

Project Name:

New Beginnings Online - Pre-Pilot Project



**Metropolitan Immigrant
Settlement Association**



**Canadian Immigration
Integration Project**

New Beginnings Online – Pre-Pilot Project Report Abstract:

This report chronicles a project initiated by two organizations:

- Canadian Immigration Integration Project (CIIP)
- Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA)

The project entailed offering an online or distance series of pre- employment workshops to participants from China, India and the Philippines intending to emigrate to Canada. The purpose of the online workshops was to facilitate the labour market integration of newcomers anywhere in Canada.

Date of Services:

October 15, 2007 – February 15, 2008

Table of Contents

1.	Description of Each of the Services and Expected Results	(p. 3 - 4)
1.5	Pan-Canadian Modifications to NBO Curriculum	(p. 4)
2.	Description of Activities	(p. 5)
3.	Difficulties Encountered: Achieving Goals & Objectives & Corrective Measures Effected	(p. 6)
4.	Outline of Expected Identifiable Results	(p. 7)
5.	Progress To Date	(p. 8)
6.	Future Recommendations and Next Steps	(p. 8 – 10)
7.	Conclusion	(p. 10)
8.	Appendices:	
	<i>A. Detailed description of activities: Outputs and Results</i>	(p. 11 -53)
	<i>B. Evaluations for Each of the Workshops</i>	(p. 54 -61)
	<i>C. Summary of Participant Evaluations</i>	(p. 62 – 66)
	<i>D. Participant Reflections on the NBO Program</i>	(p. 67 – 71)
9.	Bibliography	(p. 71)

1. Description of Services and Expected Results

The emerging best practice model for the effective workforce integration of skilled newcomers is one which involves a continuum of services beginning at the pre-landing stage and continuing seamlessly upon arrival in Canada until the newcomer successfully enters the occupation of his/her choice. As a key component of this model, the Canadian Immigration Integration Project (CIIP) was created to address the need of skilled newcomers for relevant, accurate information and orientation prior to leaving their first countries.

CIIP provides face-to-face group information sessions as well as individual orientations with skilled immigrants in China, the Philippines and India who are in the final stages of immigrating to Canada. The genesis of this pilot project was a search conducted by CIIP staff for additional tools to expand and enhance these sessions. Specifically, they were searching for online educational tools which could provide more intensive education about the process of job searching, and the reality and culture of working in Canada.

Several years ago, the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) in Halifax, Nova Scotia began to struggle with the question of how to provide employment services for newcomers who had landed outside the Halifax Regional Municipality. Individual employment counseling was initiated through tele-counselling and email contact. It quickly became apparent however, that analogous to the CIIP experience, this was not enough.

Also needed was a broader and more intensive learning experience, as well as the group support, available through MISA's New Beginnings pre-employment workshops. A project was undertaken to develop an online format of the New Beginnings workshops. The result was that MISA, in partnership with the Nova Scotia Community College, developed an online series of three workshops including Job Search, Interview Skills Workshops and Working in Canada - which together comprised New Beginnings Online.

New Beginnings Online is built on the same adult education principles that are the foundation for the classroom program. It respects the experience of adults and presents a curriculum built upon the goals and objectives of our particular target audience (Mayer, 1979 & 1999). New Beginnings Online teaches the skills and knowledge that skilled newcomers need as they prepare to enter the Canadian workforce. It is founded upon aspects of interaction that are integral to successful adult learning, i.e. – interaction with content, with the teacher / facilitator and interaction between participants (Anderson, 2003). Careful attention to cognitive learning theory (Anderson, 1978) and constructivist instructional design techniques (Driscoll, 2005) also pervade the online curriculum. Each group of online participants has the opportunity to form the kind of "community of learning" that occurs in the classroom.

Despite the distance separating participants from each other and participants from facilitator, remarkable and supportive mutually educational relationships emerge. For each NBO participant, this then becomes the beginning of a network of contacts which is so essential to successful workforce integration in Canada. Over the past 21 months, NBO has been offered to over 100 participants in small centres and rural communities in Nova Scotia, as well as in the Halifax metropolitan area.

The demand for NBO has been continuous and participant satisfaction with the program has been consistently positive. To date, 68% of participants that have progressed through the NBO in Nova Scotia have successfully found employment in their field of work.

It was the intersection of the CIIP project's search for an online pre-employment tool with the potential of MISA's New Beginnings Online program to be used with newcomers before arrival in Canada - that resulted in this pilot project. In November 2007, CIIP hired MISA to deliver and evaluate one set of the three NBO workshops to 15 participants in China, the Philippines and India. The regular NBO facilitator, who is a specialist in online adult learning, was released from his regular duties to deliver this pilot program.

1.5 Pan-Canadian Modifications to New Beginnings Online Curriculum

As a precursor to delivering the New Beginnings Online distance education program to CIIP clients from the Philippines, India and China; modifications to the curriculum were requested to provide a more generic approach to job-search in Canada. Beginning in early October, the Job Search, Interview Skills and Working in Canada workshops were reviewed and areas for modifications identified.

In terms of the Job Search workshop curriculum documents, this involved twenty-four specific revisions spanning twelve unit documents. Revisions were also made to the complementary workshop Orientation document and Additional Learning Resources documents. A new "Getting to Know You" document was also created for delivery to CIIP participants immediately prior to their beginning the first workshop in the series.

All Job Search workshop revisions were implemented and uploaded to the NBO server prior to commencement of the workshop on October 29th.

Regarding the Interview Skills workshop, nine curriculum document revisions were required spanning five units. The Additional Learning Resources document also required modification. All revisions were implemented and uploaded to the NBO server prior to the start of the Interview Skills workshop on December 10th.

The Working in Canada workshop required the modification of nine curriculum documents spanning three units with revisions also implemented for the Additional Learning Resources document. All revisions were implemented and uploaded to the NBO server prior to the start of the Working in Canada workshop on January 14th.

The revisions for all three workshops ranged from replacing references to "Nova Scotia" with "Canada" to re-wording of larger passages within curriculum documents. A number of assignments were revised and entries in the Additional Learning Resources documents deleted when they were Nova Scotia specific and entries added where appropriate (i.e. – in the Job Search workshop Learning Resources for example, website addresses for newspapers across Canada were added)

2. Description of Activities

The aim of the New Beginnings Online Pre-pilot was to assist a group of skilled professionals before landing to become fully prepared to effectively search for work in Canada. Over the four month period of the project, the three workshops of the New Beginnings Online Program were delivered to a group of participants who had been approved to immigrate to Canada either through the federal Skilled Worker Program or a Provincial Nominee Program. The workshops included the Job Search Workshop, Interview Skills Workshop and the Working in Canada Workshop.

At the outset of the pre-pilot, the participants were identified by CIIP field staff and referred to the New Beginnings Online Facilitator at MISA. The initial plan was to include five participants from each of the three target countries, China, the Philippines and India. At the outset of the online program, twelve participants were registered including seven participants from the Philippines and five from China.

The NBO Facilitator handled all the coordination of participation from the Canadian end from his office at the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Initial steps included corresponding with the referred participants to welcome them to NBO, introduce them to the format of the workshops, assess their ability to handle the demands of the workshops and ensure that they had access to a computer. A social café was used as a vehicle for making introductions and beginning the process of developing the group cohesiveness which is so valuable for adult learning.

The NBO Facilitator liaised with CIIP field staff during this period to clarify details, follow up on potential participants and provide progress reports. Throughout the program, he maintained close communication with these field offices as well as with the Canadian CIIP staff and MISA staff to provide regular informal progress reports and enable monitoring of the activities in the workshops. Staff members from CIIP and MISA were “silent observers” throughout the program.

The Job Search Workshop began officially on October 29, 2007, the Interview Skills Workshop began on December 10 and the Working in Canada started on January 14.

The NBO workshops are **not** passive, “stand alone” informational workshops but rather are highly interactive and carefully facilitated. Participants learn by doing, and are challenged to think about the material using “real life” situations. The goal of NBO is that newcomers will be able to truly understand the job search process and the nature of the Canadian workforce, and will learn the skills need to be independent job seekers. There are numerous assignments which are submitted electronically and returned with detailed feedback. Interaction takes place constantly between participant and facilitator, and interaction amongst participants is strongly encouraged.

Please note that a detailed description of the activities undertaken may be found in Appendix A.

3. Difficulties in Achieving Goals and Objectives and Corrective Measures Effectuated (challenges and how they were resolved)

From the perspective of managing and facilitating the three workshop series to clients overseas, no difficulties were encountered in achieving the goals and objectives of the online program. As mentioned in Appendix A, the Job Search workshop entailed 79 specific learning objectives, 9 group discussions and 16 assignments. The Interview Skills workshop contained 41 specific learning objectives, 7 group discussions and 7 assignments. The Working in Canada workshop was comprised of 46 specific learning objectives, 5 group discussions and 5 assignments.

Prior to the CIIP participants engagement in the New Beginnings Online program, the three workshop series had been offered on five occasions to Nova Scotia based clients since the summer of 2006. A wealth of experience in managing and facilitating the workshops was applied to the CIIP group. And, as in the past with NS clients, CIIP participants successfully navigated the three workshop curriculum and achieved the learning objectives clearly articulated throughout the online program, completed assignments and participated actively in group discussions.

Although no unexpected difficulties were encountered, there were challenges unique to the CIIP group. The two primary challenges encountered were the time zone difference (12 hours) and the fact that all the CIIP participants were actively employed. In terms of interaction between facilitator and participant the time zone difference was a concern at the beginning. Aside from the feeling that participants were always “one day ahead of the facilitator” however, the time zone difference quickly became a minor concern. The workshop schedules were unaffected by the 12 hour difference issue and CIIP participants progressed through all three workshops in similar fashion to prior NS based clients.

The fact that all the CIIP participants were working was a concern at the outset as well. This was a new factor in participants as although some NS based clients had progressed through the online program while fully employed, most were either not working or engaged in some combination of part-time work or employment training. Again however, the CIIP participants were able to progress through the workshop schedules, complete assignments and participate in group discussions while working full time.

4. Outline of Expected Identifiable Results

The following expected results were achieved:

- Identification of group of participants at the pre-landing stage who were interested in taking part in the NBO
- Introduction of the program to each potential participant
- The development of a good rapport with the facilitator to ensure a positive learning environment
- The development of a group bond amongst the participants through the use of the social café
- The completion of modifications to the curriculum to ensure that it had Pan-Canadian focus
- The Job Search Workshop was completed by twelve participants
- The Interview Skills Workshop was completed by ten participants
- The Working in Canada Workshop was completed by eight participants with two participants still engaged in the workshop after the designated completion date
- Participants actively engaged with the curriculum, the facilitator and to a lesser extent, with each other
- Comments in emails throughout the three workshops were positive and enthusiastic
- All participants were linked with Skills International for additional support particularly related to interview skills
- Final evaluations rated the program as very helpful

5. Progress to date

The pre-pilot has been completed and all deliverables were met.

6. Recommendations and Next Steps

- (i) CIIP delivers information on regulatory bodies and credential assessment agencies and provides this information to clients within their IIP. In Ontario, GEO and HFO are the referral points for those in the regulated fields. In other provinces, the referrals points will vary. One recommendation for the future is that NBO build more methodically on the services and referrals received at CIIP. This could be done by not only asking participants to explore the regulations governing their occupations, but also by requiring that they initiate contact with the professional regulatory body as part of an NBO assignment. This would have the added benefit of ensuring that participants were aware of all the requirements, including what documents to bring with them prior to their arrival.
- (ii) Introduce a brief questionnaire at the outset of NBO to overlap the services provided by CIIP. This would include identification of all referrals the client had received, credential assessment and regulatory bodies identified and any actions taken. This would assist the facilitator to tailor the program as much as possible to the needs of the particular participants.
- (iii) As an integral part of the introduction to NBP, clarify for the participants the real commitment in terms of duration, number of hours of program work per week and the value of the NBO. This could be readily provided by CIIP field staff as well as by the facilitator at the start of the program. Consideration of culture and social context is needed (for example, beginning the program during festival celebrations in India may have contributed to limited participation from that country). The flexibility demonstrated by facilitator Mark Larson is highly recommended and can allow for accommodation of interruptions in program participation. Alternative and “catch up” arrangements may be required in certain situations; for example if the actual physical move to Canada occurs in the middle of a workshop.
- (iv) Explore ways and means of encouraging additional participant - participant interactions. The group discussions are a useful tool in this regard and the "social cafe" provides an additional virtual space for these interactions to occur. Participant interaction with the learning material and with the facilitator is already intrinsic to the existing curriculum. The introduction of online assignments however, which require participant - participant cooperation could assist in enhancing the sense of group belonging that facilitates learning. This could also extend after the program was completed to encourage previous and present NBO clients to come together in a chat room to share their experiences. With a larger group, the range and depth of discussions will grow, and beneficial ongoing networks may be developed.

- (v) Although the "virtual cast of characters" provides some real-life context and examples throughout the NBO workshops, participants were keen to hear more stories and real life examples of immigrants who have gone before them and successfully integrated into the workforce in Canada. It is recommended that NBO integrate vignettes on engineers, nurses and others that are available on line as well as written success stories to enrich the curriculum and encourage participants to overcome the challenges faced as they strive to enter the Canadian workforce
- (vi) The topic of workplace culture is complex and multi-faceted, and it is recommended that additional content be developed and integrated into the NBO curriculum by both weaving it through all three workshops and possibly developing additional content in the Working In Canada Workshop.
- (vii) In their post-program evaluations, NBO pre-landing participants recommended the use of additional technologies. For example, voice messages and oral communication could be incorporated into NBO readily through the use of additional technologies such as SKYPE. Audio recordings of client 30 second summaries and answers to interview questions were also recommend by participants. Both these enhancements to the curriculum are being explored and can be readily implemented in future offerings of NBO.
- (viii) The need to practice interview skills learned is a continuous theme in the New Beginnings classroom workshops, but it is particularly challenging in an online program. However, to address this gap, a highly encouraging partnership with the Skills International has emerged. Skills International has the capacity to provide practice opportunities for online participants and MISA is currently engaged in very positive discussions with Skills International to work out partnering in this regard, starting with the NBO pre-landing pilot participants. Several participants have been exposed to the "Perfect Interview" application and view the opportunity to practice their interview skills online as beneficial.
- (ix) A rigorous outcome evaluation is needed in order effectively measure how NBO affects the efficiency, effectiveness and nature of workforce integration for those immigrants who receive the support of the CIIP orientation and the NBO program. Although the numbers are very small at this point, there is the potential for a comparison study which could match skilled immigrants on the basis of country of origin, destination province, occupation, gender, age etc., and track their experiences upon arrival. If the pre-landing program can be continued, cumulative data with a larger sample size would be extremely useful in establishing whether there is an advantage in beginning the "continuum of service" at the pre-landing stage. While there is substantial "common sense" logic to this approach, tracking outcomes could provide the hard data needed to support the continuation of the integrated pre-landing program offered by CIIP, MISA and Skills International. It is therefore recommended that the pre-pilot NBO clients be tracked at the three month and six month point following completion of the program through online surveys and regular online focus group sessions. This evaluation activity would require additional funding.

- (x) Based on the success of the pre-pilot, we are recommending a continuation of the pre-pilot and an expansion and roll-out of the pre-pilot across the Country. To this end, MISA has submitted a proposal in response to Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Call for Proposals for national projects that will support the Department's policies and programs for the settlement and resettlement of newcomers to Canada.

The three year proposal, which was developed in collaboration with the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) and Skills International (SI), is designed to build on the pre-pilot and further develop and deliver online employment preparation and language learning services that help international immigrants pre-landing to be better prepared to integrate into the workforce upon arrival in Canada. (See Executive Summary in Appendix)

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the pre-pilot of the New Beginnings Online with pre-landing participants was a resounding success. The participants were uniformly enthusiastic about the program and reported that it was an excellent learning experience. Through the workshops, the participants, all skilled professionals, were intensively prepared for job searching, effectively handling a Canadian job interview and understanding the Canadian workplace. By the conclusion of NBO, each participant had identified a specific job opportunity, developed a targeted resume and cover letter, initiated a list of potential employers, practiced leaving voice messages and emails for employers, practiced answering interview questions, and was referred to Skills International for the opportunity of further practice in interviewing and the development of an online profile. This group of newcomers are significantly better prepared for the challenges of entering the workforce in Canada, and with the tremendous advantage of having these skills as they enter the country, should be ready to "hit the ground running" upon arrival.

8. Appendices:

Appendix A: Detailed Description of the Activities Undertaken During the Delivery of the Pre-Pilot and the Outputs and Results

Job Search Workshop:

Registration material was delivered via email to the participants identified by CIIP field staff one week prior to the official start date for the Job Search workshop. The registration package included an Orientation document, Schedule and Getting to Know You Document. Getting to Know You documents and participant resumes were received back from participants just prior to the official start date (October 29th). Twelve participants were actively engaged in the Job Search workshop (seven from the Philippines and five from China).

JSW Participant Profiles:

New Beginnings Online – CIIP - 101		
Name	Field of Work	Location
	Business Admin / Accounting	Philippines
	Information Technology	Philippines
	Teacher	China
	Pharmacist	Philippines
	Estimator / Management Engineer	China
	Pediatrician	Philippines
	IT / Business Systems Analyst	Philippines
	Mechanical Engineer	Philippines
	Pharmaceutical Sales / Marketing	China
	Investment Banking / Corporate Finance	Philippines
	Research Scientist	China
	Insurance Broker / Medicine	China

The Job Search workshop was originally scheduled to run for four weeks. An additional week was offered to participants halfway through and they unanimously endorsed the amendment to the schedule. The workshop ran over the following timeframe:

- October 29 - November 4 : Units One / Two / Three
- November 5 - November 18: Units Four / Five
- November 19 - November 25: Units Six / Seven
- November 26 - December 2: Units Eight / Nine / Ten

The workshop consisted of the following ten units:

- Unit One: Getting Started
- Unit Two: Skills, Strengths & Accomplishments
- Unit Three: Researching Your Occupation
- Unit Four: Looking for Work
- Unit Five: Resumes
- Unit Six: Cover Letters
- Unit Seven: Other Job Search Tools
- Unit Eight: Marketing Yourself
- Unit Nine: Recognizing & Expanding Your Network
- Unit Ten: Wrap Up

Participants were responsible for participation in nine group discussions and the submission of sixteen assignments. The ten unit curriculum contained seventy-nine specific learning objectives with the overall goals of the workshop summarized below:

- Look at how employers find good employees
- Understand why being positive is important
- Identify your skills, strengths and accomplishments
- Research the qualifications, skills and labour market needs of your occupation
- Find and choose suitable advertised jobs
- Name three or more possible employers
- Write and target a useful resume and cover letter
- Choose good references and letters of recommendation
- Know other job search tools and learn how to develop and use them
- Find ways to contact employers
- Identify your current job search network and how to increase it
- Understand why it is important to be organized in your job search
- Identify ways to continue job searching

JSW Narrative:

To attempt to capture every detail of a five week workshop comprising nine group discussions and sixteen assignments would be impossible. In terms of assignments alone, this would translate into over approximately 175 points of interaction. Regarding group discussions, 206 postings were compiled spanning nine group discussions. What I will do is to focus upon “highlights” from a number of Units that illustrate important events over the five weeks.

As mentioned earlier, the Job Search workshop began on October 29th. Participants were provided with an Orientation package and schedule and also a request to contribute an introduction to a group discussion called the Social Café. The Social Café was configured and available several days prior to the official start date and participants were urged to use this discussion area to introduce themselves at the beginning of the workshop and also as an informal area to “talk” amongst themselves on any issue they wished. We had nine introductions at the outset and over the course of the workshop, these introductions evolved into seventy-two postings on a variety of topics.

Unit One officially began then, on Monday the 29th and the “highlight” of this unit involved a self-assessment assignment, then a section dealing with the importance of being positive in their job search and looking at job searching from the other side of the equation, i.e. – the employers’ point of view.

The self-assessment assignment was called “What Do You Need to Learn?” and presented a number of questions in the areas of research, attitude, communication and organization. Essentially we wanted to know at the outset what the participants identified as the things they needed to learn. This provided the opportunity to focus their attention at the beginning of the workshop on the Units upcoming that would address their needs and also gave us the chance to follow up on their list of needs at the end of the workshop.

It was in the Unit Ten “Wrap Up” group discussion where we asked them to comment on what they had learned and if the workshop had met the items they had identified as needing to learn at the beginning. Here is one sample contribution from the Unit Ten group discussion:



Reflect on Your Experiences

“The Job Search Workshop did help me to learn the skills identified at the beginning of the Workshop. In the future I will be using all the emails, discussions, activities and assignments as references when looking for a suitable job in Canada. The lessons learned will definitely help not only me but also my wife in looking for possible jobs there.”

I think all of the skills learned were important as they together enhance the chances of getting a job there. But I guess the top two items for me are the upgraded resume and cover letter. Having very good templates for these two items will definitely help me (and my wife) in getting that job in Canada”

This first assignment is always a benchmark type of event in the online program, as not only does the Facilitator get an accurate impression of the learning needs of the participants, but also is an indicator of their technical skills. Online learning is a different mode of instruction and viewing the quality of all the first assignment submissions verified that the CIIP group were highly competent in the technical skills required to proceed through the online program. And, had grasped the online learning paradigm or to put it simply, “how it would work”. By the first few days in week one, all the participants had submitted their first assignment via email and the majority had contributed to a group discussion.

Unit Two focused upon the different types of skills job seekers have, the concept of transferable skills and included both an assignment and group discussion designed to assist participants identify their own skills and accomplishments. The “highlight” of this unit were the contributions made by participants in the group discussion entitled “Your Most Important Accomplishments” . Here is one sample from this Unit Two group discussion:



Reflecting on Your Accomplishments

Here are my top three accomplishments.

In 1993 - I just graduated from college and was fortunate enough to be hired as one of the first batch of engineers and we were tasked to build the first GSM cellular phone network in the Philippines - Islacom. It was thru this opportunity that I was given a chance to do hone my project management and presentation skills. It was also here that I have learned to negotiate with suppliers and initiate bidding processes for a very large scale project. I was also glad to have been given the chance to build, and eventually manage the MIS division for the company where we were in charge of the Billing systems.

In 1997, I eventually got the opportunity to work for another startup telecom company which was Multimedia telephony Inc. This company was then engaged in delivering online and real time Stock market information right to the pager. It was in this company where I was hired to help setup the infrastructure of their paging business. I became in charge of setting up the Local area network, as well as assist in looking for vendors to setup our Wide area network infrastructure.

And in 1999-2000, I was fortunate to have been hired as the first Filipino IT professional onboard the Monarch of the Seas - a cruise ship operated by Royal Caribbean International. I was hired first as an Assistant systems manager where I was given the opportunity to present myself and prove my skills, as well as learn the operations. Again, I am likewise proud to note that experience has paid off and it only took me 7 months before they promoted me to Systems Manager. It was during this time that I have learned about cultural diversity, and respect to all cultures. I have likewise improved on my management skills while I was on by attending the various management seminars and trainings conducted onboard. In 2005, I was again fortunate to have been promoted again to my present position, which is IT Operations Manager and my first assignment was to be part of the management team for the Voyager of the Seas, the Largest cruise ship in the world as of the year 2000. It was by interacting with the management staff onboard that I have learned the value of working with others, listening and participating in a team effort to accomplish a goal.

The contribution above is representative of the accomplishments shared by participants. This group discussion is a seminal one in the workshop as it is the first opportunity participants have to convey their skills and accomplishments in the context of the workshop and their own job search. It is the first instance of their own “articulation” of the skills they possess and complements the assignment in this unit as well where they are asked to identify their own employability skills.

Still in week one, we then move onto a critical unit in the workshop entitled Researching Your Occupation. This three step unit entailed participants researching their own occupation using the National Occupation Classifications website. Researching their credentials using the Canadian Centre for International Credentials website and researching the labour market using the Labour Market Information website.

All participants utilized the NOC website to research their particular field of work. The assignment responses are two to three page summaries of their research so I have not included a sample. Each participant was exposed to how the “main duties” of their job were described and what employment requirements were required to practice in this field in Canada.

It was suggested to many of the participants that a two tier approach be taken whereby they would research occupational titles in their field and if regulated, also investigate occupations related to their field that are unregulated. For example, in the case of the Mechanical Engineer, he was encouraged to investigate Mechanical Engineering Technologists and Technicians. And in the case of the Pediatrician, investigate alternative occupations in the Health Policy Researchers, Consultants and Program Officers classification.

All participants successfully investigated their primary occupation and in many cases alternative options as well. This then lead into the second step of Unit Three where participants identified the appropriate agency for pursuing regulatory requirements. Below is one participant’s research into teaching at the post-secondary level.

Unit Three – Step Two (CICIC research)

I found on CICCI website some information about the job titled “University Professors and College Instructors” and I referred to the college-level information on requirements to practice.

And below is the table concerning this unregulated occupation about its relevant organization or association.

<i>Name: Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC)</i>
<i>Address: 1223 Michael Street North, Suite 200 Ottawa ON K1J 7T2 Canada</i>
<i>Telephone: Phone : (613) 746-2222 Fax : (613) 746-6721 Email : taboyles@acc.ca http://www.acc.ca/</i>
<i>Professional Association: Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC)</i>

And there are more organizations which I can refer to and find information relating to the occupation. The following is the list.

Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC)

<http://www.arucc.unb.ca/>

Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC)

<http://www.aucc.ca/>

Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)

<http://www.caut.ca/>

Participants then addressed the labour market research component of Unit Three and successfully answered the questions posed in the “Questions About Your Own Occupation” assignment.

Unit Three – Step Three

(LMI Research)

I tried financial auditors and here are the answers to the activity questions:

1. Yes, there are job opportunities for financial auditors in Toronto. I wanted to check Mississauga, but it was not among the specific geographic locations listed.

It is interesting to read that there are changes to the Ontario Public Accounting Act which now enable qualified CAs, CGAs and CMAs to obtain license to practice public accounting, which was once restricted to Chartered Accountants.

2. Salary range is \$30.96/hr

3. For potential employers, I saved it in my computer and attached herewith as part of my assignment.

I also want you to know I am having fun with this specific assignment, as I get to see salary ranges for different occupational options for me in the field of accounting, for my husband in his field of engineering, and even for my daughter in her field of physics.

I forgot to mention that in the previous assignment I also was able to get much info about the universities in Canada for my daughter. Thanks so much for this whole wealth of info you are sharing with us.

As mentioned in the above assignment response, participants compiled a list of potential employers in their area of interest. The final aspect of the labour market information research is the collection of a list of potential employers and every participant found opportunities in their primary and / or alternative occupations. Participants were also encouraged to utilize the Working in Canada Tool to complement the Labour Market Information website on an on going basis.

We then moved into the second week of the workshop on November 5th and began Unit Four which dealt with the advertised and unadvertised “hidden” job markets. Resources for investigating both job markets were introduced and the primary assignment in this Unit was to have all participants identify and submit an advertised job in their field. All participants successfully accomplished this task using the resources provided. Many utilized the list of potential employers they had compiled in the proceeding unit, others found a particular opportunity using the new resources they were exposed to in Unit Four.

Participants had indicated their province of destination earlier in the workshop, and the job advertisements they submitted in Unit Four all came from their province of destination.

With a particular job advertisement in hand, participants were now ready to proceed into Unit Five which involved the development of a targeted resume. Via a two step unit, participants were exposed to the importance of and parts and formats for a targeted resume. They were provided with two sample resumes for comparison and also to a “bank” of targeted resumes. In the second step, they were then asked to submit their first draft targeted resume.

Upon receiving their first draft, a Targeted Resume Checklist template was employed by the Facilitator to address concerns and provide suggestions for improvement. The checklist document was returned to participants with their original resume containing revisions **highlighted in blue**. An iterative process then ensued where participants updated their resumes accordingly and then once again returned their resume to the Facilitator for further suggestions.

I have included a sample Targeted Resume Checklist document and first iteration of a resume. I have removed the name of this particular participant.

Targeted Resume Checklist

Name:

The following is an assessment of how well you targeted your resume.

Targeted Areas	Facilitator Comments
Objective targeted to job title	Your objective statement is fine. You clearly tell the employer what job you are applying for. Keep in mind the employer may have multiple positions advertised so you simply want to briefly specify the job you are interested in.
Highlights of Qualifications – includes relevant skills, education and experience the employer wants	I changed your “summary of qualifications” to “highlights of qualifications”. “Highlights” is more accurate. I included your education as the first bullet as this is something that employers always look for at the outset. And, your education is impressive so let’s put it right up front. I removed two additional references to Unicenter as you already mentioned this in the “remote desktop support” highlight. I inserted a reference to your “adept at network hardware and software analysis” & “practical experience in managing staff and technical resources”. Your experience includes this expertise and based upon the job advertisement, I thought it important to mention your skills in this regard.
Employment Experience – arranged with relevant experience first. Also skills and accomplishments listed support your highlights of qualifications	Your employment experience is the most impressive aspect of your resume. I attempted to keep your resume to two pages and thus abbreviated the listing of duties under each position. You’ll notice I kept your language for the most part but tried to convey the essence in a shorter amount of writing. I kept the listings from your original that reflected the critical requirements in the job advertisement as best I could.
Education – arranged with relevant education first	Your education section is fine. Do you have any MCSE certification? Your education and experience certainly matches any MCSE type of training and the job ad does mention “or equivalent”.

Other Comments

My primary concern was with the length of your original resume. It extended to four pages which is rather long. Keep in mind that “targeting” is intended to convey the critical skills, abilities and experience you have that meet the requirements listed in the job advertisement. This job advertisement was a tough one as it listed quite a number of requirements.

Please give my revisions your review and let me know what you think of my suggestions for your Highlights sections and the duties listed under your past work experience.

Thanks for your work on targeting.

Career Objective: Seeking the position of Network Systems Administrator

Highlights of Qualifications:

- Bachelor of Science – Electronics & Communications Engineering
- 16 years experience in IT Systems Management in the Telecom and Hotel Services environment
- Extensive Windows 2000 & 2003 server technical support including:
 - Administration of Windows Terminal Server farm
 - Active Directory Administration and server setup
 - Remote support via Unicenter Remote Control, PC Anywhere & Windows Terminal Services
 - Management and monitoring of service pack and Windows updates using Windows Software Update Services(WSUS)
- Proven PC Troubleshooting skills including installation and first level support and helpdesk management
- Installation, management and troubleshooting of IP based LANS/WANS and IP based routing and bridging solutions
- Adept at network hardware and software solutions analysis
- Extensive practical experience in managing staff and technical resources
- Excellent oral and written communication skills

Employment Experience:

IT Operations Manager
Royal Caribbean International

2000 - 2007

- Manage, operate, maintain and administer shipboard computer systems
Property Management System, Point of Sale Systems, Network Servers, Network Hardware, Networked PCs, Company approved software, Credit Card System, AMOS System, Passenger and Crew Systems, and interfaces to Property Management System
- Manage Shipboard Systems technical operations
Staff availability, hours of operation and any communication to management regarding systems availability. Ensure 24-hour, seven day a week operational needs

Assistant System Manager
Royal Caribbean International

Feb 2000 - November 2000

- Systems Administration for Shipboard applications running under the Unix and Windows NT 4.0 platform
- Troubleshooting and customer support for MS Office and Windows NT 4.0 clients

Employment Experience: (continued)

Part Owner - System Manager Interact Cybercafe'

1999 - 2000

- Systems planning and administration for Internet and Intranet applications.
- Customer relations with respect to computer and internet operations and other special requests from customers.
- Troubleshooting and customer support for MS Office and Windows 97 clients.
- Developed business plan and feasibility study for the Cybercafe'.
- Installed and configured software and hardware needed for the successful implementation of computer operations.

Systems Integration Specialist (Asst. Manager) Multimedia telephony Inc. (MTI)

1996 - 1999

- Administration and technical support for in-house operating systems and programs
- Implementation, setup and administration of remote access to a Windows NT4.0 Server for a call center setup
- Administration of Local Area Network and Wide Area Network Security
- Administration and implementation of Unix(AIX) System, Microsoft Windows & MS Office Message Handling System and Customer Service System.
- Coordination, implementation and construction of the structured cabling system for MTI's paging operations, as well as for general office operations
- Conducted negotiations with different Internet Service Providers in implementation of MTI's internet-related value added messaging services.
- Developed and maintained the company's corporate web site and e-mail

Technical Operations and Support Specialist – Islacom

1993 - 1996

- Centralized point of contact for all general hardware services
- Conducted first level diagnostics and troubleshooting for Windows '95 and Windows NT4.0 clients.
- Managed computer networks that link to telecommunications switches
- Consulted on formulation of systems requirements specification and network design for Islacom's Internet Service provider project

Education:

Bachelor of Science; Electronics & Communications Engineering
Don Bosco Technical College
Mandaluyong City, Philippines

1993

References Available Upon Request

This combination of Targeted Resume Checklist and revised resume is a representative sampling of the process all participants engaged in during Unit Five. In every case, a two step exchange of suggestions, revisions and updates was pursued until the participant was satisfied with the final product. These completed targeted resumes are now being employed by participants as the “template” for future job applications and in a number of cases are the resumes being uploaded to the Skills International website.

There was a group discussion at the end of Unit Five as well with the topic question, “What were the challenges you faced in developing, updating and targeting your resume?” Here is one response:



Reflect on Your Experience

The most challenging thing I met in developing, updating and targeting my resume is how to interpret strong leadership and strong people management skills in the highlights of qualifications. For I only have 1 subordinate and am not sure about the meaning of people management skills. In addition, I found out it is difficult for me to make the statements in highlights of qualifications as concisely as Fatima did.

From this unit, I understood that looking for a job is just selling myself to the employer and my resume is just my personal advertisement. An employer only will give me a maximum of 30 seconds to look at my resume. If I want to catch an employer’s attention to my resume, a concise, well organized and a good match highlights of qualifications play a key role.

It was at this point in the Job Search workshop that an additional week was offered to participants. Ensuring that all had addressed fully Units Three, Four and Five was deemed critical before moving on to the second half of the workshop and the additional week was gratefully adopted by all the participants. It was especially useful to have the extra time to ensure the targeted resume process was successfully completed before proceeding into Unit Six.

Thus, Unit Six (Cover Letters) began on November 19th and followed a similar format to the unit on targeting a resume. In step one, the styles, structure and formats of cover letters were introduced and sample cover letters compared with a “bank” of cover letters also available via the Reference section on the JSW website. In the second step a Targeted Cover Letter Checklist document was employed and revisions to draft submissions again provided with Facilitator revision highlighted in blue.

I have included a sample Targeted Cover Letter Checklist document and the final iteration of a cover letter. I have removed the name of this particular participant.

Targeted Cover letter Checklist

The following is an assessment of how well you targeted your cover letter

Targeted Areas	Facilitator Comments
Employers information	I made a slight adjustment to your employer information. I tried to find a specific contact name on the RIM website but with no luck. In this case simply use the “Dear Sir or Madam” salutation.
first paragraph- Objective – you clearly tell the employer in the first paragraph what job you are applying for and why you are applying for this job.	Your first paragraph was quite good. As with your general cover letter, I re-worded your sentence a bit but tried to maintain the essence of your writing. You clearly identified what position you are applying for and nicely gave your reasons for applying.
Middle paragraph(s)- you tell the employer the skills and qualifications you have and how they match what they are looking for/ what they require. You discuss your experience. You tell them why you want to work for their company. You tell them why you want this job. You persuade them to give you an interview.	Your two middle paragraphs were the both very good so I didn’t feel the need to make major revisions. I did however re-phrase your reference to educational credentials. You nicely referred to your years of experience, specifically in the design field and this is exactly what this particular employer will want to see.
End paragraph- Wrap up. You include your contact information and repeat why you want to work for the job and any other special requirements the employer may have ie: availability or relocation (if applicable to the position).	I revised your ending paragraph and took my suggestions from your general cover letter assignment and incorporated them here as well. You might consider referring to your expected arrival date in Canada in your last paragraph.

Other Comments

I thought your first draft targeted cover letter was very good. You illustrated the skills and experience that most directly applies to this job opportunity. I’d suggest you include your current address and contact information at the top of the letter and also consider including a reference to when you expect to arrive in Canada in your end paragraph. Something like this:

“I will be arriving in Canada in xxxx and in the interim I am available anytime at your convenience and can be contacted via the phone at xxxxxxxx or via email at xxxxxxxxxx.” You want to give the impression that you are keen to discuss this opportunity right now.

November 25, 2007

Recruitment
RIM Ottawa
450 March Road
Kanata ON K2K 3K2
Tel: (613) 599-7465
Fax: (613) 599-1922

Regarding: Mechanical Design Engineer Position (Job Number: J0306-0082)

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to express interest in the position of Mechanical Design Engineer which I discovered recently on your website. I am currently employed in a multinational electronics company as a Mechanical Design Engineer with over fifteen years of experience in design. I am confident my background and experience would make a positive impact to your company.

During my tenure as a Design Engineer, I gained extensive expertise in the design of sheet metal and plastic parts. The last nine years of design were done in the 3D environment where PRO/Engineer was the company 3D software. In addition to sheet metal and plastic parts design, I have been heavily involved in design reviews, tooling supplier audits and interactions with the end customer. My Bachelor's Degree in Mechanical Engineering meet the credentials mentioned in your advertisement.

I can contribute to the long term success and growth of RIM, either as an individual contributor or as part of a team. Being a self motivated individual with strong planning and time management skills, I know that I will be able to thrive in a work environment that is both demanding and challenging.

Based on my research, RIM is a company at the forefront of design in the electronics industry and I would relish the opportunity to contribute my skills and experience. An opportunity to personally discuss the Mechanical Design Engineer position will be much appreciated. I will be arriving in Canada in xxxxxx and in the interim I can be contacted via email at xxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

I am looking forward to hearing from you soon and thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely Yours,

As with the targeted resume process, an analogous series of iterations occurred with all participants to arrive at a final cover letter “template”. Virtually all commented on employing their completed cover letter on an on-going basis in the future.

A group discussion was available near the end of Unit Six where participants were asked to comment on the challenges of developing both a resume and cover. Here is one sample contribution:



Reflect on Your Experiences

I think so far this is the most difficult part of the online seminar: the resume and cover letter-writing. The former, because of the licensing requirements specified in most of the job ads related to my field of accounting; and the latter, because cover letters are not used in our country, so I am not familiar with how to compose them.

To compress all the necessary information, like skills and qualifications in 2 pages or less in a resume, is also another challenge. Likewise, in the cover letter, I found it difficult to arrange the paragraphs in such a manner as to catch the attention of the employer so that he may hopefully proceed to read my resume.

Progressing on into the fourth week of the Job Search workshop, Unit Seven dealt with “Other Job Search Tools” and was a three step unit where participants provided the Facilitator with their reference list and Job Seekers Calling Card. Given the wealth of work experience most participants had, producing a reference list was a fairly easy task. The Job Seekers Calling Card was likewise an relatively simple task as all participants had the information readily at hand from earlier units to incorporate into the “business cards”. Included below is a fictitious sample JSCC from the curriculum.

<p>Raj Sargunaraj <i>Mechanical Engineer</i></p> <p>Phone: (902) 454-3211 Cell: (902) 466-6676 rsargunaraj@hotmail.com 36 Ryland Crescent, Sydney Nova Scotia B1K 3M4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 10 years experience in system development & maintenance<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supervisory experience-plant maintenance technicians<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Experience in modelling analysis<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent multi-tasking, time management and organizational skills
---	--

And, the third step introduced the concept of an employment portfolio.

Participants found Unit Seven somewhat of a “relief” after the intense work they had done in the proceeding units and from a Facilitator point of view, Unit Seven is a nice segue into the final three units dealing with Marketing Yourself, Recognizing and Expanding Your Network and the final Wrap Up unit.

As of November 26th then, the final week of the workshop began with Units Eight, Nine and Ten on the agenda. Unit Eight is entitled Marketing Yourself and introduced the concepts of how to market yourself effectively to potential employers and apply for advertised jobs. In the second step of this unit, the 30 second summary (what to say to a potential employer) was dealt with and participants were given the option to send their 30 second summary script via email to the Facilitator or leave a voice mail message “speaking” their summary. Here is the assignment:



Practicing Your 30 Second Summary

This is an optional assignment. Since you are overseas the long distance charges to make a call to Canada can be quite high. You can choose to send your written 30 second summary in lieu of the expense associated with calling.

If you do choose to call however, now it is your turn to practice your 30 second summary. Call the facilitator and leave a voice message of your 30 second summary. The facilitator will give you feedback on your 30 second summary message.

This assignment illustrates one of the revisions to the CIIP curriculum made before the workshop began. For Nova Scotia clients that had been engaged in the JSW workshop since the summer of 2006, leaving a voice mail message was a requirement, not an option. The overseas calling expense and time difference were concerns. The majority of CIIP clients chose to send their script via email and here is one example with Facilitator suggestions highlight in blue:

*During my tenure as a Design Engineer, I gained extensive expertise **in the design of sheet metal and plastic parts.** The last **nine** years of design were done in the 3D environment where PRO/Engineer was the company 3D software. **In addition to sheet metal and plastic parts design,** I have been heavily involved in design reviews, tooling supplier audits and interactions with the end customer.*

This particular participant did choose as well to leave his script via voice mail. The Facilitator experimented with creating a digital recording (facilitator voice – participant script) using a hand held device and returned via email the resulting audio file to a number of participants.

A Nova Scotia based workshop ran several weeks after the CIIP workshop and further experimentation was conducted recording voice mail messages directly from voice mail and these proved highly successful. The recording quality was much higher than expected and in future it may be beneficial to return this assignment to it's original form for CIIP clients as well. Those CIIP clients that did receive the audio recording via email were most appreciative and found it helped them become more comfortable with the 30 second summary assignment.

Unit Nine is entitled Recognizing and Expanding Your Network and outlined methods for creating and expanding the network of contacts that would expedite a participant's job search. It also focused upon the concept of an information interview and how to request and prepare for an information interview.

Here is a sample response to a Unit Nine – Step Two assignment where we ask participants to compose an email request for an information interview.

Unit Nine – Step Two Email Request for Information Interview

Dear _____,

My name is -xxxxxxxx- and I am researching employment opportunities in the Mississauga area. I was referred to you by -xxxxxxxx- from Citibank, and she tells me you work as an accountant at _____ Company. I have 20 years experience as Tax Auditor in the Philippines, and I am particularly interested in gathering information about your company, the work you do, and how you started your career.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you for about 15 minutes in your office at your convenient time. I will be in the Mississauga area during the second week of April 2008.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to talking with you.

*Sincerely,
-xxxxxxxx-*

A group discussion was also scheduled near the end of Unit Nine where we asked participant to comment on the following two questions:



Group Discussion

Group Discussion

- Do you think expanding your current job search network will help you find job opportunities in your field?
- What would you find challenging about information interviews?

And, here is one response from a participant from the Philippines:

I definitely think that expanding my current job search network will help me find job opportunities. I already have an initial but short list with me which was prepared as part of an earlier activity for this workshop.

The whole process about information interviews is challenging. Seeking the person to send the email to, writing the email and preparing for the information interview process itself are all new to me but overall I think that it still is a better process for me rather than making cold calls to a number of companies. Making cold calls in the end will have to be done if it is one way I can land a job that matches my skills.

The final unit in the Job Search workshop is entitled “Wrap Up” and is essentially a review unit. We re-visit the importance of practicing your job skills, staying positive and organizing your job search on an ongoing basis. The highlight of Unit Ten is the group discussion where we ask participants to comment on the self-assessment assignment submitted at the beginning of the workshop. It is meant to ensure they have learned the things they identified as “needing to learn” at the outset. Here is the Reflect on Your Experiences group discussion topic:



Group Discussion

Reflect on Your Experiences

You’ve learned a lot in the job search workshop. I reviewed the list of things "you need to learn" submitted at the beginning of the workshop and collected the items participants identified.

- How to research my occupation.
- How to develop a list of possible employers in a province and city in Canada.
- How to describe my skills and abilities.
- How to target my resume.
- How to target my cover letter.
- How to talk about what is on my resume.
- How to build a network to help me in my job search.
- How to contact potential employers (phone, email).
- How to organize my job search.

Compare this list with the needs you identified at the beginning of the workshop and answer the following questions:

- Did the Job Search Workshop help you learn the skills you identified at the beginning of the workshop?
- Which of the skills you and your classmates identified were the most important?

Here are several sample responses:

“Without a doubt, this Job Search Workshop helped me learn the skills I identified from the start of the workshop. Not only that, it has helped me acquire new skills, too, such as how to prepare a cover letter, calling cards and letter-request for information interviews.

Thank you so much, Mark, for the privilege of joining this workshop.

Of all the skills taken up in this workshop, I think targeting the resume and preparing the cover letter are among the most important. I didn't realize how ill-prepared I was for job-hunting until I was selected for this workshop. I wish all future immigrants to Canada will have the same opportunity to participate in this kind of workshop before leaving for Canada.”

“The job search workshop helped me so much. I realized how different job hunting is from the Filipino way.

I think the most important skills I learned were making my resume, both basic and targeted, followed by preparing the cover letter. Now I know, whatever type of job I would look for in the future, I could prepare for it well as long as I am armed with a perfectly written resume!”

“This is the fifth time I have written down "Hello Mark" this evening at local time. I have spent more than two hours on finishing reading my left Unit 8, Unit 9 and Unit 10 and giving my reflections on topics in the discussion section from Unit 6 to Unit 10. It really takes time. However, the workshop is a great introduction of the life style and the job-hunting attitude and approach in Canada. It did help me a lot with the skills I need to learn listed at the beginning of the workshop. And more than that, it is helpful for me to get ready and get well prepared for the future.”

The three comments above are representative of the contributions from all participants in the Job Search workshop. The sixteen assignments and nine group discussions intrinsic to the workshop curriculum provided the criteria whereby client progress could be measured.

In brief, upon completion of the workshop, all participants had learned to more effectively articulate their own skills and accomplishments. They had researched their own particular occupation, identified pathways for licensure with regulatory bodies and compiled a list of potential employers in their particular province of destination. They had developed a targeted resume and cover letter to a specific job opportunity in their field, compiled a reference list and job seekers calling card and also been introduced to employment portfolios and how to use them. They had examined techniques for effectively marketing themselves with potential employers and practiced methods for contacting them. And finally they were exposed to methods for effectively employing what they had learned and developed to engage in effective job searching on an on-going basis.

Interview Skills Workshop:

After a one week break upon completion of the Job Search workshop, the Interview Skills workshop began on December 10th. Participants received the Interview Skills schedule and activation notice of their user ID and password five days before commencement of the workshop. Ten participants were actively engaged in the workshop (six from the Philippines, three from China and one from India). Two participants from China that were actively engaged in the Job Search were unable to continue in the Interview Skills due to Internet connectivity and hardware problems (laptop failed).

One participant from the Philippines was still progressing through the Job Search.

ISW Participant Profiles:

New Beginnings Online – CIIP – 101		
Name	Field of Work	Location
	Business Admin / Accounting	Philippines
	Information Technology	Philippines
	Teacher	China
	Pharmacist	Philippines
	Pediatrician	Philippines
	IT / Business Systems Analyst	Philippines
	Mechanical Engineer	Philippines
	Pharmaceutical Sales / Marketing	China
	Investment Banking / Corporate Finance	Philippines
	Information Technology / Purchasing	India
	Research Scientist	China

The Interview Skills workshop ran for three weeks as per the original schedule . The first two weeks in December and then a break for the holidays. The workshop ran over the following timeframe:

- December 10 – December 16: Units One & Two
- December 17 – December 23: Units Three & Four
- January 1 – January 6: Units Five & Six

The workshop consisted of the following six units:

- Unit One: Interview Purpose & Preparation
- Unit Two: First Impressions / Stages and Formats
- Unit Three: Interview Questions
- Unit Four: Interview Answers
- Unit Five: Interview Mistakes
- Unit Six: After the Interview

Participants were responsible for participation in seven group discussions and the submission of seven assignments. The six unit curriculum contained forty-one specific learning objectives with the overall goals of the workshop summarized below:

- Understand the purpose of a job interview
- Identify how employers select who to interview
- Identify how to prepare for an interview
- Recognize ways to make a positive first impression
- Recognize the stages and formats of an interview
- Identify four categories of interview questions
- Create your own interview questions
- Predict interview questions
- Answer interview questions effectively
- Recognize illegal interview questions
- Respond to illegal questions effectively
- Identify questions to ask an interviewer
- Recognize common interview mistakes
- Employ ways to avoid interview mistakes
- Recognize ways to assess your interview performance
- Identify how to follow up with interviewers

ISW Narrative:

As mentioned earlier, the Interview Skills workshop ran from December 10 – January 6. Participants were on a three week schedule with a break over the holiday season. There were seven group discussions totaling 115 contributions and six assignments entailing 65 interactions with the Facilitator.

The Social Café group discussion was again made available at the beginning of the workshop and here is a sample from a Chinese participant. The holiday season was a popular topic early on.



Social Café

Glad to see you in this social cafe. Let me first catch my breath. I have been trying to make up for what I was supposed to finish before 10th and now I have almost finished all the assignments in the first workshop. What a relief! I can start my new journey with this workshop.

Everyone is expecting Christmas, including my students here in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China, although there will not be holidays for them here. Actually, the native Suzhounese are expecting 22nd December as they regard this day as a New Year Eve according to the local tradition. I do not know why, but I will buy a special wine fermented with osmanthus flowers as the local people do and have a family reunion, drinking and feasting. Luckily, 22nd is Saturday here as we do not have a national holiday for this local festival. I will surly enjoy the time with my family.

Take care and enjoy your Christmas atmosphere.

Unit One officially began on December 10th and on the agenda were the purpose of an interview, how employers choose people for an interview and interview preparation. Participants were exposed to the interview process from the perspective of both the employer and employee and four video clips (two in each step) are embedded throughout this first unit that participants found complemented the curriculum very well.

They had the opportunity to “hear and see” a Human Resource specialist answer questions such as:

- “What is the employer trying to learn in a job interview?”
- “What increased my chances of getting an interview?”

In another clip, participants viewed the HR Specialist’s thoughts on researching and getting ready for a job interview.

Aside from the video clips the highlights of this first unit were the assignment and group discussion responses from participants. The assignment evolved from a Case Study dealing with how to prepare prior to when an employer calls for an interview.



Reflecting on the Case - How Could It Have Gone Differently?

Many job seekers don't realize that interview preparation starts when they get the phone call for an interview. How could Fatima's case have gone differently? Think about what might have made a difference in this situation.

Here is one sample response from the Facilitator to a participant from the Philippines. The response provides more detail about the assignment itself and also illustrates the importance of the interactive exchanges that occur on an ongoing basis for every assignment.

Thank you for your Reflecting on the Case – How Could it Have Gone Differently assignment. As was mentioned in Unit One, “interview preparation starts when they get the phone call for an interview”. We had listed fourteen choices of questions you could ask the person that calls you for an interview and the eleven you chose are all good questions.

Here are your eleven questions:

1. Is it possible to get a copy of the company's annual report?
2. How long will the interview be?
3. What is the interview format?
4. Will there be a practical?
5. Is specific preparation needed for the practical?
6. How many people will be interviewing me?
7. Could you tell me the names and job titles of the interviewers?
8. Could you provide me with a job description?
9. Where specifically are you located?
10. Is there parking available?
11. Is the company on a bus route?

Perhaps we can trim down the number of questions a bit. Eleven is a lot of questions to ask. I like your first eight. Asking any or all of these eight questions would be good ones for example, if an employer such as Aerotek was to call. I usually don't ask your last three as I take it upon myself to find out this information. I consider it part of the research I would do on a company beforehand.

So, here are your remaining eight:

1. Is it possible to get a copy of the company's annual report?
2. How long will the interview be?
3. What is the interview format?
4. Will there be a practical?
5. Is specific preparation needed for the practical?
6. How many people will be interviewing me?
7. Could you tell me the names and job titles of the interviewers?
8. Could you provide me with a job description?

The first, I would only ask if I wasn't able to find one myself during my research of the potential employer. Your next three are all absolutely essential questions. Knowing if there is some form of practical before the interview occurs is a good thing. They may want to "test" your knowledge with more than simply a series of interview questions.

Knowing how many people will be interviewing you and their names is a question I always ask as well. It simply makes me feel less nervous knowing beforehand who and how many people I will be meeting. I can also memorize names before the interview and not be worried that I will forget someone's name.

"Could you provide me with a job description" is another very good question. Having a job description is especially useful but don't be surprised in they don't have one. It is often the case that employers detail the requirements and qualifications for a job in a job advertisement but have no formal job description in place. With many small companies, and larger ones as well, it can be very time consuming for the employer to write out job descriptions and they often think of the job advertisement as being the "description". Don't be concerned by this. Simply asking the question shows your interest and enthusiasm. And if they do have one, asking them to email you the description will help you anticipate questions you might be asked at the actual interview.

So, with my suggestion to trim your list, I think you have a good "bank" of questions to have in hand when you expect a call from an employer.

Good job on this first assignment in the Interview Skills workshop. Having about seven or eight questions always in mind when you expect to be called for an interview is a good thing. It helps you prepare and also shows the potential employer you are an organized and dedicated individual.

All participants had upon completion of this assignment, their own "bank" of questions ready for when an employer calls them for an interview in the future. The group discussion that appeared at the end of this step continued with the theme of interview preparation and posed two questions with the intent of measuring the effectiveness of what they had been exposed to in Unit One. Here are the two questions posed and a representative response.



Reflecting on Your Experience: Interview Preparation

How have you prepared for job interviews in the past?

What are you going to do to differently to prepare for your next job interview?

In the past there is very minimal preparation I have done for an interview. Similar to the others I just arrived on time with my resume and dressed appropriately for the interview. Also the last time I was an interviewee was back in 1994.

Luckily most of the steps I have just read and my classmates' feedback plus your feedback are truly an eye opener. For my next job interview my preparation will be totally different as I will be researching the company, scouting the workplace, practicing some of my answers and dressing appropriately. There will also be preparation of my portfolio and a review of the job advertisement.

Hopefully I will be able to convince them that I am the proper person to hire.

Still in the first week of the workshop, participants moved onto Unit Two where the topic of first impressions was introduced as well as a detailed presentation of the variety of interview stages & formats. One compelling aspect of the component dealing with interview stages was the fact that 85 percent of an interview is taken up with answering questions and thus we moved into the second week of the workshop.

Beginning on December 17 then and extending until December 23rd, the two middle units of the workshop began and these are entitled Interview Questions and Interview Answers. Participants were introduced to the four common categories of interview questions, asked to predict the questions they might be asked at an interview, comment on their own experiences with interview questions and ultimately asked to compose answers to the questions they anticipate being asked at an interview in the future.

A highlight in Unit Three was the “Challenging Questions” group discussion. Participants had the opportunity to share amongst themselves and with the Facilitator their own experiences. This put them into the best frame of mind for moving into Unit Four where we asked them to provide answers to the questions they will encounter at interviews in Canada. Here is one representative sampling from a participant from China:



Your Experiences with Challenging Questions

We'd like you to think about your past interview experiences.

What interview questions were the most challenging and why?

Looking back, I have gone through a few informal interviews in the last five years. I went to these interviews to obtain an opportunity to do a part time job. As for my present job, all I could remember about the interview was that I was asked to deliver a 45-minute class in front of a panel of teachers, administrators, and other college supervisors.

One of the most challenging questions I have been asked was "In what way would you break the ice if the students were always quiet in the English class?". It was a situation that I rarely met with. I always make my students feel free to ask me questions in class or after class and they do open their mouths in class. Afterwards, I thought about the interview question a lot.

Another challenging question does not come from any interviewers, but from my own students. I have been asked again and again the same question "How can I learn English well" from different students during these seven years. I point out that learning English really takes time, but they just seem to ignore that or they do not spend enough time on English.

Unit Four dealt exclusively with answering interview questions. It opens with a section addressing a common participant issue - interview concerns about language. A video clip is available with advice about answering the general interview question, "What are your greatest strengths and your greatest weaknesses?" question. And then, sample questions and answers are provided for the other three types of interview questions, i.e. technical, behavioral and situational.

The most beneficial aspect or highlight of unit four was the responses received from all participants containing their own answers to the following assignment.



Assignment

Practicing Your Answers Using Voice Mail

Reading about all of this information is one thing - but the real learning will come from doing it - using these tips and strategies. Let's practice some of your answers.

The using the phone and leaving a voice mail message part of this assignment is optional. Since you are overseas the long distance charges to make a call to Canada can be quite high. You have a choice as to how you would like to complete this assignment.

Choice #1: Plan answers to your predicted general, technical, behavioral and situational questions. Write your answers in a word processing document and send the document to the facilitator via email.

Choice #2: If you do choose to call, plan answers to your predicted general, technical, behavioral and situational questions. Call the facilitator and leave a voice mail message.

In the case of this assignment, all the participants chose option number one. As with the voice mail assignment in the Job Search workshop, making phone delivery of their answers a requirement would be more beneficial. Recordings of their answers could be returned to participants via email and would enhance the feedback provided by the Facilitator.

Answers were developed from the perspective of the job advertisement provided by participants during the Job Search workshop. Here is one sample written response. (Pediatrician – Philippines)

GENERAL: Can you tell me a little about yourself?

I am a physician and have had training in the Pediatrics Specialty. In my work experience, I have had the chance to lead in both clinical health and administrative environments. As a Pediatrician, I have led a team of medical professionals in the clinical management of patients. Administratively, I have managed the Resident Staff with regards to the Pediatric Residency Training Program.

TECHNICAL: What do you think are challenges to managing resources?

One of the challenges in managing resources is prioritization. I believe that it is important to always keep in mind the objectives of the organization. Concepts or projects that would contribute most to these objectives should be given priority in terms of appropriation of sources. Another challenge is dealing with misappropriation of resources. These can be minimized by careful study of projects and having a systematized accounting and inventory.

BEHAVIORAL: Can you tell us about a time you had to manage conflict in your work place?

I was a Chief Resident when a conflict between a nurse staff and a resident staff regarding records keeping of a particular patient. I took hold of the patient's chart and reviewed it. I then took time to talk, one on one, with both parties concerned and held a meeting with both of them afterwards. I proposed that the resident should be able to hold and keep the patient's chart from 7 – 11 AM, after which the nurse handle the chart. This gave equal chance for both of them to review the record of the patient and deliver health care more efficiently. Consequently, this system was adapted by the department.

SITUATIONAL: What would you do if you are given a project to promote by your superior which you think is not in-line with the company's goals?

Once I am assigned a project, I review it very well. If in my review I observe that it is not in-line with the company's objective I will approach my superior. I would ask his opinion about the project. I would then point out and agree with him on its strong points. Afterwards, I can objectively share with him what I think would be its weak points or the problems that may arise with the project and give suggestions as to how these can be avoided or minimized.

The quality of answers received from all participants to this assignment were most impressive. This was by far the most time consuming exercise during the Interview Skills workshop and often the most intense in terms of facilitation. In the case of these CIIP clients, their attention to the curriculum and their own wealth of work experience contributed to the excellent answers composed. Any number of their answers could be incorporated into a "bank" of sample answers in both written and audio format for future online workshop participants

It was at the end of Unit Four that the Christmas holidays occurred and although several participants continued to progress through the material and submit assignments, for the most part everyone took advantage of the break and jumped back into the workshop on January 1st.

The last week in the workshop then entailed Units Five (Interview Mistakes) and Unit Six (After the Interview). The Unit on Interview Mistakes begins with "We all make mistakes. The most important thing is that we learn from our mistakes." This essentially sets the tone for this brief unit. Participants are introduced to common interview mistakes, view a video clip reminding them that interviewers can make mistakes as well and then after reading a collection of "light hearted" real interview mistakes, participated in a group discussion where they shared their own experiences concerning interview mistakes..

Seven participants made that "leap of faith" and were willing to contribute their own experiences with interview mistakes. Here is one sample from a Chinese participant:



Group Discussion

Reflecting on Your Experience

As far as I can remember, having not predicted the interview questions and having not fully prepared for the interview are the mistakes I have made. Once I was asked "Among reading, listening, writing and speaking courses, which one do you think you are most capable of teaching?". I have not thought about it as I teach English as a comprehensive course without any particular emphasis on one of the specific skills. Of course, I did not get the opportunity to teach English as a part time job in the interviewers' training school.

Best wishes and merry Christmas.

The final unit of the Interview Skills workshop is entitled After the Interview and examined the things you should do to “follow up” such as send thank you notes, assess effectively your own performance and recognize how employers check references. One highlights of this unit was the twenty question self-check assessment which served to ensure participants learned the critical aspects of the entire workshop. All participants scored 18 out of twenty or higher.

Here are ten of the twenty questions:



Assignment

Self Check - What Do I Know About Job Interviews?

1. Which of the following is a good way to prepare for your job interview?
2. The purpose of a job interview is:
3. For men and women, the best way to dress for a job interview is to wear:
4. You never get a second chance to make a first impression! Which of the following is not part of making a positive first impression?
5. Use the SAR formula (**S**ituation, **A**ction, and **R**esult) when you are answering _____ questions.
6. In a _____ interview you will be interviewed by more than one person.
7. Which of the following is an interview mistake?
8. It's best to arrive _____ before an interview?
9. _____ of your interview is answering questions.
10. If you don't understand a question in the interview, the best thing to do is:

The other highlight was the group discussion. Earlier in the workshop (Unit Four) we had asked participants to identify a “community resource” to help them prepare for job interviews. At that point in the workshop participants were formulating the answers to their predicted interview questions and to complement the written assignment where they submitted their answers to the Facilitator, we encouraged them to establish a contact in their community that could assist them with preparation for an interview.

This group discussion was particularly interesting for overseas clients as it provided the Facilitator the opportunity to recommend resources in Canada that would prove useful pre and post landing. Here is one sample response with Facilitator feedback:



Reflecting on Your Experience

Re: Reflecting on Your Experience

An internet search will help me find an employment resource center. Hopefully one that is near us will have a resource person to assist me in preparing for job interviews.

The person approached should be able to prepare me for job interviews by providing feedback on my actions and reactions during a mock interview. This feedback is important so that I can make adjustments to whatever needs to be improved prior to an actual interview. The resource person could also provide other resources which I could check on prior to the actual interview.

Re: Re: Reflecting on Your Experience

Thank you for jumping into our conversation about “community resources.” Your idea about employment resource centers is a good one. I reviewed your Unit Four assignment (Potential Employers) from the Job Search workshop and noticed your interest in Ontario. And, I found this link today. It will take you to a list of Employment Resource Centers in Ontario:
http://www.settlement.org/sys/faqs_detail.asp?faq_id=4000102

If you have a chance, check out some centers and establish contacts with Employment Specialists in your field.

Settlement agencies often can be helpful in this regard as well and here is a link to agencies in Canada and Ontario:
http://www.settlement.org/sys/faqs_detail.asp?faq_id=4000684

I would suggest you begin establishing contact with agencies before leaving for Canada. I am sure you will be able to track down some email addresses and could send appropriate people a copy of your resume and intentions. This might be a positive first step.

Congratulations on completing the Interview Skills workshop. It has been a pleasure working with you. I will be in touch again soon concerning the final workshop in the series (Working in Canada) in the next few days.

In similar fashion for all participants, resources in their province of destination such as settlement agencies, professional associations or staffing agencies were provided in Facilitator responses. This group discussion and the self-check assignment were extremely beneficial opportunities for interaction at the end of the Interview Skills workshop.

The Interview Skills workshop contained seven assignments and six group discussions in total and as with the Job Search workshop, these components provided the measurement criteria for participant engagement and progress through the workshop. Upon completion of the workshop, all participants had investigated how employers select who to interview, how to prepare for an interview and via an assignment had chosen the questions they would ask when called for an interview. They had also identified the aspects of making a good first impression, created their own set of interview questions they anticipated being asked at an interview and developed their own answers to these questions. As the workshop drew to a close, participants contributed their own experiences to a group discussion dealing with the challenges of interviews and the questions they expect to be asked and as mentioned earlier commented on resources to assist them with interviews pre and post landing.

Working in Canada Workshop:

After completion of the Interview Skills workshop, there was an hiatus of one week and then the Working in Canada began on January 14th. Participants received the Working in Canada schedule and activation notice of their user ID and password five days before commencement of the workshop. Eight participants were actively engaged in the workshop during the designated schedule (five from the Philippines and three from China).

Two participants from the Philippines and one from India were still progressing through the Interview Skills workshop.

WIC Participant Profiles:

New Beginnings Online – CIIP – 101		
Name	Field of Work	Location
	Business Admin / Accounting	Philippines
	Information Technology	Philippines
	Teacher	China
	Pharmacist	Philippines
	Pediatrician	Philippines
	IT / Business Systems Analyst	Philippines
	Mechanical Engineer	Philippines
	Pharmaceutical Sales / Marketing	China
	Investment Banking / Corporate Finance	Philippines
	Information Technology / Purchasing	India
	Research Scientist	China

The Working in Canada workshop ran for three weeks as per the original schedule . The workshop ran over the following timeframe:

- January 14 – January 20: Units One & Two
- January 21 – January 27: Units Three & Four
- January 28 – February 3: Units Five & Six

The workshop consisted of the following six units:

- Unit One: Employment Contracts
- Unit Two: Workplace Orientation
- Unit Three: Organizational Culture
- Unit Four: Workplace Protections
- Unit Five: Getting Paid
- Unit Six: Workplace Success

Participants were responsible for participation in five group discussions and the submission of five assignments. The six unit curriculum contained forty-six specific learning objectives with the overall goals of the workshop summarized below:

- Recognize the importance of employment contracts
- Identify the different types and parts of employment contracts
- Understand the parts of a workplace orientation
- Recognize the differences between written and unwritten rules
- Recognize the importance of organizational culture
- Examine characteristics of organizational culture
- Recognize the range of Nova Scotia laws about workplace protection
- Find Labour Standards and Occupational Health & Safety information
- Find Workers Compensation and Human Rights information
- Understand how workers get paid
- Recognize the parts of a pay statement and paycheque
- Understand deductions and contributions
- Find information about filing an Income Tax return
- Recognize parts of workplace culture that contribute to workplace success
- Examine your role in contributing to workplace success
- Identify how you can manage your career

WIC Narrative:

The Working in Canada workshop ran according to a three week schedule and was offered January 14th – February 3rd. There were six group discussions totaling 118 contributions and five assignments involving 50 interactions with the Facilitator. The Social Café was available just prior to the beginning of the workshop as with the previous two but it was a fairly quiet area during the final workshop. Two participants exchanged experiences with the VISA application process at the outset and then participants focused on the curriculum.

Units One and Two were on the agenda during the first week and the topics of these two units were Employment Contracts and Workplace Orientations. The Unit on Employment Contracts introduced both written and verbal contracts, the components of contracts and the assignment asked participants to identify what they felt should be in their own employment contract. Participants engaged in a group discussion and shared their own experiences with employment contracts and what they would look for in a contract in Canada.

One highlight of the first week was the assignment dealing with employment contracts. It was a effective assignment as many participants commented on their own employment contract experience and how it compared with the sample contracts and curriculum presented in the learning material. The assignment itself revealed a wealth of participant experience with contracts and how they varied across professions and country of origin. Here is the assignment and a representative response by the Facilitator:



Assignment

Your Employment Contract

You've had the opportunity to review two sample contracts. Both are good contracts. Each clearly states the rights, obligations and expectations of the employer and employee. Now it is time to think about what this means for you. Imagine you've been offered a job and will be presented with a contract for negotiation.

- Identify the key parts that you think should be in your contract and explain why.

Thank you for the “Your Employment Contract” assignment. Your personal experiences with a verbal contract in the past are much appreciated. Your insights from past experience help verify much of the material covered in Unit One.

We asked you to identify what you would consider the key parts of an employment contract and here are your choices:

1. Start Date
2. Job description
3. Address of workplaces
4. Details of Pay and Benefits
5. Type of Employment
6. Term of Employment
7. Sick Days,
8. Termination of Contract Notice

As was mentioned in Unit One, the key questions an employment contract should answer are:

What are my work hours?

When do I start? What is the length of my employment?

What are my duties?

Who do I report to?

What will I be paid?

How will I get paid?

How much vacation will I get?

Your listing of what you consider the key parts of a contract will answer almost all of these questions so keep your list in mind when you are offered a contract. I commented on five of your eight choices.

Start Date is always important. Employers always have a preferred start date and this often “comes up” during a job interview or is indicated in the job advertisement itself. It is good to see the start date on paper however to ensure there are no conflicts. On occasion I have negotiated a start date and simply asked for the position to begin two weeks later than on the contract. In my particular case, I simply wanted a bit of vacation between jobs and the employer was amendable to this.

I’ve often asked for clarification regarding a job description. Usually they reflect the duties and responsibilities outlined in a job ad but it is always a good idea to ensure they match. Occasionally I’ve been offered an employment contract that didn’t contain a job description. On these occasions I’ve asked for one to be included and the employer was amenable to this.

Details of pay is always an important element of a contract. Every employer I have been engaged with over the years included details in this regard. Your rate of pay and when you get paid should be mentioned. You would usually find information about the “other benefits” you referred to as well in this section. This could include health benefits or professional development opportunities that are either built into the contract or you have the option of pursuing. In my case for example, our company negotiated a better rate with a health insurance company than I could individually. I then have the option to pursue the health coverage and have the cost deducted monthly from my salary.

Terms of employment is another key aspect of an employment contract. This refers to the length and nature of the employment (i.e. – contract, seasonal, or indefinite length). Most contracts are on a yearly basis but it depends on the employer. Many contracts are considered on-going and simply are subject to review on a yearly basis. Regardless, it is important to know the issues in this matter for any contract you are presented with.

And lastly, your Termination of Contract Notice selection is a good one for you to look for. I always look for this one as well. The amount of time the employer needs to provide and the time you need to provide the employer in regards to “terminating employment” can vary depending on the field of work. In Pharmaceutical Sales or International Management I would guess (at least in the first year) there would be a minimum two week notice period required on the part of both the employer and employee. This is a standard timeframe and is the legal requirement in most provinces in Canada.

In summary, your eight “key parts” are excellent choices on your part. Keep in mind, that Canadian employers are eager to keep good employees and are amenable to having potential employees ask questions about an employment contract. It is perfectly acceptable to simply ask for clarification about aspects of a contract you consider important.

Participants made their selection of “key parts” from a menu of sixteen components and this ranged from a minimum of five to, in the case of one particular participant, all sixteen aspects of a contract. The average selection was eight. In the group discussion that followed this assignment, many participants expressed a need to “pay more attention” or “watch out for this aspect” of an employment contract when they are offered one in Canada. Or as one participant mentioned, *“As a new employee in Canada, I will examine the key parts of employment contract as taught by this unit very carefully.”*

Another highlight in week one embedded within the Unit dealing with workplace orientations, was another aspect of the Canadian workplace, i.e. – written and unwritten rules. Written rules often took the form of a workplace orientation and real workplace orientations from the employer perspective were examined. Participants also examined how to recognize and identify the difference between written and unwritten rules and were asked how to deal with a particular unwritten rule. Providing a specific unwritten rule “situation” was an effective method to reveal an aspect of workplace culture in Canada and allowed for advice and comments from the Facilitator. It also permitted the timely introduction of additional learning material relating to the broader topic of Canadian workplace culture. The assignment itself is included with the unwritten rule presented, then the participant response embedded in the Facilitator reply.



Assignment

Written and Unwritten Rules Situation

Think about the following situation.

You’ve been in your new job for two weeks. You have a concern about company social events after regular work hours. Your manager and co-workers from your department go to a restaurant every Friday after work. It’s supposed to be an opportunity to relax and get to know each other better but often work issues are discussed and decisions made that you feel you should know about. There is no written rule stating you need to attend these events. But, the unwritten rule seems to be that you should attend these events every week.

How would you deal with this situation?

Thank you for your Written and Unwritten Rules Situation assignment. Here is your answer to our unwritten rules situation:

As I know, this type of social events is a good chance to know co-workers better. Then, as a new-comer of a department, maybe it is not so accustomed to it at first and do not know how to attend it. If I am confronted with this situation, I will try my best to attend the social events of the department. I will ask co-workers about how to attend the social event of the department, and manage my time to attend it. If I have very important things to do and I can not attend, I will tell my co-workers and ask for a leave.

It is often hard to know how to deal with an unwritten rule such as the one described, but your course of action is a good way to handle it. Especially when you are a new employee and wish to make a good impression. Attending the events initially for a while also provides you with the opportunity to ask other employees about how they handle this situation as well. This is usually the best way to learn the "unwritten rules" - simply by asking co-workers that have worked for a company for an extended period and have come to know what the unwritten rules are.

In most cases, it is not expected that employees be obliged to attend social events after work hours. Most employers would recognize it is over and above the "call of duty" to attend events after work (especially ones every Friday). This has been my experience.

As per the advice in Unit Two: "Other than being told what the unwritten rules are, the only way to learn about them is to spend time studying the work environment". Keep an open mind when you first start work in a new place and "study" how staff interact and what is expected of them.

I have handled this situation in a similar fashion to your thoughts. At least initially I would attend these Friday evening social events and use them as an opportunity to get to know my co-workers better. It would be unusual that important business decisions would be made at events after official work hours and you can always make it clear that if you cannot attend a particular Friday, you'd want to be informed of any important issues the following Monday.

You have probably heard the phrase, "some people live to work and others work to live". It has been my experience that employers know this to be true and recognize that a work / life balance is an individual perspective.

If you can think of any unwritten rules that have caused you concern in the past or have questions about any that might do so in the future, just let me know.

BTW: Here are two links from Unit Six that are related to “unwritten rules” that you might find interesting. Unwritten rules relate to Canadian Workplace Culture which we talk about in Unit Six and you might find these links interesting at the moment.

<http://jobsearch-in-canada.com/employer-expectations.html>

<http://www.sciencecoop.ubc.ca/info/cultural.html>

Take care and I look forward to hearing from you again.

Several participants were asked if more “unwritten rules” situations would be beneficial and all answered in the affirmative. Creating a collection of specific situations could be developed and inserted into the curriculum for additional participant comment and discussion. A “bank” of unwritten rules could assist illustrate numerous aspects of Canadian workplace culture.

Included in the above response are resources available within the curriculum and these were provided to participants on an on-going basis in assignments and group discussion responses. Throughout the Working in Canada workshop, the Facilitator investigated and collected an extensive list of additional learning resources and referred participants to relevant resources when appropriate. Here is a sampling of online resources made available:

From SaskNetwork: “The workplace is changing – how are you managing?”

<http://www.sasknetwork.ca/html/JobSeekers/workplace/workplace.htm#success#success>

From Citizenship and Immigration: Cultural Profile Project

<http://www.cp-pc.ca/>

Sobeys School of Business: The Workplace Review

<http://www.smu.ca/academic/sobey/workplacereview/welcome.html>

Newcomer Magazine: The Art of Getting it Right – Workplace Ethics in Canada

http://www.cnmag.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=60%3Athe-art-of-getting-it-right&Itemid=47

Newcomer Magazine: Rules at Work

http://www.cnmag.ca/index.php?view=article&catid=44%3Aissue-6&id=297%3Arules-at-work&option=com_content&Itemid=74

Canadian Immigrant: The Culture of Work

<http://thecanadianimmigrant.com/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=679>

Culture Online: Made in Canada

<http://www.culture.ca/english.jsp>

Charity Village: Ana Maria Fantino and the management of a multicultural workforce

<http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/archive/asp/asp06/asp0604.html>

University of Iowa: East Asian Culture in the Workplace: China, Japan, Korea & Taiwan

http://www.uiowa.edu/hr/administration/linguistics/asian_culture.pdf

These online learning resources collected during the workshop itself, could be included in the existing list of Additional Learning Resources available via the Working in Canada website and made available to future online participants as integral components of the program.

Week two of the workshop began on January 21st with Organizational Culture and Workplace Protections on the agenda. The unit dealing with organizational culture was especially interesting and involved the recognition of six characteristics of organizational culture and a group discussion where participants shared their own cultural perspective on one of the six aspects described, i.e. – diversity, hierarchy, work style, time, motivation and communication. I have include one representative participant and Facilitator response with diversity as the characteristic being discussed.



Reflecting on Your Experience

Earlier in this step, we reviewed six characteristics of organizational culture. You were asked to think about the organizational culture of a past workplace.

Now it's time to learn from others in the group by sharing some of your experiences in a group discussion. Select one characteristic from the list of six in section C: Characteristics of Organizational Culture. Answer one of the questions.

Example: If you select communication, answer one of the three questions.

Communication

- Was good communication important in your last workplace?
- Which communication skill was most important – writing or speaking?
- How did you communicate your ideas to co-workers and managers?

Re: Reflecting on Your Experience

I will choose "Diversity" as a characteristic of the organizational culture I am currently a part of.

I am currently in a role which allows me to interface with various mechanical engineers both male and female. Ages of these engineers varies as some were new graduates while others had considerable work experience.

As I am based in the Philippines, I am usually with Filipinos but we also have Indians working as electrical engineers. There are instances that I have to interface with them as both mechanical and electrical engineers work on the same project together depending on skills needed. I also report to a superior who is from Scotland and sometimes my other boss based in HK, a Singaporean, assigns certain tasks to me. Since we have design centers in Hong Kong and China, there are times that I get involved in the work that they do. Just last November 2007, I was in China to deliver a training on mechanical design (luckily in English) to our colleagues there. Also the whole company has headquarters in the US therefore we also have some American culture in the workplace.

I have been in this diverse set-up for at least 10 years and I was able to cope with it. I just kept an open mind about the whole set-up and there were a lot of instances where I had to strike a compromise between what was acceptable to one group of people but not in the other.

Re: Re: Reflecting on Your Experience

Thanks for your thoughts about diversity. Your experience already in a diverse environment will be viewed as a very positive aspect of your background with Canadian employers.

Here is a section from an article entitled "Cultural Diversity in the Workplace" you will find online at:

<http://www.bredin.ab.ca/ImmigrantServices/Employment%20Preparation/Cultural%20Diversity%20in%20the%20Workplace.aspx>

According to the Conference Board of Canada, the rapid growth of visible minorities is changing the very face of Canada and boosting our economy. By 2016, almost one in five workers will belong to a visible minority group. Looking ahead, their contribution promises to be at least as important as it already has been.

The article opens as you can see with a statistic that illustrates the type of workplace you will likely encounter when you arrive in Canada. I also found an interesting article (from a Manager's perspective) entitled "Management of a Multicultural Workforce". Given your Senior Lead Engineering background, hearing a Managers' thoughts on the diversity issue should be interesting. You will find the entire article at:

<http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/archive/asp/asp06/asp0604.html>

CV: *So, what are the most important things managers need to know when managing a culturally diverse workforce?*

AMF: *I think that not only for managers, but for everyone who is in this business, one of the key things is to be aware of the culture of employees. No one can be an expert in all the hundreds of cultural groups that exist in Canada. But it helps to read and be aware of current issues in the world and the history of different countries. However, we should also reverse the focus to ourselves. We are not culture free and we need to be aware of our own cultural biases. Some people think that culture is something that some foreigners have and that we don't have a culture. That is not true. We have values, judgments, and opinions and we see the world in particular ways. It doesn't mean that we should stop thinking that way; it's just to be aware that we have certain beliefs and ideas. If we are not aware, we impose our ideas or judge other people according to them.*

Your comments about keeping an open mind and striking a compromise are exactly the type of "thoughts" potential employers in Canada will want to hear about. Having experience in such a diverse environment as you have, adds to your already outstanding wealth of education and expertise in the field of Mechanical Engineering. With so many companies pursuing global markets (RIM for example) your familiarity with functioning well in a diverse environment is another "skill" you can add to your repertoire.

If time permits, perhaps you could share with us one of your “instances where I had to strike a compromise between what was acceptable to one group of people but not in the other” Specific examples can sometimes illustrate the concept of diversity better than a collection of articles on the topic.

The curriculum presented six characteristics of organizational culture with the following four focused upon by participants in the group discussion: diversity, hierarchy, communication and work style. The exchange provided is representative of the interaction that occurred around the topic of organizational culture. Having the participant choose a characteristic relevant to their own past experience permitted the Facilitator to comment and expand upon their chosen characteristic. In every response, referrals to appropriate online resources permitted the investigation a particular aspect of organizational culture relevant to a participant’s own experience.

As participants finished the second week of the workshop and began the third on January 28th, the topics of Workplace Protections and Getting Paid were addressed. Both units contained assignments designed to have participants investigate particular aspects of the topic in question. In the case of Workplace Protections, participants answered five questions related to the Nova Scotia Labour Standards code and thus exposed them to common “protections” available throughout Canada. It also allowed the Facilitator to focus the attention of participants on their province of destination for further inquiry.



Labour Standards Code Questions

You have seen how your virtual friends were able to use the Labour Standards Code to answer some of their questions. Now use the Labour Standard Code Guide to help you answer the following multiple choice questions.

Thank you for your Labour Standards Code Questions assignment. You got all five correct! We briefly toyed with the idea of making this a ten question assignment but it’s purpose was simply to give you some impression of the labour standards code; not become an expert. I often consult the “code” myself (as they change from time to time) but they more often than not lead into other questions and I end up calling the local Labour Standards Code office. BTW: Were there major differences between the codes you investigated in Nova Scotia and those in the Philippines?

They are quite good in Nova Scotia (the local representatives I mean). We are in the habit of having a representative from the Labour Standards Office visit our office for group question and answer sessions with clients so they have gotten to know us quite well. Labour Standards will vary a bit from province to province but they are based on federal (nation wide) legislation so they are for the most part quite consistent. Here are two websites that leads you to British Columbia labour standards information for example: (your job advertisement from the Job Search workshop was from the Vancouver area)

Employment Standards Act: http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/E/96113_01.htm

Labour Relations Board of British Columbia: <http://www.lrb.bc.ca/codeguide/>

If you were to find yourself working in Vancouver in the coming months, you could find answers to Labour Standards questions at the sites above.

In the following unit (Getting Paid) participants were introduced to common elements of a Canadian pay statement, i.e. – Federal Income Tax , Canada Pension Plan and Employment Insurance and also employer contributions and deductions were detailed. An assignment in Unit Five exposed participants to details of a standard pay statement. Again, as with the assignment dealing with workplace protections, they were asked five questions about a sample pay statement.

In the second step of the Getting Paid unit, participants focused on the topic of income tax. They were exposed to a sample T4 statement via a government of Canada website and also encourage to participate in an online course on learning about taxes.

The final unit during week three was Workplace Success. This unit examined the role of the employee and employer in contributing to success in the workplace and the issue of workplace culture as it relates to on going success in the Canadian workplace. Participants examined what they have done in the past to succeed in the workplace and what they can do to succeed and manage their career in the Canadian workplace.

Two articles of note were provided in the section dealing specifically with Canadian Workplace culture, i.e. –

Overview of Canadian Workplace Culture

<http://www.sciencecoop.ubc.ca/info/cultural.html>

Canadian Employer Expectations: Your First Job in Canada

<http://jobsearch-in-canada.com/employer-expectations.html>

These articles and other aspects of the learning content such as “Managing Your Career”, “Probationary Period” and “Workshop Reflection” led into the final group discussion or highlight of the Working in Canada workshop where participants were asked the following questions:



Group Discussion

Reflecting on Your Own Experience

Based upon what you've read and your own work experience, think about these questions:

- What made you successful in your last job?
- What can you do to achieve workplace success in Canada?
- What can you do to manage your career?

Contribute your response to the group discussion area and compare your experiences with other members of the class.

Re: Reflecting on Your Own Experience

I believe that one of the reasons why I was successful at my previous job as a Pediatric Resident is because I love what I was doing. With this, I was able to effectively carry out all my duties and responsibilities and, on many occasions, went an extra mile.

I believe I can use the same formula when I start working in Canada. Although it would be different in terms of culture, plus, my adjustment of being uprooted from my country of origin and moving into a country half way around the world from it. Also, this on-line class has certainly contributed a lot to help ease my anxieties about working in Canada. Now that I am equipped "theoretically", I need to practice everything I learned from this "class".

I can manage my career by continuously upgrading myself thru trainings. Mentoring is also a good way of managing, it would help me learn through other professionals. Setting deadlines for myself would help so that I can pace my career moves.

Re: Re: Reflecting on Your Own Experience

I went looking for mentor programs in the Vancouver area upon reading your posting and stumbled upon this link:

http://www.med.ubc.ca/education/md_postgrad/International_Medical_Graduates.htm

It is from the University of British Columbia / Faculty of Medicine website and although not related to mentoring specifically, I thought you might be interested. There is a "links" page that you might find of interest as well that leads to a number of British Columbia medical related organizations where you may find some mentoring related information.

http://www.med.ubc.ca/education/md_postgrad/Links.htm

We have a "Mentor" program here at MISA and I have asked the director of the program about mentor programs in British Columbia as well. She said "it rings a bell" and will get back to me with any specific contacts she has run across in the past.

I will be in touch again in this regard.

Concerning your responses to the three questions we posed:

- What made you successful in your last job?
- What can you do to achieve workplace success in Canada?
- What can you do to manage your career?

Loving what you are doing is definitely a major reason for succeeding in any occupation. Not to seem flippant but "love is a transferable" skill that hasn't been mentioned as yet during the workshop. It can be applied effectively anywhere in the world so you are already ahead of the game for succeeding in Canada 😊

I was happy to hear the on-line class has helped ease your anxiety about working in Canada by the way. Having worked with you over the last three months, I have every confidence that you will succeed.

Thanks for sharing your thoughts and I will keep looking for mentor related information for you.

In the case of every participant, responses were provided by the Facilitator referring them to agencies or online resources to further illustrate workplace culture and managing their career in the Canadian workplace.

The Working in Canada workshop contained five assignments and five group discussions and as with the other two workshops, these provided the measurement criteria for student progress and interaction with the content, the facilitator and with each other. Upon completion of the workshop, participants had a new appreciation of the importance of employment contracts and had chosen what they would consider the key aspects of an employment contract in Canada. They were exposed to sample workplace orientations in Canada and asked to reflect upon their own experience with workplace orientations and compare these to orientation components in the Canadian environment.

Participants examined an unwritten rule in the Canadian workplace and interacted directly with the facilitator and with each other as to how best to deal with a particular unwritten rule. They identified aspects of a representative Canadian labour standards code and common Canadian pay statement. Participants were introduced to specific aspects of Canadian workplace culture and asked to comment on one particular aspect of workplace culture. Interaction via an assignment and group discussion on workplace culture were highlights of the middle section of the workshop. And as mentioned in the narrative section, the workshop closed with a discussion dealing with managing their own career in Canada.

APPENDIX B Workshop Evaluations

Job Search Workshop Participant Evaluations:

Following the conduct of the Job Search workshop, the Facilitator submitted a participant evaluation. Questions sought feedback on:

- Registration material
- Orientation package
- Content and process
- Facilitators
- Schedule

For the Job Search seven evaluation forms were received from participants . A simple five point scoring system was used to measure the extent the participants agreed with the specific questions provided on various elements of the online workshops. Virtually all questions were answered by the majority as a yes (4) or yes definitely (5) response. Suggestions for improvement were also recorded.

Job Search Workshop – Participant Evaluation Summary						
						Number Completed Evaluation: 7
	1 No	2 Not Really	3 Somewhat	4 Yes	5 Yes Definitely	Suggestions
Registration material – A series of email messages were sent to all students describing the Job Search Workshop and how to register:						
Easy to read?					7	
Sufficient information about workshop?				1	6	
<i>Suggestions for improvement:</i>						Submit this part of evaluation earlier or right after registration Workshop helpful – connect to possible employers at the beginning Informed by CIIP staff in advance of the workshop
Orientation package – An orientation package was sent to all students registered in the workshop prior to the beginning of the course:						
Orientation material help understand workshop?				2	5	
Information on access online workshop helpful?				1	6	
Information on participation online helpful?					7	
<i>Suggestions for improvement:</i>						

Content – You encountered many different styles of new learning material throughout the Job Search Workshop:						
Documents easy to read?					7	
Instructions clear?					7	
Workshop document helpful in looking for work?					7	
Enjoy participation in group discussions?				1	6	
Contributions from facilitators in group discussions beneficial?					7	
Contributions from students in group discussions beneficial?				3	4	
Case studies aid in understanding?				1	6	
Virtual group of newcomers?			2	1	4	
Video clip information beneficial?			1	3	3	
<i>Suggestions for improvement:</i>						Lack of time to read responses from classmates and facilitator Video clips very useful, desire for “real cases” Use SKYPE for talking once a week Closed captioning for video clips

Facilitators – You encountered one facilitator during the Job Search Workshop:						
Feedback provided about assignments helpful?					7	
Feedback provided in group discussion beneficial?					7	
Facilitators reply to assignments in timely manner?					7	
<i>Suggestions for improvement:</i>						Feedback, tips and advice very helpful

Job Search Workshop – Participant Evaluation Summary (cont’d)						
						Number Completed Evaluations: 7
	1 No	2 Not Really	3 Somewhat	4 Yes	5 Yes Definitely	Suggestions
Schedule – The original Job Search Workshop schedule for four weeks. There were 9 group discussions and 16 assignments scheduled during this time.						
Schedule allow time to read material?			1	2	4	
Addition of one more week useful?				1	6	
Enough time to participate?			1	3	3	
Enough time to complete assignments?			1	3	3	
<i>Suggestions for improvement:</i>						Tight schedule Time allocated for workshop sufficient – extra week between units eased the time pressure

As mentioned earlier, the majority of responses to all questions in the Job Search workshop evaluation were in the (4) yes or (5) yes definitely categories . This confirmed that registration and orientation material were effective in introducing participants to the online program. The series of thirteen content related questions confirmed that the curriculum material was well designed and effectively conveyed the learning content. Facilitation was overwhelmingly endorsed and validated the importance of interaction with the facilitator as a crucial element of course effectiveness, i.e. – feedback from the facilitator regarding assignments and group discussions.

The “Schedule” component of the evaluation was interesting. An extra week was introduced to the course schedule and this was a welcome addition from all participants when offered. Six of the seven responses in the (5) yes definitely category reflect this ready acceptance of an extra week in the schedule.

Interview Skills Workshop Participant Evaluations:

Following the conduct of the Interview Skills workshop, the Facilitator submitted a participant evaluation. Questions sought feedback on:

- Content and process
- Facilitators
- Schedule

For the Interview Skills seven evaluation forms were received from participants . A simple five point scoring system was used to measure the extent the participants agreed with the specific questions provided on various elements of the online workshops. Virtually all questions were answered by the majority as a yes (4) or yes definitely (5) response. Suggestions for improvement were also recorded.

Interview Skills Workshop – Participant Evaluation Summary						
Number Completed Evaluations: 7						
	1 No	2 Not Really	3 Somewhat	4 Yes	5 Yes Definitely	Suggestions
Content – You encountered many different styles of learning material throughout the Interview Skills Workshop:						
Easy to read?					7	
Instructions clear?				1	6	
Content useful?				1	6	
Content help to prepare for interviews?				1	6	
Content help recognize stages/formats for interview?				1	6	
Content help identify 4 categories of interview questions?				1	6	
Content help predict interview questions?				1	6	
Content help answer interview questions?				5	2	
Content help identify questions for interviewer?				2	5	
Content help avoid interview mistakes?				2	5	

Interview Skills Workshop – Participant Evaluation Summary (cont'd)						
						Number Completed Evaluations: 7
	1 No	2 Not Really	3 Somewhat	4 Yes	5 Yes Definitely	Suggestions
Content help identify follow up with interviewers?				1	6	
Establish a community resource person?		1	3	2	1	
Community resource person helpful?		1	2	1	2	
<i>Suggestions for improvement:</i>						Looking for a resource person is foreign to me – not ready to do this
Facilitators – You encountered one facilitator during the Interview Skills Workshop:						
Feedback provided about assignments helpful?				1	6	
Feedback provided in group discussion beneficial?				1	6	
Facilitators reply to assignments in timely manner?				1	6	
<i>Suggestions for improvement:</i>						
Schedule – Interview Skills Workshop schedule was three weeks. There were 7 group discussions and 7 assignments scheduled:						
Schedule allow time to read material?				4	3	
Enough time to participate?		1		2	4	
Enough time to complete?			1	1	4	
More assignments beneficial?		4	1		2	
Comments	Hard to predict interview questions in a specific field. More model questions and answers in categories according to different fields would be beneficial					

The Interview Skills evaluation focused on three areas, i.e. – content, facilitation and schedule. The majority of response in the content section were in the (5) yes definitely category with the exception being the sections dealing with establishing a community resource. Although some scores for these two area were in the (3) somewhat and (2) not really categories, as evidenced by the response to participants in the group discussion dealing with the community resource issue, the inclusion of this aspect of the curriculum remains a valuable component as it allows facilitator feedback for identifying useful resources in Canada.

Participants consistently chose (5) yes definitely and (4) yes in terms of the value of facilitation. And, the three week schedule was validated by the majority of (5) yes definitely and (4) yes responses.

Working In Canada Participant Evaluations:

Following the conduct of the Working in Canada workshop, the Facilitator submitted a participant evaluation. Questions sought feedback on:

- Content and process
- Facilitators
- Schedule

For the Working in Canada workshop, seven evaluation forms were received from participants . A simple five point scoring system was used to measure the extent the participants agreed with the specific questions provided on various elements of the online workshops. Virtually all questions were answered by the majority as a yes (4) or yes definitely (5) response. Suggestions for improvement were also recorded.

Working in Canada Workshop – Participant Evaluation Summary						
						Number Completed Evaluations: 7
	1 No	2 Not Really	3 Somewhat	4 Yes	5 Yes Definitely	Suggestions
Content – You encountered many different styles of learning material throughout the Working in Canada Workshop:						
Easy to read?				1	6	
Instructions clear?				1	6	
Content useful?				2	5	
Content help identify importance of employment contracts?					7	
Content help to understand purpose of workplace orientation?					7	
Content help to recognize difference between written/ unwritten rules?					7	

Working in Canada Workshop – Participant Evaluation Summary (cont'd)						
Number Completed Evaluations: 7						
	1 No	2 Not Really	3 Somewhat	4 Yes	5 Yes Definitely	Suggestions
Content give understanding of 6 organizational cultures?				2	5	
Content help with provincial/federal laws that protect Nova Scotia workers?			1	1	5	
Content help with provincial/federal laws that protect Nova Scotia employers?			1	1	5	
Content help in understanding mandatory deductions/contributions?				2	5	
Content useful in learning about tax filing?			3	1	3	
Did you take the online tax course?	2			1	4	
Content identify how to obtain success in workplace?				2	5	
Content identify how to manage career?				2	5	
<i>Suggestions for improvement:</i>						Cite actual cases of immigrants that succeeded in their careers More examples of unwritten rules
Facilitators – You encountered one facilitator during the Working in Canada Workshop:						
Feedback provided about assignments helpful?					7	
Feedback provided in group discussion beneficial?					7	
Facilitators reply to assignments in timely manner?					7	
<i>Suggestions for improvement:</i>						
Schedule – Working in Canada Workshop schedule was three weeks. There were 5 group discussions and 5 assignments scheduled:						
Schedule allow time to read material?				1	6	
Enough time to participate?			1		6	
Enough time to complete?		1		1	5	
More assignments beneficial?		1	5		1	
<i>Suggestions for improvement:</i>						

The Working in Canada evaluation focused on three areas, i.e. – content, facilitation and schedule. The majority of responses in the content area were in the (5) yes definitely and (4) yes categories with the only variance in this regard when responding to the specific sections in the curriculum on learning about tax filing and taking an optional online tax course. This has been a consistent response in all six offer rings of the Working in Canada workshop since it's first implementation in the summer of 2006. In every instance the evaluations reveal an almost even 50 / 50 split in participant relevance concerning these subject areas.

The facilitation responses are consistently in the (5) yes definitely category again and reveals a consistent three workshop validation of the interaction provided via contact with the facilitator. In terms of the three week workshop schedule, the consistent majority of responses are in the (5) yes definitely and (4) yes categories.

Appendix C

Summary – Post Workshop Series Evaluation

Evaluation Process:

At the end of the three workshop series, there was an additional evaluation form submitted to participants. This form was called “Reflections on the Online Program” and contained eight questions.

1. Did New Beginnings Online help you to prepare for your move to Canada? Yes / No (If yes, please comment on how it helped you.)
2. What did you find most useful about New Beginnings Online?
3. In your opinion, what improvements or additional material could be added to the workshop material and facilitation?
4. Can you suggest additional technologies that would enhance the New Beginnings Online workshops? If so, please explain.
5. Were you able to apply what you learned from the CIIP seminars to the New Beginnings Online workshops?
6. Did New Beginnings Online help you learn about the labour market and potential job opportunities for you in Canada? If yes, please comment.
7. Did New Beginnings Online help you determine whether your occupation is regulated in your destination province?
(If you found that your occupation is regulated, did you make contact with the appropriate regulatory body or professional association?)
8. In your own words, could you explain what New Beginnings Online has done for you on a personal basis (i.e.- increased confidence, networking, understanding Canadian culture better, feeling better prepared etc.)

Ten responses to this questionnaire were received from participants and I have summarized their responses in the Summary – Post Workshop Series Evaluation. All ten open with a resounding **Yes** – the online program did help them prepare for their move to Canada.

The “Reflections on the Online Program” was also made available to CIIP Field staff and MISA staff in the form of a group discussion that ran immediately upon completion of the Working in Canada workshop.

Summary – Post Workshop Series Evaluation:

1. Did New Beginnings Online help you to prepare for your move to Canada? Yes / No
(If yes, please comment on how it helped you.)

- 100% - all ten participants responded (Yes)
- Three workshops contained a lot of useful information
- I am able to learn in advance prior to moving
- Before this online seminar, I was just anxious of what to expect in Canada
- Not only the materials in the workshops but the links provided by the facilitator
- Helped me learn how to catch an employers attention
- Targeted cover letter, resume and how to answer interview questions
- Helped lessen my anxieties about my “big move”- especially work ethics in Canada
- I had a complete understanding of finding a job and working in Canada
- Things would be less of a surprise for me when I do get to Canada

2. What did you find most useful about New Beginnings Online?

- Resume preparation most useful
- Resume preparation in the Philippines totally different from the way it is done in Canada
- Everything – learned a lot about resume writing and the tools needed to land a job in Canada
- Targeting your resume – what to expect in an interview
- Resume and cover letter are the most important parts of job hunting
- Program taught us about employment contracts and what to expect in Canadian employment
- Preparing our resumes, identifying hard & soft skills, preparing our cover letter
- Job Search workshop most useful
- All the relevant information and labour market considerations newcomers need to be acquainted with
- How to speak on the phone when called for an interview
- How to prepare for an interview
- Interview Skills most useful

3. In your opinion, what improvements or additional material could be added to the workshop material and facilitation?

- Additional scenarios on unwritten rules
- A more cost effective option for leaving phone messages
- Voice recordings sent via email
- Real life situations of immigrants in Canada, cite success stories
- More online videos
- Information about big cities, - background, culture, local characteristic, job market, etc.
- Real stories of people that underwent the program, how the program helped them
- Seminar is already comprehensive / I am satisfied with it
- Information about the education and health system in Canada

4. Can you suggest additional technologies that would enhance the New Beginnings Online workshops? Is so, please explain.

- Video conferencing for group discussions – I would not mind being up past midnight
- Online chat, web to phone, Skype, Yahoo Voice, MSN Live, etc.
- I used Skype to talk to the facilitator on line and it works fine
- A forum also between participants in the workshop and potential employers

5. Were you able to apply what you learned from the CIIP seminars to the New Beginnings Online workshops?

- Yes, CIIP seminar mentioned labour information, regulation of professions, resume preparation and these were also taught in NBO
- Yes, although CIIP seminar was too short
- Yes, already submitted a resume to Skills International
- Yes, I was impressed with a video about the interview process, four stage of an interview and four types of interview questions
- Yes, definitely – the CIIP seminar was like a preview to the on-line workshops
- Yes, in CIIP seminars we came to know how to make cover letters and resumes
- Yes, when I finish NBO assignments, I used material from CIIP seminars
- Because of time limitation, CIIP seminars only provide general outline of some information

6. Did New Beginnings Online help you learn about the labour market and potential job opportunities for you in Canada? If yes, please comment.

- Yes, I learned about labour market and potential job opportunities in Canada
- There was information on advertised and unadvertised jobs
- I know now that job opportunities do not simply abound in classified ads or street posts
- NBO has definitely helped me discover that there is a very big wealth of opportunities for the job I am looking for in Canada
- NBO has guided me in tapping into those opportunities
- Yes, I learned ways to find some potential job opportunities through materials and group discussions
- Yes, this program taught me different ways to find a job in Canada
- Yes, the concept of being hired for my skills is a new one for me
- Preparations for work in Canada is entirely different beginning with the resume
- Yes, it has definitely helped me particularly in giving me a good checklist of things I have to consider
- Yes, NBO told me that there are two types of job market, advertised and unadvertised, and the latter accounts for 80% - I must pay attention to both

7. Did New Beginnings Online help you determine whether your occupation is regulated in your destination province?

(If you found that your occupation is regulated, did you make contact with the appropriate regulatory body or professional association?)

- Yes, I was able to know that my occupation is regulated
- Yes, Not yet, I plan to do so when I land in Canada in April
- Yes, my occupation is not regulated
- The CIIP seminar made me aware of the regulation laws in Canada. The On-line program taught me about the regulatory bodies in the different provinces. Currently more focused on looking for a job based on the skills I have
- My profession is not regulated. I will contact professional body when I get to Canada
- Yes, it is a great help as before I was not aware of regulated and non regulated occupations

8. In your own words, could you explain what New Beginnings Online has done for you on a personal basis (i.e.- increased confidence, networking, understanding Canadian culture better, feeling better prepared etc.)

- Now I know what to expect in Canada even before I land
- I have a better understanding of Canadian work culture
- The seminar has armed me with valuable knowledge about life in Canada in general and job search in particular
- NBO has definitely helped increase my confidence in landing a job in Canada
- This program taught me the right attitude in finding a job abroad, like being optimistic
- It helped my recognize my strengths and weaknesses as a job seeker
- The thought of getting to know other people from the Philippines and other Asian countries through this program gave me courage
- A good thing about the program is that while we were being "oriented" into the Canadian work culture, we were also being taught to adapt to it
- Having a good understanding of Canadian labour market and being well prepared for job search
- NBO has increased my confidence in answering interview phone calls, giving interviews personally
- I have a good idea of questions which are being asked in interviews

Appendix D

Participant Reflections on New Beginnings Online

“I think New Beginnings was able to collate in one series of seminars all the relevant information and labor market considerations newcomers need to be acquainted with when they get to Canada. It has definitely helped me particularly in giving me a good checklist of things I have to consider, from searching for jobs, submitting applications, interviewing and working. I feel that things would be less of a surprise for me when I do get to Canada.”

“New Beginnings Online helped me learn how to effectively catch an employer’s attention by creating a targeted resume, cover letter and how to appropriately answer an interview question.”

“New Beginnings Online has definitely helped me discover that there is a very big wealth of opportunities available for the job I am looking for in Canada. New Beginning Online has guided me in tapping into those opportunities and using it to increase my chances of getting ahead.”

“Everything about new Beginnings Online is useful in finding a job in Canada, particularly the Working in Canada Skills training because this particular program taught us about employment contracts and what to expect in Canadian employment.”

“This program taught me the right attitude in finding a job abroad, like being optimistic. It helped me understand a bit about Canadian culture, and the Canadian working environment. The knowledge I acquired from this workshop somewhat increased my confidence to try my luck in finding a job in Canada. It helped me recognize my strengths and weaknesses as a job-seeker.”

“New Beginnings Online has increased my confidence in answering interview phone calls, giving interviews personally. I have got a good idea of questions which are being asked in the interviews. Being an Indian I have come to know about the Canadian culture better than before. A group discussion helps us to networking. With all this knowledge I feel better prepared and confident. I really enjoyed it. And it is so very well prepared that we learn from it easily. I find it very simple, easy to understand.”

“I was just anxious of what to expect in Canada, and I was initially made to believe (by friends who have immigrated ahead of us) that immigrants simply grab the first job they find. Survival was the main objective. Career development seemed like a luxury for immigrants like us, that it was not even an option.”

“The concept of being hired for your skills is a new one for me. In my country of origin, hiring is usually based on the degree you have. So preparations for work in Canada are entirely different beginning with the resume.”

“New Beginnings Online is a wonderful program initiated by the Canadian government. When I was told that I was enrolled into the program by my CIIP counselors, I was so excited. The thought of getting to know other people from the Philippines and other Asian countries through this program gave me courage, being aware that these people were probably going through the same emotions, feelings I was...it’s good to know I wasn’t alone, there’s definitely strength in numbers. As the course proceeded, I learned more about the work ethics of Canada. A good thing about the program is that while we were being oriented into the Canadian work culture, we were also being taught how to adapt to it.”

“New Beginnings Online has helped my preparation a lot. Now I know what to expect in Canada even before I land therefore I am better able to prepare my documents and seek assistance now than later. I also have a network of friends who I can contact for any job leads and I have a better understanding of the Canadian work culture.”

“New Beginnings Online has definitely helped increase my confidence in landing a job in Canada. Prior to taking this course, I was still living with the fear that I would not be able to get the job I wanted when we got to Canada. After going thru the course, I have managed to get a little of that fear out and try venturing into the new environment which is Canada, with confidence. Lastly, thanks to CIIP for making all of this possible. This certainly shows that there are people who do care and want us, the immigrants to succeed in our new venture in Canada.”

9. Bibliography

Anderson, T., (2003). Getting the Mix Right Again: An updated and theoretical rationale for interaction, *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, Vol.4, No. 2

Anderson, R.C., Spiro, R.J., & Anderson, M.C. (1978). Schemata as scaffolding for the representation in connected discourse. *American Educational Research Journal*, 15, 433-440.

Driscoll, Mary P. (2005). *Psychology of Learning for Instruction*. Boston, Pearson Education, Inc.

Mayer, R.E. (1999). Designing instruction for constructivist learning. In C.M. Regolith (Ed.), *Instructional Design Theories and models: A new paradigm of instructional theory* (pp. 141-159) Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associations.

Mayer, R.E. (1979). Can advance organizers influence meaningful learning? *Review of Educational Research*, 49, 371-383.