Lecture Notes

Professional Communications OER: Interpersonal



# How to Use this Document

Slide decks and lecture notes have been provided for each of the module topics. Lecture notes are contained within the slide decks as “Presenter Notes” and are also provided here for easy reference. Slide decks and lecture notes are intended for instructor modification. Please add to or remove content from these to suit your lesson goals and the length of time you have available. You may also wish to use them as part of a blended or fully online course plan. Where additional documents are referenced in the lecture notes, you will find links here. If you are unfamiliar with using Google Slides, see the [Google Docs help file](https://support.google.com/docs?hl=en&p=#topic=2811776).

As you prepare for lessons in this module, it may be useful to review the [X Instructor Notes].

# Communication and Diversity in Canadian Workplaces Slide Deck

For this lesson, you may need access to the [Reflection Journal](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OwyH_aSpgigSVLxt9Nb2T_6psA8C9CU2vP_TUY8R3Qc/edit?usp=sharing), [Concept Map Assignment](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xgvpD6-9Lcc7P_ZxTbiau6uPvmhNoOpm7323EB6ef5E/edit?usp=sharing), and [How Diverse are We?](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cT3N-TQumf8NSNk2luxMo6ryQdZAvAIjmIgteqL2G7s/edit) handout. Prior to holding this class class, teachers will need to prepare for the “What Is a Stereotype?” activity by marking sheets of paperwith grouping labels at the top (for example: men, women, Jews, Chinese-Canadians, Caucasians, African-Canadians, Inuit, athletes, geeks, the homeless, the middle class, teenagers, 60+ age group).

## Cover Slide

## Welcome

**Notes:** Add to slide a course name, dates, location, instructor name.

## Intro to Diversity in Canada (Video)

**Notes:** If using, the OER “Intro to Diversity in Canada” video.

## The Communication Process Revisited

**Lecture:** The Communication Process that you learned about in the Foundations module plays a big part in interpersonal communication, too. Think about inside jokes that you have with your friends, for example. Maybe the mention of a word or a name makes you and your best friend laugh, but an outsider wouldn’t have a clue what you were talking about! The shared understanding that we have with other people is what makes the communication process work. We give meaning to words, symbols, and other elements of communication and agree on that meaning so that we can send a message and know that the receiver will understand us. This is what that process looks like.

## For example…

**Lecture:** Communicating interpersonally relies on shared understanding of things like gestures, signs, and words. If we don’t share the same meaning when we use these, we’ll have misunderstandings. For example, this hand gesture, for us in North America is a peace sign, but will be interpreted by people from the United Kingdom and Australia as an insult akin to the middle finger. Not a good way to make friends! Signs and symbols are another tricky area to navigate, particularly among different cultures. What do you interpret this road sign to mean? It is used in Poland to alert motorists that they are entering an accident area, but since we don’t have a sign that looks like this in North America, we might have trouble making sense of it. Last but potentially most difficult to interpret are words that have different meanings to different people. This is where things can get confusing! For example, when you hear the words *braces*, *football*, and *barbie*, what do these mean to you? Chances are you’re thinking of a device that straightens your teeth, a game that the Dallas Cowboys play, and a doll that drives a pink Corvette. But if you’re from the United Kingdom, you might instead be imagining the suspenders that your grandpa uses instead of a belt, and a game that North Americans call “soccer.” If you’re from Australia, instead of a Barbie doll, you might instead be thinking about a barbecue! Even cultures that share a language, popular media, and other similarities can interpret messages differently. This is all the more apparent when messages are flowing within a diverse group of people.

## What is Diversity?

**Notes:** The instructor leads the class in creating a concept map on the board based on the activity in the [Concept Map Assignment](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xgvpD6-9Lcc7P_ZxTbiau6uPvmhNoOpm7323EB6ef5E/edit?usp=sharing). Encourage the use of key terms like *ethnocentrism*, *bias*, and *stereotyping*, and of the types of diversity mentioned in the chapter, such as *linguistic*, *generational*, and *socioeconomic*.

*Instructors, please note that this activity can be used as a solo or group assignment or an in-class activity depending on the needs of your class. It is used in this lecture as a class activity simply as a possible use case.*

**Lecture:** Let’s create a concept map to connect some of the terms you learned in the reading. Who can share one of the new terms that they learned from the reading?

## How Diverse Are We?

**Notes:** Hand out the [How Diverse Are We?](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cT3N-TQumf8NSNk2luxMo6ryQdZAvAIjmIgteqL2G7s/edit) sheet and ask students to circulate in the classroom, finding out who can initial the squares on their paper. The first person to have all of their squares signed is the winner. You may wish to provide some stakes or small prize for participation, to add a light challenge or competition to the activity.

## Benefits of Diversity Discussion

**Lecture:** Now that we have looked at the diversity in our own classroom, let’s talk about what the benefits of these differences might be. Who can share one of the items on your handout that you think would be a good thing in the workplace? Why do you think this is?

**Notes:** Prompt for the following key points.

* Can stem the skills, talent, and population shortage
* Better understanding and connections to domestic and global markets
* Diverse teams are more creative and innovative and deliver higher value
* Increase employee and customer satisfaction while reducing lawsuits and increasing overall public reputation
* Improve company performance and result in increased shareholder value

## Diversity in Canada

**Lecture:** Do you consider Canada to be a diverse place? Here is one of the graphs from the eText that tells us a little about the makeup of Canadians. Where do you see the highest concentration of people who were born in their home province? What about people who were born outside of Canada? What does this mean for you as a citizen of Canada and as a worker in this country?

## What is a Stereotype? (Activity)

**Notes:** Prior to class, prepare sheets of paperwith grouping labels at the top (e.g., men, women, Jews, Chinese-Canadians, Caucasians, African-Canadians, Inuit, athletes, geeks, the homeless, the middle class, teenagers, 60+ age group).

Pass these around the class and ask students to write down something that they know or have heard said about this group of people. Stress that this does not need to be something that the students themselves believe.

Once all the papers have circulated and been added to, lead a discussion about the stereotypes that have been pointed out.

**Lecture:**

* Where do these assumptions come from?
* How do we know they are true, or not true?
* If they are true, can we say for certain that they are true of all members of that group?
* Why do these stereotypes persist?
* How could we eradicate them?
* How do these assumptions play a part in the way we communicate with and about this group?

## Types of Diversity

**Lecture:** Who can name a key benefit, challenge, or communication issue that arises in the workplace for each of these demographics? Can you think of other types of diversity not listed here?

**Put Yourself in Someone Else’s Shoes**

**Notes:** Provide students with the link to the interactive activity on the website PlaySpent.org and invite them to work through it. When they have finished, ask about what the experience showed them.

**Lecture:**

* Were you successful when you reached the end of the exercise? Why or why not?
* Is the experience of the character in the exercise relatable for you, or very different from your own life and your social group?
* How might a person like the character in the group face challenges in the workplace?

## Diversity and Segregation

**Notes:** Have the students interact with the [Parable of the Polygons](http://ncase.me/polygons/) activity.

**Lecture:**

* Why do we organize ourselves into segregated units? Do you think this happens intentionally?
* What facets of diversity do you think would make these shapes unhappy?
* How do feelings of bias occur? Are they learned?
* Do you think the societal attitudes demonstrated in the activity can be changed? If so, how?
* In what ways do you experience bias towards diversity in your own life, or observe it in other communities and social groups?

## Reflection Journal

**Notes:** Introduce the assignment. The first reflection is on the topic of Diversity

[Diversity in the Workplace Assignment.](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WE8Yy6AxnjC0hqVJdukU7I82OybD6Q_8Ofq7IdAj78k/edit)

## Review

**Notes:** Recap today’s lecture, touching on key points. *Today, you have learned…*

## Closing Slide

**Add to slide:** Any readings, homework, preparations or reminders that students need before next class.

## Credits

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# Your Interpersonal Communication Preferences Slide Deck

For this lesson, you may need access to [X].

## Cover Slide

## Welcome

**Notes:** Add to slide a course name, dates, location, instructor name.

## Intro to your Interpersonal Communication Preferences (Video)

**Notes:** If using, the OER “Intro to your Interpersonal Communication Preferences” video.

## Personal, Social, and Cultural Identity

**Notes:** Draw a chart on the board with three headings: *personal*, *social*, and *cultural*. Ask the students to share identities that are part of their personality and list these on the chart. As a class, decide which items fit under which headings. Also, as a class, decide which are ascribed and which are avowed. Use a different coloured pen to underline or mark the ascribed and avowed identities so that the class can distinguish between them.

**Lecture:** Personalidentities may change often as you develop new interests and hobbies. Social identities develop as you become a member of social groups. Culturalidentities are often part of us from birth or are passed down to us by elder members of our cultural group. Which personal, social, and cultural identities are present in this classroom? Who can share a personal, social, or cultural identity that they have? Which ones are ascribed, and which are avowed? How have these identities changed throughout your life? What proportion of your personal, social, and cultural identities are shared with members of your family or social group?

## The Five-Factor Model

**Notes:** Have students individually complete the [Five-Factor personality model test.](http://www.personalitytest.org.uk/) Once everyone has run through the test, lead a discussion about what the students discovered. They should not be required to share their results; instead, they should be encouraged to share what surprised them or whether or not they think the test is accurate for them. How do they think that these traits influence what they are like to work with? When they have worked with people whom they found challenging, do they think that this was caused by differences in personality profile? How might these personality traits influence the types of work they enjoy or are good at?

**Lecture:** Personal identity is examined using the Five-Factor model. You can use the acronym OCEAN to remember the five traits examined: openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism.

## Perception

## Lecture: Perception is about how we see the world. We do not all perceive things in the same way. For example, take a look at these images. What do you see? Do we all see the same thing? These are optical illusions; our brain tricks us into seeing things in a certain way, even if that is not the reality. Do you look into the cylinder from the left or the right? In reality, this is just a series of circles and is not three-dimensional. Your brain is playing a trick. What about the other graphic—which is the larger central circle? In reality, they are both the same size. It is what’s around them that tricks our brain into seeing something that is not accurate. But if you have seen these optical illusions before, you’ll know what to look out for.

Differences in perception are a challenge when communicating, too. Because we don’t all see things in the same way, and our preconceptions and experiences play a part, perception can create bias, even when we don’t realize it. For example, if you are part of a hiring panel interviewing candidates for a new role at your company, and the hiring panel are all of the same demographic group (young white males, for example), you are more likely to select a candidate that matches your shared demographic traits—even if that person is not the most qualified for the role. And you may not even realize why you’ve made that choice; perception biases can be unconscious.

## Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

## Lecture: Sometimes when a person reacts negatively to something we say or do, our perception is that they don’t like us, that they are angry with us, or that we have done something wrong. But often this is not about us at all. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs tells us that all humans have a set of basic needs that they require for survival. When the needs on the bottom of the pyramid are met, we can move up and attend to the next set of needs. This has a couple of key implications for the workplace. First, it tells us that when a person’s basic needs are not met, for example, if the person is tired or hasn’t eaten, we can’t expect them to perform at full capacity. So if someone snaps at you unexpectedly at 2 p.m., instead of snapping back at them, we should probably make sure they had lunch, first! Second, it shows us how much of an impact the workplace can have on the well-being and happiness of employees. If the employer can help to meet some of these basic needs, employees have more capacity to work within the higher levels of the hierarchy.

For example, if the employer pays a good wage, provides a quality work environment, and creates opportunities for social interaction between colleagues, employees have the capacity to work within the Esteem rung of the hierarchy—for example, on projects that advance business goals and provide them with career advancement opportunities—because their Physiological, Safety, and Belonging needs are met.

## Preferences and Work Habits

## Notes: Have students fill out the [Work Habits Questionnaire](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dOJVUPttffeH2QS94Bjaskqt-OzUmoid04UhWnwCrBE/edit), then lead a discussion asking students to share some of the points they noted down.

## Belbin’s Team Model

## Lecture: What strengths and weaknesses do you bring to teamwork? In groups, use the internet to do some research on Belbin’s Inventory and find out whether you align most with action-, people-, or thinking-oriented roles. Which specific role fits you best? What about the other members of your group?

## Review

**Notes:** Recap today’s lecture, touching on key points. *Today, you have learned…*

## Closing Slide

**Add to slide:** Any readings, homework, preparations, or reminders that students need before next class.

## Credits

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# Cross-Cultural Communication Slide Deck

For this lesson, you may need access to [X].

## Cover Slide

## Welcome

**Notes:** Add to slide a course name, dates, location, instructor name.

## Intro to Cross-Cultural Communication (Video)

**Notes:** If using, the OER “Intro to Cross-Cultural Communication” video.

## What Is Culture?

**Lecture:** People from the same culture share an understanding of their beliefs, attitudes, values, traditions, and assumptions. This information is learned and from a young age, through a shared language and a similar way of interpreting messages. Culture is learned, shared, dynamic, systemic, and symbolic.

## Comparing Cultures with HofstedeNotes: Have students work in pairs to use Hostede’s Cultural tool to compare Canada, the UK and the US. Once they have done this, they should then compare Canada with two other countries that they think Canada has a significant cultural difference with. Once they have had the opportunity to try this, lead a discussion about what they discovered and how they think the work environment might be different in these countries when compared to Canada.

**Lecture:** Compare Canada, the UK, and the US using Hofstede’s cultural tool. Discuss the similarities and differences among them. Reset the tool and compare Canada with two different countries that you think Canada has a large cultural difference with. Discuss whether they are as different as you expected or more similar. What do you think it would be like to work in one of these countries as compared to Canada?

## Trompenaars

**Lecture:** In pairs, examine each of Trompenaars elements individually and decide where you think Canada would fall on the continuum for each one of these dimensions.

**Notes:** Once student pairs have had time to look into Trompenaars’ elements individually, ask for volunteers to explain where they placed Canada on each of these continuums. Why did they make these choices?

## Reflecting on CultureLecture: Where would you fall on Trompenaars’ continuums for each of the elements? Make a note of it in your reflection journals.

## Cross-Cultural Communication Concept Map

**Notes:** [Cross-Cultural Communication Concept Map](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xgvpD6-9Lcc7P_ZxTbiau6uPvmhNoOpm7323EB6ef5E/)

**Lecture:** In pairs, create a cross-cultural communication concept map to connect the terms and ideas you learned about in the chapter.

## Cross-Cultural Research Assignment

## Notes: [Cross-Cultural Research Assignment](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_xqhyfaILXHksdU1SVB95WBecXzKus4c4qXMoy35G2U/)

**Lecture:** In groups, decide what you would do to prepare to work with someone from another culture, and then collect the information that you think you would need to know. Collate your research as you will be presenting it to the class.

## Intercultural Development Continuum

## Notes: Explain the details of each stage (see eText)

## Review

**Notes:** Recap today’s lecture, touching on key points. *Today, you have learned…*

## Closing Slide

**Add to slide:** Any readings, homework, preparations, or reminders that students need before next class.

## Credits

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# Conflict Resolution Slide Deck

For this lesson, you may need access to the [Conflict Styles Quiz](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1WnAUSGvK6JGNak3hqT4_UDtBBVpr9df7-VSvPxAd05s), the [Escalation of a Conflict Exercise](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ov1fWmM7Kl1tdgKoHqZj1qcj4pQ47F8q1PdscxEWJE4/edit?usp=sharing), and the [Summary Reflection sheet](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MZ88sOU893j4UVGFjv1W_gg_ggzr98kCLd_fhdhrV_0).

## Cover Slide

## Welcome

**Notes:** Add to slide a course name, dates, location, instructor name.

## Intro to Conflict Resolution (Video)

**Notes:** If using, the OER “Intro to Conflict Resolution” video.

## What Is Conflict?

**Lecture:** As we talk about conflict, it is important to remember a few things about it. Often we think that conflict is a negative thing that means our relationship with the other person(s) is in trouble—but this isn’t true! Conflict often presents an opportunity to resolve issues. It happens to everyone and occurs because we have incompatible goals, scarce resources, or there is some sort of communication interference. Remember when we talked about interference or “noise” when we were discussing the communication process—this plays a major role in conflict situations. It is also important to remember that we can’t avoid conflict, and we can’t always resolve it. Sometimes there isn’t a solution, and we have to “agree to disagree” and try to move forward anyway.

## Types of Conflict

## Notes: Structural conflicts are a result of the way things are set up. For example, perhaps your workplace uses outdated software that makes it difficult and time-consuming to share documents with colleagues, so you become frustrated with a colleague in a different department who is taking too long to return the files you need.

Relationship conflicts are tied into communication, as they may result from people communicating with different channels or with different speeds. These can also be the result of miscommunication or time-management issues.

Interaction conflicts happen when we don’t do a good job of interacting with others. Maybe your time-management skills aren’t great, and you don’t realize the impact this has on your team, for example.

Values-and-identity conflicts happen when our values don’t align and can be especially apparent in cross-cultural scenarios.

Data conflicts happen when we have different sets of information. For example, if two team members both believe they are responsible for the same deliverable because their line managers have given them differing information, this can cause conflict.

Lastly, cultural conflicts occur when we have misunderstandings over language, norms, and communication styles.

## Phases of Conflict

## Lecture: At a big-picture level, conflict usually occurs over five main phases, which can be broken down further into various stages. First, we’ll get to know these five phases: Prelude, Triggering Event, Initiation, Differentiation, and Resolution. The prelude tells us who is involved and what the situation is. The triggering event is a specific occurrence that kickstarts the conflict; it could be a remark or annoyance, for example. Initiation is when the conflict officially begins. Perhaps there is an argument or confrontation, for example. The differentiation phase decides how far the conflict will go. Perhaps the people involved decide to drop the issue entirely, maybe they work it out, or maybe they seek help from someone else to help clear up the issue. In the last stage, resolution, the conflict is resolved or managed. If at all possible, you’ll be aiming to resolve conflict, but if there is no solution to a problem, you’ll need to find a way to manage it. Perhaps you’ll work with another team if the communication challenges with your existing team cannot be overcome, for example.

## Stages of Conflict

## Lecture: Conflict can be broken down further into various stages or specific points. It may be easier to look at this diagram to think about how conflict escalates and is reduced. Early on, emotions are running high, and those involved usually become frustrated. This can result in blaming and competition between them. Often, issues from the past get raised up again during a new conflict, which serves to “fuel the fire.” If things become too emotional, the conversation between those involved may become abandoned entirely. Without some type of intervention here, the relationship can break down into hostility and a stalemate or outburst, where neither party can see a resolution. This is where help from a neutral outsider can make a big difference. If both parties are committed to finding a resolution, negotiations can begin. During this time, parties look for a resolution and reach an agreement or settlement, and then they can work towards rebuilding their relationship through peacebuilding.

## Escalations of a Conflict

## Notes: Have students act out a conflict using the instructions in the [Escalations of a Conflict Exercise](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ov1fWmM7Kl1tdgKoHqZj1qcj4pQ47F8q1PdscxEWJE4). Following the activity, lead a discussion about what worked and what didn’t. What could they do to mitigate the issues experienced in a real-life conflict situation?

## Reactions to Conflict

## Notes: Call on students, asking them to explain each type of reaction and an example of how this might play out in the workplace. They should use their reading as a guideline.

## Conflict Management Styles

## Lecture: This diagram shows the five main styles of managing conflict. These are: Competing, Collaborating, Avoiding, Accommodating, and Compromising.

Take the [Conflict Styles Quiz](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WnAUSGvK6JGNak3hqT4_UDtBBVpr9df7-VSvPxAd05s) to find out which you most closely identify with. Once everyone has completed the quiz, we’ll share some of our answers.

There are no right or wrong answers. Each style has benefits and drawbacks, depending on the situation. Raise your hand if you fit within the competing style? Collaborating? Avoiding? Accommodating? Compromising?

## Did you learn something new about yourself, or were you not at all surprised with your results? How do you think this would affect your ability to work in a team?

## Resolving Conflict in Groups

## Lecture: Conflict happens often in groups. The more people who are involved, the more chance there is for a conflict situation to occur. This is a natural and unavoidable part of working in groups, but there are some things you can do to minimize the amount of conflict you experience in a group situation, or to help you resolve it, when it does happen.

When you are setting up a new working group, come up with strategies and communication processes that will help you to prevent or handle conflict. Good communication will help to stop issues from building into conflict. When you meet, take notes and have someone take meetings, for the record. This way, there is no confusion about what is being sad or which responsibilities are whose. If there are any issues of friction, bring the conversation back to the present. What are the issues you are dealing with now, and what can you do about them to help the group move forward? There is no benefit to dragging up issues from the past or worrying about future concerns unless they have direct impact on the current problem.

When someone is responding emotionally, try to find out what the cause of the emotions are. Often, we don’t realize why we are reacting in a certain way until we talk about it. When emotional responses come up, have each team member explain the facts and assumptions that they are basing their views on. It may be that their facts or assumptions are incorrect, so clarifying these can help things to move forward. Whenever you are dividing up work, make sure there is clarity about who is responsible for what, and in what order tasks will be completed in. This helps to keep things moving and avoid duplication of work. If you are having a conflict within your group, it is sometimes helpful to split off into smaller discussions and then come back to the larger group with suggestions and ideas. It can be intimidating for people to speak out in a large group, and it is sometimes more difficult to get discussions and ideas going, so this is a strategy that can help you. If you are struggling to find a resolution within your group, taking a vote can help to clarify each group member’s position and bring a resolution quickly.

## Business Etiquette

## Lecture: Here are some habits that you can work on that will help you develop good business etiquette when working in North America. Remember that things are different in different cultures, so do your cross-cultural research if you are working with people from elsewhere and you should be able to manage just fine!

## Summary Reflection

## Lecture: In your journal, reflect on what you have learned and how your opinions have, or have not changed, based on the concept maps and reflective writing you have done during this module. Use the [Summary Reflection sheet](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MZ88sOU893j4UVGFjv1W_gg_ggzr98kCLd_fhdhrV_0) to guide your work.

## Review

**Notes:** Recap today’s lecture, touching on key points. *Today, you have learned…*

## Closing Slide

**Add to slide:** Any readings, homework, preparations, or reminders that students need before next class.

## Credits