Cultures at Work

Intercultural Communication
in the Canadian Workplace

Ana Maria Fantino

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The Muttart Fellowships

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Intercultural Communication in the Canadian Workplace

Ana Maria Fantino

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to newcomers to Canada and to those who welcome them.

Acknowledgements

In gratitude to:

- The Muttart Foundation for giving me this special opportunity for a sabbatical year dedicated to research and rest

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Introduction

This book is intended for directors, managers, and staff of human services and community agencies working in a culturally diverse setting. It focuses mainly on agencies that have first-generation immigrant employees. As we will see, however, culture is a "sticky commodity" that evolves and changes but never disappears.

Managers always work with diversity simply because they work with people. In a sense, all managers are multicultural, as they have to coordinate and support people from many different cultural backgrounds whether they are first generation immigrants or not. Cultural diversity introduces another layer of complexity in the management of an organization while providing opportunities to embrace diversity's essential richness. An intercultural approach contributes to good management, as it nurtures an environment that works for all employees.

Why be concerned about cultural diversity in the workplace? According to the 2001 Census of Canada, one in every five workers in Canada is a first-generation immigrant. Alberta is one of the three provinces in which immigrants comprise the largest proportion of the labour force (16.2 per cent)—after Ontario and British Columbia. In such large metropolitan centres as Calgary, Montreal, Ottawa-Hull, Toronto, and Vancouver, the proportion increases to one immigrant in every three workers.[1]

In addition, in the last decade, the Canadian workforce has seen a substantial number of workers approaching retirement along with consistently low fertility rates, resulting in a growing reliance on immigration as a source of skills, knowledge, and labour force growth. The 2001 census data show that "immigrants who landed in Canada during the 1990s, and who were in the labour force in 2001, represented almost 70 per cent of the total growth of the labour force over the decade. If current immigration rates continue, it is possible that immigration could account for virtually all labour force growth by 2011."[2]

Many immigrants bring a wealth of experience and education to the social services field. Typical of many traditional cultures, such values as cooperation, loyalty, and family and community orientation could be instrumental to most agencies' mission and practices. Despite an increasing awareness of intercultural issues among social services agency staff and management, the potential contributions of multicultural employees are not always known, recognized, or used fully. In addition, linguistic and particularly cultural misunderstandings occur too often between managers and employees and among agency staff.

[1] *2001 Census of Canada* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2001. http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01(accessed February, 2005).

[2] Ibid.

It is widely acknowledged that, by making use of the capacities of staff from a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, agencies can draw from a much greater knowledge and skills base. When employees reflect the diversity of the population at large, they create stronger links with the communities they serve. Management that understands and includes diversity creates a more harmonious and productive workplace.

Most of the published literature on multiculturalism and diversity is particularly geared toward business. In an era of globalization, business organizations have embraced diversity to effectively manage international business interests and reach larger sectors of consumers locally and internationally.

Most existing intercultural training programs/modules also are based on theories, case studies, situation descriptions, and exercises drawn from business models of management, which carry limited applications in social services. This book explores cultural diversity in a Canadian context, specifically Alberta, and within the nonprofit, community services sector.

Information was collected through:

- a literature review in the fields of social psychology, intercultural communication, and education
- professional and personal experiences
- observational notes on visits to centres for research on migration and multiculturalism, settlement agencies, and other community organizations.
- individual and group interviews with directors, managers, team leaders, and front-line immigrant staff of community agencies and university researchers in Calgary, Edmonton, Milan, and Rome.

I am grateful to the directors, managers, and staff of the following organizations for their generous collaboration with this project:

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Edmonton Immigrant Services Association (EISA)
Edmonton John Howard Society
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Istituto Psicoanalitico per le Ricerche Sociale/Psychoanalytic Institute for Social Research (IPRS), Rome
Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration (PCERII)

About this book

The "Introduction" provides background information about cultural diversity in the workplace and describes the topic's present and future relevance for community organizations in Canada and Alberta. It also describes each upcoming chapter and possible applications in training workshops.

Chapter 1—"Culture and Identity"—provides a brief theoretical framework for the following themes: culture, identity, and their interrelation; cultural models, scripts and narratives; communication and context; and the psychosocial dynamics of culture shock.

Chapter 2—"People in Transition"—identifies the main issues relating to world migration and the journeys migrants embark upon when they decide or are forced to cross borders. It describes the challenges facing immigrants and refugees in their process of integration to Canada and Alberta and provides information on services for newcomers.

Chapter 3—"Cultural Encounters in the Workplace"—includes 16 dialogues and explanatory notes that illustrate ways in which culture plays out in everyday life, with a particular focus on the workplace.

Three appendices provide: "Tips for Dealing with Cultural Differences at Work," a "Glossary of Terms in Intercultural Communication and Education," and "Citizenship and Immigration Canada Glossary of Terms."

The "Bibliography" lists references cited as well as recommended reading and useful websites.

Workshop Applications

This book contains information that can be used as resource material for intercultural education workshops, especially chapter 3 and the "Glossary of Terms in Intercultural Communication and Education." For example, workshop leaders can give participants copies of selected dialogues from Chapter 3, without the explanatory notes, for discussion.

After they read each dialogue, the participants must discover "what went wrong" in that brief exchange; identify each actors' assumptions and expectations; and describe what "really" happened during the interaction in small group discussion.

Then each group reports its findings, and the facilitator uses the explanatory notes to help clarify issues and generate a broader discussion. Once participants have solved the mystery of the misunderstandings suggested in these dialogues, they can be asked to write or act their own dialogues based on their personal and professional experience.

Although this book includes many examples of people from cultures other than Canada's, it is not a specific book *about* those cultures. The aim is to develop a framework for understanding the dynamics of interaction between people of different cultural backgrounds. It is about the intercultural encounters, the dialogues, the understandings and misunderstandings that occur daily in the workplace.

Chapter 1
Culture and Identity

What is Culture?

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* culture is "the way of life of a particular society or group." Culture includes material and ideal objects such as tools, machines, techniques, institutions, languages, ideas, beliefs, taboos, works of art, rituals, ceremonies, and other related components.[4] Culture, in this sense, includes all human achievements of a group of people (e.g., Greek culture; Egyptian culture).

The continuity and development of cultures is secured through the transmission of knowledge and artifacts from generation to generation. However, since cultures are both conservative and creative, they tend both to perpetuate themselves and to develop and grow in a constant dialectical movement between permanency and change.

A culture grows and reproduces itself just as it is made and re-made in every individual. Each person will process cultural models in different ways according to personal internal characteristics and dynamics.

According to Roger M. Keesing, "Culture is not all of what individuals know and think and feel about their world. It is their theory of what their fellows know, believe, and mean, their theory of the code being followed, the game being played, in the society into which they were born…. It is this theory to which a native actor refers in interpreting the unfamiliar or the ambiguous, in interacting with strangers (or super naturals), and in other settings peripheral to the familiarity of mundane everyday life space; and with which he [or she] creates the stage on which the games of life are played…." [5]

[3] Rudyard Kipling, *The English Flag.* 1892. Quoted in *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 347.

[4] Oxford English Reference Dictionary (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 347.

[5] Roger M. Kessing, "Theories of Culture." *Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol.* 3 (1974), p. 89.

Cultural Models and Narratives

"Culture hides much more than it reveals and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants…. the real job is not to understand foreign culture but to understand our own."

- Edward Hall [6]

Cultural models originate as collective constructs, a distillation over time of social practices, everyday experiences, and ways of solving problems and overcoming obstacles in a particular context. As Victor De Munck wrote: "The cultural models are derived from iterated experiences that have historical depth, collective breath, and contextual specificity." [7]

People are socialized in a culture and, during the course of their lives, internalize cultural models that permit them to interpret experiences and guide their actions in many areas. As children and throughout life, we learn things such as: how to eat, dress, greet people, face risks, make decisions, interpret life and deal with the unknown. Cultural models are derived from collective experience and, in turn, influence the interpretation of experiences.

For J. S. Bruner, the cultural models and their "scripts" (e.g., "Wash your hands before eating"; "Don't talk to strangers") usually are embedded in narratives. Narratives represent people's experiences and connect events over time. They are instrumental in making reality more intelligible and predictable. Bruner writes that, without narratives, "We would be lost in a murk of chaotic experience and probably would not have survived as a species in any case." [8]

Long before writing was invented, people created great narratives, stories, or myths to answer important questions for humanity such as: Who created the world? How did men and women come into being? Why are we here? Why do injustice and pain exist? What is good and what is evil? How should we act? Both in the past and present, narratives seek to make the world intelligible; impose order on chaos; and incorporate past, present, and future into a sequence. Narratives are structured so that people can identify with characters that make them laugh, cry, become angry, and *remember* the story. Most importantly, narratives are meant to find meaning and make sense of the world; they are not necessarily concerned with searching for the truth. Alan Parry writes that "stories always dealt with the 'why' questions. The answers they gave did not have to be literally true; they only had to satisfy people's curiosity by providing an answer, less for the mind than for the soul." [9]

Cultural models and narratives remain in our minds as partially conscious knowledge, but most are either in the "back of our minds" (pre-conscious level) or unconscious. Each person carries a continual narrative, or has an inner voice that constantly interprets, evaluates, organizes, and dictates. Typically this is represented by the metaphor of an iceberg in which only the surface vertex is visible while the base of the triangle remains submerged. This has implications for intercultural exchanges as illustrated in Chapter 3.

[6] Edward Hall, *The Silent Language* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1981), p. 30.

[7] Victor C. De Munck, "Theory and Method: In the Belly of the Beast: Two Incomplete Theories of Culture and Why they Dominate the Social Sciences (Part 2)." *Cross-Cultural Psychology Bulletin* 35, 3 (September 2001), p. 15.

[8] Jerome S. Bruner, *Acts of Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 56.

[9] Alan Parry and Robert E. Doan, *Story Re-visions: Narrative Therapy in the Postmodern World* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1994), p. 1.

Alfred Schutz, a Viennese social philosopher who immigrated to the United States in the late 1930s, describes a set of habits and notions about daily experiences that he called the "taken for granted" and "of course" assumptions. They are usually the unexamined, never questioned notions that make our world "natural" and relatively predictable.[10] People never question themselves every morning if the floor will hold their weight when they get out of bed. A person extends a hand for a handshake with an expectation that the other person will grasp it. A range of predictable, expected responses provide clues for further interactions. The notions of "tall" and "short," skin colour, and beauty involve similar assumptions. These and thousands of other assumptions made daily constitute a person's basic understanding of how the world is and how it functions. They constitute the basis of the proverbial "common sense" that, when faced with cultural differences, may become "the least common of the senses," as the Spanish saying goes.

Individuals, generally, know their culture only partially. Social class, age, gender, rural or urban upbringing, and such other factors as family dynamics and personality determine the person's position and perspective within their culture and its subcultures. People may be dissenters within their own culture and reject their own group's cultural messages; they may identify only partially with some aspects of their culture; or they may know only the messages given to members of their particular social group while ignoring substantial aspects of the culture as a whole.

When interacting with people from other cultures, it may be unrealistic to expect that each of them will have a *complete* knowledge of their own culture, as Canadians easily discover when asked about Canadian culture. Most people provide vivid insights about experiences that reflect their own cultural roots. Only deeper consideration, after being faced with differences, enable them to reflect on the underlying assumptions that are the implicit aspects of their culture.

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Schutz argues that the condition of "strangeness" comes from two sources: strangers in a foreign country may be rejected or explicitly included, talked to, or explained to (none of which follow of-course suppositions) and, in being questioned, are forced to make explicit their prejudices and assumptions. As result, their interpretation of the world appears neither "natural" nor "well-nown," but as incomplete and tied to history, culture, and individual biography (when not totally meaningless). Almost contemporarily to Schutz, in 1942, Albert Camus portrayed a person's experience of being a stranger in his own society in the novel *The Outsider*.

[10] Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers* (The Hague: Martinu & Nijoff, 1971).

In Context and Out of Place

While cultural models and scripts provide people with clues for interpreting the world around them and guide action, these clues are insufficient when a person faces a particular situation. People interpret seeing a clown at a Fringe Festival show and seeing a similar clown approaching in a desolate street at night very differently. As Michael Cole puts it: "While culture is a source of tools for action, the individual must still engage in a good deal of interpretation in figuring out which schemas apply in what circumstances and how to implement them effectively."[11]

"Context" is "the interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs."[12] It is derived both from the Latin "contextus" (meaning connection and coherence) and "contexere" (to weave, to join together). These components are embedded in Coles' definition: "the connected whole that gives coherence to its parts."[13]

Context allows us to differentiate, by comparison and contrast, certain attributes and properties that otherwise we will not even know exist. Benjamin Lee Whorf proposes that, in a universe in which everything is blue, the concept of blueness cannot be developed for lack of contrasting colours.[14]

One refugee woman, a single mother with five children, faced multiple barriers to adaptation in Canada. Despite other difficulties, the most striking thing for her in Canada was, in her words, "To discover that I was black and that it was bad."

The notion "exotic" usually is associated with concepts of "foreign," "strange," and, in a few cases, "barbaric," arises from removing an event or action from its context. No matter how strange or "exotic" cultural behaviours may seem, they usually make sense, when situated in their proper context and historical perspective. Whether others agree with those behaviours or not is another matter, but including context adds significance and facilitates understanding.

The Assumption of Similarity

Milton Bennett contends that mono-cultural communication is based on the "assumption of similarity"; that is, thinking that differences are only superficial and that all people are basically the same.[15] He warns us about the inappropriate application of the so-called "Golden Rule": "Do unto others as you would have it done onto you."[16] In the context of grand world religions, the rule emphasizes the intrinsic equality of all human beings and urges people to overcome narrow attachments to their primary groups. Bennett, however, points out to different implications of the rule, particularly in the North American context. First, it assumes that "other people *want* to be treated as I do" and second that "all people are basically the same, and thus they really *should* want the same treatment

[11] Michael Cole, *Cultural Psychology*: *A Once and Future Discipline* (London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 130.

[12] *Webster's Third New International* Dictionary (Toronto: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 1, 1981), p. 492.

[13] Michael Cole, *Cultural Psychology: A Once and Future Discipline*, p. 135.

[14] Benjamin Lee Whorf, *Language, Thought, and Reality* (New York: The Technology Press and John Wiley & Songs, 1956).

[15] Milton Bennett, ed., *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication* (Maine: Intercultural Press, 1998), p. 193.

[16] *The Holy Bible* (Matthew 7:12).

(whether they admit it or not) as I would."[17]   A case in point is international "helpers" in Third World countries who insist that they know better than the locals "what is good for them." This ethnocentric view and generally patronizing attitude usually are mixed with a genuine desire to help and, thus, is difficult to argue with or reject entirely. Bennett proposes what he calls the "Platinum Rule" which would read, "Do unto others as they themselves would have done unto them."[18]

High Context and Low Context Cultural Communication

In his studies of cross-cultural communication, Edward Hall devised a useful categorization with a level of abstraction that includes cultural groups beyond national borders. He establishes a continuum from High Context to Low Context communications. In High Context (HC) messages, most of the information is in the context. It greatly depends on the situation and its relevance; nonverbal gestures; social setting; and history of the event and the participants.[19]   Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner wrote: "Context has to do with how much you have to know before effective communication can occur, how much shared knowledge is taken for granted by those in conversation with each other, how much reference there is to tacit common ground."[20]   In Low Context (LC) messages, at the other end, most of the information is contained in verbal and/or written words with little regard for the context.[21]

HC cultures (e.g., Latin, Asian and Arab cultures) usually are more concerned with the quality of human relationships; customs and traditions; social status; and the history and stories behind and around an event. The "family" model also applies to the workplace where the organization or the boss becomes a parental figure expected to care for the welfare of employees and their families in exchange for their unfaltering loyalty.

LC cultures (e.g., North American, Northern European) are predominantly task-oriented ("get the job done") and more concerned with efficiency. Communication tends to be direct and explicit ("get to the point") and mainly through words and facts.

The type of language used at home (e.g., short forms, contractions, expressions) is HC; a person must be a member of that particular family to fully understand the code. By contrast, courts of law (LC) use a language that is explicit, detailed, and highly articulated.

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[17] Milton Bennett, ed., *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication,* p. 191.

[18] Ibid., p. 213.

[19] Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1976).

[20] Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner. *Riding the Waves of Cultures; Understanding Diversity in Global Business, 2nd Ed.* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1998), p. 92.

[21] Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture.*

Who Am I? Who Are we? Culture and Identity

The concept of identity is the articulation point between culture and personality. The notion of who we are is shaped to a large extent by the culture in which people are raised. Social and historical circumstances at the time, along with biological and physical factors, form the basis of identity.

Erikson's notion of identity, elaborated in the mid-1950s, remains relevant to intercultural study. He defined identity as "a pre-conscious sense of psychological well-being; a feeling of being at home in one's body, of knowing where one is going, and an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count."[22]

Identity is:

- a sense of persistent self-sameness and continuity through life changes

- a psychosocial phenomenon based in real-life experiences

- acquired through a process of identifying with and differentiating from significant others, ideas, and ideals of the time

- partly a highly conscious process, but with unconscious motivational aspects and conflicts

- strongly grounded in the past but also dependent on the future

- a state of being and becoming. (Adapted from Erikson).[23]

The notion of identity as a psychosocial construct has three basic and implicit tenets: the continuity of the time inhabited, the space inhabited, and the relationships developed with others. These three notions—time, space, and relationship—also constitute the three fundamental concepts of intercultural studies and practices.

Culture Shock

Direct and prolonged contact with a culture different from one's own usually causes feelings of excitement as well as anxiety, disorientation, and identity loss.

The "culture shock" phenomenon described by Homer in the *Odyssey* has been known for centuries. Kalervo Oberg was among the first to use the term "culture shock" to refer to an occupational disease affecting anthropologists, missionaries, and others who live and work abroad. After him, the term spread throughout social disciplines and continues to be used widely.

[22] Erik Homburger Erikson, "The Problem of Ego Identity," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 4 (1956), p. 74.

[23] Erik Homburger Erikson, *Life History and the Historical Moment* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), pp. 19-20.

"In my country things
flowed naturally for me.
I didn't have to think
about it. In a different
culture, everything has
to be carefully planned
and even tested before
you do it. It is difficult to
be spontaneous; you can
make many mistakes.
What you thought you
knew doesn't work
anymore. It so tiring and
frustrating."

- Canadian Immigrant

An important distinction should be made between the usual examples of culture shock experienced by people from industrialized nations visiting or living in Third World countries and the experiences of Third World immigrants and refugees coming to more developed countries. In the second case, the shock is more intimidating, as the actual experience is preceded by the perception, amplified by the host country's media as "superior" (e.g., economically developed, technologically advanced) to the country of origin. As the immigrant is always disadvantaged initially, feelings of inferiority, the sense of coming from a "backward" society, and pressures to "fit in quickly" may predominate.

The effects of culture shock can range from mild to severe depending on the cultural distance between the country of origin and the host society, individual personality traits, and past experiences.

One of the major effects of culture shock is on personal identity. The referential points of orientation and markers of identity are lost, especially the familiar faces, places, concepts, images, sounds, smells, and relationships that enable people to know who they are. People recognize such things—things they call "theirs"—things to which they belong and, in turn, which belong to them.

Culture shock is not necessarily one big blow; rather, it results from many small cumulative incidents that progressively undermine a person's sense of confidence and challenge the most basic sense of self. The poem "When everything is borrowed" captures some of the small episodes that build up to make people feel that they do not belong to the place or even to themselves. (see Page 20)

A less noted aspect of culture shock for immigrants or long-stay sojourners is that although they may weather the initial phase and think that they have adjusted, it may affect them again unexpectedly, long after arrival in the host country. At certain times, a particularly embarrassing situation or cultural misunderstanding may push the immigrant back to thinking that his/efforts to understand the new surroundings are worthless.

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The Mirror Effect

The encounter with a foreign culture may create feelings of rejection while also, inevitably, forcing questions about basic assumptions. The "mirror effect" is the paradox that the more people try to understand another culture, the more they must reflect on their own. When shocked by culture, they also will be shocked by self-discovery.

It is Hania's first day at work in Canada. A capable young woman, she anxiously waits to go to the lunchroom at lunchtime to meet and get to know her co-workers. Once there, she smiles and sits at a common table. Hania is not shy, so she introduces herself, seeks to initiate a conversation, and offers to share the food

that she has brought. She is dismayed that no matter how much she tries, the dialogue dies down and people quickly revert to what they were doing before she came—reading a newspaper or doing crossword puzzles.

For Hania, eating a meal in isolation is almost a sin. "When you are with other people you are supposed to share—or at least offer to share—what you have," she said. "A meal is an occasion for conversation, at least. "I don't know what kind of education they had…." In Hania's opinion, it is bad manners not to participate in a social encounter. Her culture's rules of hospitality also indicate that you welcome visitors and newcomers, offering them what you have (usually the best of what you have) and making them comfortable. If the visitor, out of politeness or shyness, says, "No," the host must insist until the person is at ease and feels comfortable to accept or refuse your offer. How many times to offer; when to accept, and when to refuse are judged by slight non-verbal clues that the participants easily recognize.

Before the lunch experience, Hania had assumed that everyone shares the same rules of hospitality. "It is only natural," "It is human nature," "That is how it's done," she would say. This experience, along with many others, revealed to her that, first, her notion of hospitality was a cultural assumption and not a universal law. Second, it forced her to analyze and examine her own accepted wisdom by asking herself such questions as: "Aren't we too imposing insisting so much in inviting people to eat?" If they say, "No, thank you," maybe they really mean "No." Why insist? And, more painfully, she thought, "Maybe it is just me." "What do I do that they don't like?"

Psychological Dynamics: Fear of Loss and of the Unknown

Every change in life entails some level of stress, and any significant loss may disrupt an individual's sense of continuity. Even a change of residence within the same city can lead to powerful grief. A change as dramatic as a migration to a different culture raises two basic fears in a person: fear of loss and fear of the unknown.[25]

Fear of loss is associated with sadness, guilt, and depression, and an overwhelming concern for what is left behind—leading to a grieving process. During migration and resettlement, the social, spatial, and temporal framework upon which identity grows and depends, suffers a sudden and profound disruption. Consequently, the fear of loss is related not only to a particular object of affection but also to the very basis of personal identity.

Fear of the unknown expresses itself as anxiety and concern about difficulties found in the new environment. If exacerbated, this can lead to paranoid-like

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[25] Ana Maria Fantino, *Psychosocial Processes of Immigrants' Adaptation: Latin Americans in Canada* (Edmonton: University of Alberta master's thesis, 1982).

behaviour—one of the most commonly observed mechanisms in newcomers[26] —over-activity or withdrawal, and, if resolved, to an active adaptation to reality. Immigrants may perceive a totally new environment as a challenge as well as a threat. As Morten Eintinger points out, a large amount of superficial stimulation can produce effects similar to lack of stimulation, such as feelings of isolation and insecurity.[27] When exposed to overwhelming new stimuli, people may feel unable to integrate their experience into their existing psychological schemes and then become unable to anticipate the consequences of their behaviour, foresee responses, and adjust their behaviour accordingly. The sense of orientation they previously took for granted is lost. As a result, the stimuli may appear threatening. This process may be the origin of paranoid-like reactions. People also are prevented from testing their hypotheses about the new society because they lack opportunities for meaningful interaction with nationals.[28]

These fears are related to the basic conflict a person experiences when facing an important change: the struggle between permanency and change, which is the core issue of identity. The simultaneous desires for permanency and change act as ever-present opposites in the psychological dynamics of human growth. The growth process is not linear, but normally proceeds by successive cognitive, emotional, and physical integrations of conflicting experiences.

While fear of loss and of the unknown tends to coexist within an individual, one type of fear may predominate. One or more members of an immigrant family may assume the role of "keeper of the past," one who grieves the losses. Others assume the role of "leader of change," facilitating adaptation to the new environment. Rigid adherence to these roles may lead to lack of communication within the family and an increased feeling of isolation and misunderstanding.

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[26] Ralervo Oberg, *Cultural Shock*, Reprint A-329 (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merril, 1954).

[27] Niels Morten, *Flygtningens Identitets Problemer.* Working Paper (Copenhagen: Københavns Universitet).

[28] H. N. Higginbotham. "Cultural Issues in Providing Psychological Services for Foreign Students in the United States." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 3 (1979), pp. 49-85.

When everything is borrowed…

When everything is borrowed…
When everything is borrowed,
when the sea is borrowed,
and the songs, the stars, the noises,
the news, the gestures, the problems.

When the streets are borrowed,
the furniture, the language, the jokes, the neighbours,
the movies, the laughs and the landscape,
the avenues and the different sounds of the air.

When swearing doesn't mean anything to you,
when neither the "fiestas" are yours, nor the dances.
When you don't recognize yourself in the details.
When nobody owes you anything.
When nothing is yours,
just a few memories…

• • •

When the water doesn't taste like your water,
neither the wine your wine, nor the bread your bread.
When—in saying your "good mornings"—you don't find
any familiar face, the old well-known of always
who, now, only dwells in your memory.

• • •

What could you have done?
to deserve the punishment
of existing on what you can borrow
of not belonging even to yourself,
of living in a foreign land
full of hospitality
perhaps,
full of enemies,
perhaps,
but where only others say "mine"
to the jobs, the parks, the rivers,
to the Virgin Mary, the wind, and the past.
When everything is borrowed,
you remember you had
a city, an occupation and a house,
a Sunday afternoon,
some friends,
a past, unimportant, but yours
and, an illusion for the future.

Dr. Gustavo Cirigliano is an Argentinean Professor of Education. This poem, originally written in Spanish and titled "Cuando Todo es Prestado" was written August, 1983 when he lived in Spain. The translation is mine. Reproduced with the author's permission.

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Chapter 2
People in Transition

World Migration

Migration movements in the modern world are not new. Migration, characterized by large flows of people, took place during the second half of the 19th and all through the 20th centuries. In the western world, two very general directions of migration can be distinguished: from Europe to the Americas and Australia in the second half of the 19th century and after the world wars of the 20th century; then from the less developed countries to the industrialized countries of Europe and North America. This second flow has increased considerably in the last quarter of the 20th century until now. This is due largely to globalization, a result of the worldwide expansion of economic relations, international commerce, trade and investment, and rapid modernization in less developed regions.

The movement of people has increased considerably in the last decade. The United Nation Population Division estimates that the number of migrants in the world reached between 191 million in 2006[29], up from 175 million in the year 2000. Migrants represent almost three per cent of the global population.[30] In addition, most migrants move within their own country (as is the case in China) or within a region (as in Central Africa) rather than crossing international borders.

Although globalization has stimulated many types of migration flows, the predominant direction of international migration today originates from countries in transition experiencing modernization. Geographically, migration from Asia and Africa to Europe and North America are major flows.

Why do people move? People migrate for a number of different reasons, extending from very personal motives to pressing economic needs and such severe social conditions as war, oppression, or political/racial upheavals. While personal and economic reasons predominate in people moving temporarily to work or study, severe social conditions create refugees. Most emigrants are driven by diverse and complex motivations and circumstances. A prevalent perception among emigrants is that they have no future in their home countries. The reasons migrants often cite are to broaden their own options and ensure a better future for their children. Many also are fleeing the devastation of wars, invasions, and oppression. Most refugees fall into this group. The Geneva Convention of the United Nations (1956) defines refugees as those who "by reason of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership

[29] *United Nations Economic and Social Council (POP/942).* http://www.un.org/new/Press/docs/2006/pop942/doc.htm (accessed July 7, 2006).

[30] *World Migration 2005* (New York, United Nations Population Division, 2005). http://wwportal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php (accessed August, 2005).

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in a particular social group, or political opinion have left their country of habitual residence and are unable, or by reason of such fear, unwilling to return to that country." While an emigrant's decision to leave is commonly considered "free choice," refugees are forced to leave home; often, they cannot return home.

The distinction usually made between immigrants and refugees is that emigrants voluntarily decide to migrate and refugees are forced to do so. Emigrants are said to enjoy the freedom also to select their country of destination and are free to return home—unlike refugees. This assumes that the "voluntary" emigrant experiences an "open world" where people move freely and decide where they will go. Actually, as with the refugees, some "voluntary" emigrants migrated as their only alternative to overcome difficult life conditions in their societies of origin. They also may have had to take whatever country offered them permanent residency. Because of selective standards, they in fact were "chosen" rather than choosing their country of destination. They also may have many restrictions on returning to their country of origin. These restrictions range from personal motives (i.e., feeling and being seen by others as a failure) to socio-economic reasons (i.e., lack of occupational opportunities, loss of social networks). In most situations, the distinction between voluntary and involuntary migration is difficult to define and seems more a matter of degree than of radical distinctions.

The Roman God Janus

In old Roman mythology, Janus, the "god of two faces" (one old and one young), was believed to see the past, present, and future without turning his head. He was the guardian of the interior and the exterior of temples and houses; more precisely, he was a doorkeeper in charge of protecting gates and doorways because they face two ways. Likewise, Janus was the patron of beginnings and endings, including sunrise and sunset and, by extension, all transitions. He was celebrated at the beginning of each new year. The name of the first month, January, comes from his name.

Ovid (79 B.C.) poetically describes Janus' powers in "Fasti":

> I am the same in front and behind; but there is another reason for my singular appearance; in telling you, I shall teach you wherein my power lies.

> Everything my eyes can encompass –the skies, the Ocean, the clouds and the earth—to my hand has been given the power to open and close them; I have been entrusted with guarding this vast universe; I am the one who makes it turn on its hinges.....Now that you know my power, I shall explain my face to you….

> Every door has two sides, one looking out onto the street and the other at the household god; seated near the threshold of your home, the doorkeeper sees people go in and out: as the doorkeeper of the home of the gods, my eyes look upon the East and the West… For fear that in turning my head I might lose precious moments, it has been given to me to see in front and behind at the same time, without moving.[31]

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[31] Joel Schmidt, *Roman Mythology* (Rochester: Grange Books, 2004), p. 61.

Migration: Transition without Rituals

Migration is one major change people can face in their lives. Being uprooted from their sociocultural environment, as in many other sudden and dramatic changes, splits migrants' inner and outer circumstances.

Although migration is common and ordinary, for individuals it is "extra-ordinary." In dealing with immigrants and refugees for more than 20 years, I have yet to meet the person that does not remember the exact date s/he arrived in Canada. For the rest of their lives, many immigrants refer to the time of their migration as a turning point, as the demarcation of the "before" and "after" in their lives.

As Erik Homburger Erikson wrote: "…Emigration can be a hard and heartless matter, in terms of what is abandoned in the old country and what is usurped in the new one. Migration means cruel survival in identity terms too, for the very cataclysms in which millions perish open up new forms of identity to the survivors."[32]

All societies have created and organized rituals and ceremonies, religious and secular, to strengthen and support individuals and groups undergoing crucial life events (e.g., birth, marriage, bereavement). Migrants, who often cross cultural as well as national borders, have no socially established "rites of passage" and little social support.[33]

Immigrants in Canada

Immigration has contributed greatly to Canada's becoming diverse. Nearly one out of every five people living in Canada today was born outside the country, representing 18.4 per cent of the total population. Two in five Canadian residents aged 15 and over were born outside Canada themselves or have one or both parents born outside Canada.[34] At the beginning of the 20th century, Canada experienced the greatest flow of immigrants in its history, reaching a peak in 1913 when 400,000 immigrants arrived.[35] Immigration has played and continues to play an important role in shaping the character of Canadian society. Nearly two million new immigrants came just in the last decade.[36]

The face of immigration has changed substantially over the years. During the first 60 years of the 20th century, immigrants came predominantly from Europe and the United Kingdom.[37] Today, immigrants come from more than 200 countries in every region of the world. In 2003, slightly over half (51 per cent) of the immigrants admitted to Canada came from the Asia and Pacific region, 20 per cent from Africa and the Middle East, and 17 per cent from Europe and the United Kingdom.[38]

[32] Erik Homburger Erikson, *Life History and the Historical Moment,* p. 43.

[33] Monica McGoldrick, John K. Pearce, and Joseph Giordano, *Ethnicity and Family Therapy* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1982). Ana Maria Fantino and Alice Colak, "Refugee Children in Canada: Searching for Identity." *Child Welfare League of America* V, LXXX, 5 (September-October, 2001), pp. 587-96.

[34] John Kralt, "Overview of the Relationship Between Country of Birth of Parents and Ethnic Origin as Reported in the 2001 Census of Canada." *Canadian Diversity/Diversit é Canadienne, Association for Canadian Studies* 2, 3 (Summer 2003), p. 11.

[35] Monica Boyd and Michael Vickers. "100 Years of Immigration in Canada." *Canadian Social Trends* No. 58 (Autumn 2000), pp. 2-12.

[36] Statistics Canada. http://www.statcan.ca/daily. (accessed February 2005).

[37] Janet Dench, "A hundred years of Immigration to Canada 1900-1999" (Montreal: Canadian Council for Refugee, n.d.) http://www.web.net/~ccy/history.

[38] Citizenship and Immigration Canada. http://www.cic.gc.ca. (accessed December 2004).

Challenges Facing Immigrants and Refugees

Newcomers to Canada must adjust to an array of climatic, socio-economic, and cultural differences. In order to survive and integrate into their new home, they must master many new skills—from learning a new language, understanding cultural norms, navigating the Canadian systems, seeking to transfer their previous work experience and education, finding employment, finding new friends, and making social and emotional adjustments to sometimes facing discrimination and racism. Newcomers must deal with both the loss of the familiar and the effects of resettlement in a new country.

The main challenges facing immigrants and refugees in Canada include: acquisition of English or French language; recognition of credentials; access to meaningful employment; and reconstruction of a social network. These issues have been widely acknowledged and documented in the literature.[39]

Developing Language and Accessing Employment

Immigrants to Canada (and Alberta) in recent years show a trend toward higher education and skill levels. Between 2001 and 2003, nearly 70 per cent of immigrants to Alberta (19 years of age or older) had post-secondary education. Of those, 34 per cent had a bachelor's degree, nearly 9 per cent a master's degree, and 2 per cent a doctorate as their highest levels of education. The remaining 25 per cent had incomplete university studies, non-university diplomas, or trade certificates.[40]

During the same period, an average of 52 per cent of these adult immigrants knew the English language when they arrived; 48 per cent did not.[41] It should be noted, however, that many immigrants listed in the statistics as "knowing English" have only basic language skills that are insufficient for the job market or a meaningful social life.

Integrating Skilled Immigrants into the Alberta Economy reports that half of the immigrants who came with a post-secondary credential were unable to fully apply their prior education, training, or experience. "Even though immigrants are more educated and have better English skills than previously, they have achieved lower levels of employment and are having more difficulty integrating in the labour market."[42] It also articulates a need to incorporate immigrants into the provincial labour market: "Alberta's future economic success depends on the province's ability to attract, retain and develop the people and skills for a knowledge-based economy."[43]

[39] Canadian Task Force on Mental Health Issues Affecting Immigrants and Refugees. *After the Door has been Opened* (Ottawa: Health and Welfare Canada, 1988; Canadian Council for Refugees, *Best Settlement Practices: Settlement Services for Refugees and Immigrants in Canada,* 1998. http://www.web.net/~ccr/. (accessed July 2005); Baha Abu-Laban, et al., *The Settlement Experiences of Refugees in Alberta: A Study Prepared for Canada Immigration and Citizenship* (Edmonton: Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration and Population Research Laboratory; Debbie Douglas, "Better Together." Immigrant and Refugee Families: Challenges of Settlement Workshop lecture, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI). Toronto, May 3, 2005.

[40] Alberta Government. *Integrating Skilled Immigrants into the Alberta Economy 2004.* http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/other/InforServ.asp (accessed January 2005).

[41] Alberta Government, Advanced Education. *An Overview of Immigration to Alberta,* 2003. http://www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca (accessed January 2005).

[42] Alberta Government. *Integrating Skilled Immigrants into the Alberta Economy,* 2004, p. 2. http://www.earning.gov.ab.ca/other/InforServ.asp (accessed January 2005).

[43] Ibid.

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In only four years (1997-2001), Alberta received approximately 29,000 immigrants with post-secondary education and credentials. Half are unemployed or under-employed despite the province's low unemployment rate and its shortages in 21 (out of 53) occupational groups.[44] That same report makes the following recommendations:

- Increase immigrants' access to and use of occupation-specific information about the Alberta labour market.

- Increase the number of programs and services to bridge the gap in knowledge, language, skills, and Canadian work experience.

- Develop Alberta's ability to assess academic credentials, language, work experience, prior learning assessment, and recognition.

- Increase awareness of the economic and societal benefits of diversity, perception, and understanding of the skills and knowledge of immigrants in Alberta workplaces.

- Encourage industry, employers, employees, and labour organizations to become involved in maximizing skilled immigrants' ability to contribute economically.[45]

Skilled immigrants, however, are not the only ones who could contribute significantly to the country. For example, the social and economic contributions to the community made, for instance, by immigrant unskilled workers, caregivers, and members of the Family Class immigration category (which includes children and seniors) are immense but rarely highlighted in reports.

Social Isolation and Reconstructing a Social Network

In many cultures, people live in extended families and highly interactive communities that provide support and practical help in daily life. During re-settlement, these immigrants often feel free from the control and expectations of a close-knit social circle, but also they find themselves isolated in their new community and frequently feel extremely lonely. As one man described it, "In (country of origin), I never stayed home like here. I would go visit the towns around…. I had relatives all over the place…. Here, your neighbour doesn't know you...."[46] A woman said, "I am alone in this apartment with a big television set and nobody to talk to."[47]

Many immigrants feel almost completely dependent on the basic family unit (with whom they migrated) to provide all social and familial necessities. Except for brief telephone calls, e-mails, or letters, they may be unable to rely any longer on their families, friends, and former neighbours back home. In return, the family back home often places high expectations and demands on them. This, along with all the difficulties of settling and surviving, tends to intensify and overcharge immigrant family interactions, making the entire family system vulnerable. More

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 Ana Maria Fantino, Nanci Langford, and Njeri Waiyaki, "Adaptation Strategies and Marital Relationships of Edmonton Immigrant Couples." *INSCAN* (Fall 1999), pp. 15-16.

47 Ibid.

positively, this tendency can be a very effective adaptation strategy, because it produces intensely close-knit groups that help one another in times of need and help secure the family's success in the new society.

Refugee families, in particular, come from very stressful situations of war, persecution, dangerous escapes, and prolonged stays in refugee camps. Some have witnessed massive killing or have been imprisoned or physically and psychologically tortured. Some have been separated from their families for long periods; others have lost many family members, and most have lost everything once familiar to them. In addition to isolation and loneliness, these individuals and families mourn and grieve their considerable losses.

Immigrants and refugees' grieving can begin just after arrival or even before they leave their home country. On the other hand, family members may be so busy "adjusting" that they deny it and experience it years later as delayed grief. The loss grieved may include people, things, and relationships. Some of these can be replaced in Canada, but many cannot because they depended on the context of the home society.

For immigrants and refugees, reconstructing their social network in Canada is both a challenge and opportunity. With time and through interaction with others, immigrants' new experiences become more familiar, and they begin to feel oriented. Contacts with other Canadians are important throughout the immigrant's life but are particularly significant during the initial settlement period. Even brief contacts at this stage can represent the promise of a full sense of belonging in the future.

Research shows that post-migration factors may become powerful predictors of immigrants' successful adjustment regardless of previous experiences.[48] The reception and continued support offered by the host community through initial settlement and information services, accessible language courses, counselling, and the presence of a supportive community, are the most important factors that can diminish the negative effects of migration and enhance its positive aspects.

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[48] Canadian Task Force on Mental Health Issues Affecting Immigrants and Refugees, *After the Door has been Opened.*

"Canada is a highly civilized country, full of prosperity and permanent peace. Canada is a compassionate country, full of mercy towards all who share this planet. We are happy because we have never been so privileged before. However, our happiness and joy can also turn into sorrow, difficulty and hardship. We ask ourselves why:

a) We have been separated from our beloved families and friends, and have lost our distinct society. The loss and the separation from our relatives, friends, and our nation make us sad.

b) The sadness comes also as a result of the fact that we have eyes, but we are blind. Our ears have turned deaf. We ask ourselves why and we know the reason. We do not understand English. Our ignorance of the English language is the cause of our sadness, sorrow and disappointment.

c) We have difficulties in going to the store to buy food. We do not know how or what to ask for; we cannot tell whether the food we see is delicious or not, whether it is salty or sweet. Some of us even buy animal food by mistake. Because of the variety of food in Canada, some of which is canned food, we find it difficult to know which to buy unless we can read the labels…."

   *- Fragment of a letter from a Cambodian refugee
     (translated from Khmer)*

"The language, the conversation of the people, seemed like a hum. To me, they were only noises and sounds. It was like living under water. Sometimes, putting your head above water, you can hear something clear and meaningful, but then you sink again. Your ears are plugged, and everything becomes murmuring and buzzing once more. Yes, it is like living under water, semi-isolated and semi-deaf…."

   - Canadian immigrant from Argentina[49]

[49] Ana Maria Fantino, *Psychosocial Processes of Immigrants' Adaptation: Latin Americans in Canada,* p. 52.

The Integration Process

In the relationship between an immigrant and the host society, the host society holds the balance of power. Immigrants must and do make a sustained effort to adapt and integrate, but the host society also must change to enable this adaptation and integration.

The Canadian Council for Refugees writes: "Integration is a two-way street. While everyone takes for granted that newcomers will have to make adaptations in order to settle into their new home, it is more often forgotten that the host society also needs to adapt itself to accommodate its new members."[50] *How* the host society receives newcomers is crucial in facilitating their integration.

In Canada, the term "integration,"—unlike assimilation (see "Appendix B")— indicates the long process in which newcomers learn new concepts and behaviours in order to adjust to their new society while retaining main aspects of their cultural, linguistic, and personal identity.

A multicultural view of society such as Canada's offers smoother adaptation and also a different concept of what it means to be a member of the society than many other countries. In principle, a policy of multiculturalism (see "Appendix B") represents a shift from "how well and how fast immigrants can erase their origins, particularly if they do not fit society's expectations" (subtractive adjustment) to integration into society based on mutual respect for differences, equal opportunities, and shared social responsibilities (additive adaptation).[51]

Canada enables newcomers to obtain Canadian citizenship after a three-year residency period. Integration is a continuum that may start before migration and extend beyond acquisition of citizenship.

Services for Immigrants and Refugees

Immigrants and refugees are people in transition, enabled by past experiences and facing many opportunities and challenges in the new society. The experiences in their background, however, occurred in a different context. They must translate "linguistically and culturally" in order to transfer skills and talents, adjust socially, and maximize opportunities for integration. They need personal support to alleviate the stresses of migration and help them articulate their past and present social and psychological needs.

[50] Debbie Douglas, *Better Together.* Submission to the Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues. (Montreal: Canadian Council for Refugees, 2002) http://www.web.net/~ccr/ (accessed December 2004).

[51] Ana Maria Fantino, *Psychosocial Processes of Immigrants' Adaptation: Latin Americans in Canada* (Edmonton: University of Alberta master's thesis, 1982), pp. 17-18.

Settlement Services in Alberta

Settlement services for newcomers are provided through immigrant-serving agencies (also called settlement agencies). In Alberta, most of these are community-based nonprofit organizations funded mainly by federal and provincial governments. Municipalities, foundations, and other private sources provide additional resources.

Since 1980, the Alberta Association of Immigrant Service Agencies (AAISA) has been the umbrella organization formed by 19 member organizations in seven communities in the province: Calgary, Edmonton, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, and Red Deer.

Immigrant-serving agencies provide such essential services to newcomers as: orientation and information about Canadian life; temporary accommodation; second language assessment and instruction; education and career counselling; job search techniques; employment training; supportive counselling; citizenship preparation; facilitating access to community services; advocacy; and language interpretation and translation. These agencies also provide intercultural education programs for mainstream organizations to promote a community responsive to the needs of a diverse population.

Most Alberta settlement agencies offer services to a multicultural population rather than being ethno-specific. Most agency staff members are immigrants who speak two or more languages and know both Canadian and other countries' cultures. Settlement counsellors (a generic term including settlement, language, education, employment, and other counsellors working in settlement agencies) help to moderate some major risks of migration and settlement while enhancing newcomers' opportunities. Settlement counsellors often provide the bridge between past and future, between home and adopted countries, between the newcomer's original and Canadian cultures. Immigrants regard them as the "anchor in the storm" during the confusion and turbulence of resettlement.

Although Canadian society often acknowledges the contribution of its immigrants, the settlement services essential to facilitate newcomers' reception and integration are poorly understood outside the sector. Nationally, settlement services suffer from chronic under- funding and lack of recognition as a bridging service to mainstream Canadian society.[52]

Second Language Assessment and Instruction

Proficiency in at least one of Canada's official languages is a key factor to effective integration. All adult immigrants who are not yet Canadian citizens may receive basic English or French language instruction through the federal

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[52] Douglas, "Better Together." Submission to the Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues.

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada program (LINC). In addition to language instruction, the LINC curriculum includes information that helps orient newcomers to the Canadian way of life. The program aims to achieve the same proportion of women and men reflected in local immigrant populations. All eligible clients may participate in LINC training whether destined for the labour force or not.

Before beginning language training, newcomers are assessed to determine their eligibility and level of language proficiency. The Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment (CLBA) is used because it indicates how much training clients may need to achieve the LINC program outcome competency level. CLBA is based on Canadian Language Benchmarks, a set of task-based level descriptors of English or French language ability that constitutes the national standard for describing and measuring the second language proficiency of Canada's adult immigrants. The benchmarks cover four skill areas—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—and use real-life language tasks to measure language skills.[53]

Certified assessors administer CLBA assessment at Language Assessment Centres located in major cities and towns. The assessment includes an evaluation of the prospective student's learning needs and information about community resources available.

After the LINC program, which provides 1,000 hours of free, basic ESL instruction, eligible immigrants and refugees can receive intermediate and advanced English language training and bridging programs provided by the Alberta Government.

On Learning a Second Language

"In order to command a language freely as a scheme of expression one must have written love letters in it; one has to know how to pray and curse in it and how to say things with every shade appropriate to the addressee and to the situation."

- Alfred Schutz[54]

"The mother tongue is our own skin, the second language fits as a pair of tight jeans, which at first feel stiff and unfamiliar but after they have been worn for a time come to feel easy and comfortable, though they can still never be a substitute for the skin."

- Tove Skutnabb-Kangas[55]

[53] Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks 2005. http://www.language.ca (accessed August 2005).

[54] Alfred Schutz, "The Stranger," *A. Schutz, Collected Papers II.* Edited by A. Broderson. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), p. 101.

[55] Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, *Bilingualism or Not: The Education of Minorities* (Clevedon, Avon, England: Multilingual Matters, 1981), p. 54.

Foreign Credentials Assessment

Since 1994, the Alberta Government's International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) has evaluated the education people have obtained abroad and issued certificates of comparison to educational standards in a Canadian province. The IQAS mandate is to provide a fair and credible educational assessment service that recognizes education achieved outside of Canada. Its clients include individuals, employers, Canadian educational institutions, professional licensing bodies, organizations, and other provinces.[56]

Research on Immigration and Integration

The Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration (PCERII), at Edmonton's University of Alberta is one of five Canadian research centres involved in immigration and integration research. The Prairie Centre is a consortium representing six prairie universities: University of Alberta, University of Calgary, University of Manitoba, University of Regina, University of Saskatchewan, and University of Winnipeg. The Prairie Centre brings together a multidisciplinary research team of more than 100 affiliated researchers to study cooperatively the complex aspects of immigration and integration into Canadian society. PCERII collaborates closely with community groups and conducts both applied and multidisciplinary research.

Through such initiatives as national and international conferences and local brown bag luncheon seminars, the Centre brings together community groups (such as settlement agencies and ethno-cultural groups), academics, and federal and provincial policy- makers. The Centre's main goal is to better understand how immigrants become Canadians and then influence policies to make their transition easier. The Centre also publishes the *Journal of International Migration and Integration (JIMI),* a multidisciplinary international journal for scholars, policy-makers, and non-governmental organizations.[57]   The Prairie Centre publishes its working papers and research reports on their website (http://pcerii. metropolis.net).

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[56] Alberta Government. International Qualifications Assessment Service. http:// http://advancededucation. gov.ab.ca/iqas (accessed July 2005).

[57] http:// jimi.metropolis.net/ (accessed August 2005).

Chapter 3
Cultural Encounters
in the Workplace

Events that showcase the traditional food, dress, and music of ethno-cultural groups display the visible aspects of culture. As a spectator, one might think, "These are interesting things that people from 'other cultures' do" and thus distance that knowledge from one's own experience. The onlooker may find the cultural display interesting without becoming significantly involved. This is what Michael Cole and others call interpretation of culture as a "side-dish."[58] Culture, however, is a daily event, and everyone is an active participant in the re-enactment of different cultural scripts and narratives.

The following dialogues are meant to illustrate ways in which culture plays out in everyday life, including the workplace. As Craig Storti said, [intercultural dialogues] "show that culture is real, that it actually does turn up in our behaviour."[59]

The dialogues show examples of cultural differences based on actual experiences of directors, managers, and staff of Canadian community organizations. They show that all participants have cultural mindsets, leaving no one culture-free. The actors' specific culture is suggested only by the names, thus avoiding fixed cultural stereotyping.

The dialogues illustrate several themes often found in multicultural work settings, including different notions of time and space, change, relationships, freedom of choice, authority, professional responsibility, cooperation and competition, linguistic misunderstandings, and communication styles.

[58] Michael Cole, *Cultural Psychology:* A Once and Future Discipline (London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996).

[59] Craig Storti, *Cross-Cultural Dialogues:* 74 Brief Encounters with Cultural Difference (Yarmounth, Maine: Intercultural Press, 1994), p. 6.

Making Progress

Director:	"I expected your report last week…."
Lusaka:	"We are very sorry, but it is not ready yet."
Director:	"But the funders' deadline is tomorrow and…"
Lusaka:	"We already had two community meetings, and we feel that it will be necessary to meet again this weekend to get consensus, but I can assure you that we are making progress."

The director is well aware that not presenting a report on the community achievements to the funders on time may put the project's finances at risk.

Lusaka's priority for is not the deadline or the report but obtaining community support for the project. In his culture, community support is gained through wide-ranging and lengthy discussions of the issues, often involving complex negotiations between group members. This obviously takes time. Lusaka is focusing on process rather than timelines and reports, which he perceives as artificial barriers to the most important objectives of the project.

A Call from Head Office

Mrs. Clark: "Is the director there, please?"

Cuong: "No, she is on holidays. She won't be here until next week."

Mrs. Clark: "Who is in charge while she is away?"

Cuong: "I am."

Mrs. Clark: "Great! We need to know if we can go ahead and close the file on…"

Cuong: "Would you mind calling her next week about this?"

 Although Coung, a program coordinator, has been put in charge of the office affairs, he believes that decision-making is the director's domain. Following his cultural script, he defers authority and responsibility to her. He considers the director responsible in the double meaning of the word: able to respond (response-able) and also the one held accountable for decisions. His hierarchical view of authority makes him hesitant to exercise the decision-making powers granted to him in the director's absence. He also fears that others might see his making a decision as crossing the line of authority.

Mrs. Clark views the situation differently. In the director's absence, she is quite pleased to be talking to the person in charge and expects Cuong to make a quick decision that will allow her to finish her task. She is more concerned with expediency than following the chain of command as Cuong sees it.

Professional Responsibility

Mrs. Ma: "So, we don't use double negatives in English?"

Instructor: "No, we don't."

Mrs. Ma: "Excuse me, but why not?"

Instructor: "Well, we just don't."

Mrs. Ma:	"But do you know the reason why…?"
Instructor:	"I don't know, but I will find out for you."
Mrs. Ma:	"Oh…"

The North American instructor considers grammar inessential to her student's ability to communicate in English. She is unsure of the answer and does not want to provide wrong information. She acknowledges her ignorance and offers to look for the information; she sees this as the honest thing to do.

Mrs. Ma's curiosity is genuine, as she feels she must know the grammar and rules governing the new language she is learning. She comes from a structured framework where rules are important. Mrs. Ma is very disappointed by the instructor's response. She would have expected the teacher to be able to answer her questions.

In many cultures around the world, teachers are assigned a great authority and respect (often surpassing that given to parents in a family). Members of such cultures assume that teachers are professionally trained and have the knowledge needed to respond to learners.

This expectation of teachers applies to principals, directors, managers, and others in authority. As Craig Storti wrote: "In one study of management behaviour, respondents were asked whether they agreed with the statement: 'It is important for a manager to have at hand precise answers to most questions subordinates raised about their work'. Seventy-eight percent of Japanese and 73 percent of Indonesian managers agreed with the statement as against 18 percent of American managers."[60]

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Former Co-Workers

John:	"Hello, Giancarlo? I just came to Edmonton for a visit and I would really like to see you."
Giancarlo:	"Hello, my friend! It is great that you finally arrived! How are you?"
John:	"I am fine, thank you."
Giancarlo:	"You know, John? I always remember the days when we used to work together…."
John:	"Listen, I am looking here at my day-timer and thinking that maybe we can see each other on Tuesday."
Giancarlo:	"Tuesday? But that is next week! What are you doing now?"
John:	"Eehh, nothing really…"
Giancarlo:	"Why don't you come to our house right now?"

[60] Ibid., p. 74.

| John: | "Well, it is already 7 p.m. and tomorrow is a workday for you…." |
| Giancarlo: | "I will come and pick you up." |

The notion of time varies within and across cultures. The pace of life, for instance, varies between urban to rural areas within the same society; but even more significant differences exist between cultures with divergent notions of time.

The North American and northern European tendency to be ruled by socially and personally created timelines, schedules, and deadlines is well known. Time (as measured by clocks) has been "objectified" as a commodity, something that can be used, gained, wasted, and spent. Time has become equated to money, and one can "run out of" both.

In many rural societies, time is perceived as natural cycles (dawn to sunset, winter to summer) that are not ruled by humans or under their control. In regions of Latin America, when people are late for a meeting, they say, "It has gotten late" rather than "I am late." In other urban cultural settings, people say that time walks rather than runs, and it remains a secondary consideration; people control time according to their priorities.

For Giancarlo, time is flexible: time always exists for the important things in life. Because he values friendship more than time management, he wants to enjoy his former co-worker's presence *now*. By remembering the days when they used to work together, Giancarlo also values the past highly and acknowledges his friendship with John as a shared history. John, though also present, is more concerned about planning for the future. He anticipates the consequences of present actions (even for his friend Giancarlo—"tomorrow is a workday for you"). In addition, John also may think that it is "good" to remind Giancarlo that the next day is a workday, because the work ethic plays a central role in John's worldview.

A Simple Question

Christine:	"I like your accent, Marianela. Where are you from?"
Marianela:	"I am from Uruguay."
Christine:	"Oh, how nice!"
Marianela:	"I've been here for a year, but my whole family is still there."
Christine:	"Really? By the way, your English is really good."
Marianela:	"Thank you. As I said, my whole family is still there and, I hope they can come soon because…"

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Christine: "Marianela, I can't talk right now because I have a meeting at 2 o'clock and I can't be late."

Marianela, a recent newcomer to Canada, has met Christine, who is friendly and seems to care about who she is and where she comes from. Marianela is eager to meet people with whom she can share her story and listen to theirs. She feels that she is in Canada but not *of* Canada; thus, she is seeking social acceptance through relationships. In her culture, family plays a central social role and, by mentioning her family, she initiated what she expected to be a long conversation with Christine.

Christine expected only a fleeting social interaction before leaving for her meeting. Her first question, however, elicited a world of emotions and expectations of which she was completely unaware. She focuses on the present and the positive aspects of Marianela's integration ("Your English is very good."), while ignoring Marianela's story and concerns connected to the past and a country far away.

During integration, most immigrants experience tension between continuity and change, between their desire to be accepted and their need to preserve the basic values that constitute their personal identity. While they are ready to adjust, they also want to be accepted as they are now (the result of who they were before combined with their new experiences).

An immigrant in Edmonton describes this experience as follows:

> To be an immigrant or a refugee is like being born again. The problem is that you don't start from zero; you are born with 25, 40, or 50 years on your back. To be born and to learn everything as if you were a child but being old, with all the pros and cons, with your shortcomings and virtues, with your bitter experiences and your good ones, with a body that has already suffered and with eyes that have seen a lot."

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Working with Refugees

Interviewer: "We are ready to start the interview."

Ivan: "Are you recording this?"

Interviewer: "Yes."

Ivan: "Right now?"

Interviewer: "Yes, remember we spoke about it on the phone, and you said you were comfortable with it?

Ivan: "Okay. It's just that I have been recorded before without knowing."

Even years later, people who have fled their countries because of political, racial, or religious persecution or war may be very suspicious about responding to questionnaires, completing forms, and signing documents (particularly if personal information is required).

Ivan's statements that follow illustrate the context of his strong initial reaction to being recorded in the interview:

"I have lost not only my country, my house, furniture, books, and family pictures, but I have lost trust in people that, before, I had relied on. They betrayed me."

"Under torture, they made me sign a "confession" for things that I had never done."

Changing a Form

Manager:	"Based on what you have told me about client needs over the past several months, I think we should change our intake form."
Worker:	"But we have been using this form for years. It is fine."
Manager:	"I think we can improve it by adding some items and deleting others."
Worker:	"But then we will have to change the way we do intake."
Manager:	"Sometimes change is good. Let's get started!"

Emphasis on change as positive is definitely a North American cultural characteristic. Although part of North America, Canadians display mixed opinions about change. When Canadians are asked how they view it, some qualify it, "It depends…." Change to what, at what cost, at what pace? Others think that change is inherently good and/or that change is a fact of life that will happen anyway so, why fight it?

Although some immigrants share the same enthusiasm about change, most others perceive change as a risk. In fact, newcomers inherently go through multiple and radical changes during migration(s) and adaptation. They may perceive additional changes and modifications as overwhelming and potentially dangerous. As Julia puts it, "I had to change so much that I don't know who I am anymore. Not even my mother will recognize me if she sees me today." Salim prefers to protect his sense of integrity through denial, "Basically, I don't change at all in my life. I am the same person."

The study, "Adaptation Strategies and Marital Relationships of Edmonton Immigrant Couples," confirmed that many newcomers feel that changing to adapt to the new society threatens their sense of identity and sometimes betrays their values.[61]

Most people need validation of who they are and what they do at work. When a needed change is introduced in a workplace, employees must be reassured that their way of doing things was valid. They also need to know the circumstances and reasons why change is needed. Change for the sake of change is not always welcomed.

Procedures Manual

Mahid: "I need to talk to you about a client to get your thoughts about how to proceed."

Supervisor: "Sure. Come on in."

Mahid: "It is about the client I mentioned to you yesterday"

Supervisor: "Listen, I've just finished updating the *Procedures Manual*. Here is a copy for your office. Give it a read and see if anything applies to your client situation."

Mahid: "Wow, it is thick!"

Supervisor: "Yes. It's very thorough. Let me know what happens."

The low-context North American culture places more value on written than verbal forms of communication (see Page 15). Written communication involves a linear sequence of symbols. North Americans prefer this especially when the issue at hand requires order and precision or a detailed account of affairs. Some people also tend to believe that something written is more credible.

Some cultures with high levels of social interaction prefer verbal communication to the written. Verbal communication includes non-verbal information (e.g., inflection, body language), so conversations are considered the best way to obtain information, communicate feelings, and voice ideas. Conversation is seen as a relatively effortless, direct, inclusive, and enjoyable form of communication.

The supervisor is proud of his Procedures Manual. By offering it, he thinks he is giving Mahid a more complete and methodical response. Mahid feels that he is faced now with the huge task of reading a "thick" manual and figuring out which procedure applies to his particular client. In his view, a simple conversation with his supervisor would have helped him to clarify matters.

[61] Ana Maria Fantino, Nanci Langford, and Njeri Waiyaki, "Adaptation Strategies and Marital Relationships of Edmonton Immigrant Couples," pp. 15-16.

Quantity versus Quality

Supervisor: "How many clients have you seen with this type of problem?"

Worker: "Let me tell you about the cases I have…."

Supervisor: "Yes, but approximately how many clients have you seen with this problem?"

Worker: "For instance, in the case of…"

This situation may not be exclusive of an intercultural encounter. However, two different styles of communication are occurring. The supervisor needs numbers to support a proposal for expanded services to improve the clients' situation. The worker wants to put a human face on the issue. He wants to tell the details of the story in order to show his supervisor the complexity, seriousness, and extent of the situations with which he deals. In his view, qualitative evidence comes first; the number of cases is secondary. For him, one client facing this problem is too many.

Linguistic Misunderstanding

Social Worker: "I am very concerned about your comment regarding violence against women. You said that you condone it."

Sahir: "Yes, I absolutely condone it!"

Sahir had confused the verb "condone" with "condemn" and got himself in serious problems until the linguistic misunderstanding was clarified. The linguistic confusion was clarified only through the intervention of a settlement counsellor who used synonyms of "condone" to probe what Sahir really meant.

Settlement Counsellor: Are you in favour of punishing women? Do you approve of using violence against women?

Sahir: "No, of course not. Never!"

Music to his Ears

The test said: Write a few notes about a topic of your choice.

The learner wrote:

Learning English

Fazila: "Please tell me, what are these?"

ESL Teacher: "Loudspeakers."

Fazila: "WHAT ARE THESE?"

ESL Teacher: "Loudspeakers."

Fazila: (yelling) "WHAT ARE THESE?"

Instead of loudspeakers, Fazila understood "Speak louder," and she followed the teacher's instructions accordingly.

Who Did It?

Betty: "Something very serious has happened."

Anika: "What is it?"

Betty: "Twenty-one dollars are missing from petty cash."

Anika: "It must be a mistake. Let's count again."

Betty: "I have checked several times already, and there is no mistake."

Anika: "Has it happened before?"

Betty: "Never. I am responsible for the money, and we must find out who did this."

Anika: "That will create a lot of bad feelings among people. Why don't we all chip in and cover the missing money?"

Betty: "What?"

Betty is following the cultural script that says, "if a 'crime' has been committed, we will find who is responsible and let that person face the consequences." Betty is very surprised at Anika's reaction and interprets her suggestion as an attempt to cover-up an obvious wrongdoing, perhaps protecting someone.

Anika comes from a country that has suffered the turmoil of internal conflict and war; the last thing she wants is to experience conflictive situations again. She thinks that searching for the person responsible will inevitably lead to mistrust and resentment among colleagues. She has witnessed the disintegration of the social fabric of her country where former neighbours and friends accused one another and became enemies. Besides, she feels that the evidence is lacking. It is the first time that it happened. "What about if, after all, we find the money under a desk?" she thinks. Twenty-one dollars is a very small price to pay to preserve harmony among the colleagues whom she considers part of her family in Canada.

Preparing for an Interview

Indira: "One thing you must learn in Canada is how to present yourself in a job interview."

Julia: "Yes, that is important."

Indira: "For example, you must talk about your education and your work experience."

Julia: "Yes, I believe it is all in my resume."

Indira: "That is not enough. You have to talk about the things that you are good at, your achievements."

Julia: "But who am I to judge that? Nobody knows me here."

Indira: "Well, that's precisely the point. You must present yourself in the best light. You have to sell yourself."

Julia: "Definitely, I don't think I can do that."

Indira is giving Julia popular North American advice, disseminated in countless job preparation manuals and workshops, on how to behave in a job interview. The assumption here is that an individual will be judged on his/her own merits. In the workplace, these merits are revealed almost exclusively through the person's actions and accomplishments. Through a comparison of accomplishments, the interviewer will determine the successful candidate. Thus, when candidates compete with others, they must "present themselves in the best light" to improve their chances of success.

Most of these assumptions are foreign to Julia. She comes from a culture with a strong communitarian and religious base where modesty is considered a virtue. For her, people have an intrinsic sense of dignity—an almost sacred quality residing within each person—that is not necessarily manifested through conduct, deeds, or results. The value of people's accomplishments, on the other hand, are judged by their contribution to the public good, and they are to be acknowledged and assessed by others rather than the people themselves. She cannot imagine that people must "brag," as she views it, about their own qualities ("Who am I to judge that?") and that they must "sell" their strengths in order to be appreciated.

A similar cultural conflict surfaces in the work context when performance evaluations are done. Generally, in North America, evaluations (and self-evaluations especially) are not done holistically. They require employees to analyze and "divide" themselves into strengths, weaknesses, skills, achievements, and so forth. For many immigrant employees, whose view is essentially holistic, self-evaluations are both foreign and often uncomfortable.

Freedom of Choice

Helen: "As I see your situation, you have now a number of options that you can choose from…."

Aster: "I trust you, so please tell me what to do."

Helen: "I cannot tell you what to do. I can help you to explore different options, but you must make your own decisions."

Aster: "I am new to this country. You are a good counsellor and you have helped me before, why don't you want to help me now?"

North Americans place a special significance on one type of freedom—the freedom of choice. Aster does not see the world in terms of neutral options and alternatives from which to choose; she tends to feel that if options exist at all, some are good and others bad. She trusts that Helen, a professional who knows this society, will see what choice is best for her. If Helen were a visitor in her country, Aster thinks, she would be given plenty of advice on what to do and not to do. Why is Helen keeping the good advice to herself?

Shared Knowledge

Instructor: "Ole, you should be more careful, the students sitting beside you have copied some of your answers."

Ole: "Yes, we study together sometimes."

Instructor: "But you know that it is not fair, answers should be personal. How can I evaluate what each one of you has learned?"

Ole: (silence)

Ole's silence is a significant aspect of the dialogue. He does not understand what the instructor's problem is. And if there is a problem he certainly does not know the solution to it. In his country, his teachers taught him to always help his classmates, particularly if they were slower than he is.

In many cultures, knowledge must be shared and learning is a cooperative endeavor. The privatization of knowledge is a relatively modern phenomenon; it involves the notions of individualism, private property, and competition. Historically and still today, some cultures do not emphasize authorship; knowledge, as well as art, are considered collective and public productions that must be shared. Who built the medieval cathedrals? They were

constructed, some through centuries, by hundreds of architects, artisans, artists, and workers, most of them anonymous. Who produced the many legends, myths, and proverbs that circulate in world cultures? They represent accumulated wisdom, products of individual and collective efforts; no one author could claim ownership. In such cultural frameworks, teaching and sharing wisdom are among the highest honours given to learned people. Though great teachers are deemed worthy of acknowledgement and recognition, knowledge itself remains a public and social creation to be shared.

A Gift from the Community

Arlequino, known as Harlequin in English and Arlequin in French, is one of the most famous characters of the Italian Commedia dell'Arte. This theatrical phenomenon originated in Italy during the 15th century and rapidly spread to France, Germany, and England, where it remained popular for almost three centuries. Still today a puppet theatre in Rome's Villa, it delights children and adults alike with the fortunes and misfortunes of Arlequino, Pulcinella, Colombina, Pantalone, and many other Commedia dell'Arte characters.

Arlequino is one of the Commedia's most famous comic servant characters. Born in a rural area, he is older, impoverished, and forced to move to an urban area and serve as a hired servant of one the main characters. He is portrayed as rather unintelligent, acrobatic, preoccupied with survival (food), and in love with Colombina, another servant. Although he fears his master, he often upsets the master's plans when their interests do not coincide.

As the story goes, Arlequino wanted to participate in the village's carnival celebrations. As he was so poor, he had only rugs with which to cover himself, and he was ashamed. The village people, though not rich were compassionate, and all cut a piece of clothing off their own and joined these pieces together to make an outfit Arlequino could wear for the festivities.

Since then, Arlequino always dresses in a patchwork garment of different fabrics, usually in red, blue, green, black, yellow, and white.

Arlequino's clothes symbolize a community's efforts to include and embrace one of its most under-privileged members. Arlequino is no model of perfection nor is he particularly likable. What is notable in the story, however, is that the people ask nothing of Arlequino in exchange for his garments; they do not require him to mend his ways or change in order "to fit the community standards." He is included as *he is*, without pre-conditions; he is accepted with both his virtues and shortcomings. The village people recognize implicitly that, even though all are imperfect, all should be included. The story's other symbolic message is that, in order to include others, people must give something of themselves, little pieces of their own garments.[62]

[62] http://en.wikipedia.org (accessed July 2005).

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Appendix A
Dealing with Cultural Differences at Work

The culture in which people grow up in determines how they express themselves and how they relate to others. Culture defines whom they see as "us" and whom they see as "them."

At work, cultural stereotypes can create tensions that lower job satisfaction and productivity. Both employees and employers benefit when they confront and move beyond their prejudices.

Setting aside cultural biases is never easy—it takes time and determination. The following tips can serve as a starting point.

1. **Treat all people at work as individuals.** Try to look beyond cultural background and see the person.

2. **Respect personal names.** Call people by the names they prefer to be called. Learn how to pronounce each name correctly, the correct order in which to say it, and appropriate titles of respect. Avoid such slang terms as "dear" or "Mac."

3. **Turn fear into curiosity.** Instead of being suspicious of other groups, ask yourself, "What if we could get beyond our differences? What would I learn?"

4. **Avoid making generalizations** about a whole group based on one or two members. Just because one member of a group is sloppy, it does not mean all members of the group are.

5. **Be open** to new information about cultures or groups of people rather than warping or ignoring information that disagrees with a preconceived view of the world.

6. **Never assume** that because a person is good or bad at one thing, s/he also is good or bad at others. For example, never assume that someone who speaks English poorly also does other things poorly.

7. **Never play favourites or treat others unfairly**. While it is normal to feel a bit uncomfortable when dealing with someone from another culture, never let that discomfort result in treating that person differently.

8. **Notice the economic and social dividing lines in your workplace and community.** Those on the privileged side of the line must be more sensitive to the needs and feelings of those who are not.

9. **Use acceptable terms for cultural groups.** Find out which terms are acceptable to a cultural group and which are not. Speak up when others use unacceptable terms. Members of cultural groups must tell others what their group prefers.

10. **Avoid making judgments based on the accent, timing, or pace of someone's speech.** Different ways of speaking may strike you as haughty, subservient, or even insulting. View people objectively, even if their accents seem " romantic."

11. **Laugh with people, not at them**. Avoid ethnic or sexual jokes; they are never appropriate. When someone else tells an offensive joke, mention it to that person later in private. or say, "Ouch! That hurts." to let the person know that "cultural toes have been stepped on."

12. **Recognize the "insult game."** Using teasing insults to show affection is a game men sometimes play that is often misunderstood by women and members of some cultural groups. In a work culture where this is expected, learn the rules by observing the game and always accompany a jab with a smile.

13. **Expect to have to explain cultural unwritten rules**. People from cultures other than mainstream Canada may be unable to "read between the lines." Explain cultural expectations, even if this seems uncomfortable or embarrassing.

14. **Find out how disagreements are handled** in the other person's culture. It may be considered unacceptable to say "No" directly, or "No" may mean only that further negotiation is expected. Avoid public displays of anger.

15. **Pay attention to gestures**. Be careful about gestures, and consider how they might be interpreted. If someone's gestures puzzle you, ask questions. Tell people when they use inappropriate gestures, but in a way that allows them to "save face."

16. **Be aware that different cultures view time differently.** When faced with different perceptions of time, negotiate something that works for all concerned.

17. **Adjust interpersonal "space" requirements, if necessary**. Depending upon cultural practices, people may feel uncomfortable when others stand too close or too far away (by *their* standards). Notice how close *they* stand when they approach, and follow suit. Pay attention to how people react when someone moves closer.

18. **Be careful about touching in *any* way.** Watch what other people do, especially when they are with people of their own culture. Usually people do unto others what they will accept from others, except in cases of difference in social status or authority.[63]

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[63] Adapted from "Tips for Dealing with Cultural Differences at Work," (Edmonton: Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development). Adapted and reproduced by arrangements with the Crown in right of the Province of Alberta, all rights reserved. Permission is given by the copyright owner to reproduce this material for educational purposes and on a nonprofit basis.

Appendix B
Glossary of Terms in Intercultural Communication and Education

Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act (HRCMA)

This act safeguards Albertans' equality rights and works in conjunction with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.* Proclaimed July 15, 1996, this act amalgamates the *Individual Rights Protection Act* and the *Alberta Multiculturalism Act*, and prohibits discrimination in employment, tenancy, public services, signs and notices, and membership in any trade union or professional association. *HRCMA* prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, ancestry or place of origin, religious and spiritual beliefs, gender (including sexual harassment, pregnancy, or equal pay for same or similar work), physical or mental disabilities, age, marital status, family status, and source of income.[64]

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Assimilation

1. The absorption of people into a larger group[65]

2. A process, distinct from *integration*, of eliminating group characteristics so that newcomers to a society "blend in" with the host society. This may be encouraged as formal policy (as in the American "melting pot" concept or Canadian immigration policy before 1967).

Assumption

1. Something accepted or supposed true without proof or demonstration

2. Taking things for granted about others[66]

[64] Alberta Community Development (ACD), Citizenship Services Branch (now Alberta Learning). Terminologies of Diversity: A Dictionary of Terms for Individuals, Organizations and Professions (Edmonton: Alberta Community Development, 1997), p. 11.

[65] Oxford English Reference Dictionary, p. 81.

[66] Alberta Community Development (ACD), A Dictionary of Terms for Individuals, Organizations and Professions, p. 15.

Bias

A subjective preference, partiality, prejudice, or inclination to make certain choices that may be positive or negative. Biases often result in unfair treatment of individuals or groups.[67]

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

The 1981 *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* states that every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, sex, sexual orientation, religion, age, or mental or physical disability. It establishes Canada's fundamental freedoms and democratic rights and charges both federal and provincial governments with the responsibility of guaranteeing these rights. The Charter also protects mobility rights, legal rights, equality rights, Canada's official languages, and other rights. About multiculturalism, Section 27 states: "This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians."[68]

Canadian Human Rights Act

The *Canadian Human Rights Act* applies to individuals, groups, and organizations and prohibits discriminatory treatment on such grounds as race, national or ethnic origin, colour, and religion. It also legitimizes the use of such programs as Employment Equity (see *Employment Equity Act*) to reduce or eliminate past inequities.

Canadian Language Benchmarks

The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) create Canada's national standard for describing, measuring, and recognizing the second language proficiency of current and prospective adult immigrants for living and working in Canada.

The CLB provide a descriptive scale of communicative proficiency in English as a Second Language, expressed as benchmarks or reference points. The CLB covers four skill areas—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—and use real-life language tasks to measure language skills. [69]

[67] Ibid., p. 17.

[68] Ibid., p. 21.

[69] "What are the Canadian Language Benchmarks?" The Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, http://www.language.ca (accessed August 2005).

Canadian Multiculturalism Act

Canada was the first country in the world to adopt multiculturalism as an official policy. Then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau released the document "Multiculturalism within a Bilingual Framework" in 1971. It encouraged members of all ethnic groups in Canada to maintain and share their language and cultural heritage with other Canadians, and it promoted tolerance of diversity. In 1988, the *Act for the Preservation and Enhancement of Multiculturalism in Canada* expanded the policy to include measures against prejudice and discrimination of ethnic minorities. In addition, the 1988 legislation promoted ethnic minorities' full and equal participation in all aspects of society.

Cultural Diversity

Differences between people based on a shared ideology and valued set of beliefs, norms, customs, and meanings evidenced in a way of life. [70]

Cultural Sensitivity/Cultural Competence

Awareness of one's own cultural assumptions, biases, behaviours, and beliefs, and the knowledge and skills to interact with and understand people from other cultures without imposing one's own cultural values on them. Cultural sensitivity is required both at an individual level and at systemic, professional, and organizational levels. [71]

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Discrimination

An act for or against a member of a social category because that person is a member of that particular group. Discriminatory acts may or may not result from an attitude or prejudice. Each act must be judged against some external criterion in order to show discrimination.

Dominant Culture

The value system that characterizes a particular group of people (often called the mainstream) that predominates over the value systems of other groups or cultures.

[70] American Nursing Association. "Cultural Diversity in Nursing Practice." http://www.nursingworld.org/readrom/position/ethics (accessed February 2005).

[71] Alberta Community Development. A Dictionary of Terms for Individual Organizations and Professions, p. 31.

Employment Equity Act

The federal *Employment Equity* Act is designed to achieve equality in the workplace so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons other than ability. It rectifies disadvantaging conditions in employment experienced by women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and visible minorities. It is based on the principle that employment equity means more than treating all people the same way. Equity also requires special measures and accommodation of differences.

Ethnic Group

A social group with a shared cultural heritage that maintains distinctive cultural (i.e., linguistic, religious) traditions while living within a larger society. An ethnic group usually is characterized by a sense of collective identity, some co-residence, and co-marriage. In principle, all Canadian residents are members of one or more ethnic groups.[72]

Ethnocentrism

1. An inability (often unconscious) to see and accept that other cultural ways of viewing reality exist and have validity

2. Interpreting and evaluating other cultures using the presumed values and standards of one's own culture

3. Seeing one's own culture as superior to other cultures[73]

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Ghettoization

Isolation of members of ethnic groups within their own community.

Immigrants

Persons who have moved to take up permanent residence in a country other than their native land or habitual residence. See Appendix C "Citizenship and Immigration Canada Glossary of Terms " for specific definitions for immigrants in Canada.

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[72] Health and Welfare Canada, After the Door has been Opened. Report of the Canadian Task Force on Mental Health Issues Affecting Immigrants and Refugees (Ottawa: Health and Welfare Canada, 1988), p. 97.

[73] Alberta Community Development. A Dictionary of Terms for Individual Organizations and Professions, p. 37.

Immigrant-Serving Organizations

Non-governmental organizations mandated to provide settlement services to immigrants to Canada.

Integration

1. A process clearly distinct from assimilation through which groups and/or individuals become able to participate in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of a country.

2. The incorporation of past experience and personal goals into a new, coherent, and effective system compatible with the host country's predominant economic, social, and political framework. The term covers a range of situations from positive relations with the host community and retention of personal and cultural identity to the configuration of a set of characteristics regarded as multicultural identity.

Multicultural Identity/Person

A multicultural person is committed to the fundamental unity of all human beings while recognizing, legitimizing, and appreciating the fundamental differences existing between people of different cultures.

Multiculturalism

1. Reference to a society characterized by ethnic or cultural heterogeneity

2. Reference to an ideal of equality and mutual respect among a population's ethnic or cultural groups [74]

3. Reference to a Canadian policy introduced in 1971 and codified in 1988 in the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*. See *Canadian Multiculturalism Act.*

Prejudice

A preconceived opinion, usually unfavourable, or an unjustified and unreasonable bias

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[74] Ibid., p. 53.

Race

1. Any of the major divisions of humankind, having in common distinct physical features or ethnic background [75]

2. A socially defined population derived from distinguishable, inherited physical characteristics

Racism

1. A belief in the superiority of a particular race; prejudice based on this[76]

2. A system of beliefs or ideology that assumes, based on prejudice and stereotypes, that inherited physical traits are linked to social and psychological (including personality and intellectual) traits. The belief is that a group has innate characteristics. [77]

Racial Incidents

Racial incidents may involve banter, jokes, name-calling, harassment, teasing, discourteous treatment, graffiti, stereotyping, threats, and insults. Incidents also may involve physical violence and/or genocide.[78]

Stereotype

1. Positive or negative beliefs people have about the presumed physical and psychological characteristics of members of a social category.[79]

2. A mental picture or set of ideas which regard all members of a group as being the same, allowing for little or no individual differences or critical judgment.[80]

Tokenism

1. The principle or practice of granting minimum concessions, especially to appease radical demands.

2. Chosen by way of tokenism to represent a particular group (e.g., "the token women in the committee").[81]

Tolerance

From "tolerate": to bear, sustain, or endure; to allow, permit; not to interfere with, leave unmolested; to recognize and respect other's beliefs and practices without necessarily agreeing or sympathizing.[82]

[75] Oxford English Reference Dictionary, p. 1,187.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Alberta Community Development. A Dictionary of Terms for Individual Organizations and Professions, p. 62

[78] Ibid., p. 61.

[79] Health and Welfare Canada, After the Door has been Opened. Report of the Canadian Task Force on Mental Health Issues Affecting Immigrants and Refugees, p. 99.

[80] Alberta Community Development (ACD), A Dictionary of Terms for Individuals, Organizations and Professions, p. 7.

[81] Oxford English Reference Dictionary, p. 1515.

[82] Alberta Community Development (ACD), A Dictionary of Terms for Individuals, Organizations and Professions, p. 74.

Appendix C
Citizenship and Immigration
Canada Glossary of Terms[83]

Landing

The permission given to a person to live in Canada as a permanent resident. An immigrant who has been "landed" is a permanent resident.

Dependant

A landed immigrant's spouse, common-law partner, or conjugal partner and children.

Economic Class

People selected for their skills and ability to contribute to Canada's economy, including skilled workers, business people. and provincial nominees.

Skilled Worker. Immigrants selected for their skills, which will ensure their success in a fast-changing labour market and benefit the Canadian economy. Immigration regulations stress education, English or French language abilities, and work experience involving certain skills rather than specific occupations.

Business Immigrant. Business immigrants include three classes of immigrant— investors, entrepreneurs, and self-employed people. Business immigrants become permanent residents on the basis of their ability to become economically established in Canada. The business immigrant's spouse and children also are included in this category.

Investor: An immigrant who has been admitted to Canada because of:

*   business experience as defined in the Regulations
*   a legally obtained net worth of at least CDN$800,000
*   an investment of CDN$400,000 before receiving a visa.

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[83] Citizenship and Immigration Canada, "Glossary of Terms, The Monitor 1 (2006). http://www.cic.gc.ca (accessed February 2006).

The Canadian government allocates the investment to participating provinces and territories, which guarantee the investment and use it to develop their economies and create jobs. The investment is repaid, without interest, after five years.

Entrepreneur: An immigrant who has been admitted to Canada by demonstrating that s/he:

- has managed and controlled a percentage of equity in a qualifying business for at least two years in the period beginning five years before application
- has a legally obtained net worth of at least CDN$300,000.

Self-Employed People: An immigrant who demonstrates:

- the ability and intention to create his/her own employment in Canada
- the ability to contribute significantly to the Canadian economy as farmers or to Canada's cultural or athletic life.

Provincial Nominee: Immigrants selected by the provinces or territories for specific skills that will contribute to the local economy. The Regulations establish a provincial nominee class, allowing provinces and territories that have agreements with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to nominate a certain number of workers. A nominee must meet federal admissibility requirements, such as those related to health and security.

Refugee Class

Convention Refugee: A person who, by reason of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion is:

- outside each of his/her countries of nationality and unable or, because of that fear, unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of each of those countries
- is outside the country of nationality or of former habitual residence and unable, or by reason of that fear, unwilling to return to that country.

Government-Assisted Refugees: People selected abroad for resettlement to Canada as Convention refugees under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act or as members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Classes, and who receive resettlement assistance from the federal government.

Privately Sponsored Refugees: Refugees selected abroad for resettlement to Canada who receive resettlement assistance from private sources.

Refugee Protection Claimants: People who have arrived in Canada seeking the country's protection. Such people who are determined to be a Protected Person may then apply for permanent residence.

Family Class

A class of immigrants to Canada made up of close relatives of a Canadian sponsor, including a spouse, common-law partner, or conjugal partner; dependent children; parents and grandparents; children under age 18 whom the sponsor intends to adopt in Canada; children of whom the sponsor is the guardian; orphaned brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, and grandchildren under age 18; and any other relative, if the sponsor has no relative as described above, either abroad or in Canada.

Live-in Caregiver

A temporary resident of Canada who:

- has successfully completed the equivalent of Canadian secondary school
- has six months of full-time training in a field or occupation related to that for which a work permit is being sought
- can speak, read, and understand English or French at a level sufficient to communicate effectively when unsupervised
- signs an employment contract with the future employer.

Participants in this program may apply for permanent resident status in Canada after completing two years of live-in care-giving employment within three years of arrival in Canada.

Foreign Student

A temporary resident an immigration officer has approved to study in Canada.

Foreign Worker

A foreign national temporarily authorized to enter and remain in Canada as a worker.

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