

Gaining Access to the Workplace

New Employee Orientation for  
Newcomers in the Workplace

Module 1: Facilitator Guide

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## Module 1 Instructor Guide

This guide is to demonstrate the instructional approach used with the module PowerPoint slides. The guide is developed for Module 1 only but illustrates the kinds of instructional strategies and considerations needed to teach all of the materials.

### Learner Profile:

Gaining Access is an educational tool designed for Stage 1, Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) Level 3 (basic). It has adaptability (in the tasks) for CLB 4-6 (intermediate). Each module was developed for CLB stage 1, level 3.

### CLB speaking level 3 includes:

- Saying simple sentences
- Answering simple questions
- Asking for help
- Asking short routine questions
- Giving basic information about familiar subjects

### CLB listening level 3 includes:

- Understanding short sentences that are spoken slowly
- Understanding instructions
- Following directions
- Get the most important words in a story
- Understand when a person asks something

Although it would be ideal for safety and understanding on the job for all employees to be higher level speakers it is not the reality on jobsites and in the trades. For this reason, employers and employees need to be made aware and reminded of the communication misunderstandings and safety issues lower language levels can cause on jobsites and be encouraged to make EWP training available and/or accessible so that employees can begin the process of developing skills in English for the workplace.

## Program Learning Outcomes

### Matched to Essential skills

The program learning outcomes took shape from needs assessment activities and consultation with project advisory committee members. The following outcomes were developed and then matched with **Essential Skills**.

#### **1. ESL speakers may have difficulty accessing the sites and communicating their concerns.**

Procedures to access the sites may not be clear to newcomers (neither English L1 nor L2 speakers) causing confusion, and/or the need to search out site offices or even being left behind at the site gate. At some sites there was no identification on onsite busses nor marked bus stops to identify locations.

#### Essential Skills

Document Use (*study maps and refer to directions to find job sites*)

Oral Communication (*relay messages, ask and give directions, coordinate tasks*)

#### **2. ESL speakers may have problems asking questions or clarifying what they heard.**

The process at the orientation can be confusing. For example, trades people need to have their Construction Safety Training System (CSTS) cards and their drug and alcohol tests filled out prior to arriving. On some sites they must know to report to security for name checks before proceeding. The dispatchers often speak very quickly, abruptly, quietly and frequently use idioms or slang

#### Essential Skills

Reading (*read instructions and complete forms, read handbooks*)

#### **3. ESL speakers will have to adopt and use trade safety language.**

Site safety orientation training varies. For example, at one site training consisted of a security guard showing a video, returning once it was over, handing out a 12

question multiple choice 'quiz' and asking if anyone had questions they needed the answers for. Other sites had safety personnel who used power point presentations combined with videos on particular safety points. These sites used checklists of items covered in the orientation and a signed consent form that the information had been covered. Vocabulary including words like muster points, 100% retention required, lanyards on clothes, imminent danger, house-keeping policy – definitely challenging for L2 speakers below an advanced level.

### Essential Skills

*Reading (read completed forms, read material safety data sheets, read safety manuals)*

*Writing (record information about daily work, details of conversation)*

*Document Use (scan Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System for safe handling information)*

*Oral Communication (discuss safety issues on the worksite, exchange opinions with co-workers regarding critical safety issues)*

*Working with Others (participate in discussions about work processes or product improvement)*

*Continuous Learning (enroll in classes offered through unions, employers or other groups if any are available to meet this specific need)*

#### **4. ESL speakers will have to learn acronyms, slang and idioms in the safety context.**

Examples of the acronyms used include WHMIS, JHA, PPE; examples of the slang used include "this place is going to be a zoo", and "everything has to be tied off" and "luck runs out" and "in the line of fire". These will cause misunderstandings for L2 speakers.

### Essential Skills

*Continuous Learning (pay attention onsite and ask for clarification, establish mentors or cultural bridges to help in the process, enroll in classes offered through unions, employers or other groups if any are available to meet this specific need, consciously attempt to reduce the lingo onsite to clear plain language)*

#### **5. Newcomers will have to understand and adopt the concept of safety as an attitude and an essential way of thinking.**

The notion that safety is a value and a "100 % safe culture to deliver construction without harm to people, property or the environment" is a workplace goal. (Scotford Employee Handbook) The notion of "common sense" regarding safety on the job may be different across cultures and accordingly needs to be addressed.

The idea that, “the success of our safety and loss prevention program requires the dedication, commitment, involvement and participation of all personnel working together to achieve this common goal”, (PCL Safety and Loss Prevention Handbook) could also cause confusion, for example, in trades people from cultures where workers are not part of the decision making process

### Essential Skills

Reading (*read completed forms, read safety manuals*)

Writing (*record information about daily work, details of conversations*)

Oral Communication (*relay messages, give directions and coordinate tasks with co-workers, discuss safety issues on the worksite, exchange opinions with co-workers regarding critical safety issues*)

Working with Others (*participate in discussions about work processes*)

## **Barriers to learning**

The possible barriers to learning you will encounter for learners in this context include:

- Basic CLB levels
- Time removed from formal education
- Lack of time due to personal commitments and long work days

## Modules

For the modules consider the following facilitation strategies:

- Provide practical information, authentic vocabulary and workplace tasks
- Use clear, plain language and key visuals in PPTs
- Key visuals help focus and understanding – employee, employer, question, answer, think aloud, are repeated in each module
- Process charts are included to keep the words at a minimum
- Reduce large amount of text into understandable slides
- Communicate the language and concepts of safety through practicing speaking and listening to the new language learned
- Include clear speech and pronunciation features based on the language of the module
- Adapt onsite training material to accommodate for cultural differences
- Encourage a safe work environment that accommodates for basic level speakers

## PowerPoints

The Gaining Access to the Workplace materials includes 6 modules contained in Powerpoint slides. Each module contains components that are repeated.

Slide 1 – Title Slide

Slide 2 – Module Topics

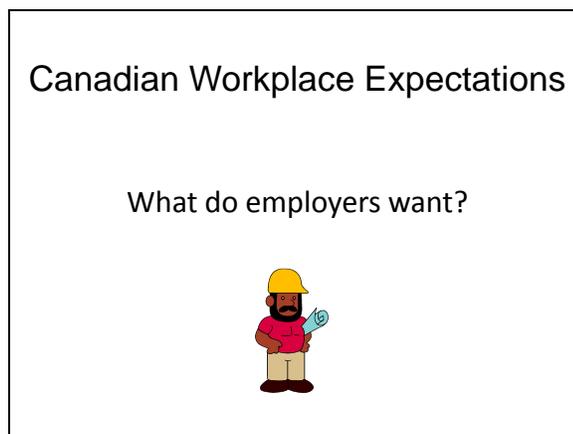


### Slide 3 – Share Stories



Stories help learners relate to the topic in a personal way, and bring their past experiences and knowledge. It adds authenticity and leads to discussions of cultural differences and similarities and creates shared meaning.

### Slide 4 – Canadian Workplace Expectations



Cultural content helps inform employees about working in Canadian jobsites.

The additional slides provide content, outline discussion and other activities and assessment.

## Module 1 General Outcomes

### Module 1 Workplace Responsibilities

**Slide one: Title slide - Responsibilities**

**Slide two: Module Topics**

**Slide three: Share stories**

It's your first day on the job. You need to follow directions.

- What kind of information will the company onsite safety supervisor (safety rep) or other person who conducts the site orientation give you?
- What questions will you need to answer?
- What questions will you need to ask?
- How will you feel about speaking up?
- How will your first day experience be different (for you) in our community from yours back home?

*(Stories may be presented in past tense if the workers are not new to Canada's workplace – present tense if they are. Relating personal experiences to the work is a buy in activity and done as a whole group activity practices listening and speaking skills.)*

### Slide four: Your Workplace Expectations

*Set the Stage – Activate the Schema*

*(help participants focus on the topic and specific language functions)*

When you are in the workplace you need language to communicate.  
Come up with your top three reasons why:

*Possible answers:*

- *You need to follow directions*
- *You need to understand what is expected*
- *You may have to fill in forms*

What you can do when you do not understand?  
Come up with your top three answers:

*Possible answers:*

- *Ask questions of a friendly coworker or a cultural bridge*
- *Ask your boss to explain*
- *Repeat back to clarify*

## Slide five: Canadian Workplace Expectations

What do employees want?

This handout contains culture general information about Canadian workplaces. It is the starting point for discussions and will give you an idea of your participant's knowledge and experience in Canadian workplaces. It contains a lot of important information and can be used in several ways.

- As culture bites throughout the workshops (there are 4 groupings on the worksheet)
- As culture work with language aspects, for example with questions (beginning with, Do you prefer **to help** or Do you prefer **helping**). This will take some preparation work. For example, you could put the generalizations in question form for CLB level 3

*"You are on the way to work when you meet a friend. He asks you to walk with him and show him the way to the doctor's office. If you help him you will be late."*

### To help

Q 1. Do you prefer to help him and arrive late to work?

Q 2. Do you prefer to go straight to work?

Answer can be informal and brief: a. to help him or b. to go straight to work

### Helping

Q 1. Do you prefer helping him and arriving late to work?

Q 2. Do you prefer going straight to work?

Answer can be informal and just: helping him or going straight to work

This would open the discussion about what is expected in the Canadian workplace, for example: What will the boss think if you are usually late? How would your coworkers feel?

(The answers need to be thought of in relation to credibility, rapport, initiative etc. in the Canadian workplace. A comparison chart can be built for the home countries and Canada. )

- As opportunities to inform on pragmatics, for example using teaching strategies for asking for assistance or offering assistance:

*“The boss just gave information on your task. You do not understand the task.”*

List three ways to ask for help.

List three ways the boss might offer to help you.

### **Possible answers on asking for help:**

- Can you please go over the task with me? I think I missed a key point.
- Would you please repeat the points so I can do the job right?

### **Possible offers to help:**

- Can you please repeat the task? I want to check your understanding.
- Do you understand? Should I repeat the points for you?

## **Handouts: Canadian Workplace Expectations**

### **Slide six: Orientation Quiz 1**

#### **Reading:**

- Participants will likely have to take an onsite orientation quiz – ask the group if they have ever taken a quiz onsite and how this one compared, ask about the test taking procedure (sometimes a video is shown and the questions and answers come directly from the video, often the answers are given out afterwards and so they have to pay attention to the official giving the test and correct their wrong answers and sometimes it takes the form of a checklist in response to items discussed ).
- discuss taking a test in a second language, getting the gist of a question – ask the group if they could understand the questions, which question was hard to understand (questions 11 – 15 were chosen considering that they are more difficult to answer and may give greater challenges).
- ask about strategies they used to understand the questions.

## Test taking:

- talk about strategies to answer multiple choice questions (e.g. delete obvious wrong answers).
- A similar quiz will be given again at the end of the course as an indication of material learned and the participants will have the opportunity to compare their marks).

## Handouts: Orientation Quiz

Test answers: 1.a 2.c 3.d 4.b 5.a 6.a 7.c 8.a 9.a  
10.d 11.c 12.c 13.a 14.a 15.b

## Slide seven: Working Together

## Slide eight: Working Together

## Slide nine: Working Together

These slides were developed using the following principles of clear language:

**Clarity** - Have a clear idea about what you want to communicate and why. The need is to communicate the concept of rights and responsibilities in order to reduce the chance of workplace injuries.

**Know your audience** - Use familiar language and give the information that they need. The participants are usually second language speakers, who may have had few years of formal education, have been out of school for a long time, have difficulty understanding large amounts of text and documentation, and like to get information in other ways than reading.

**Be consistent across the PPT s**– help participants get the information they need. These slides use visuals to represent employers and employees and a green ball to represent safety. They are balanced left and right to show the rights (as represented by what is expected of the employer to provide the employee and the responsibilities (as represented by what is expected of the employee).

**Apply the principles** – be direct, use short sentences, use the active voice, use familiar words, use visuals and illustrations

The written information has been significantly reduced for the participant's language levels but the messages are extremely important for safety in the workplace.

### **Cultural information:**

The concepts of rights and responsibilities are inherent in the three slides and are basic to being safe in a Canadian multicultural workplace.

The material is referenced from the Occupational Health and Safety Act, A Guide to Rights and Responsibilities in Alberta Workplaces, and the Workplace Rights and Responsibilities (Poster) **Publisher:** Alberta Employment and Immigration

**Catalogue number:** #567274

The material is quite language dense, the ideas are complex and contain cultural messages often uniquely Canadian. "Cultures are the sets of inherent answers to questions posed by [workplace] life, providing information about whether, how and when to act. We draw on them for common sense, for what to do and for what not to do." " ... it is the glue that connects us in social groups providing unwritten rules, codes, and boundaries around communication, perception, and meaning making."

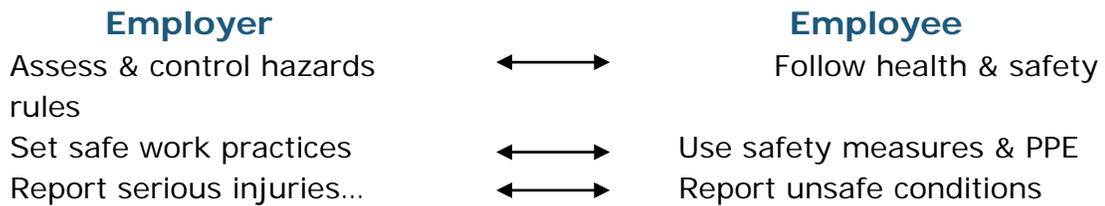
Reference: Conflict Across Cultures, Michelle LeBaron and Venashri Pillay, Intercultural Press, Boston 2006

### Plain Language

In an effort to include CLB early level speakers, principles of clear language were applied.

Things to consider:

- The key visuals – symbols for boss and employee and safety
- The short sentences can be exploited for further meaning, for example the first phrase on the employers side on slide 7: Protect health and safety can stand alone or can be a brainstorming session followed by creating a list protective measures. They can be an opening for reference to more written information in the act or guides above.
- Each phrase on the employer side is balanced by a phrase on the employee side.



The culture pieces here include differences in cultural orientations: (Individualism – Communitarianism, High Power Distance – Low Power Distance, High Content – Low Content) and the unwritten rules of the workplace. What is the law, the rule, the procedure onsite and how does it really affect the reality of individual behaviours onsite.

## **Handouts: List 4 employer responsibilities - List 4 employee responsibilities**

### **Slide ten: Jim’s Story and Human Rights - Workers Rights**

Jim’s story is online at:

<http://www.thewclc.ca/edge/issue7/HealthSafety/HealthSafetyIndex.html>

Jim’s story is also accessible in the PowerPoint slides by clicking on the box, Jim’s story. You will need Internet access to view the resource.

#### **Listen to Jim’s Story Part 1**

- The story is spoken and has subtitles included to help reinforce needed vocabulary.
- It can be paused easily and replayed.
- The language level is low to intermediate.
- Jim’s research topic is a problem at work which involves using a tool he is not trained to use, the right to refuse work or ask for training and the implications of doing so.

#### **Listen to Jim’s Story Part 2**

- Jim’s research includes some significant facts to build on, including the number of workers killed and injured on jobsites in Canada and the number of Workers Health and Safety Representatives in companies whose presence can emphasize the importance of being safe.

- Another learning point is the idea of independent learning, taking initiative and responsibility in Canadian culture.

### **Listen to Jim's Story Part 3**

- It moves on to cover asking the boss(s) questions which reinforces the work on slide 3 – Sharing Stories.

### **The Learn More Section Describes:**

#### **Workers Three Basic Rights**

- Reviews the right to know, the right to participate and the right to refuse dangerous work with definitions.

#### **Questions to ask Yourself**

- Vocabulary check on rights, safety, attitude, and training.
- Uses “fill in the blanks” in sentences to reinforce the message in slides 7-9.

#### **Questions to ask Your Boss**

- Vocabulary check on meetings, representative, emergency, hazard.
- Uses “fill in the blanks” in sentences to reinforce the message in slides 7-9.

#### **Writing Assignment 1**

- Can be used for discussion or debate in pairs, small groups or whole groups.
- *Q. – Why do you think so many workers are still getting injured or killed on the job?*
- *Q. – If you had to choose between keeping your boss happy or refusing to work in unsafe conditions, which choice would you make?*

## Workplace Rights

Participants may ask you questions that relate to the Alberta Human Rights. English Express Special Issue - Human rights in Alberta is available online at: <http://www.englishexpress.ca> and also accessible in the PPT. You can:

- Read and listen to the special issue
- Download and print the special issue (23 letter-sized pages)
- Download a read-only PDF of the special issue (8 tabloid-sized pages)
- Download the Teaching Notes for the special issue

Participants may ask you questions that relate to the Alberta Employment Standards Code. English Express Special Issue - Employment Law Protects Workers is available online at:

<http://alis.alberta.ca/pdf/cshop/EngExpEmploystandards.pdf>

Participants may ask you questions that relate to the Alberta Workers Health and Safety or the Workers Compensations Board. English Express Special Issue - Be Safe at Work is available online at:

<http://alis.alberta.ca/pdf/cshop/engexpsafework.pdf>

These resources are excellent for beginner level ESL speakers. They include references and contact information that participants may need. They also have teaching notes. Tasks and activities are included in the resources.

## Slide eleven: Safe Work Practice

Objective is to grapple with and understand responsibility and safe work practices and procedures. Not to teach the actual safety skills or standards.

### Culture work

The following safety culture value of the Alberta Construction Safety Association is indicative of the workplace:

In carrying out their tasks at work, what workers don't know **can** hurt them. Safe work procedures should always be team efforts. By involving others in the process, you reduce the possibility of overlooking an individual job step or a potential hazard. You also increase the likelihood of identifying the most appropriate measures for eliminating or controlling hazards.

Referenced from <http://www.acsasafety.org/Default.aspx?tabid=71>

### Language work

- Talk about filling in forms at work
- Forms are used to collect information
- Document what has happened

- Control work tasks
- Control work processes
- Show samples from PPT of blank form and then completed in form
  
- Safe work practice blank form
  - Easier for early CLB levels to view – without a lot of text
  - Can be reviewed for vocabulary
  - Can be reviewed for format – the layout of a safe work practice form

### **Slide twelve: Safe Work Practice completed form**

- Safe work practice complete Confined Space Entry form
- Review the parts of the form (similar to blank form)
- Read the items in the completed form – (can be done silently, teacher read or participants read)
- Review the complete form on the PPT in detail – except for worker responsibility
- Participant handout can be used to work on key words when reading difficult work – pairs with different levels grouped may help on the worker responsibility section.

### **Worker Responsibility**

- Identify work procedures
- Exit from all parts
- Ventilation + allows acceptable air levels ....

Review the key words on the PPT for the worker responsibility section  
 Have the pairs list worker responsibilities in their own words (from 3 -8 depending on language ability)

At times the language gap will be very large. Participants need to be encouraged to become life-long English language learners. This may be a good time to talk about the ideal language requirements for working and staying safe. It's also the right time to inform the workplace writers about clear language documents for ESL and for literacy issues with English speakers. (It's the same balance as the earlier slides about rights and responsibilities employer and employee both working together).

For students who are working on their English or workplace knowledge outside of the workshop this website reference has over 70 of these safe work practices in the same format.

<http://www.acsa-safety.org/Default.aspx?tabid=71>

## Slide thirteen: Safety Incident Pyramid

### Language strategy

This slide can be used to first discuss the use of a graph. (You could also introduce pie, bar, line graphs here as well.) Participants may relate to this visual way of showing information. Pyramids are used to show proportional, interconnected or hierarchical relationships with the largest component at the bottom and narrowing up.

The vocabulary in the pyramid may need to be described or discussed to allow participants to fully understand the intended meaning in the graph. What are unsafe acts and near misses? **Unsafe acts** could be described as dangerous behavior and then discussed to draw from examples of the participants previous jobsites. (Website pictures could also be useful here.) A **near miss** is an unplanned event that did not result in injury, illness, or damage - but had the potential to do so. Only a fortunate break in the chain of events prevented an injury, fatality or damage. Although human error is commonly an initiating event, a faulty process or system invariably permits or compounds the harm, and should be the focus of improvement. Other familiar terms for these events is a **"close call"**, or in the case of moving objects, **"near collision"**. The often misunderstood phrase is so-called to stress that not only had things gone remotely off course towards danger, but they had actually only **"barely missed"** catastrophe. For instance, commercial airliners are considered dangerously close if they are one mile apart. If they pass at a quarter mile apart or less, this is a "near miss" because they were extraordinarily near each other when they missed collision. Near miss referenced from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Near\\_miss\\_\(safety\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Near_miss_(safety))

### Cultural Safety message

This safety incident pyramid indicates that every major injury is preceded by a warning sequence of events as per a certain statistical ratio indicated in the pyramid.

600 unsafe acts: 30 near misses: 10 minor injuries: 1 major injury.

## Slide fourteen: Clear Speech – Volume

Volume is a very important part of Clear Speech. Volume is important on the job – especially considering extraneous noise, distance, weather conditions and so on. This slide can be used with the handouts to include both language and culture work.

## Language work

Using the participant handout first four statements can set the scene and help participants focus on the topic and the language needed.

## Culture work

In task 3 the question, *“What do you need to ask your boss?”* can lead into culture work and pragmatic language. It can be used to discuss how to make an appropriate request on the jobsite. In general the context determines the register and can range from formal to very informal. The jobsite will be informal which can seem rude to speakers of some other languages.

- Would you please consider speaking up?
- Please speak up.
- Speak up.
- What? (say what?) (hmm?)

What’s right in one context can be wrong in another. Native speakers move naturally between the contexts but it can be very confusing to those with another first language or culture. ESL speakers sometimes need explicit instructions to enable them the understanding the correct choice of language. Take for example, the use of “sir” to the boss on site. The newcomer may not understand that our low power difference makes it wrong to give title to the boss and can be seen by coworkers as opportunism and standoffishness and by the boss as meekness. Not relationship building!

Use of story here is useful with all the misunderstandings and can make the information shared and authentic.

## Slide fifteen: Words to know

## Slide sixteen: Words to know

## Slide seventeen: Acronyms

You may want to introduce the vocabulary earlier in the session or you can chose to introduce words as they come up in the workshop and refer participants to the word list in the handout.

The vocabulary will be very challenging to beginner speakers of English (CLB stage 1 level 3) and challenging to stage 2 speakers as well. The reality of the workplace is that these participants may work onsite with their language levels and therefore so this program will attempt to give them exposure to the language needed and encourage them to become continuous earners of English.

When you are using the words to know in the workshop encourage listeners to listen for key information. Listen for the important words or chunks of language. They may need to hear them repeated several times. When you model make the stressed syllables longer, louder and slower.

The participants may need the drill practice of repeating the chunks after you to model phrasing, stress and intonation.