A 360° View of Communicative Competence at Work

A Framework for Intercultural Communication in the Workplace

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User Guide

The Communicative Competence at Work Framework is intended as a resource for organizations and individuals, employers and employees to thrive within a multicultural workplace.

Learn more at **360communication.ca**

The Communicative Competence at Work Framework

A Project Developed By:

TOUCHSTONE
INSTITUTE
COMPETENCY EVALUATION EXPERTS

Funding Support From:

Ontario

Goals of the Framework

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Development of this framework was focused on supporting the following goals.

Within Community Organizations

Employment counselors and settlement workers can use the framework to:

- develop an understanding of the language and communication barriers that newcomers may experience while integrating into the Canadian labour force
- advise employers and employment agencies on strategies and competencies that can help prepare recruitment documents, and induct and retain employees in a multicultural work environment
- help establish intercultural communication as an essential competency area for those providing employment and settlement services

Within Educational Organizations

Course and curriculum developers can use the framework to:

- provide guidelines for defining program goals, content, course outcomes, and learning strategies for language and communication courses that target immigrant professionals
- incorporate intercultural communication components in curricula development for bridging programs

Post-secondary instructors can use the framework to:

- guide them in course material development and as a reference tool in their teaching

Goals Continued

Within Corporate Organizations and Other Workplaces

Corporate trainers and instructors can use the framework to:

- provide a reference source and guide for developing and delivering training

Employers can use the framework to:

- develop an understanding of actual and potential workplace dynamics
- establish recruitment strategies and inform hiring and orientation of staff
- manage employee performance and identify areas where development is needed

Employees and employment seekers can use the framework to:

- develop an understanding of workplace dynamics of a multicultural environment
- develop helpful knowledge and skills to prepare for jobs and careers

## Within Regulatory Bodies and Professional Associations

Executive members, registrars and employees can use the framework to:

- develop awareness within the profession of the role of intercultural communication competencies within the workplace and how they can reside in policy, regulations and practices
- prepare newcomer professionals for integration in the workforce
- work toward establishing intercultural communication competencies as an expectation, and possibly a requirement, for certification in regulated professions and professional associations

Using the Framework in Your Context

The Communicative Competence at Work Framework is envisioned as a support for all of us in the workplace. The following models illustrate implementation of the framework in a workplace context through initiative taken by the individual and the organization.
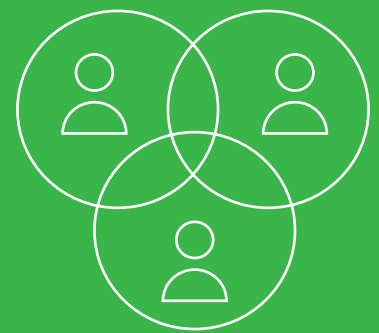
Individuals taking the initiative in the workplace

Considering individuals that may benefit from the framework, this section addresses three sub-groups that can typically be distinguished from each other, but that have soft boundaries. These are:

1. **Individuals raised and educated in Canada**
2. **Individuals raised and educated outside Canada**
3. **The 1.5 generation**

The 1.5 generation is made up of those who immigrated as children and were educated primarily in Canada, or who were born in Canada to immigrant parents. In either case, the family lives primarily within the culture of its country of origin. This category can also apply to international students, who earn academic credentials in Canada and choose to stay as permanent residents. The 1.5ers' education in Canada cannot be assumed to provide them with intercultural communication skills for the workplace.

Successful intercultural communication requires that all sub-groups in the workplace gain competence. *Note that the intended outcomes are the same for all three sub-groups.*

THE INDIVIDUAL		
Individual Sub-Group	**Workplace Role**	**Intended Outcome**
1. **Raised and educated in Canada** 2. **Raised and educated outside Canada** 3. **The 1.5 generation**	**Job seeker**, readying self for success within a multicultural workplace	**The purpose of developing competence is self-development to:** • Grow an understanding of multicultural workplace dynamics • Become aware of the explicit and implicit ways that societal and organizational cultures can affect how verbal and nonverbal messages are constructed and received
	Employee, at any level within an organization	**Guage own level of awareness, knowledge and competence:** • Learn communication strategies and approaches that are effective in multicultural settings • Learn communication strategies and approaches that are effective in multicultural settings

Organizations taking the initiative in their context

Organizations will benefit from the framework, whether they are service providing or business oriented.

Organizations that may find this framework beneficial include colleges and universities, community organizations, consulting and corporate training firms, regulatory bodies and professional associations and employers (in all sectors). These sub-groups of the organization are not mutually exclusive. For example, colleges and universities are employers as well as educators.

Individuals in any of the roles of the organization identified below can take responsibility for their own self-development, in addition to what they gain from and contribute to organizational initiatives.

THE ORGANIZATION			
Individual Sub-Group	**Workplace Role**	**Purpose of developing competence within the role**	**Intended outcomes**
Colleges and universities	Curriculum designers: the faculty and consultants who are responsible for developing college and university curricula that address communication in the workplace	Fulfil the organization's mandate to prepare graduates to communicate successfully in the increasingly multicultural workplace, which requires well-developed intercultural communication competence	**Post-secondary education gains consistency across institutions in preparing immigrant and non-immigrant graduates of mainstream programs, continuing education, and bridging programs to become professionals who:** • Can communicate successfully in a multicultural environment • Have mastery of strategies and approaches to intercultural communication that can be adapted to any mix of societal and organizational culture within a given workplace

THE ORGANIZATION

Individual Sub-Group	Workplace Role	Purpose of developing competence within the role	Intended outcomes
Colleges and universities	Faculty/ instructors in universities and colleges who teach communication or any other courses	Provide intercultural awareness and competency training to faculty to assist their teaching of international students and newcomer professionals	Teaching faculty develop intercultural awareness, knowledge and communication competencies; apply them in their teaching of a range of students including Canadian born, immigrant or international students; and prepare their students to communicate effectively in a multicultural environment
	Administrative staff dealing with 1.5 generation, international students, and immigrants continuing their studies in Canada	Provide intercultural awareness and competency training to administrative staff to assist their work with international students and newcomer professionals	Administrative staff develop intercultural awareness, knowledge and communication competencies; apply them in their work with students, whether Canadian born, immigrant or international
Community organizations	Employment counsellors and settlement workers	Develop awareness, knowledge and competencies that enable these professionals to: understand the process of transitioning that newcomers go through to become integrated into the Canadian labour force advise employers and employment agencies on strategies and competencies that can help recruit, induct and retain employees in a multicultural work environment	Intercultural communication is established as an essential competence for those providing employment and settlement services, including bridging programs for immigrant professionals Intercultural communication competence is established as an integral element of all employment and settlement services and related advocacy initiatives
Consulting and corporate training firms	Consultants, coaches, mentors, and trainers	Provide information, advice and training to clients that supports intercultural communication competence, and that aids in the development of this competence in client organizations	Consulting and corporate training firms become advocates for intercultural communication competence and support the development of this competence in their client organizations

THE ORGANIZATION

Individual Sub-Group	Workplace Role	Purpose of developing competence within the role	Intended outcomes
Regulatory bodies and professional associations	Executive members, registrar, policy makers, and employees	Promote the development of intercultural communication competence within the membership Gain in-depth information within the profession about the role of intercultural communication competence within the workplace, and how it can reside in policy, regulations and practices Prepare newcomer professionals for integration in the workforce	Intercultural communication competence becomes an expectation, and possibly a requirement for certification in regulated professions and professional associations
Employers (in all sectors)	Executive/senior management	Understand and recognize the importance of intercultural communication to organizational success Through policy and personal performance, ensure that the organization has the framework, resources and commitment to function effectively in a multicultural setting, and staff who have intercultural communication competence	Best practices of diversity and inclusion are embraced as productive organizational goals Effective inter-organizational and public relations outcomes are gained for the organization, utilizing employees' intercultural communication competence Rewards for high performance by managers and staff include recognition for intercultural communication competence
	Line managers	Understand importance of intercultural communication effectiveness at work, and the significance of intercultural communication competence for productivity in a multicultural workplace Know how to expand staff awareness, knowledge and competence to gain harmonious collaboration between employees in multicultural and multidisciplinary teams	Down time resulting from intercultural miscommunication is reduced, with the goal of eliminating it The organization is able to maximise the benefits that can be gained from a multicultural workforce that offers diverse experiences and approaches to work and problem solving

THE ORGANIZATION			
Individual Sub-Group	**Workplace Role**	**Purpose of developing competence within the role**	**Intended outcomes**
Employers (in all sectors)	Human resources personnel	Draft job descriptions that include intercultural communication competence; manage and conduct recruitment, hiring and onboarding within a framework that concretely addresses intercultural communication competence Commission, develop and deliver training in intercultural communication Support and advise on intercultural communication competence at all levels of the organization and within their profession	Leadership and support is provided to executive and line managers in ensuring that all employees have intercultural communication competence Having a workforce proficient in intercultural communication knowledge and practice becomes an increasingly systemic value and attribute of the organization, embedded in policies, talent recruitment and on-boarding, employee development, and performance management and recognition programs HR personnel model appropriate levels of intercultural communication competence

Explore the Competency Framework
for Intercultural Comunication
in the Workplace online.

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