disagree, the "softeners" become much more assertive, and at the end, as you will see on the next page, speaker 1 eventually agrees with the others. Consensus doesn't mean that everyone agrees all the time. However, as you contrast the two examples in Table 2.6, you will notice that softeners are less confrontational, less critical. It aims at keeping harmony between the speakers at all times. In a different workplace culture, in another part of the world, the more direct, very assertive communication style works very well. However, in the Canadian workplace, "softeners" are essential for successful communication.

## Task 2

Read through the other half of the dialogue between John, Eva and Teri. The two columns below showcase two different ways of saying the same dialogue. This time, the left column is much more frank, without softeners. The right column is with softeners. Your task is to match the sentences A to E with the right column. The first one has been done for you.

### No Softeners

- 6. **A**  **Speaker 2**  
Eva, you have had experience with team conflict. I know you will back me up on this.
- 7  **Speaker 3**  
I can't agree, given the urgency at the moment. I think we need to bring in an external third party to start with interviews with specific teams to get at the root of the conflict.
- 8  **Speaker 1**  
I think I was pretty clear in what I said. An advisory is action we can take right now to ease tensions in teams.
- 9  **Speaker 2**  
That isn't the answer, John. We need to put our energy into identifying gaps, not guessing at solutions.
- 10  **Speaker 1**  
I know you think the issues are more complex than I do. However, I still think that we need to keep the idea of an intercultural advisory committee on the table.

### With Softeners



- A. "Eva, you have had experience with team conflict. What are your thoughts?"
- B. Point taken. I agree that the issues are perhaps more complex than we first thought. I just ask that we at least keep the idea of an intercultural advisory committee on the table for the moment.
- C. As I said, I have seen it work. It is something we can do right now to ease the tension in teams.
- D. I am not sure that is the answer, John. We need to put our energy into identifying gaps, and then the solutions will emerge. I don't want a potentially great idea, like an advisory, to end up being a band-aid because we got ahead of ourselves.
- E. I agree, advisory committees can be effective. However, given the urgency at the moment, I suggest we use an external third party as a first move to start with interviews with specific teams to get at the root of the conflict. Then we could consider an advisory, or other solutions.

## Task 3

Read through sentences A to E in the right column again. Underline all words, phrases or sentences that you believe are softeners.

### The Age Myth

Myths are widely-held, yet false beliefs. They might even be half-truths, but they can control your expectations and limit your possibilities. They are often easier to believe because we have never seen or heard of a different reality. "I am too old" is a common myth that discourages some newcomers from working to master English. However, as you will read, it is possible to master something, regardless of age.

#### Examples

Consider the following people. Nola Ochs was 95 years old when she received her bachelors degree in 2007. Her 22-year old granddaughter graduated on the same stage on the same day. Chao Mu-he was 96 when he received his Masters degree in 2009. Hazel Soars graduated with a degree at 94. George Dawson, an illiterate 98 year-old man, went back to high school to learn how to read and write, and then co-published his memoirs at 102. The list goes on. It makes the age myth seem weak.

#### Brain Science

Many people assume that by the time people get into their sixties, their memory is in serious decline. This is a misconception. According to studies, the intellectual ability in adults to learn declines only a little until most people are in their 80s. Advances in brain research show that aging can no longer be seen as always leading to brain decline. Scientists now know that aging is a much more complex experience.

Through plasticity and reorganization, the brain can actually keep a very productive life. Scientists used to think the brain was a static organ. Nowadays, they know that the brain continues to change and reorganize itself. It even produces new neurons well into old age.

#### Learning Strategies

Continued learning, physical exercise and a stimulating environment increase brain cell growth. Older learners may require more time when learning, and their reaction time can be slower than younger learners, but they can still learn and enjoy the experience. Also, it is often forgotten that older learners have experience behind them - they know how to study. They know failure and how to persist. Often people just need better learning strategies, not youth. The fact is individuals will vary greatly in their personal motivation.

In any case, the speed of learning should never prevent anyone from learning what he or she wants to, including English. Age is important, but it is often overrated. Don't become old before you get old.

## Giving Quick Updates

Many project updates require you to be very economical with your words. You have to focus on the essentials. Conclusions. Facts. Recommendations.

### TASK 1

Read through the article on the age myth. Then read through the summary below.

The summary is an update that was given at a team meeting. The company has been exploring how to become more of a learning organization. Each team member had to research a learning myth and then write a short article on what was learnt. The team members then had 60 seconds to give an oral update to the rest of the team.

Organize the five paragraphs of the update into a logical sequence using the 3-30-3 Model (page 39 in the desk reference). Number each paragraph from 1 to 5.

..... Well, I think the most important conclusion I came to was that generally, older people can learn just as well as younger people. The speed at which they learn is the only difference.

..... There is a lot of evidence that supports this idea, but I can perhaps highlight a couple of things. One is brain plasticity and the other is real life examples.

..... So, realistically speaking, people shouldn't use age as a reason to avoid learning. But they need the right amount of time, and perhaps better learning strategies, to really understand or master what they are learning.

..... In terms of brain plasticity, scientists now know that the brain remains flexible well into old age. It even continues producing new neurons.

..... There are some amazing real life examples of people who have gone back to school in their 80s and 90s. The best example, I think, is George Dawson. He was 98 when he went back to school to learn to read and write, and 102 when he co-published his memoir.

### The Genius Myth

Myths are widely-held, yet false beliefs. They might even be half-truths, but they can control your expectations and limit your possibilities. They are often easier to believe because we have never seen or heard of a different reality. A common myth that discourages some newcomers from working to master English is explained in the following: "I am not good at learning languages. I was born this way."

Genetics can be easily overrated. Genetics are important in determining our strengths, but they are not the final word.

#### Genetics

Everyone has around twenty-thousand genes. Since talent is innate there should be a gene for each talent. The difficulty is that scientists have not yet figured out what each of our genes does. So far, there is no language gene. The most recent research suggests that our inherited DNA is not fixed at birth, that our early environments continue to write patterns into our genetic code.

#### Hard Work

Consider what Geoff Colvin writes in *Talent is Overrated* (pg. 75). The Hungarian educational psychologist, Laszlo Polgar. He wanted to prove that great performers are made, not born. He trained all three of his daughters from age 4 to be chess players. Although he was not a great chess player himself, he chose chess because progress is easier to measure. Moreover, back in the 60s, the prevailing view was that women were not capable of competing at the highest levels. He devoted his life to teaching his daughters chess. Hours and hours every day.

At 17, the eldest daughter became the first woman to qualify for the Mens' World Championship, though she wasn't allowed to play. At 19, together with her two sisters, they all played on the women's Hungarian Olympiad team and beat the Soviet's for the first time. At 21, she became the first woman to be named a grand chess master. At 15, the youngest daughter became the youngest person to become a grand master. What happened to the middle sister? She wasn't as good. Why? According to her, when practice got tough, she was the first to quit. It wasn't genes that made the difference, just deliberate practice. So why didn't the daughters become world champions? They gave up chess, got married, had kids. But they were convinced in their father's belief that success is 99 percent hard work.

#### Multiple Intelligences

We also know there are "intelligences". Howard Gardener from Harvard University has identified eight that are found in every person to varying degrees. A Google search will give you more information on this. Research in multiple intelligences shows that although people seem "wired" to be better at some intelligences, people also grow in all eight intelligences. Also, their capacities can change over time. Intelligences that captivated them in early life may not hold the same appeal as they get older. What we need at midlife is not always what held our attention when we were young. Mastering English seems to be more about hard work than genes.

## Give a Quick Update

Be economical with your words. Focus on the essentials.

- Conclusions.
- Facts.
- Recommendations.

### TASK 2

Read through the article on the genius myth. Your company has been exploring how to become more of a learning organization.

Use the 3-30-3 Model to create a 60 second update on the information. Write in the space below.



## Principle 3

# Become really good at working with difference

### Contents

#### Integration Journey *Workplace Integration*

Part 3 The Story of Tan Le  
The Culture Shock Model

**Section 7** - Identify the cultural differences. Build on the similarities.

- The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

**Section 8** - Intercultural communication - the crucial link.

- Exploring Intercultural Styles
- Exploring the Canadian Communication Style
- Giving Opinion
- Disagreeing
- Making Requests
- Pointing out Mistakes

**Section 9** - Know other types.

- Learning from Aman's Misattribution

**Section 10** - Understand power.

- The Building Blocks of Credibility



### Learning Outcomes

1. Use the DMIS to understand personal and other people's reactions to cultural differences.
2. Use intercultural communication continuum's to adjust personal communication style to the Canadian workplace norms, and to recognize difference more accurately in multicultural contexts.
3. Be able to identify and adapt to direct and indirect communication in the Canadian workplace, in order to give opinion, disagree, make requests and point out mistakes.
4. Understand how credibility is built to get and job versus keeping a position.

## Instructions

Follow these instructions to complete the activities using Tan's story.

1. Go to Ted.com for Tan's immigration story. The direct link is [www.ted.com/talks/tan\\_le\\_my\\_immigration\\_story.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/tan_le_my_immigration_story.html) or do a search on the site using "Tan Le My Immigration Story."
2. Listen to the talk online. It is about 12 minutes long. We will only follow her talk up to 9:13. A part of the script has been cut and pasted below for our learning purposes. You can read Tan's entire script by clicking on the "Show Transcript" icon, just under the video streaming on the Ted site.
3. After listening to the talk, read through the excerpt from the online script in this workbook. It has been organized into four general stages: Departure - Settlement - Economic Integration - Workplace Integration.
4. Respond to the questions attached to each stage.

## Economic Integration

### What is economic integration?

- Economic integration involves searching for the right job, writing and submitting your resume, and undergoing the interview process.



### Excerpt 3 TEDTalk

She opened a **computer store** then **studied to be a beautician** and **opened another business**. And the women came with their stories about men who could not make the transition, **angry and inflexible**, and troubled children **caught between two worlds**.

Tan's mother arrived in Australia as a refugee and started work in survival jobs on a farm and assembly line. Eventually, with more skills and education, she became a small business entrepreneur. She achieved economic integration by starting with survival jobs until she found meaningful work that suited her. What is clear is that she made two transitions, one external and the other internal.

In terms of an external transition, she went from being a farm laborer to owning her own beautician business. She identified the skills she needed. She was determined. She persisted. She found success. But that external success was likely due to her internal transition i.e. she was flexible and adapted to the new culture, whereas others were "angry and inflexible" or "caught between two worlds". What goes on inside of a newcomer is just as important as what goes on outside. At times, external circumstances might even reflect internal attitudes, positive or negative.

### Task 1

Read through and reflect on the following statements. They are a collection of wisdom and thoughts from newcomers, instructors and others who experience the shifts from moving between cultures.

1. Decide whether you think they are useful suggestions for newcomers to understand the integration journey.
  2. Are there any additional or alternative suggestions or ideas about integration that might be helpful to other newcomers in understanding the integration journey?
- **Identity** When a newcomer adds a new culture (e.g. Canadian) to their existing worldview, they gain another way of looking at and understanding the world. At the same time, the person's identity becomes more complex, more nuanced. He hasn't lost what he was, yet he has become more than he was. Later, when the newcomer returns to his first country to visit friends and family, he feels the same, yet different, like he belongs in parallel worlds. It takes knowledge, skills and the right attitude to manage this feeling. To turn it into a positive thing.

## Economic Integration

### What is economic integration?

- Moving from a “survival job” to work that is more commensurate with your experience and education, and expresses who you are.



- ▶ **Complexity** To manage this complexity of identity, the newcomer needs a more sophisticated understanding of cultures. She needs the intellectual tools and integration knowledge to make sense of complexity. The knowledge and skills can help her to cultivate the attitude that is comfortable with a little ambiguity.
- ▶ **Ambiguity** The newcomer accepts there can be competing, yet equally valid, views on any number of things (versus “being caught between two worlds”). Therefore, the person must be comfortable with a measure of ambiguity. A little ambiguity is always present in the newcomer’s life.
- ▶ **Intercultural** Instead of being caught between two worlds, the person accepts the complexity and ambiguity. He uses the intercultural tools and integration knowledge to inform his actions. To understand his thoughts and emotions. In his mind, he can view things from the perspectives of both his first culture and Canadian culture. In his actions, he can move between Canadian norms and his first culture without feeling like he is betraying himself or his heritage. He becomes intercultural intentionally, not by chance.

## The Culture Shock Model

The Culture Shock model\* suggests that when anyone arrives in a new culture, they go through at least four stages of adjustment. A stage might last weeks or years.



*A summary of the model*

- 1 **Honeymoon stage**  
excited about the new culture
- 2 **Hostility stage**  
frustrated and confused
- 3 **Humorous stage**  
feel you can relax a bit and laugh at yourself
- 4 **In Sync stage**  
feel at home in the new culture

### Task 2

Read through each stage. Then mark which stage you think you are in at the moment. Finally, write down something you experienced in Canada that might demonstrate each stage so far in your life.

#### 1. Honeymoon Stage

The newcomer has recently arrived in Canada. He is excited by the newness of everything. She might feel mild identity confusion, loneliness or homesickness. However, they are curious about the new culture and mostly excited by their first friendly interactions.

#### 2. Hostility Stage

After a some days or weeks, the first challenges occur. These might be language or communication problems, barriers to achieving goals, cultural offenses, extreme loneliness, identity confusion etc. The newcomer begins to feel incompetent. His self-esteem and confidence are shaken. She will approach life in Canada with one of three strategies: flight, fight or commitment.

- ▶ **Flight.** The individual withdraws from the new society. She stays at home and avoids people. She may choose to return to her first country.
- ▶ **Fight.** The person starts criticizing the new culture. He spends time with fellow newcomers who are also unhappy. He feels close to them because they are all angry, frustrated and discouraged in their journey. He doesn't have the tools or flexibility to make the necessary adjustments. Returning to his first country is likely not an option.
- ▶ **Commitment.** The newcomer realizes that there are significant differences in language, culture and expectations in Canada. The person decides to adapt to the culture, and adjust plans and timelines. She begins to focus on the similarities with Canadians and other newcomers. She celebrates the positives. The newcomer chooses to spend time with people and other newcomers that can help her stay positive during the change. She recognizes that she is in the middle of a journey of change that can be positive, depending on attitude.

\*The model has been adapted from *Communicating Across Cultures*; Stella Ting-Toomey; The Guildford Press, 1999 pages 248-249.

### 3. Humorous Stage

The newcomer begins to be a little less serious. He laughs more at his mistakes - he wants to learn from them, instead of allowing them to make him depressed and frustrated. He recognizes there are pros and cons to every culture. The newcomer still experiences a mix of emotional ups and downs, small failures and successes. However, he is aware he is on an integration journey, that there is nothing wrong with him. He begins to form a few new friendships and has more ways to be involved in community.

### 4. In Sync Stage

In sync means synchronized. The newcomer feels more at home in Canada, like she belongs at a deeper level. The person better understands the language, communication, culture and expectations. She has started to adapt behaviors and communication. The person begins to feel a wide range of positive emotions including trust, empathy and hope. The newcomer allows his goals to evolve and is more confident in taking on unfamiliar opportunities. The pathways to success, and the social norms for getting there, are clearer and more achievable. The newcomer is much more flexible in the new environment. Canada seems more like home, or at very least a home away from home.



### Task 3

In our excerpt 3 of her TEDtalk, Tan commented that certain immigrants “couldn’t make the transition”, that they were “angry and inflexible” or “caught between two worlds”. At what stage in the Culture Shock Model were these people at? What can these immigrants understand, do or think that could help them move to the next stage of the model?

## The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

The DMIS\* is a tool used to explain the reactions of people to cultural differences. It defines people’s attitudes to difference. It explains the skills for being more culturally competent. Because successful integration is so intimately connected with strong intercultural skills, the DMIS is one of the most useful frameworks to help newcomers understand the integration journey.

The DMIS defines 5 orientations to cultural differences. They are listed below, along with the strengths of each stage and the specific developmental task to move a person on to the next stage. According to the model, orientations 4 and 5 are better able to support the attitudes, skills and knowledge for intercultural competence.

*A summary of the model*

- 1 **Denial**  
disinterested or unaware of differences
- 2 **Defense**  
“us and them” thinking
- 3 **Minimization**  
overemphasis on similarities
- 4 **Acceptance**  
recognition and appreciation of differences
- 5 **Adaptation**  
adjusting behaviors and communication

### Orientation 1

#### **DENIAL**

You are comfortable with the familiar. You don’t want to make life complicated with cultural differences. You may not even be aware of the cultural differences around you. Perhaps you are so focused on your work that you aren’t aware your behaviors and communication are being misunderstood by colleagues from other cultural backgrounds.

#### Your Strength

Support for a community of like-minded people.

#### Your Developmental Task

Recognize that cultural differences are escaping you. Realize that this is probably affecting whether or not some coworkers enjoy working with you, and limiting your opportunities at work.

### Orientation 2

#### **DEFENSE**

You distrust cultural behavior and ideas that are different to your own. You may be aware of other cultures but your opinion of them is often negative. You might think of your own culture as superior to others. If you are friendly with a person from another culture, you likely think that person is an exception to your opinion of the group.

#### Your Strength

Aware that cultural differences are a real.

#### Your Developmental Task

Become more tolerant of differences. Find what you have in common with persons from other cultures. Focus on the universal human needs and less on the differences, until you can accept the differences.

### Orientation 3

#### **MINIMIZATION**

You are beyond feeling other cultures are a threat to your own culture. You believe that despite interesting differences (e.g. food, dress and customs) all people are mostly the same. You believe people have the same universal needs and share the same values.

#### Your Strength

Seeing the essential humanity of each person. Being tolerant of others.

#### Your Developmental Task

Stop thinking everyone is the same as you. Learn more about your own culture so that you can stop projecting your own values onto others.



### Orientation 4

#### **ACCEPTANCE**

You are aware of your own culture, that it is only one of many ways of experiencing the world.

#### Your Strength

Recognize the cultural differences between your first culture and other cultures.

#### Your Developmental Task

Shift your perspective - see a situation through the “eyes” of other cultures, without losing your own values and first culture.

### Orientation 5

#### **ADAPTATION**

You realize the value of being able to see the world through more than one cultural lens.

#### Your Strength

Cultural flexibility, and a deep understanding of at least one other culture.

#### Your Developmental Task

When necessary, adapt your behavior and communication to another culture’s style. Focus on gaining deeper understanding about more specific cultures .

\* The DMIS Model was pioneered by Mitchell R. Hammer and Milton J. Bennett. A [Google](#) search for *The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI): An Approach for Assessing and Building Intercultural Competence* will provide more information on the model.



## Using the DMIS to Understand Integration

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) can help you understand your feelings and reactions to difference, whether it is culture, personality, gender etc. If you are aware of why you are thinking, speaking, behaving or feeling a certain way, it is easier to manage those thoughts, words, actions and emotions more effectively.



*The two stages of the model*

### Ethno-centric Stage

#### Denial Defense Minimization

This includes the first three orientations. In this stage, the person is only focused on his or her own culture. The person is either unaware of significant differences or uncomfortable with them.

### Ethno-relative Stage

#### Acceptance Adaptation

This includes the last two orientations. In this stage, the person accepts there are important cultural differences. He or she is willing to adapt behavior and communication.

### Task 1

1. Read through Outlooks A to E listed below. Each outlook is a fixed mental attitude, a kind of strong opinion or belief, that predetermines a person's response to a situation.
2. The five outlooks belong to five newcomers to Canada. Each reveals one of the five DMIS Orientations. Refer back to the previous page to match each of the outlooks to a DMIS Orientation.
3. Also, make a few notes below about what the development task is for each of the outlooks. The first one has been done for you.

#### OUTLOOK A

I have come to Canada to work hard and contribute to the economy. I immigrated because I want better opportunities for my family. As long as an employer can see I am hardworking, he will give me a job. Sure, I need to have good English, but that is not as important as my technical skills. A good education and strong technical skills will get me promoted at work. It has always worked like that for me.



#### DMIS ORIENTATION ..DENIAL...

What is the development task?

To realize cultural differences are escaping her. Realize it affects relationships and opportunities at work.

#### OUTLOOK B

I think learning about Canadian culture is useful. I also think it is really important to understand English well. More importantly, is to act professionally. As long as I am respectful and work in professional way, the career opportunities will open for me. If everyone treats others with respect, then we can all work together well.



#### DMIS ORIENTATION ..

What is the development task?



# Section Seven

# Become really good at working with difference

## OUTLOOK C

It took me some time to adapt to Canadian workplace culture. At first, I didn't realize I was making cultural mistakes. When I did, I was embarrassed and annoyed. I didn't like the way Canadians communicated. It was like they didn't have any opinions or emotions. But the more I worked in a multicultural context, the more I realized there are a lot of different ways of communicating. My way is just one way. I am not saying I like to use every other style of communication, but I think it is good to be able to see the world through the eyes of another culture. I have also started to adapt my behavior and speaking to working with Canadian organization.



**DMIS ORIENTATION .....**  
What is the development task?

## OUTLOOK D

Getting a job was difficult when I arrived in Canada, even though my English is better than many other newcomers. Employers didn't recognize the value of the skills I brought from my country. Even though I had supervised teams and had lots of work experience, no one wanted to hire me for the kind of work I did in my country. They said I needed Canadian work experience. How could I get Canadian work experience if no one would hire me. So I went back to university to earn a Masters degree in my field. Afterwards, I did get a job, but it is still not what I did in my first country. I have two years Canadian work experience and I have my professional designation, but I still can't get a promotion. I need money to pay off my university tuition. Other newcomers I know say that Canadians think they are better than other other people, that the education and work experiences in other countries are not as good as in Canada. I think a lot of Canadians don't want newcomers to succeed. I think they are scared that we will do better than them if we get a chance.



**DMIS ORIENTATION .....**  
What is the development task?

## OUTLOOK E

If you look and listen carefully, you realize there are significant differences in the expectations and behaviors of people from Canada and my first country. Therefore, it is really important to develop intercultural skills. It is also essential to identify the link between language and culture. Canadian culture affects how Canadians use English. Even the British and Americans realize it, and adapt how they communicate. I have strong technical skills, but I know I need to develop even stronger cultural and communication skills. I have started to study these on my own time, and I have also joined a training course. I have already started to change my communication style by using more softeners, especially in high risk situations.



**DMIS ORIENTATION .....**  
What is the development task?

## Task 2

1. Which one of the five DMIS Orientations do think you were in when you arrived in Canada?
2. Which DMIS Orientation do you believe you are in now?
3. Which DMIS Orientation is most effective for people living in Canada's multicultural society?
4. Canada is a multicultural society. How do you think knowing the DMIS could help you live and work more effectively in this society?


## Exploring Intercultural Styles

The Canadian communication style has both similarities and differences to the communication in other cultures. Clarity, coherence, conciseness and consensus define the Canadian style, but there are also intercultural lenses to explore communication.



### Task 1

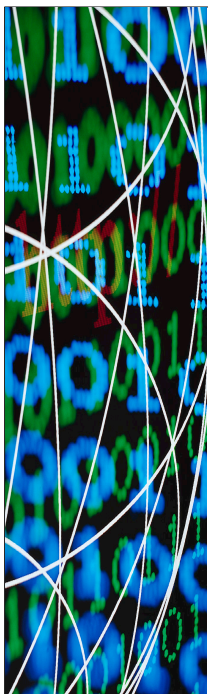
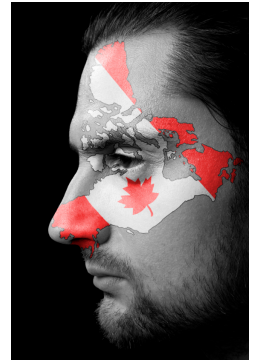
1. Read through columns A and B (from page 56 in the desk reference). The two columns are extreme opposites.
2. Mark with an X on the continuums, between 1 and 5, where you think the Canadian communication style occurs. The first one - *direct and indirect* - has been done for you, marked with an X between the 3 and 4. Canadians tend to be more indirect through their use of softeners and suggestion.
3. Mark your own cultural tendencies on the continuums. Compare the Canadian tendencies with the tendencies from your own first culture and language.

Column A		Column B
<p><b>Direct</b> I mean what I say. I say what I mean. Yes means yes. "Saving face" is not important. Don't be offended - it's not personal - it's just work. To be frank is to be respectful of the facts and to avoid confusion, or avoid misleading you.</p>	1.....2.....3..X..4.....5	<p><b>Indirect</b> I suggest. I imply. So "read between the lines" and watch my body language as well. Yes could mean maybe or no. "Saving face" is important - it keeps our reputations intact and maintains harmony between us.</p>
<p><b>Linear</b> I talk in a straight line*. I get to the point quickly. My points are explicit and stay on topic. I am efficient, time-focused. I am clear, concise and coherent.</p>	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	<p><b>Circular</b> I talk around the point, which may not be stated explicitly. I may move on and off the main topic as I develop the context. I might include personal stories and seemingly irrelevant details. Every fact occurs within a bigger context that you need to understand as well. I am people-focused.</p>
<p><b>Emotionally Detached</b> I separate myself from the issues. I am objective and work with little emotional connection. If something is important, it shouldn't be distorted by personal feelings.</p>	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	<p><b>Emotionally Attached</b> If it's important, I am both intellectually and emotionally engaged. If it's worth being passionate about, to feel it. To express that feeling. If I have an interest in the outcome, how could I separate myself from it?</p>
<p><b>Low Self-Disclosure</b> I keep my personal life mostly separate from my work life. I build rapport with colleagues as we work together to accomplish a task. I prefer to keep most of my personal information to myself. Building very close friendships at work usually takes time.</p>	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	<p><b>High Self-Disclosure</b> I talk a lot at work about my personal life. Other people have life lessons that can help me in my life. By being more open about our lives, we build rapport together.</p>

\* The continuums above were developed by integrating models from established intercultural theorists, Geert Hofstede and Craig Storti, with extensive empirical data collected in multicultural Canadian workplaces between 2004 and 2012.

## Exploring the Canadian Communication Style

The Canadian communication style is defined by the use of softeners. These are specific words that soften opinion, disagreement, requests and feedback etc. in order to build a platform of agreement between colleagues. Softeners are not meant to weaken the opinion; rather, they indirectly invite ideas from others so that consensus can be reached on an issue. It is also a way of bypassing, or minimizing, tension and conflict.



### Be You. Be Intercultural. Be Canadian.

To find success, you need to adapt to the Canadian communication style, but you also need to retain and use the style of your first culture and language whenever it is effective or expedient. You should also become familiar with other intercultural communication styles. Many of your coworkers from other cultures will use other styles. For example, Asian cultures tend to be more indirect, while many Europeans tend to be more direct. Both need to be competent in the Canadian style, as well as being aware of each other's styles.

Remember, neither your style nor the Canadian communication style works everywhere, every time, in a multicultural workplace. Become aware of which contexts and moments require a different communication style.

- For example, it might be when speaking with a colleague from a different cultural background. If you are not able to adapt to that person's style, at the very least you will be able to avoid misunderstanding or judging the person. You know their style and motivation.
- It might be in scenarios where it is strategic not to be clear, coherent or concise. There are urgent circumstances and emergencies when you shouldn't use softeners or build consensus. There are instances when you should be frank in your opinion, and quick to respond.

Most importantly, you should aim to be able to be intercultural and flexible. Watch the best communicators in your organization. Make notes on the words they choose. Copy their communication style until it feels as normal as your first language style.

### Task 2

Read through Tables 2.7 to 2.10 in the pages that follow. In each table, three different orientations to communication are contrasted:

- the **direct** communication style
- the **indirect** communication style
- the **Canadian** style, which tends to try and find a balance between the two extremes by using **softeners**.

Each table focus on one of four key language functions: **giving opinion**, **disagreeing**, **making requests** and **pointing out error**, and gives examples for how each of the three styles uses the language functions. Then explanations are given.

The examples are taken from various case-studies in workplace communication. In your workplace, you will often hear the Canadian approach, although the direct and indirect approaches are used in specific communication contexts, depending on the need. Take special note of the word choices that the speakers use in the examples. **Their word choices shape their communication styles.**

# Section Eight

## Use intercultural communication

### Giving Opinion


**Scenario** Three different workers on a team answer the question “Can a non-native speaker of English adopt a Canadian accent?”

**Instructions** Read the three different responses. They are all saying the same thing, but with different communication styles. Match the dialogue to its communication style. Write either A B or C in the box.

**A** “It is not possible. No one has ever done it.” (or) “I do not know. I have no experience in this.” (or) “It can only be done if you come to Canada as a young person.”

**B** “Yes, I think you are right.” (or) “There are many things to consider in this question.”

**C** “I’m not sure, but as far as I know, it hasn’t been done.”

Communication Style	Explanation
<p><b>Direct</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Descriptor - “Definitive”</b> Speaker is definitive (conclusive). The opinion originates from a background that requires people to have strong, well-defined opinions. There is no need to discuss, unless you have a solid counter-idea. The opinion is grounded in past experience i.e. speaker knows because he has done it before, and others are therefore wrong. The speaker is right, otherwise he wouldn’t assert his opinion.</p> <p><b>Values</b> Wants be solution-oriented, make a positive contribution, show expertise.</p> <p><b>Misperceptions</b> The opinion may seem intransigent (uncompromising), prescriptive (telling and directing), or even dogmatic to people with alternate communication styles.</p>
<p> <b>Canadian</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Descriptor - “Constructive and Explorative”</b> The speaker takes an open-ended position. The speaker limits his opinion, which then invites input from others. His opinion is future-oriented. It is open, allowing for possibility, the unexpected and the unknown.</p> <p><b>Values</b> Respect is built through being collaborative, not by having every answer and solution. He wants the team to construct the solution together. The least experienced team member may have something constructive to add. This communication style believes it’s vital to include others in the process, to build platforms of consensus.</p> <p><b>Misperceptions</b> To others, he can sound unconfident, incompetent or uncertain. Can also sound like he has a secret agenda, that there is something he is not saying. That he is hiding something. That he is not forthright.</p>
<p><b>Indirect</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Descriptor - “Waiting and Listening”</b> Speaker is unsure. Doesn’t want to lose face by showing a lack of knowledge. This speaker will wait for you to ask for his opinion, especially if you are more senior than him. If “face” is involved, he may even defer back to the most senior person, even though he might be an expert on the issue.</p> <p><b>Value</b> Often, this communication style will say nothing until first hearing the others, so that his opinion is in harmony with the others, whenever possible.</p> <p><b>Misperceptions</b> To others, he can sound weak, unconfident, incompetent or uncertain. If English is not his first language, he can appear as though he doesn’t understand.</p>

# Section Eight

## Use intercultural communication

### Disagreeing


**Scenario** In the next example, three women speakers on a team express disagreement with someone. They are responding to the following opinion: “Everyone on the team should go through communication training.”

**Instructions** Read the three different responses. They are all saying the same thing, but with different communication styles. Notice the Canadian tendency to affirm any points they do agree with first, before they disagree. By establishing what is agreed on first, it is often easier to work through disagreement to reach consensus. Match the dialogue to its communication style. Write either A B or C in the box.

A “You always try very hard to find the right answers, even when the causes are not clear.”

B “I think your decision is wrong. We don’t even know what the real issues are.”

C “I hear what you are saying, but we should probably consider some kind of assessment to identify the real issues.”

Communication Style	Explanation
<b>Direct</b>  <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Descriptor - “Refuting”</b> You are wrong - the speaker tells you directly. Then she sets the facts out to show you why.</p> <p><b>Values</b> Her frankness is not personal; she is being straightforward in order to be explicit, to avoid confusion and problems.</p> <p><b>Misperceptions</b> The opinion may seem intransigent (uncompromising), prescriptive (telling and directing), or even dogmatic to people with alternate communication styles.</p>
 <b>Canadian</b>  <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Descriptor - “Acknowledging”</b> The speaker starts by affirming what she agrees with. At the very least, she acknowledges she has heard. She emphasizes that she respects that you have an opinion, even if she disagrees with it. Then she suggests an alternative view. Moreover, she may question the person’s certainty on facts. She might imply errors.</p> <p><b>Values</b> This speaker wants to build platforms of consensus, even if it’s only to “agree to disagree”.</p> <p><b>Misperceptions</b> To others, he can sound unconfident, incompetent or uncertain. Can also sound like he has a secret agenda, that there is something he is not saying. That he is hiding something. That he is not forthright.</p>
<b>Indirect</b>  <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Descriptor - “Implying”</b> This speaker will often avoid disagreeing openly, especially if you are more senior, or unfamiliar. You will need to “read between the lines” of what the speaker says, or watch her body language. Sometimes her silence is louder than words. If “face” is involved, she may even defer back to the most senior person, despite her own expertise.</p> <p><b>Value</b> Often, this communication style will say nothing until first hearing the others, so that his opinion is in harmony with the others, whenever possible.</p> <p><b>Misperceptions</b> Others may completely overlook what she is trying to imply. They may not be listening for indirect meaning.</p>

# Section Eight

## Use intercultural communication

### Making Requests


**Scenario** In this example, the three guys on the team need to give a directive to a team member, to get the person to accomplish a task.

**Instructions** Read the three different responses. They are all saying the same thing, but with different communication styles. Notice the Canadian tendency to use polite request forms e.g. “would you” or “could you”. Match the dialogue to its communication style. Write either A B or C in the box.

A “Would you mind getting that information to me before noon tomorrow.”

B “I need that information before noon tomorrow.”

C “I will contact Tim at noon tomorrow.”

Communication Style	Explanation
<p><b>Direct</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Descriptor - “Telling”</b> Very directive by telling the person to do it, especially if the person is a subordinate or less experienced. The speaker is speaking out of his authority or position to get the task done.</p> <p><b>Values</b> Being directive reduces ambiguity in the task. The senior person has a responsibility to take care of juniors by being directive, or clearly telling them to do it.</p> <p><b>Misperceptions</b> This “telling” style (versus asking) tends to be more common in <i>high power distance</i> cultures (see page 63 in the desk reference) with strong hierarchy in the workplace. In Canada, the military would be a good example of this style, or in a hospital emergency unit where life and death decisions are made. However, in most Canadian workplaces, most of the time, this style is not effective. It is seen as bossy or overbearing. The person may even be accused of being a bully, even though their motivations are meant to clear, or even paternalistic.</p>
<p> <b>Canadian</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Descriptor - “Asking”</b> Asks the person to do it, in order to get their buy in i.e. willingness. The speaker wants the person to take ownership of the task. The speaker may even want input from the person, even accepting a better or different way of doing the task.</p> <p><b>Values</b> A senior person tends to look for willing participation from the person, not obligation.</p> <p><b>Misperceptions</b> Sometimes, a supervisor will avoid asking; rather, he will expect the person to initiate a task, to find out what should be done, or figure it out. This kind of initiative is especially true, if the task is low risk. Employees who are more used to being “told” what to do may not use their own initiative because they are used to waiting to be told.</p>
<p><b>Indirect</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Descriptor - “Implying”</b> Power distance can once again affect how people make certain requests. In high power distance cultures, a subordinate, or even a peer, might imply what he wants you to do, versus asking you.</p> <p><b>Values</b> To imply leaves opportunity for the senior person to say no with out losing face or embarrassing the subordinate.</p> <p><b>Misperceptions</b> If loss of “face” might occur, the speaker will imply what must get done. Others may completely overlook what she is trying to imply. They may not be listening for indirect meaning.</p>



## Section Eight

## Use intercultural communication

### Pointing out Mistakes


**Scenario** In the final example, the three speakers need to point out a coworker’s mistake in a set of statistics about aging populations in Canada.

**Instructions** Read the three different responses. They are all saying the same thing, but with different communication styles. Notice the Canadian tendency to affirm what is correct, to question, to suggest or imply, and the use of “softeners”. Match the dialogue to its communication style. Write either A B or C in the box.

A “Your statistics on aging are wrong. You can correct them and give me the report tomorrow.”

B “Most of the statistics sound great. I not sure about the numbers on demographic trends. Perhaps we should double-check those. There is time. We can wrap this report up by tomorrow.”

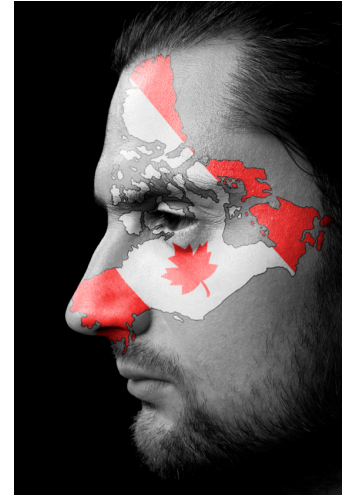
C “You can give me the report tomorrow instead, if you like. Our workforce is aging quite quickly. Did you notice how much the facts on demographics can vary.”

Communication Style	Explanation
<b>Direct</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Descriptor - “Intellectual Confrontation”</b> Straightforward and fact-based. Pragmatic and rational.</p> <p><b>Values</b> “Saving face” is not important. Don’t be offended, it is matter-of-fact, not personal. It doesn’t hurt to admit your errors, learn from them, and then avoid making them again.</p> <p><b>Misperceptions</b> In most Canadian workplaces, most of the time, this style is ineffective if not first preceded with affirming what is correct. Otherwise, the communication can be seen as overly critical and negative.</p>
 <b>Canadian</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Descriptor - “Relational Confrontation”</b> Starts by affirming what is correct. Then suggests specific changes or alternative approaches. Questions the certainty of facts, or implies there are mistakes. Allows for the unexpected or unknown.</p> <p><b>Values</b> This approach is meant to keep a positive spirit to what could easily be an awkward discussion.</p> <p><b>Misperceptions</b> To others, the speaker may seem overly nurturing. Others may feel that the speakers approach might leave too much ambiguity around the error. It might make the person think that everything is going well, instead of clearly understanding that a mistake was made, and exactly what the mistake was.</p>
<b>Indirect</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Descriptor - “Unspoken Confrontation”</b> Rarely confronts, especially if the person is more senior. The mistake is not mentioned; rather, the mistake is raised by suggesting or implying. The speaker will use body language and other non-verbals to tell you about the mistake. Sometimes just silence or restrained comments will communicate error.</p> <p><b>Values</b> The intention is to “save face”.</p> <p><b>Misperceptions</b> Others may completely overlook what she is trying to imply. They may not be listening for indirect meaning.</p>

## Learning from Aman's Misattribution

The remarkable multicultural nature of Canadian society makes integration much easier compared with many other places. In many other parts of the world, everyone looks and acts similarly. If a person looks ethnically different, it sometimes limits his or her opportunities. Not so in Canada. Here, it is normal to work with lots of people from other parts of the world. As with similar countries, it took time to build the equality and openness that defines our multicultural society.

It means that integration is not in any way dependent on ethnicity or race. Instead, the limits newcomers experience lie in enabling or technical skills. Sometimes people don't take cultural or personality differences seriously enough. The story of Aman is one such example.



### Aman's Knee-Jerk Reaction

Aman immigrated to Canada, joined a bridge-to-employment program for engineers, and, within weeks of graduating, was employed as a junior project manager. Fen, Aman's department head, had immigrated to Canada from Asia 20 years before. The two needed to work closely together on projects.

Within 6 months, Aman was ready to quit. He confided in his workplace mentor that his department head was more critical of his work than of anyone else's. Aman said he had gone beyond his best, but that Fen continued to withhold recognition and career opportunities. In fact, Aman had come to the conclusion that Fen's behavior was rooted in discrimination, in the fact that Aman was brown-skinned, educated abroad, and not born Canadian.

The mentor knew the department head, and took the initiative to ask how things were going with Aman. "Wonderful" was the response. "He is my best project manager. I am planning to promote him to senior project manager within a few weeks." Although the department head considered himself fully Canadian, his motivational style was not. "In certain Asian cultures, parents are tough on their children," he explained. "It's how we show we care for them." Aman, on the other hand, expected a Canadian leadership style from his department head. More encouraging, focusing on the positives. As a result, he assumed Fen's "toughness" was discrimination. Due to his lack of intercultural skills, he wrongly attributed a cultural difference to discrimination.

Workplace discrimination is not common but it is a very serious issue. In fact, there is zero tolerance for it in the Canadian workplace. The result of Aman and Fen's misunderstanding could have ended up being very negative for both men. Fortunately, the mentor took the time to sensitively uncover their assumptions. Neither Aman nor Fen took culture seriously enough. They likely assumed that "being professional" had a universal definition. Both Aman and Fen had to appreciate that the universal value of motivating others is demonstrated in culturally defined ways.

## Questions

1. Before the mentor intervened, both Aman and Fen were in the ethno-centric stage of the DMIS model. Which orientation best describes them? Choose one from the following:

### Orientation 1

#### DENIAL

You are comfortable with the familiar. You don't want to make life complicated with cultural differences. You may not even be aware of the cultural differences around you. Perhaps you are so focused on your work that you aren't aware your behaviors and communication are being misunderstood by colleagues from other cultural backgrounds.



### Orientation 2

#### DEFENSE

You distrust cultural behavior and ideas that are different to your own. You may be aware of other cultures but your opinion of them is often negative. You might think of your own culture as superior to others. If you are friendly with a person from another culture, you likely think that person is an exception to your opinion of the group.

### Orientation 3

#### MINIMIZATION

You are beyond feeling other cultures are a threat to your own culture. You believe that despite interesting differences (e.g. food, dress and customs) all people are mostly the same. You believe people have the same universal needs and share the same values.



## Questions

2. Which of the following tasks best describes what Aman and Fen needed to do next in their development?

### Developmental Task A

Recognize that cultural differences are escaping you. Realize that this is probably affecting whether or not some coworkers enjoy working with you, and limiting your opportunities at work.

### Your Developmental Task B

Become more tolerant of differences. Find what you have in common with persons from other cultures. Focus on the universal human needs and less on the differences, until you can accept the differences.

### Your Developmental Task C

Stop thinking everyone is the same as you. Learn more about your own culture so that you can stop projecting your own values onto others.

### A Word on Discrimination

What is discrimination? To paraphrase the Supreme Court's definition in the 1989 decision in *Andrew v. Law Society of BC*, discrimination means the following:

*Any difference (based on the personal characteristics of an individual or group) that puts a burden, obligation or disadvantage on them, but is not put on other people (e.g. skin color, ethnicity, gender, disabilities, sexual orientation). No difference must limit or withhold equal access to opportunities, benefits and advantages that are available to other members of society.*

### Tan Le's Story

When Tan arrived in Australia in the early 1980s, she experienced discrimination, in the form of racism, as you read in paragraph 3 of TEDTalk Excerpt 2. Although discrimination unfortunately occurs in every part of the world, much has been done to stop it. Today, Australia has a social policy of tolerance and acceptance, which has eliminated most discrimination. In fact, the 2011 national census revealed that more than a quarter of Australia's population was born outside the country, making it one of the most multicultural and open societies in the world.

### Self Esteem

Canada, like Australia, is a very multicultural country, and very tolerant of human differences. Laws such as the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) protect every citizen and work to prevent discrimination. In fact, Canadian nationality is not defined by physical appearances, but by a set of common values. Acceptance and respect for others are core values that define us. Any form of prejudice is harmful to people and society because it attacks a human being's self-worth. A healthy self-image is essential for self-esteem, which is the fourth of Maslow's five human needs.

### The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

As a newcomer to Canada, it is important to go online and read through the Charter and understand the value that it places on the diversity you bring to Canada. The Charter guarantees certain political and civil rights to every Canadian. It unifies Canadians around a set of values that are meant to transcend difference and protect it. For example, under Equality Rights, number 15 (1),

*Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.*



## The Building Blocks of Credibility

Credibility is the amount of respect and trust you have with your colleagues and clients. Credibility leads to degrees of power to shape outcomes and find favor for opportunities. Through your credibility, you have influence and control in various situations and decision making. But more importantly, culture defines how credibility is built.



### Task 1

Read through the list below. It includes a variety of factors used in various workplace cultures to build credibility with colleagues and clients. Which of these factors were used to build credibility in your previous workplace(s) i.e. which of these created influence? Put a check (✓) in the boxes. Remember, this is after a person is hired.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>PROFESSION</b><br>e.g. engineer versus electrician  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>AGE</b><br>e.g. older people get more respect                               | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>FAMILY</b><br>e.g. married or unmarried, lots of children   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>JOB TITLE</b><br>e.g. position such as manager, supervisor  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>GENDER</b><br>e.g. male versus female                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>FAVORS</b><br>e.g. inviting boss for dinner   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>EDUCATION</b><br>e.g. university versus apprenticeship  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>ETHNICITY</b><br>e.g. one culture is above another                          | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>MONEY</b><br>e.g. expensive things, rich versus not rich  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>CREDENTIALS</b><br>e.g. showcasing education or professional credentials, designations, awards etc.   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>RACE</b><br>e.g. color of skin  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>COMMUNICATION SKILLS</b><br>e.g. strong speaking skills   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE</b><br>e.g. led a team, supervised people   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>RELIGION</b><br>spiritual beliefs and affiliations                          | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>ENABLING SKILLS</b><br>Also called soft skills or interpersonal skills<br>e.g. working well with people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>HARD SKILLS</b><br>e.g. competency and expertise in technical skills, customer service, sales etc.    | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>FAMILY NAME</b><br>e.g. last name gets respect                              | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>ATTITUDE</b><br>e.g. positive, negative, critical, pessimistic  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>FIRST LANGUAGE</b><br>i.e. the ability to speak fluently in the language of one's geographic location | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>NETWORK</b><br>e.g. the people you know who can help you, and you help them | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>CULTURAL FLUENCY</b><br>Knowing the mainstream cultural norms   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>APPEARANCE</b><br>e.g. the way one dresses  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>BODY LANGUAGE</b><br>e.g. the way one sits, listens                         | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>INTERCULTURAL KNOWLEDGE</b><br>Knowing cultural norms of minorities                                     |

## The Building Blocks of Credibility


Credibility is earned in the Canadian workplace. It is never ascribed by title, status or position. Credibility in the workplace culture comes from combining strong enabling and technical skills. In the Canadian workplace, this combination tends to be about a 50-50 split. Great technical skills and strong enabling skills are a winning combination - but if you lack in either one, growing in credibility can be slow.



### Task 2

Organize the factors you checked in Task 1. Start with the one that is most important for credibility (in your previous workplace culture) to the least. Focus on the top 5.

Most Important 

 Least Important

### Task 3

In the Canadian workplace, there are certain factors that get you a job, some that help you to keep that job, and certain neutral factors that neither add nor take away from credibility.

1. If you compare your list from Task 2 with List 2 below, are there any significant differences? Are there any items (in your list) from Lists 1 and 3 that should be moved out?
2. Are there any changes that you might need to make in terms of how you plan to build and maintain your credibility in the Canadian workplace?

#### List 1

##### Getting a Job

- ✓ Experience
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Credentials
- ✓ Hard Skills
- ✓ Enabling Skills
- ✓ Communication Skills
- ✓ Attitude
- ✓ Appearance

#### List 2

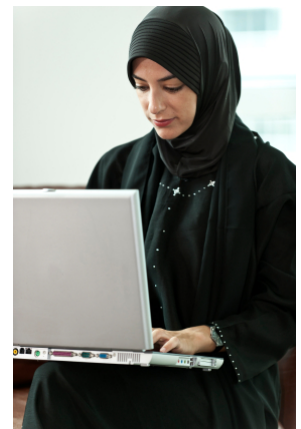
##### Keeping a Job

- ✓ Enabling Skills
- ✓ Hard Skills
- ✓ Attitude
- ✓ Communications Skills
- ✓ Workplace Culture

#### List 3

##### Neutral Factors

- ✓ Ethnicity
- ✓ Race
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Gender
- ✓ Family
- ✓ Money





### Application

#### Case Study with Sam

In the case study, on page 45 in the desk reference:

1. How did Sam first try to build his credibility?
2. Later, he adapted his approach - what approach did he take?
3. Why did the first approach fail?
4. Why did his adapted approach work successfully?



### Application

#### Case Study with Habib

In the case study, on page 65 in the desk reference:

1. How did Habib try to build his credibility?
2. Why did the approach fail?
3. What kind of approach would have been more successful?



## Principle 4

# Master Workplace English

### Contents

#### Integration Journey Workplace Integration

Part 4 The Story of Tan Le

#### Section 11 - Master English. Own it.

- Deliberate Practice

#### Section 12 - Reflecting. Setting Goals.

- Have Your Goals Been Set?



#### Learning Outcomes

Reflect on everything that has been learnt in order to set specific goals for integration.

## Instructions

Follow these instructions to complete the activities using Tan's story.

1. Go to Ted.com for Tan's immigration story. The direct link is [www.ted.com/talks/tan\\_le\\_my\\_immigration\\_story.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/tan_le_my_immigration_story.html) or do a search on the site using "Tan Le My Immigration Story."
2. Listen to the talk online. It is about 12 minutes long. We will only follow her talk up to 9:13. A part of the script has been cut and pasted below for our learning purposes. You can read Tan's entire script by clicking on the "Show Transcript" icon, just under the video streaming on the Ted site.
3. After listening to the talk, read through the excerpt from the online script in this workbook. It has been organized into four general stages: Departure - Settlement - Economic Integration - Workplace Integration.
4. Respond to the questions attached to each stage.

## Workplace Integration

### What is workplace integration?

- Adapting language, communication and other cultural behaviors to the norms of the Canadian workplace, in order to fully contribute expertise and achieve a meaningful sense of belonging.



### Excerpt 4 TEDTalk

Grants and sponsors were sought. Centers were established. I lived in **parallel worlds**. In one, I was the classic Asian student, relentless in the demands that I made on myself. In the other, I was enmeshed in lives that were precarious, tragically scarred by violence, drug abuse and isolation. But so many over the years were helped. And for that work, when I was a final year law student, I was chosen as the young Australian of the year. And I was catapulted from one piece of the jigsaw to another, and their edges didn't fit.

Tan Le, anonymous Footscray resident, was now Tan Le, refugee and social activist, invited to speak in venues she had **never heard of** and into homes whose existence she **could never have imagined**. I didn't know the **protocols**. I didn't know how to use the cutlery. I didn't know how to talk about wine. I didn't know how to talk about anything. I **wanted to retreat** to the routines and comfort of life in an unsung suburb -- a grandmother, a mother and two daughters ending each day as they had for almost 20 years, telling one another the story of their day and falling asleep, the three of us still in the same bed. I told my mother I couldn't do it. She reminded me that I was now the same age she had been when we boarded the boat. **No had never been an option. "Just do it,"** she said, "and **don't be what you're not.**"

So I spoke out on youth unemployment and education and the neglect of the marginalized and the disenfranchised. And the more candidly I spoke, the more I was asked to speak. I met people from all walks of life, so many of them doing the thing they loved, living on the frontiers of possibility. And even though I finished my degree, I realized I could not settle into a career in law. There had to be another piece of the jigsaw. And I realized at the same time that **it is okay to be an outsider**, a recent arrival, new on the scene -- and not just okay, but something to be thankful for, perhaps a gift from the boat. Because **being an insider can so easily mean collapsing the horizons, can so easily mean accepting the presumptions of your province**. I have stepped outside my comfort zone enough now to know that, yes, the world does fall apart, but not in the way that you fear.

Possibilities that would not have been allowed were outrageously encouraged. There was an **energy there, an implacable optimism**, a strange **mixture of humility and daring**. So I followed my **hunches**. I gathered around me a small team of people for whom the label "It can't be done" was an irresistible challenge. For a year we were penniless. At the end of each day, I made a huge pot of soup which we all shared. We worked well into each night. Most of our ideas were crazy, but a few were brilliant, and we broke through. I made the decision to move to the U.S. after only one trip. My hunches again. Three months later I had relocated, and the adventure has continued.

## Three Habits for Your Integration Journey in Canada

Sections 11 and 12 in this workbook are designed for reflecting on what your learning and for planning ahead. Use the final part of Tan’s story from the previous page to begin reflecting on where you are at in your integration journey.

### Recognize feelings

There are moments when a newcomer can feel overwhelmed or confused by new expectations and norms in Canada. When Tan became a sought after speaker, she found herself in new cultural situations. She didn’t understand the “protocols”, the preferred ways of thinking, speaking and behaving. She lacked confidence. She wanted to retreat into her familiar world. To isolate herself from opportunities she felt inadequate to manage well. In these moments it is really important to take a mental step back and recognize your feelings. Don’t ignore them if they persist. Be honest with yourself about your emotions. And then reach out for supports.



Do your cultural or personal backgrounds encourage or discourage you from recognizing and talking about feelings?



### Reach out

Reach out to the right people and resources. Tan reached out to her mother. She had already gone through many of the changes Tan was experiencing. She was the right person to reach out to. A newcomer to Canada can reach out to other newcomers. To caring coworkers. Often just talking about an issue can bring clarity. Open conversations can take the internal pressure off you. Also, reach out for these integration resources - the desk reference and workbook. Use them as a departure point to begin guiding you in your new life.

Who or what can you reach out to if you need support?



### Be half-full

Tan’s mother told her to “just do it” and always to be true to herself. The same is true to newcomers. You need to get on with life in Canada, to just do it. You need to adapt in many ways, but at the same time, you need to be true to who you are. Only you can find the balance to that equation. Tan’s strategy was to look for the positives, to be half-full. At some point, she realized it is okay to be an outsider at the start, because it has advantages. Experience taught her, as it did her mother, that your world may fall apart but not in the way you fear. She views her life journey as both a jigsaw and an adventure.

Tan talks about a jigsaw and an adventure. What metaphor or image do you use to describe your journey? Is the metaphor half-empty or half full?

## Deliberate Practice

It takes hours of deliberate practice to get really good at something, including English. Mastering English for work may seem easier for others, but you have no idea what it cost them in time. Putting in the hours of learning can trump natural talent. After many years of teaching languages, one instructor observed that those who seem to be “gifted” language learners did not necessarily do as well in the longterm as those students who found the right motivators, and then paid the price in hours.



### Task

Read through the study done at the Music Academy of West Berlin. Then answer the following questions in the right hand column: What lessons can I take from the study that could be applied to mastering English for work? What other strategies have worked for me before? What is my best time(s) of the day to study English?

Consider what Geoff Colvin writes in *Talent is Overrated* (pg. 57). A study was conducted in Germany at the Music Academy of West Berlin. Researchers wanted to find out why some violinists are better than others. Three test groups were formed - the good, the better and the best violinists. All had started the violin at around age 8, and all were now in their early twenties. The study results were amazing. Although all three groups were putting in the same number of practice hours each day, the “best” group had a cumulative lifetime total of violin practice that was double the total lifetime hours of the “good” group. And about a third more lifetime hours than the “better” group.

Something else separated the best violinists from the ones that were just good. The best musicians spent the most time practicing alone. All three groups agreed that this was the most difficult thing to do, and the least fun. It hurt. All those hours for what seemed like little return, in the short run.

The best violinists also chose to practice in the morning, when they had the most energy, while the others usually practiced in the later part of the afternoon. Becoming the best they could be was a hard choice they made daily. That hard choice to put in the hours alone made their violin playing seem so easy for them. But it wasn't. They paid the price for what they wanted most.

There are many factors that contribute to creating to a successful language learner. For example, understanding your learning style and tailoring your learning strategies to that style. Good teachers are also important up to a point. Previous education might help. What is even more important is for you to know that many of the assumptions we have about why you can't have been challenged.

In Section 6, you read about the Hungarian chess champions who challenged the natural talent theory. And George Dawson who at 98 went back to school to learn to read and write. You may never speak English fluently or perfectly. But you can master it - you can make it work for you.

### Lessons to Apply to Mastering English

### Other Strategies That Have Worked for Me

### My Best Time of the Day for Learning





Have your goals been set? Is your time well spent? Is the price paid? These are the questions you need to ask yourself as you think about the next 6, 12 and 18 months. There is a lot you can accomplish in terms of your integration journey in a year and a half, in 3 years or 5 years. Your success from these integration resources depends not just on what you have read but even more on what you take action on.

**Take Action**

Think about the eight steps listed below for setting goals. Use them to help you set your goals. Think of one goal you want to achieve in your career and map it out in the space provided in the column on the right.

**8 Steps** Setting Your Career and Learning Goals

**1. Make the Goal Achievable**

Set a goal that is challenging, possible.

**2. Be Clear and Specific**

Use lots of details to explain your goal.

**3. Set a Timeline**

Use weeks or months or years. Are you going to spend that time well?

**4. Identify the Smaller Steps**

What are the specific things you need to do?

**5. Learn to Say No**

This might be asking family to give you time. It might be saying no to the TV for a few evenings each week. What price do you need to pay? The price is not always money.

**6. Ask Other People**

Who can help you in a small or big way?

**7. Let your Goal Evolve**

Are you going to be flexible? Will you only be afraid or worried? Will you be positive to changes and new opportunities?

**8. Stay Motivated**

How can you reward yourself? What small rewards can you give yourself?

**MOST IMPORTANT** - how will you know you have achieved the goal?

What will be different? What will you be able to do? What do you want people to say? What do you want to be different?

**Your GOAL**












## Take Action

There is much you have learnt about yourself, the expectations in the Canadian workplace and the integration journey. This last section is designed to enable you to set clear goals for growth in your life. Answer the following questions by going back to various pages in the desk reference and workbook.

## Reflect on Yourself

First, brainstorm about what have you learnt about yourself culture through reading about the following:

The 28 Articles		
Culture Shock Model		
DMIS		
Intercultural Communication		
Pronunciation		
Maslow's Theory of Human Needs		
Departure's Push and Pull Factors		
Myths about Potential		
Building Credibility		

**Set Goals**

Answer the following questions in the form of a goal. Then, use the 8 steps on goal setting to set out actionable steps to achieve the goals. If any of the questions do not apply to you, write “not applicable”, and then move on to the next question.

Questions	Goal	Actionable Steps
1. What aspects of pronunciation do you need to apply in order to speak more clearly?		
2. What parts of clarity do you need to take action on?		
3. What parts of coherence do you need to take action on?		
4. What parts of conciseness do you need to take action on?		
5. What do you need to adapt in how you build consensus and use softeners?		
6. What do you need to adapt in how you view credibility in the workplace?		
7. What is your development task in the DMIS?		

# Answer Key



## Section 1

**Comprehension** 1. F 2. T 3. T 4. F 5. T

### Application

1. e.g. Carlos changed the way he pointed out mistakes to others in English. 2. e.g. Carlos set a goal to go from reviewing blueprints to working on the project controls team within 6 months. 3. e.g. Carlos took up the offer to work with a coach. He now volunteers some of his time to help other newcomers.

### Synthesis

- Essentially, all the adaptation in the workplace rests with newcomers. The mainstream Canadian ways of thinking, acting and speaking were formed over many years by the immigrants who came before you and the people here from the beginning. The same is true for anyone who moves into a new country, culture, group, company or even team. The newcomer adapts. However, in the end, it is a choice. To change or adapt must be of a person's own free will. It cannot be a demand. Only an invitation.
- For example, employers are required to make accommodations for religious needs, as long as those needs do not disrupt the normal flow of business operations or put the employer at a disadvantage. Employers can also provide integration/intercultural training to both newcomers and native-born Canadians, if possible. At the very least, they can be patient with newcomers as they figure out the culture and expectations.

## Section 2

**Comprehension** 1. T 2. T 3. F 4. F 5. T

### Application

1. e.g. Carlos set himself goals for 6 months and for 3 years because he knew that if he worked hard to exceed expectations, and took training opportunities, his current situation would change for the better. 2. D

### Question

Sean saw the foot-in-the-door job as half empty. The feedback from the company indicates he never intended to maximize his day of small beginnings.

### Task

Beginnings 7 Turning Points 4 Personal Strategies 2 Result of Strategies 1 Approach to Learning 5 Integration 6 Asking for Promotion 8 Career Outcome 3

## Section 3

**Comprehension** 1. F 2. F 3. T 4. T 5. T

### Application

1. B 2. In any culture, there are people that exceed and don't exceed expectations. At different stages of our lives, we can exceed or not exceed expectations depending on our circumstances. 3. D

### Analysis

- .....P..... Using a notebook to write down what you learn.
- .....C..... Understanding how credibility is built.
- .....C..... Being aware of non-verbal communication.
- .....P.... Avoiding knee-jerk reactions.
- .....P..... Being prepared for meetings.
- .....P..... Staying positive.
- .....C..... Dealing with a coworker's mistakes.
- .....C..... Adapting to how power (hierarchy) operates.

### Tan Le Part 2

Task 1 1. S 2. S 3. S 4. B 5. B

Task 2 Security A-2 Belonging B-1 Self Esteem C-3

### Section 4

Comprehension Clarity Coherence Conciseness Consensus

### Application

1	Understood his strengths e.g. good English and clear pronunciation.
2	Recognized and accepted he was not communicating effectively e.g. clients didn't understand him.
6	Asked for help from someone with knowledge in the area he wanted to develop i.e. Canadian colleague who had worked in Asia.
4	Figured out his own strategies to improve his communication e.g. thinking in English.
3	Asked for feedback from someone who heard him speak regularly i.e. supervisor.
8	Recognized a norm from his first cultural was negatively affecting his communication in English e.g. ending with a main point.
5	Took advantage of the available training opportunities e.g. Toastmasters.
9	Overcame the awkwardness of adapting e.g. noticed the positive reaction from his coworkers towards his communication.
7	Took ownership of the solution e.g. used the internet to find information.
10	Continued to find and use new ways to enhance his communication e.g. writing ideas down in point form before meetings.

Exploring Clarity 1. Example 2 2. e.g. power distance 3. e.g. ubiquitous, predominantly

Exploring Coherence 1. Example 2 2. D

Exploring Conciseness 1. Example 1 2. D

## Section 5

**Comprehension** 1. F 2. T 3. T 4. F 5. T

**Task 1** 1. A 2. D 3. C 4. B 5. E

**Task 2** 6. A 7. E 8. C 9. D 10. B

### Task 3

Here is the suggested list of softeners:

6. What are your thoughts? 7. I agree...however, given the urgency at the moment, I suggest...then we could...  
8. As I said,... It is something we could do... 9. I don't want a potentially great idea....to end up... 10. Point taken...I agree that...I just ask that...

## Section 6

### Task 1

- ....1.... Well, I think the most important conclusion...  
....2..... There is a lot of evidence...  
....5..... So, realistically speaking...  
.....3.... In terms of brain plasticity...  
....4.... There are some amazing...

## Tan Le Part 3

**Task 3** "Hostility Stage"

## Section 7

### Task 1

- Outlook B - DMIS Orientation is Minimization - The development task is to Stop thinking everyone is the same as you. Learn more about your own culture so that you can stop projecting your own values onto others.
- Outlook C - DMIS Orientation is Accept - The development task is to Shift your perspective - see a situation through the "eyes" of other cultures, without losing your own values and first culture.
- Outlook D - DMIS Orientation is Defense - The development task is to Become more tolerant of differences. Find what you have in common with persons from other cultures. Focus on the universal human needs and less on the differences, until you can accept the differences.
- Outlook E - DMIS Orientation is Adaptation - The development task is to When necessary, adapt your behavior and communication to another culture's style. Focus on gaining deeper understanding about more specific cultures .

## Section 8

**Task 1** Both your and the Canadian tendencies on the continuum will always have a subjective aspect to them. Therefore, the following suggestions on the Canadian norms are not definitive. Like most of the cultural knowledge in the desk reference, they are departure points (see Culture Box 1.3, page 19 in the desk reference).

Column A		Column B
<b>Direct</b>	1.....2.....3.. <b>X</b> ..4.....5	<b>Indirect</b>
<b>Linear</b>	1..... <b>X</b> 2.....3.....4.....5	<b>Circular</b>
<b>Emotionally Detached</b>	1.....2 <b>X</b> .....3.....4.....5	<b>Emotionally Attached</b>
<b>Low Self-Disclosure</b>	1..... <b>X</b> 2.....3.....4.....5	<b>High Self-Disclosure</b>

**Giving Opinion** Direct A Canadian C Indirect B

**Disagreeing** Direct B Canadian C Indirect A

**Making Requests** Direct B Canadian A Indirect C

**Pointing Out Mistakes** Direct A Canadian B Indirect C

## Section 9

**Question 1** Denial

**Question 2** Developmental Task A

## Section 10

### Application: Case Study with Sam

1. He first tried to use his title and designation to gain respect from others.
2. He chose to use better word choices (softeners and persuasiveness) and have consistent work habits i.e. being more task-focused in his use of time.
3. The first approach - I am the supervisor so listen to me - failed because the Canadian workplace has a low power distance between supervisors and subordinates (see power index pg. 55 and 63).
4. The adapted approach worked because it was more in line with the Canadian management style (see table 3.5 on pg. 63).

### Application: Case Study with Habib

1. He tried to build his credibility by being very directive and ingratiating.
2. The approach failed for the following reasons:
  - being directive which is interpreted in a low power distance culture (Canada) as being “bossy” (see the characteristics of high and low power distance in table 3.5 on pg. 63). Habib’s team wanted him to interact with them (in his communication, thinking and behavior) through a low power distance approach.
  - Being ingratiating means he was trying to gain trust and relationships with his supervisors through gifts and dinners (see Box 3.8 pg. 64).
3. Habib should have used a lower power distance approach, using communication style (consensus) and behaviors more consistent with the Canadian workplace norms and values.