Getting Ready for Work-Integrated Learning

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Contents

Chapter 10: Writing at Work

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Land Acknowledgement

Getting Ready for Work-Integrated Learning is a collaborative effort of many people working at the College of New Caledonia in British Columbia, Canada. As part of the staff at the College of New Caledonia, we are honoured to work with [Indigenous communities of this region](#), inclusive of First Nations, Mètis, and Inuit peoples. We acknowledge the graciousness of the First Nations peoples in welcoming those who are seeking knowledge to their traditional territories:

- ?Esdilagh (Alexandria) First Nation
- Binche Whut'en First Nation
- Burns Lake Band (Ts'il Kaz Koh)
- Cheslatta Carrier Nation
- Kwadacha Nation
- Lake Babine Nation
- Lhtako Dene First Nation
- Lheidli T'enneh First Nation
- Lhoosk'uz Dene Nation
- McLeod Lake Indian Band (Tse'Khene Nation)
- Nadleh Whut'en
- Nak'azdli Whut'en
- Nazko First Nation
- Nee Tahi Buhn Band
- Saik'us First Nation
- Skin Tyee First Nation
- Stellat'en First Nation
- Takla Lake First Nation
- Tl'azt'en First Nation
- Tsay Keh Dene Nation
- Wet'suwet'en First Nation
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Acknowledgements

Introduction

Today's students are preparing to enter fast-paced work environments, and work-integrated learning (WIL) is supporting student work-readiness success. As a post-secondary student, you are surely working hard to develop your skills towards your goals for graduation and to start your career. Work-integrated learning (WIL) during your studies ties those skills to real workplace experience and projects and helps you to navigate and develop an understanding of the nuances that go along with culture, interpersonal skills, critical thinking, and conflict resolution that often accompany the work environments.

This resource was developed for all post-secondary students preparing for or wanting to learn more about work readiness for WIL and entering the workforce. Through this resource, you will explore topics including Indigenous Peoples, communities, and cultural safety; self-management; career goals; workplace essential skills; interpersonal and communication skills; workplace safety; and more. In addition, each chapter includes interactive H5P student activities for you to reinforce and self-assess your learning.

SECTION I

Section I provides a basis for understanding work-integrated learning (WIL), the different types and formats for WIL student experiences, and how to leverage learning through reflective practice during WIL.

Chapter 1: Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

By the end of this chapter, the reader will be able to:

- Define work-integrated learning (WIL)
- Identify the different types of WIL
- Explain student responsibilities in WIL
- Describe what reflective practice is and the benefits during WIL

Terms to Know

- **WIL (work-integrated learning)** – Methods of integrating what is learned in the classroom to real-world experience.
- **Experiential Learning** – The process of learning through experience.
- **Employability** – The skills and capabilities required for employment.
- **Skills** – "The ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in" implementation "or performance" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).
- **Capabilities** – A skill or talent that has potential for development or use.
- **Reflective Practice** – The ability to spend time to assess situations and our participation to inform learning and future behaviours.
- **Continuous Learning** – The practice of looking for opportunities to learn towards expanding knowledge, skills, and capabilities.

Case study: Avery (he/him) explores work integrated learning

Avery loves his program at College of New Caledonia, but he is worried about graduating from college without job experience. Avery is just finishing up his first year and is trying to decide which courses to take

for his second year. On campus one day, he hears two of his peers talking about an opportunity to learn more about work-integrated learning. Then, everywhere he goes on campus, he sees posters for a student info session on work-integrated learning. He is getting really curious. Avery decides he would like to know more and will attend the session to find out:

- Is work-integrated learning similar to co-op?
- What eligibility criteria does he need to meet to participate in the program?
- Does work-integrated learning count for school credit?
- Does work-integrated learning count as job experience?

1.1 What is Work-Integrated Learning?

Work-integrated learning (WIL) is an opportunity for you to participate in career-focused experiential education. This means that there is a combination of classroom learning and a work placement. You literally gain work experience while you go to school! A WIL experience will help you to connect what you are learning in-class to experiences you are having at work. It gives you an opportunity to apply the theory you learn in school to your real life and your future career. At the same time, WIL also helps you to reflect upon and better understand work through the safe space of a classroom. The goal of WIL is for you to plan for career development and self-directed learning. Basically, you will learn how to monitor your career development through engaging in self assessment, setting goals, and evaluating your progress.

Did you know that work-integrated learning is linked to an increased prospect for student employment after graduation (Galarneau, Kinack & Marshall, 2020)? Students who participate in WIL benefit from taking part in a genuine real-work environment or project and experience the nuances that go along with culture, interpersonal skills, critical thinking, and conflict resolution that are a part of working life. Taking part in a WIL experience will help you to understand what you need to do and how you need to prepare to enter the Canadian workforce.

> Co-operative and Work-Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL), describes WIL as:
>
> A model and process of curricular experiential education which formally and intentionally integrates a student's academic studies within a workplace or practice setting. WIL experiences include an engaged partnership of at least: an academic institution, a host organization, and a student. WIL can occur at the course or program level and includes the development of learning outcomes related to employability, personal agency and life-long learning (CEWIL Canada, 2020).

The work-integrated learning process requires a level of commitment from you, your instructor, and your employer. You will work together to help advance your career development. At first, you will spend time preparing for the work placement opportunity by developing employability skills, competencies, and knowledge that can be applied alongside their studies within the workplace. Then, you will get to work! You will gain practical experience in a developing career and put your acquired knowledge from classroom into practice at work.

What is Experiential Learning?

Work-integrated learning is a form of experiential learning. The word "experiential" highlights that your learning is occurring through experience. The structured process of WIL guides you through a

cycle of learning. David Kolb (1984), a psychologist and educational theorist, developed a theory that outlined the cycle of experiential learning. He suggests that you work through stages that build upon one another based on the experiences that you have and how you think about them afterward. Kolb's cycle, based on Lewin's experiential model, links together four continual stages: experience (feeling), reflection (watching), conceptualization (thinking), and active experimentation (doing) (Kolb, 1984, p. 30). Figure 1 shows how you move through the cycle.
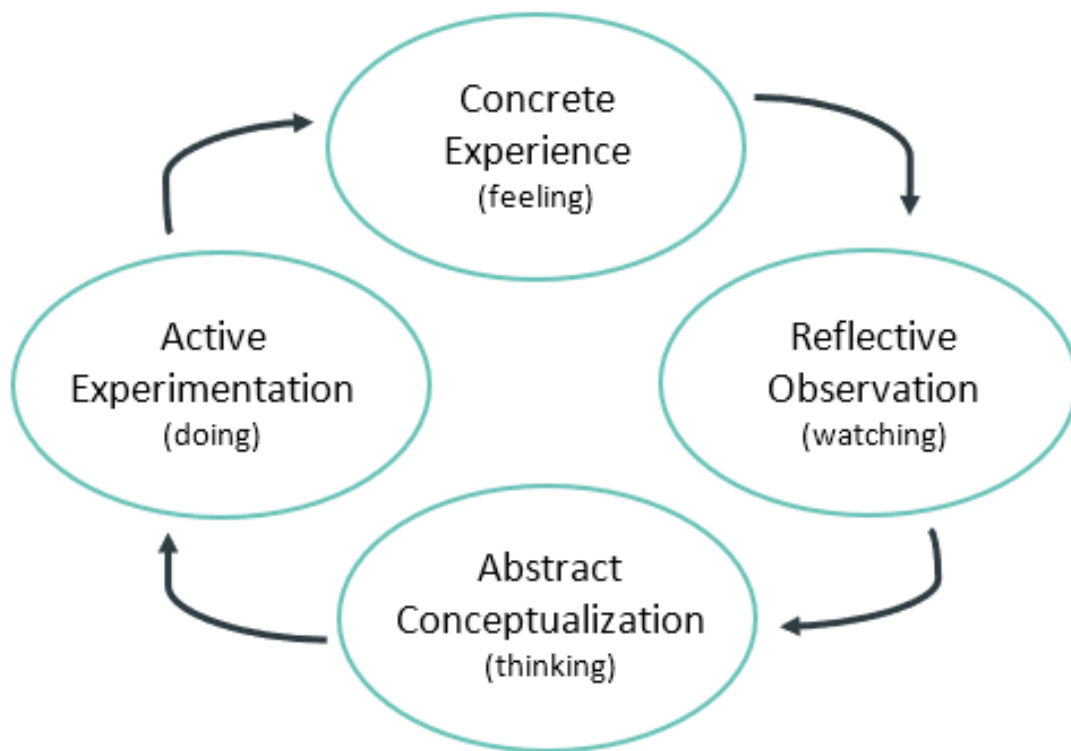
Figure 1.1 Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle.

Activity

Use the following activity to explore each of the stages in Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle.

- Concrete Experience
  - An event, situation, or behaviour that made you go hmmm. In this stage of the learning cycle you pull from your experiences, whether current or past.
- Reflective Observation
  - Taking a step back to think about the bigger picture and how the experience made you

feel. In this stage of the learning cycle you to dig into your experiences and ask questions for deeper understanding and learning.

- Abstract Conceptualization

    ◦ What can be applied from what you learned in class. Fitting what you've just learned into everything that you already know. In this stage of the learning cycle you are tying in concepts and forming conclusions based on your experiences and learning.

- Active Experimentation

    ◦ How will you put what you have learned into practice? In this stage of the learning cycle, you apply your conclusions and new knowledge into practice towards new experiences.

Watch the video David Kolb's Experiential Learning (5 minutes)

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://opentextbc.ca/workintegratedlearning/?p=23#oembed-1

Media Attributions

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1.2 Types of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

Work-integrated learning (WIL) is offered in a variety of methods and models. Depending on the WIL type, your experience as a work-integrated learning student is either embedded as your course work toward your program or is separate from your regular program and is taken independently, such as a co-op program. Most of the time, a WIL experience counts towards course credit and/or credential completion. Each program and school are different, so you will need to check with your instructor or institution to learn more about what options exist at your school and what their eligibility requirements are.

Common Types of Work-Integrated Learning

There are nine common types of work-integrated learning. They are Applied Research, Apprenticeship, Co-operative Education, Entrepreneurship, Field Placement, Internships, Professional Practice (practicum and clinical), Service Learning, and Work Experience:

- **Applied Research Project**. This type of WIL is when students participate in research at job sites and workplaces. Students act as researchers about work instead of workers on the site. Some examples of applied research include consulting projects, community-based research, and design projects.

- **Apprenticeship.** This type of WIL is a formal model that matches a student apprentice with a certified journeyperson. The apprentice is paid to gain experience under the direction of the journeyperson while also taking some coursework or other in-class training. Some examples of apprenticeships include electrician, cook, hairstylist, or auto body and collision technician.

- **Co-operative Education (Co-op)**. This type of WIL combines work terms and academic terms, either alternating or back-to-back. Usually, the co-op experience is connected to the student's field of study. Some examples of co-op opportunities are Marketing Associate for a Business Administration student majoring in Marketing; Social Media Assistant for a Public Relations student; and Clinical Assistant for a Kinesiology student.

- **Entrepreneurship.** This type of WIL supports students in the start-up of their own business. Students may get resources, space, mentorship, or other funding to help them turn their ideas into practice. Some examples of entrepreneurships are developing an online store, designing a new app service, or creating a local delivery service.

- **Field Placement.** This type of WIL is usually part-time or short term. It is an intensive opportunity for students to gain experience as a part of academic programs that do not have other formal WIL elements like co-op or apprenticeship and may or may not require supervision of a registered or licensing body. Some examples of field placements include areas of study such as social work, forestry, and engineering.

- **Internship.** This type of WIL is usually discipline specific, supervised, and intensive. It may be paid or unpaid and take place at any time within a student's program. Some examples of

internships include Human Resources assistant, Manufacturing intern, or Graphic Design intern.

- **Practicum or Clinical Placement.** This type of WIL is a mandatory unpaid work experience under the supervision of a registered professional as a requirement for licensure or certification. Some examples of practica are diagnostic medical sonography practicum, nursing practicum, or medical device reprocessing technician clinical.

- **Service Learning.** This type of WIL matches community need with student workers in a particular class or discipline. Students work in partnership with a community organization to help solve problems and meet needs identified by the community. Some examples of service learning are Writing students developing content for a women's shelter website, Physics students tutoring high school or Accounting students providing support at free tax clinics.

- **Work Experience.** This type of WIL incorporates work terms into an academic program. It may have fewer formal components than a co-op program. Some examples of work experience include pro cook training, customer service, or administrative placements.

Work-integrated learning looks different at every school and workplace. This short list, adapted from Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL Canada, 2021), should help you see what options are out there. To learn more about the various types and definitions of work-integrated learning in Canada, visit What is WIL? on the CEWIL Canada website: [What is Work-Integrated Learning?](#) If you want to know how a particular type of WIL works at your school, contact your program administrator or work-integrated learning office to learn the specifics that apply to you.

There are also simulated types of WIL that may be course-based and embedded right into the student's assigned work. The experience is structured with purposeful and meaningful activities linked to course outcomes to tie the theory concepts into the work being completed. Types of simulated WIL are teaching lab, simulated interactive lab, employer or community-based project, and capstone project. WIL involves various stakeholders including organizations, industry, faculty, administration, and in some instances government, and the Industry Training Authority (ITA), which leads and coordinates British Columbia's skilled trades system (ITA, 2019).

Activity

Using the information above and/or using the [CEWIL website](#), complete the following True/False questions.

- WIL intentionally integrates a student's academic studies within a workplace or practice setting?

- Work experience is typically one work term and completed as part-time?

- Internships are typically 12 to 16 months however, can be any length of time?

- Co-op consists of combining academic terms and paid work terms?

- Field placements are part-time and short term intensive hands-on practical experiences in a setting relevant to the student's subject of study?

Case study: Avery learns about work-integrated learning

Avery goes to the WIL info session at the College of New Caledonia (CNC). He learns that CNC offers a form of work experience placement as a part of course credit for an elective course called Work-Integrated Learning. If he chooses to take the class, he will work with his instructor to identify areas of work relevant to his program and learn about how to apply for work. He will practice job-related skills in class, like resume writing, interview skills, workplace safety, and more. He will be required to apply for, interview, and successfully get a field placement. He may also have to help identify potential workplaces for his work experience placement and approach them about taking him on. His work experience placement will count as real job experience that he can use on his resume when he graduates. Even though he won't get paid, he will gain experience that may help him get an advantage over his classmates who do not participate in this elective program.

The Class Part of Work-Integrated Learning

Like with the types of WIL, class can look different depending on which program you take. Most of the time, these programs get you some form of academic credit. They do not always have grades, though. Pass/fail is a common way to mark completion on your transcript. Many co-op, internship and apprenticeship programs have class components where you prepare for and debrief your experiences in class. Think about these as the "feeling" and "thinking" stages of Kolb's model of experiential learning. Sometimes, there is no associated class. Instead, you might be asked to work independently on activities or a report that summarize your experience. Here are a few common activities that could be linked to the school part of work-integrated learning:

- **Assessments.** You may engage in a variety of assessments to help you determine your strengths, areas for development, skills, and competencies. These assessments will help you to set goals and evaluate your improvement as you progress throughout your work term.

- **Preparation Classes.** You may be required to attend class, workshops, or other events before you start applying for work opportunities. Typically, these sessions would be focused on the early stages of the job search. They may also be built around particular themes or issues in the workplace.

- **Training and Seminars.** Part of your WIL experience may be group training. This could be related to workplace safety, like the Workplace Hazardous Materials (WHMIS) course or a Standard First Aid course. It could also be a form of professional development like Intercultural Competency training, ethics, or conflict resolution training.

- **Worksite Visit.** Your WIL instructor may connect with you and your supervisor during your work term. This monitoring exercise may happen virtually via a conference call or involve an actual visit to the worksite. You may have to complete assignments, assessments, or reflections as a part of this process.

- **Online or In-Class Check-ins.** Many schools offer a virtual classroom to accompany a work placement. This may take the form of a repository of information for students, or it might

take the form of a synchronous or asynchronous online class. You may have assignments, group work, or other activities to complete as a part of these check-ins.

- **Work Term Reports.** Often students will be asked to reflect on their work placement in a formal report. These reports may ask you to reflect on your skill development, goals, and challenges. It may be a written report, but could also take the form of a journal, online discussion, workshop, presentation, or video.

Case study: Avery in WIL Class

It is the next semester, and Avery is taking WIL as one of his electives. For the first six weeks, he completes online work readiness modules. So far, he has completed several assessments to determine what kind of careers suit him, engaged in a job search, written a cover letter and resume, and started applying for placements. One of his weekly assignments is a journal where he reflects on what he has learned. He responds to different questions each week. They are all connected back to the main theme of the week. Once his work experience placement begins, he will be required to document his tasks. At the end, he will complete a learning portfolio and may be required to prepare a presentation for the employer Avery's learning portfolio will include his best journal entries, a statement about his goals, and a statement about his next steps.

Imposter Syndrome

Most of experience some form of imposter syndrome at some point in our school and work lives. It is a feeling of self-doubt that perhaps you don't really belong where you are at because you do not have the skills or knowledge that others perceive you as having. A nagging that you have ended up in this job or in this course out of luck and that everyone will find out that you're not really who they think you are. It often makes us uncomfortable and therefore not always talked about. If you ever experience this, here are a couple of things to help dispel it:

- Acknowledge it and then put it into perspective.

- Share your feelings with a trusted friend or mentor.

- Celebrate your strengths and successes.

- Accept that no one is perfect. See yourself as a work in progress with the ability to continue to learn and grow.

- Challenge negative thoughts and if you need evidence recall past successes.

The Work Part of Work-Integrated Learning

As a WIL student, you will have a lot of responsibilities at work. You will maintain dual accountability to both your WIL supervisor and your supervisor at work. You will need to communicate, conduct yourself professionally, understand confidentiality, seek feedback, and be open to learning. The WIL

placement opportunity is dependent on good and open communication and active listening. As you openly ask questions, you will find your fit and the expectations of you within the placement. Before you begin, you should familiarize yourself with your school's student code of conduct, any rules or regulations in the WIL placement, and the organizational guidelines and rules at your work placement. Here are a few common responsibilities that you will have as a part of the work part of work-integrated learning:

- **Establish Contact with the Workplace Appropriately.** The post-secondary WIL program will likely have an established process where the student is provided with forms to fill out and a process to contact the work placement. In some cases, you will need to apply and interview for open positions. In other cases, you may actually be in a position of soliciting a potential work placement. Once you and your employer have agreed to the placement, you will establish an initial connection and a follow-up meeting to discuss the commitment such as work hours, conduct, duties, primary contact, etc.

- **Follow Workplace Requirements.** Once your placement begins, be punctual and follow the daily organizational routines that are in place. Organizations often mandate that employees abide by a set structure of routine, with scheduled work hours, breaks, and social norms.

- **Work within your assigned role.** Your roles and responsibilities may begin before and keep going after the work placement. However, your duties should be clearly laid out. You need to ensure that you do not attempt or ask to perform tasks beyond your work placement requirements. Students are responsible for taking care and understanding not to perform tasks beyond their skills and capabilities, communicate openly to ask questions, express any concerns, and ensure to perform and complete tasks assigned to their best abilities.

- **Be curious about the workplace protocols and culture of your placement.** Organizational protocols and culture will vary from organization to organization, and this is your opportunity to really explore the industry or sector where you aspire to work after graduating. Confidential information related to the work placements should not be disclosed without the spoken permission of the employer. Always seek clarification from the employer if you are unsure whether certain material or information is confidential. Information obtained in WIL should not be leveraged in any way for personal gains.

- **Follow occupational health and safety guidelines.** You should also seek to know and understand the workplace occupational health and safety standards within your region. In British Columbia, employee and employer safety standards are regulated by WorkSafe BC which are explored further in [Chapter 5: Workplace Safety](#).

You are required to manage the set of obligations set out by the post-secondary institution and the employer within your work-integrated learning placement. Remember to maintain a high level of professional behaviour during your work placement and enjoy the learning experience to discover new possibilities through work-integrated learning.

Activity: Questions to answer before your work placement

To help you prepare for your work placement, come up with a plan! Try to answer the following questions about your work placement before it begins.

1. How can I demonstrate active engagement in my work placement?
2. What if I make a mistake?
3. The work tasks being assigned to me are out of my scope of knowledge, what should I do?
4. My responsibilities are unclear, who could I talk to?
5. How can I find out the daily organizational routine?

Case study: Avery prepares for his work placement

Avery has just finished interviewing with three potential work experience placements. He has received two offers, both as administrative support in busy offices. As he is making his decision about where he wants to work, he turns to the WIL questions he needs to answer about his work placement. Here are his initial responses:

1. How can I demonstrate active engagement in my work placement?

   ◦ Ask for a list of duties and orientation materials.
   ◦ Prepare a calendar with events and due dates.
   ◦ Create some templates for routine tasks to remind me of what to do.
   ◦ Request feedback on my performance from my supervisor.

2. What if I make a mistake?

   ◦ Identify the mistake and fix it if I can.
   ◦ Report to my supervisor.
   ◦ Write about it in my journal.
   ◦ Come up with a plan to prevent it from happening again.

3. The work tasks being assigned to me are out of my scope of knowledge, what should I do?

   ◦ Identify strategies for learning on the job.
   ◦ Ask for help and clarification from my boss.
   ◦ Request additional training or job shadowing if I need it

4. My responsibilities are unclear, who could I talk to?

   ◦ Supervisor

   ◦ Co-workers

   ◦ Instructor

   ◦ Peer group in my class

5. How can I find out the daily organizational routine?

   ◦ Ask supervisor or co-workers.

   ◦ Read employee manual or other documentation.

1.3 Reflective Practice in WIL

Reflective Practice: Combining Your Work with Your Class

Reflection is careful thinking and consideration about experiences that you have had. It can take the form of thinking, talking, or writing. The goal of reflection is to help you work through your thoughts and feelings about your experience. Reflection also helps you to remove yourself from the initial experience so that you can analyze it and see how you might do things differently next time. You can also use reflection to compare, contrast, and bring together experiences from different parts of your life. As a work integrated learning student, you are going to be constantly connecting your work life with your experience as a student in a particular discipline. As you do this more and more, it becomes a part of your regular routine. Reflective practice is when you take reflection and turn it into a regular behaviour or practice.

Reflective practice is what ties together the 'work' and 'school' parts of work integrated learning. Reflective practice during work-integrated learning encourages you to tie what you are experiencing at work to what you have learned in theory. The goal is to apply theory to practice to see how your experiences support and challenge your school learning. Reflective practice is an important component in WIL because it helps you to understand and improve on the job. Reflective practice during the work placement helps you to consider a situation and your actions and determine how well you performed or what you might do differently next time. It is an intentional process to develop a professional and continuous learning practice.

Here are some questions you can ask as you work to build your reflective practice:

- What positive experiences did you have at work today?
- What negative experiences did you have?
- What might you do differently next time?
- What did I witness today that I would like to emulate?
- What would you like to learn more about?

Continuous Reflection for Continuous Learning

Reflective practice has a lot of benefits! Students who participate in reflection have a more in-depth understanding of their learning and can take informed actions. Reflection can help you be a better student and a better worker. However, it is hard work! You need to be willing to explore your thoughts and your feelings. Sometimes, reflection can make you feel vulnerable. You may face difficulties with reflection due to fear of judgment, criticism, or feedback. You may also encounter feelings that are hard to resolve or that require you to sit with your own discomfort.

The most important thing you can do when you have trouble with reflection is to keep trying. If you feel challenged, see that as an opportunity for you to grow and develop as a professional. Seeing challenges as threats speaks to a fixed mindset and can encourage us to hold back in our efforts (Dweck, 2016, p. 31). Instead, you want to see yourself as engaged in continually growth and development. Adopting a growth mindset means seeing setbacks and challenges as opportunities to learn (Dweck, 2016, p. 34). A growth mindset is about establishing that you are capable of doing difficult things, even if you can't yet accomplish them.

Watch the video: [Growth Mindset and Fixed Mindset](#).

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://opentextbc.ca/workintegratedlearning/?p=32#oembed-1

Reflection is an ongoing process in the learner's educational and WIL journey. Earlier, we referred to David Kolb's (1984) learning theory and linking four continual stages grounded in feeling, watching, thinking, and doing. Figure 2 shows these stages as constant and repeated with each cycle of reflection building upon the next throughout the WIL placement.
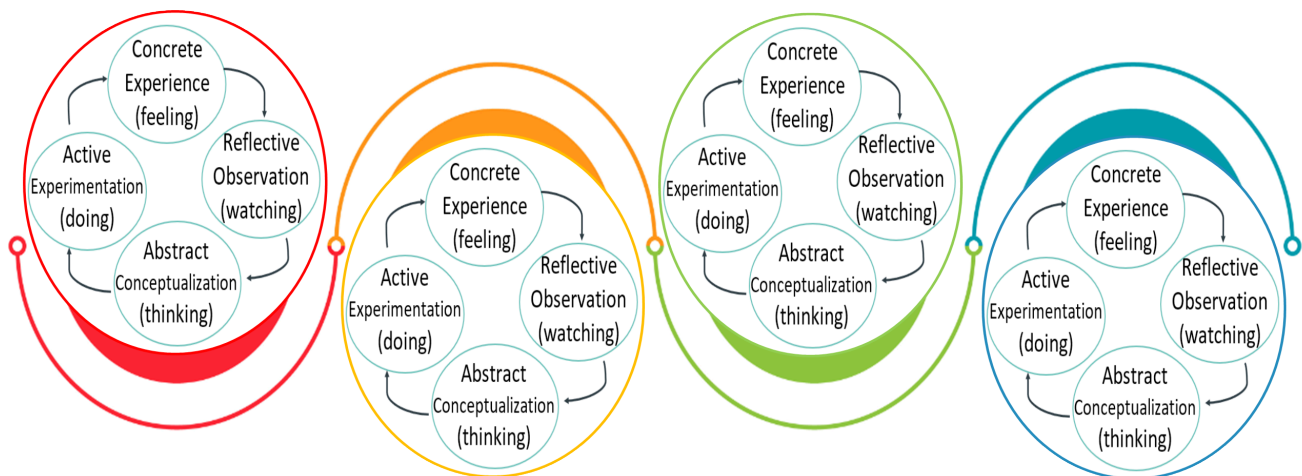
Figure 1.2 Illustration of Kolb's learning theory paired with the cycle of reflection. [Click to see image full size]

When you consistently practice reflection, it creates continuous learning and nurtures interest in your work placement journey and how to respond to changes in the workplace. Ongoing reflective practice provides huge benefits for developing and increasing awareness of self and others. It supports to develop creativity and encourages curiosity for deeper insights to inform future actions in work processes.

Driscoll Model of Reflection

As you learn to reflect, it can be helpful to use worksheets or other tools to help you. One of the most important models for reflection was created by John Driscoll in 1994. The Driscoll model incorporates

the "what", "so what", and "now what" of the experience into your reflection (Driscoll, 1994). This means that you aren't just describing what happened. You are taking your experience, identifying what was significant about it, and then determining what you should do next. The Driscoll model of reflection is often utilized within clinical settings; however, it can apply to various experiential learning. The model is integrated with Kolb's learning cycle and includes trigger questions to prompt thinking through the reflection. The two processes create an experience for self-directed learning to inspect, analyze, challenge, transform, and apply behaviours towards desired outcomes.
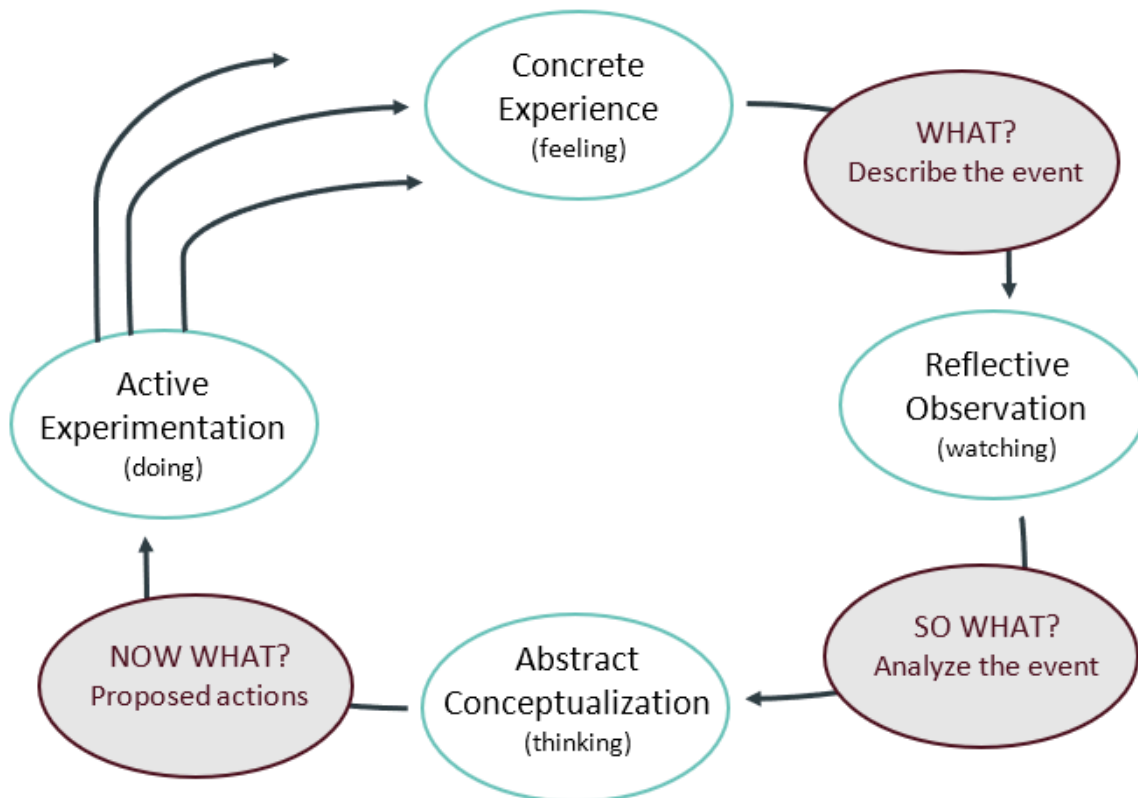
Figure 1.3 Driscoll's "what", "so what", and "now what" reflection model. [Image description]
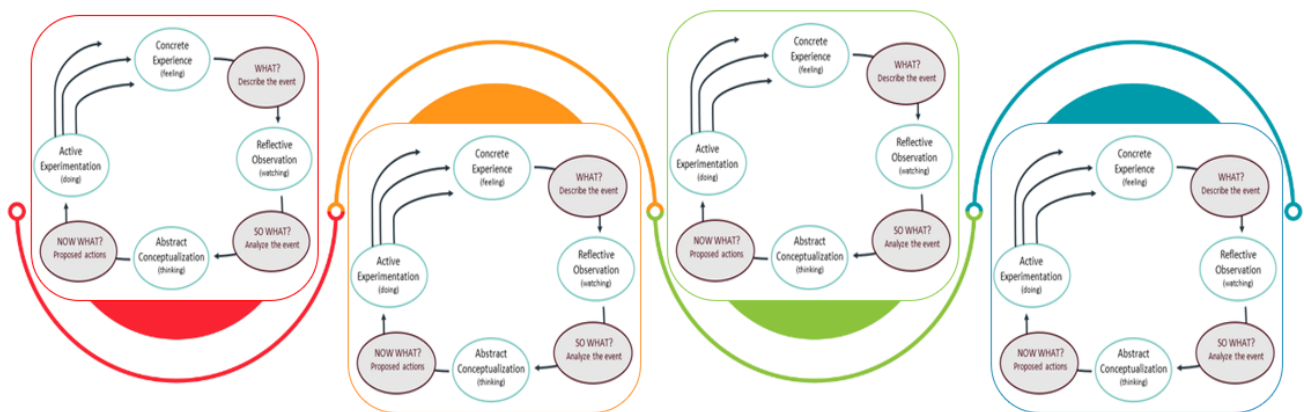
Figure 1.4 Driscoll's reflection model shown as an iterative process. Driscoll, 2017, p. 65. [Click to see image full size]

Driscoll (1994) explains the "WHAT" of the model to recall the experience and what was felt at the time to begin the reflective cycle. "SO WHAT" analyzes the experience looking at what reactions and feelings the experience created and whether the outcome was successful or disappointing. "NOW WHAT" processes the experience and the lessons to put into context actionable ideas and behaviours to move forward with. Feel free to use the following reflective practice worksheet template as a guide. You may also be asked to use other guided reflection methods in your class.

The WIL Reflective Worksheet adapting the "what", "so what", and "now what". Click to access a printable pdf version of the worksheet template: [WIL Reflection Worksheet [PDF]](#).

Ways to Reflect

Reflection can happen at work, at school, and in your personal life. Sometimes, it can be helpful to use different types of reflection to help you get a bit deeper. Here are some common ways you can reflect.

Reflect at School
- Engage in a group discussion
- Keep a reflection journal
- Get creative

Reflect at Work
- Brainstorm
- Take notes
- Plan time at the end of your day
- Use sticky notes
- Read for professional development
- Schedule one-on-one with a trusted coworker

Reflect at Home
- Meditate
- Speak out loud
- Go for a walk
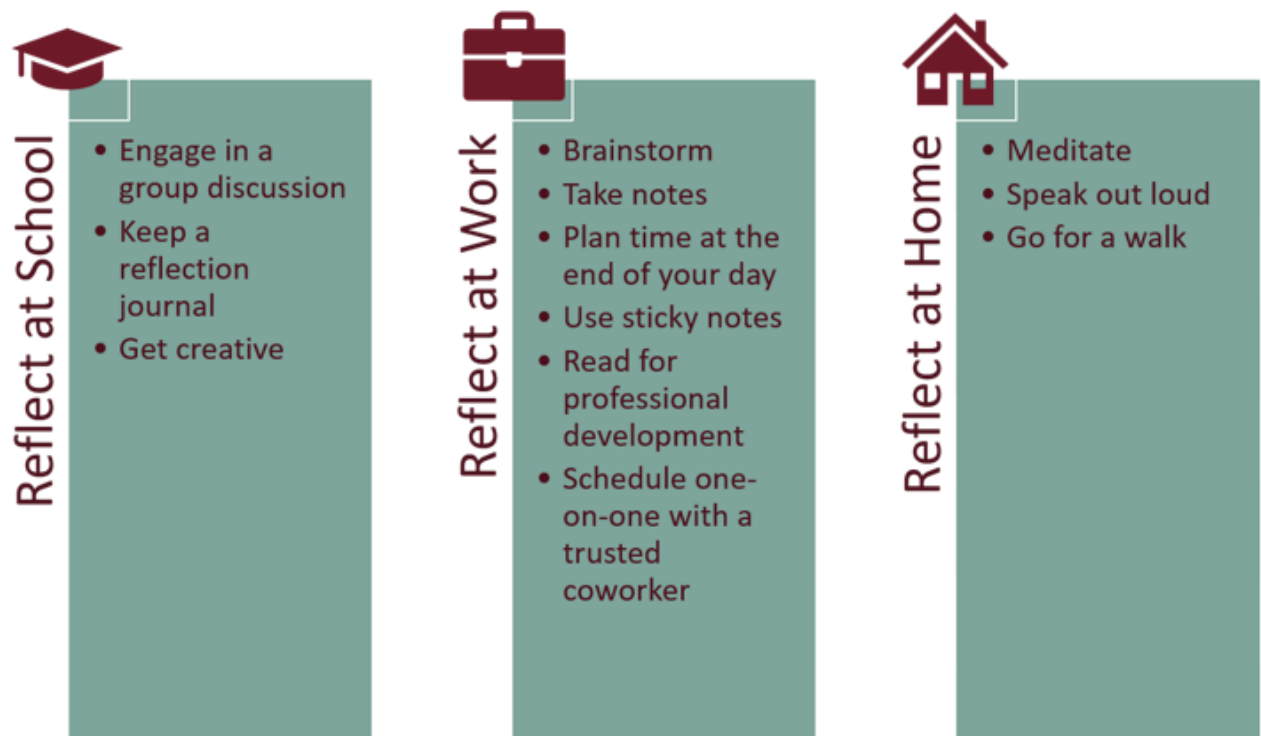
Figure 1.5 Ways to reflect at school, work, and home. [Image description]

Key Takeaways

- Work-integrated learning (WIL) is career-focused experiential education that blends what you learn in the classroom with real-workplace experience.

- Experiential learning is a cycle of feeling, watching, thinking, and doing.

- There are different ways to offer WIL and nine models as determined by CEWIL.

- Reflective practice is an integral part of the student journey for self-evaluation and continual growth during WIL.

Image Descriptions

Figure 1.3 Driscoll's "what", "so what", and "now what" reflection model

Driscoll's reflection model integrated with Kolb's learning cycle, starts from concrete experience (feeling), "WHAT?" describe the event, to reflective observation (watching), "SO WHAT?" analyze the event, to abstract conceptualization (thinking), "NOW WHAT?" proposed actions, to active experimentation (doing).

[Return to place in text]

Figure 1.5 Ways to reflect at school, work, and home.

Reflect at school

- Engage in a group discussion

- Keep a reflection journal

- Get creative

Reflect at work

- Brainstorm

- Take notes

- Plan time at the end of your day

- Use sticky notes

- Read for professional development

- Schedule one-on-one with a trusted coworker

Reflect at home

- Meditate

- Speak out loud

- Go for a walk

[Return to place in text]

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SECTION II

Work-integrated learning supports career development and understanding the direction you want to take your career in. Section II provides direction to set your career goals and how to prepare for job interviews.

Chapter 2: Career Goals

Terms to Know

- **Commitment** – Dedication and interactive engagement in a process, loyalty to a cause, and the ability to follow through with a project.
- **Goal** – The object of a person's ambition or effort; an aim or desired result (Lexico, 2021).
- **Objective** – Similar to a goal, this is a desired aim, or the statement denoting that goal includes a timeline and an endpoint in sight.
- **Reflection** – A process of reviewing and documenting that enables an individual to learn from their previous trials and errors, their faults, and their experiences.
- **Routine** – A set sequence of actions that provide structure, improve time utilization, and enhance work quality.
- **Self-assessment** – A process of self-study where an individual identifies their personal traits and attributes which enable them or hinder their progress.
- **State** – The particular condition that someone or something is in at a specific time.
- **Trait** – A personal or professional attribute, when viewed positively this can give a worker an advantage in their task completion process.

Case study: Mackenzie (they/them) contemplates their future

Mackenzie has always been passionate about mental health. They know that they want to help people

overcome the stigma associated with mental health challenges and change the way we talk about anxiety and depression. They are in their last semester of their Social Service Worker certificate program. They have some important decisions to make about what they will do next. In May, they will complete their certificate and will be eligible to graduate. They could join the workforce full time. They could choose to stay one more year at college and get their Social Service Worker Diploma. The college also has a University Transfer Diploma, so they could even decide to continue on to a degree program. Each option will impact the debt they take on, the money they make at work, the jobs that are available to them, and how they will spend their time and energy. The decision seems overwhelming and they are worried about getting it wrong. How should they decide what is next for them? What do they want their future to look like? It is time to set some goals.

Introduction

Goals are a way of identifying an outcome we want to work toward. They give us a sense of purpose and help us to focus our minds and actions. Goals direct our attention toward the future and can help us to take a big idea and turn it into a series of small actions that build toward its completion. Goals take us from thoughts like "wouldn't it be nice," "some day," "if only," or "I wish…" to assertions like "I did," "I achieved" and "I am". Goals also help us to solve problems. When we struggle with life challenges like job loss, health changes, relationship problems, or financial setbacks, goals can help us to identify our priorities and determine how we recover. Goals are also important to help us make choices and decide what opportunities to act upon. Your decision to go to school and your decision to participate in work-integrated learning is likely connected to a goal or aspiration you have.

Achievable goals start with thoughtful contemplation. You need to think through what your goals are and how to turn them into action. An achievable goal is a goal that you are able to fulfill with effort and action. You can use a similar process to define and action goals in all areas of your life. There are four areas that will contribute to your success: honest self-assessment, commitment, patience, and the existence of a routine.

2.1 Identifying Goals

Goals Begin with Understanding Yourself

Ask most children what they want to be when they grow up and you may be surprised by the answers. They might say anything from the Prime Minister of Canada or a celebrity, to an animal or a super hero. Childhood dreams are fun but there does come a point when we all need to make some realistic career goals. Don't give up on your dreams (unless you have new ones!). Instead, use them as clues that might point you toward your current goals. You may be a long way from the child who dreamed of being a fire fighter or you may still feel the same thrill that you did when you were a teenager teaching your younger siblings how to read. Chances are that the things that interested you then are still a part of who you are now. That is why it is essential to start your career planning with a clear understanding of who you are as a person and a worker.

Career and education planning is an exercise in self-reflection and self-assessment but remember you are your greatest investment. Think back on the self-reflection tools that we discussed in [Reflective Practice in WIL](#).

Here is a list of questions to ask yourself to aid in self-reflection and self-assessment when determining your career and education goals.

Start by asking yourself:

- What am I interested in?
- What am I passionate about?
- What values are important to me personally and in a workplace?
- What motivates me? Am I intrinsically motivated or extrinsically?

Intrinsically motivated people find satisfaction in themselves and find enjoyment in simply engaging in the task or activity. It is personally rewarding to them, for example, an auto mechanic may simply love engines and finds satisfaction in making an old car run again. Whereas an extrinsically motivated person feels rewarded by external factors such as payment or praise. Neither of these is right nor wrong, but it is a good thing to understand about yourself when career planning.

- What are my strengths? Am I good with technology? Am I detail oriented? Am I good at helping people? Am I a strong communicator?
- What are my weaknesses? Do I have difficulty with numbers?

While strengths and weaknesses are a good place to start considering career options, for example, someone who doesn't like working with numbers might not consider being an accountant. You should also remember that there are tools that help us overcome our weaknesses.

- Do I like learning new things? Am I curious? Do I like routine and stability?

- Which way do I prefer to work? Am I independent? Would I rather collaborate?

- Do I want to travel for work or would I prefer to stay close to home?

- Do I like to be creative? Or would you prefer to follow rules, conventions, and guidelines?

- Do I want to work with my hands?

- Do I want to work with animals? People? Children?

- Do I want to work inside? Or am I happier if I can be outside?

Answering these questions may seem like a daunting task, but since you're already in college, you've already made some choices about what you like and want to do. Work-integrated learning is a great step towards defining your career path. This experience allows you to try something on to see how well it fits. Every time you try something, you're closer to your chosen career. Keep mental (or written) notes about why you loved that task or found it boring or difficult.

Discover Your Career Goals

In many ways, your career will start with an idea or a dream. It requires you to look inward at yourself and outward at the world around you. Look at your life with a curious and critical eye. When you think of work, a job, or a career, what thoughts come to mind? Go back to your self-evaluation and review your strengths and weaknesses, your encounters, your knowledge, your progress, your achievements, your failures, and everything in between. Think forward to what is available to you, what is realistic for you, and what will give you a sense of achievement. Consider different jobs that sound appealing. If you were to picture yourself in that position, you will quickly recognize and understand that you are subconsciously reflecting and conducting a subtle self-assessment. In order to identify your goals, you need to think critically about what values you have when it comes to the workplace.

Have you shaped your career path? Begun to tailor your courses towards it? Or are you waiting to have an epiphany on what you should work towards? Asking yourself the right questions can help you determine your present state; where your experiences and your situation can help you further determine your unique characteristics and traits. Knowing your state and your traits can provide you with a greater sense of structure and determine your processes. Due to the personal nature of this assessment, honesty will serve as a clear indicator of your desired directions and how realistic your goals are.

Here are some questions you can use to start trying to determine out potential career ideas:

- **Areas of Work.** What am I interested in? What am I passionate about?

- **Workplace Culture.** What values are important to me in a workplace? Do I prefer to work independently or as a team? What kind of recognition do I expect?

- **Work Tasks.** Do I like to follow rules or be creative? How do I feel about working with the public? Do I want to help people?

- **Work Location.** Do I want to work inside or outside? At a desk? On a computer? In a city or the country? Do I want to travel?

- **Qualifications.** What kind of schooling or additional credentials do I have? What additional qualifications do I want to undertake?
- **Compensation.** How much money do I want to make? What benefits do I value beyond a paycheque?

In addition to asking yourself questions, you can also take advantage of a number of useful tools. To help you in your quest for career goals, do some career research. There are some great resources that can help you find a career path:

- **Take a Career Quiz.** Start with Career Quizzes and Tests through the Government of Canada Job Bank (2021a), where you will find career quizzes that will help you see what occupations you may be suited for.
- **Review Job Profiles.** Also on the Job Bank website you can explore an occupation and search different occupations and find out more details about wages, prospects, skills needed, and more (Government of Canada, 2021b).
- **Use a Career Search.** WorkBC offers a career search tool that will allow you to filter and compare job profiles using region, education, and occupation (WorkBC, 2021).
- **Evaluate Your Willingness to Work for Yourself.** Some people find that the best career of them is to be an entrepreneur. Complete the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC)'s Entrepreneurial Assessment to see if this might be a good fit for you (BDC, 2021).

Whether you are reflecting on questions or engaging in an online quiz, it is useful to record your response. Taking notes about what you find will help you as you turn your ideas into goals.

The work world today is fast-paced with multi-tasking, several distractions, and often a high need for instant gratification can lead to a struggle with poor mental health, lack of ability to constructively reflect on your learning, skills, and future directions. Your reflection can help you set goals and thus provide you with a roadmap for your future.

When you are reflecting on your career goals, remember to use the tools described in the reflective practice section and the Driscoll model of reflection in Chapter 1: Work Integreated Learning. The secret of a successful self-assessment lies in a thorough self-reflection.

> ### Case study: Mackenzie identifies possible careers
>
> Mackenzie has to decide whether to graduate or continue their education in the next two weeks. They know that they want a career in mental health, but they still can't imagine what specific jobs they might hold. They decide to search for jobs related to mental health. Mackenzie makes a list of mental health jobs and their qualifications. Then, they look at some recent job postings to help figure out some recent pay scales.

Table 1: Mental Health Jobs, Qualifications, and Pay Scales[1]

Job Title	Qualifications	Pay for Recent Job Ads
Case Manager	Undergraduate degree	$25-38 per hour
Crisis Counsellor	Relevant college or undergraduate degree	$22-32 per hour
Mental Health Promotion Worker	Relevant college or undergraduate degree	$25 per hour
Nurse (Registered Practical)	College diploma (RPN)	$28-40 per hour
Nurse (Registered)	Undergraduate degree	$35-$50 per hour
Occupational Therapist	Undergraduate degree	$35-45 per hour
Peer Support Worker	Lived experience with mental illness	$18-20 per hour
Personal Support Worker	College diploma	$20-22 per hour
Psychologist	Doctoral degree Registration with Psychological Association	$45-90 per hour
Psychiatrist	Medical degree	$250,000-$400,000 per year
Psychosocial Rehabilitation Worker	Undergraduate degree Certification with Psychosocial Rehabilitation Recovery Practitioner	$26-28 per hour
Social Worker	Undergraduate or Masters degree Registration with BC College of Social Workers	$35-50 per hour

Once they have made their list, Mackenzie tries to balance the money they would make versus the time they would invest in their schooling. They rule out any job that pays less than $20 per hour and anything that requires more than an undergraduate degree. They determine that with their Social Service Worker certificate, they would be best qualified to be a Personal Support Worker. Compared to the other jobs they researched, they don't see the same ranges in pay for that job. They look at the remaining options and thinks about where they are at in their program. Their best options that build on their Social Service Worker Certificate if they pursue further education are Crisis Counsellor, Psychosocial Rehabilitation Worker, and Social Worker. They decide they would like to do the two-year Diploma program and will think some more about a university transfer. Mackenzie doesn't have a specific goal yet, but they feel closer to their next step.

1. Data from Ontario Community Mental Health (2018) and Indeed.com (2021).

2.2 Smart Goals

Make SMART Goals

One of the most important ways that you can turn from imaging careers to having a career is through goal setting. You need to identify the thing you want to do or be, and then identify the steps that will help you get there. This means that you may need to research, reflect, and write in order to come to a meaningful goal. Did you know that writing down your goals exponentially increases your chances of achieving them? When you commit your goals to paper, you are helping to increase your accountability. You are starting a plan that you can turn to and use to assess how you are progressing.

Coming up with a good goal is not just about the act of writing. What and how you write your goal matters, too! Goals need to be SMART. It is important to write SMART goals. You may already have heard of SMART goals. This acronym stands for:
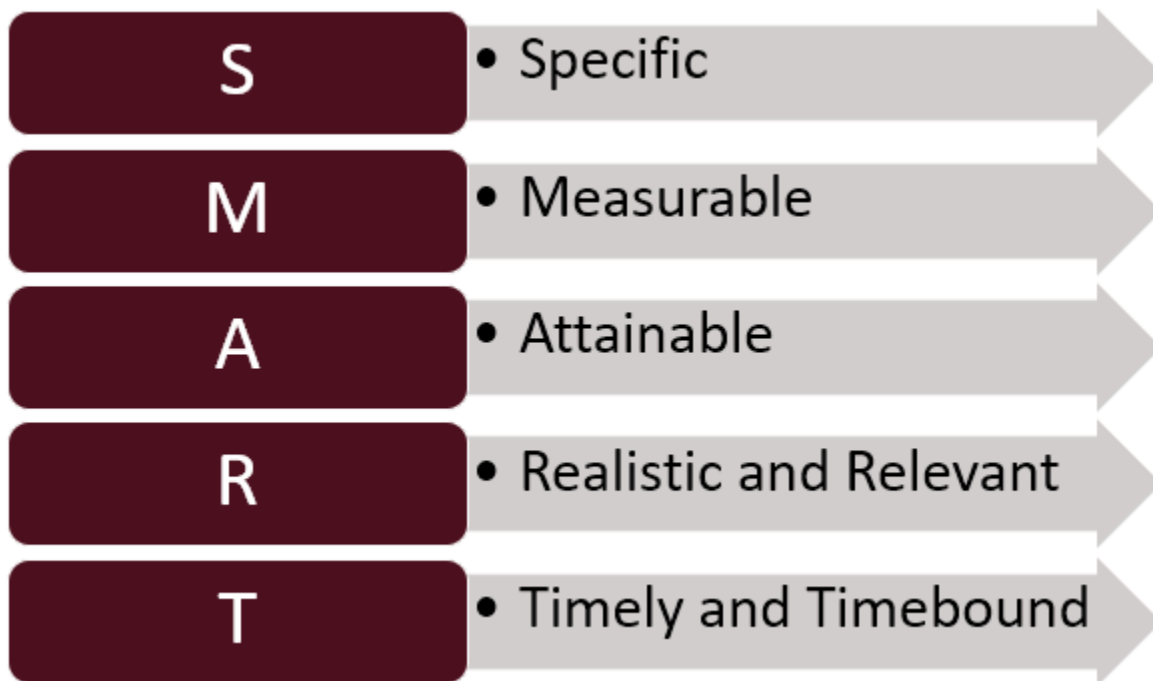
Figure 2.1 SMART Goals.

A SMART goal is a goal based on research and reflection. It is often something that you revise, add to, and change to make it better. You don't need to write it perfectly the first time. Instead, you can improve it by using the SMART framework as a guide.

Improve Your Goals with SMART

Let's start with a common goal and see how we can revise it using SMART. Imagine your goal is to save money to buy a car. This is a good goal, but it is vague, which means it will be more difficult to achieve and lacks the planning needed for you to stay on target. Let's look at how to make this a SMART goal.

Goal: I want to save money to buy a car.

---

1. **Specific.** The first step is to make it specific. This means that you need to narrow and focus your big idea. Ask questions like who, what, where, when, why and how. In this case, you should ask, how much money do I need to save? What exactly do I want to buy? You may need to do some research to help.
   Revision 1 (Specific): I want to save $5000.00 to buy a used car.

2. **Measurable.** This is now specific and somewhat measurable but how can we make more measurable. The fact that you have identified an amount is a big help. However, it isn't clear how you will meet that goal. Adding specificity increases the chance of accomplishing your goal. Also, making it measurable helps you keep track of your progress. It may be worth creating a visual or adding incentives to help you keep going. For this goal, you might ask, how will I save the money? One way to add another measurable element might be to save a set amount from each pay cheque or each month, or to set an end date or other time frame.
   Revision 2 (Measurable): I want to save $5000.00 to buy a used car by saving $150.00 per pay cheque.

3. **Attainable.** Attainability means that it is possible to meet your goal. Your goal needs to be manageable with everything else going on in your life. Sometimes, this means going a bit slower or sacrificing a bit more. Can you manage with $150.00 less each pay cheque and still pay all of your bills? If so, great, but if not, you will need to adjust your goal to be more attainable. Most of the time, making a goal attainable means balancing this priority against others. You may need to take something else away. For example, maybe by eating out less, you could lower your monthly bills. Ensure that your goal is attainable, if you attempt something that is so far out of reach, it is easy to become discouraged and give up.
   Revision 3 (Attainable): I want to save $5000.00 to buy a used car by saving $150.00 per pay cheque by never eating out.

4. **Realistic and Relevant.** You can see your goal is getting bigger, but you are also planning a way to make it successful. To determine if your goal is realistic, you will have to do some reflection. Think about your personal circumstances, skills and past behaviours. To determine if it is relevant, do some research. Sometimes our expectations are much bigger or smaller than they need to be. Explore options and see how other people have done it. You can even strike up a conversation with a friend, advisor, or faculty member. You will need to check to ensure that each part of your goal is both realistic and relevant. Will $5000.00 buy you a good used car? Is saving $150.00 per pay cheque realistic? Is it realistic to never eat out if

you usually eat out every night? If so, great, but if not, this is the time to make adjustments. Ensure you choose something that is relevant to your situation, if you love eating out and your workplace is on the bus route, maybe saving for a car isn't really relevant for you.
Revision 4 (Realistic and Relevant): I want to save $5000.00 to buy a used car by saving $150.00 per pay cheque by eating out only twice a week instead of every night.

5. **Timely or Time-bound.** The final element of a SMART goal is timely or timebound. This is where we add the element of time into the goal. Goals need to have end dates to help keep them practical and attainable. Your time element still needs to be realistic and relevant. Some times are connected to major life events, like graduation. Other times will be based on other factors, like your income or level of skill development. If you wanted to save $5000.00 by setting aside $150.00 per pay cheque, that would take roughly 34 pay cheques. If you are paid biweekly, it would take 16 and a half months to save this money. Is a little more than a year a reasonable amount of time to save? When and why do you need the car? If you want a car sooner than this, you need to adjust one of the elements such as how much you save each pay cheque.
Revision 5 (Timely or Time-bound): I want to save $5000.00 to buy a used car by saving $150.00 per pay cheque for 34 pay periods by eating out only twice a week instead of every night.

Writing clear SMART goals will help to make them more attainable. Engaging in SMART goals incorporates research and reflection to ensure you can meet your goals and reap the benefits!

Activity

1. Think about what you want to achieve. It might be an education goal or a financial goal. Attempt to write a SMART to help you achieve this.

2. Review the following goal and identify the SMART elements in it: I want to secure six job interviews before my graduation date of May 27, 2024, by applying to and following up on three job openings every day.

   ◦ Six job interviews: This goal is specific and measurable. It speaks to what you want to accomplish and how you will track the progress.

   ◦ By May 27, 2024: This goal is timely. The time frame and date set tells by when you want your goal to be achieved.

   ◦ Three job openings: This goal is specific and measurable. Stating how many job openings provides a target and how it will be tracked.

   ◦ Every day: This goal is timely.

   ◦ Graduation: This goal is relevant. Linking the tasks help to support the larger objective.

Make SMART Career Goals

Now that you have engaged in self-assessment and learned about how to write a clear SMART goal, is time to bring those two pieces together. It is time for you to try to develop some smart career goals. Here are some points to keep in mind when you are applying the SMART framework to work.

Specific

- What credentials do you need?
- What job titles do you want?
- When do you need to complete each step?

Measurable

- How will you know when your goal is met?
- Can you quantify your goal?
- Can you identify each step or stage in your career goal?

Attainable

- Can your achieve your goal with your current resources, values, skills and interests?
- Do you need to add in additional steps to meet your goal?
- Does your goal account for other factors in your life?

Realistic and Relevant

- Does this goal align with your values, skills and interests?
- Do you need to complete this goal to achieve your career aspirations?
- Will employers see and value the actions you are taking?

Timely or Time-bound

- Can you achieve your goal in the time you have allocated?
- Have you allocated time for each step or stage of your goal?

Case study: Mackenzie sets SMART career goals

Mackenzie has decided to complete their two year Social Service Worker diploma. They still have their list of career prospects and has narrowed down their options. They have done some more research and even booked an informational interview with a local Crisis Counsellor. The work sounds very challenging but rewarding. They want to focus their attention on gaining a similar position in a mental health context.

They are ready to set some goals. They start with a brainstorm to identify what they need to do to get to their goal. Once they have their ideas, they can start forming them into a SMART goal.

Here is their brainstorm:

- Complete my Social Service Worker diploma
- Get job experience in mental health
- Complete a crisis intervention course
- Get suicide prevention certification

Now, they work to refine each of these items to turn them into a SMART goal. They also put them in the order they will want to complete them:

1. Volunteer from May to August at least two nights per week with the Canadian Mental Health Association.
2. Take a work-integrated learning course in the Fall 2022 to gain relevant job experience at a mental health organization.
3. Take a crisis intervention course online through Justice Institute of BC in Spring 2022.
4. Work part-time on the Peer Support Hotline at my college for my second year.
5. Complete my Social Service Worker diploma in June 2023 with a B+ average.
6. Apply and secure a job in mental health within six months of graduation.
7. Within 2 years, get a job as a crisis counsellor for a minimum hourly wage of $28.00.

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2.3 Timely Goals

Time Frames for Goals

Your path to long-term success also means breaking down your goals into manageable pieces. When you chunk your goals into short, medium, and long-term, you can chain them together. What starts with taking a work-integrated learning class today turns into job experience in the area you want to work into could eventually turn into your dream career. To get from your schooling today to your career in the future, you need to be able to plan out the steps and stages you need to pass through to get where you want to go.

- **Long-term goals** are those big milestones in your life. The big things that you strive for in your career, finances, personal relationships, and education. These goals will usually take five to twenty years (or more) to accomplish and can include marriage, a professional designation, a doctorate degree, a family, a financially secure retirement, or travel. These will be the answers to big questions like what do I want to accomplish in my life?

- **Mid-term goals** are things that you can usually accomplish within one to five years. They could be completing your degree, buying a house or a car, or achieving a benchmark career-wise such as obtaining a certain kind of job or level at a job. Usually, these goals will help you obtain your long-term goals. They work toward them like building blocks.

- **Short-term goals** are smaller but equally important. The time frame for these goals is usually a year or less. These are things that you will need to act on quickly to achieve. They may include completing a course or semester of courses, getting a work-integrated learning experience, finding a new apartment, or organizing an event like your dad's 50th birthday party.

It's a good idea to have a mix of all three of these types of goals in mind. Someone once told me to set 9 goals and write them somewhere visual. One or two of these should be long-term goals, 3-4 mid-term goals, a few short-term goals, and one goal that you will accomplish and feel proud of in the next month.

Setting and achieving goals helps to build confidence in yourself and your abilities.

Activity
Review the following goals and identify whether they would be long-, mid-, or short-term goals. 1. Climb Mount Robson this summer with friends. This is a _____-term goal

2. Graduate from the Social Work program at CNC in 2023. This is a _____-term goal.

3. Travel home to India in 2025 to visit my family. This is a _____-term goal.

4. Retire with a full pension at age 65 (I am 25 how). This is a _____-term goal.

5. Pass my Chemistry course with a B+. This is a _____-term goal.

6. Become a millionaire by age 60 (I am 20 now). This is a _____-term goal.

Evaluating Your Career Goals

This chapter both starts and ends with reflection. You need to have a good sense of where you want to go when you start planning for a career. However, you also need to know that plans change and goals can change, too. Your life will involve a number of shifting priorities and goals. You will also encounter setbacks and roadblocks along the way.

As you move toward your career goals, never stop reflecting and evaluating. As you meet each of your short and medium term goals, use these successes as opportunities for reflection.

Ask yourself:

- Am I still on track to achieve my goal?
- Have my priorities changed?
- Does my timeframe still make sense?
- Are there other opportunities I want to pursue?
- Is my goal still realistic, relevant and attainable?

Key Takeaways

- Self-evaluate to learn more about yourself and research potential career aspirations before you set career goals.
- Develop goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, relevant and time-bound.
- Make a path to your long term goal by establish short and mid-term goals.
- Keep evaluating your progress and revising your goals as you work toward achieving them.

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Chapter 3: Interview Skills

Learning Objectives

- **Interview** – A question and answer discussion between an interviewer and a potential candidate.
- **Panel** – When you are interviewed by a group of two or more interviewers.
- **Behavioural questions** – Interview questions that focus on how you act in the workplace.
- **Situational questions** – Interview questions that focus on how you respond to different scenarios.
- **Competency based questions** – Interview questions that focus on your knowledge and experience related to the job.
- **STAR Format** – Situation, task, action, result. STAR format is a structure you can use for responding to an interview question.
- **Personal characteristics** – Specific characteristics you are protected against discrimination in the British Columbia Human Rights Code.
- **Etiquette** – Rules and conventions to follow to appear polite and professional.
- **References** – People who support your candidacy in a job by talking about you with your potential employer after an interview has taken place.

Case Study: Maryam (She/Her) Got an Interview!

After applying to over two dozen job ads, Maryam got her first call. Tom called from Maple Leaf Bank and asked if she could come in for an interview next Thursday. He told her to come to the Prince George branch of Maple Leaf Bank at 3:00pm. When she hung up the phone, she felt a bit overwhelmed. She had so many questions!

- What was she expected to do at the interview?
- What kinds of questions would the interviewers ask?
- How should she prepare for the interview?

3.1 What is an Interview?

An interview is an opportunity for a potential employer to learn more about you. In most cases, it takes the form of a question-based discussion. It is an opportunity for you to talk about why you would be a good candidate for the position. Many people describe an interview as an opportunity to "sell yourself". An interview is a kind of oral argument about why you are a strong candidate for a particular position. However, it is not a monologue or a speech. Your job is to answer the questions the interviewer poses. Think of an interview as an opportunity for you to explain how you meet the qualifications for the position and will contribute to your potential employer and workplace's goals.

Types of Interviews

Most interviews are individual. You will meet with a prospective employer and be expected to discuss how your skills, attributes, and experiences align with the position you applied for. Often, employers will have developed a set of questions that they will use for all candidates. This means that you and your competitors will have a consistent experience that will allow you to be assessed more fairly. Interviews can vary in type and length. Take a look at some of these common types of interviews.

- **Panel.** A panel interview is when the candidate is interviewed by a hiring committee. Often, a panel includes the supervisor for the role, a human resources representative, and other members as determined by the organization and position being applied for. Usually, you won't know who will be on your panel in advance.

- **Group.** A group interview is when groups of candidates are interviewed together in the same place at the same time. The interviewers may pose questions to the group as a whole, they may question interviewees individually in front of the group, or they may segregate the group into subgroups and move through stations that combine different questions or even a combination of questions and tasks.

- **Virtual.** Virtual interviews happen using virtual conferencing tools. Some happen on video while others may happen on the phone. Virtual interviews can take the format of any other type of interview. If you are interviewing virtually, ensure that you have the appropriate technology and that you get it working before the interview takes place!

- **Task.** Some interviews may also include a test or other task. Follow the instructions carefully. In some cases, the materials for this task will be provided in advance. Other times, it will be presented at the time of the interview. If the interviewers want you to prepare something in advance, they will tell you! Tasks can take the form of tests, writing tasks, design tasks, role play, or, if it is a group interview, group exercises.

- **Presentation.** One of the most common tasks in an interview is a presentation. The length and format will be determined by the interviewer. Again, if you are using technology, make sure you test it in advance. If you develop materials, send them to the interviewer in advance.

- **Informational.** As we discussed earlier in this book, you can also reach out and request an

informational interview from a prospective employer. In these interviews, you act as the interviewer and gain information about the workplace and the employer. An informational interview may help you early in your job search process, but it is not a job interview. Use the opportunity to ask questions and not to self-promote.

3.2 Preparing for a Job Interview

Approach your interview with a positive mindset and be prepared to talk about yourself. Start your preparation for an interview with self-reflection. Ask yourself:

- Do I feel comfortable talking about myself?
- What skills do I really want to demonstrate to my interviewers?
- What past experiences do I want to share with my interviewers?

While modesty may be a virtue in the workplace, it is best to be confident and open in an interview. This means that you can and should talk about your accomplishments and successes, as well as the skills you have gained and the lessons you have learned. For some people, this may feel unnatural or uncomfortable. That's okay! If you start with self-reflection, you can prepare to become more comfortable and practice talking about yourself.

Know that in a job interview it is appropriate and respectful to speak confidently about yourself. If it doesn't feel natural to speak about your own accomplishments, prepare your talking points in advance and practice them. If you are already a confident person, you may want focus on empathy. Focus on how you can help your employer and not just how awesome you are! You should always avoid bragging, boasting, or otherwise coming across with exaggerated confidence or bravado.

Activity

Reflect on your own comfort in speaking about your accomplishments and being empathetic to others. Place yourself on each of the following spectrums.

Quiet — Outgoing

Reserved — Blunt

Self conscious — Self assured

Easily embarrassed — Overconfident

Self-focused   Community-focused
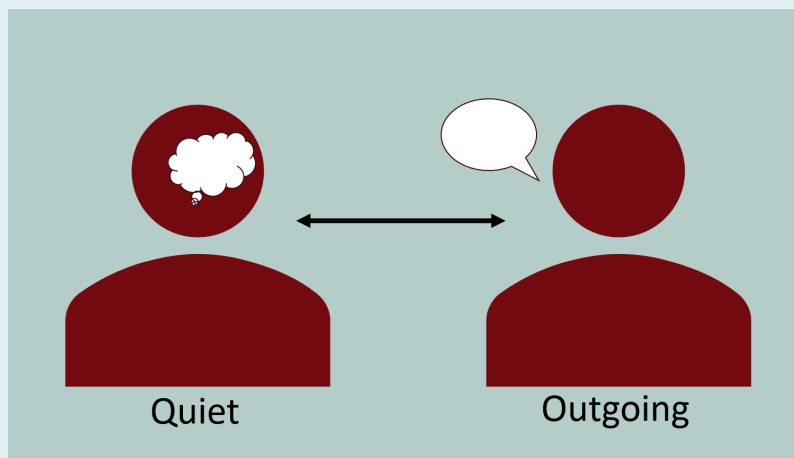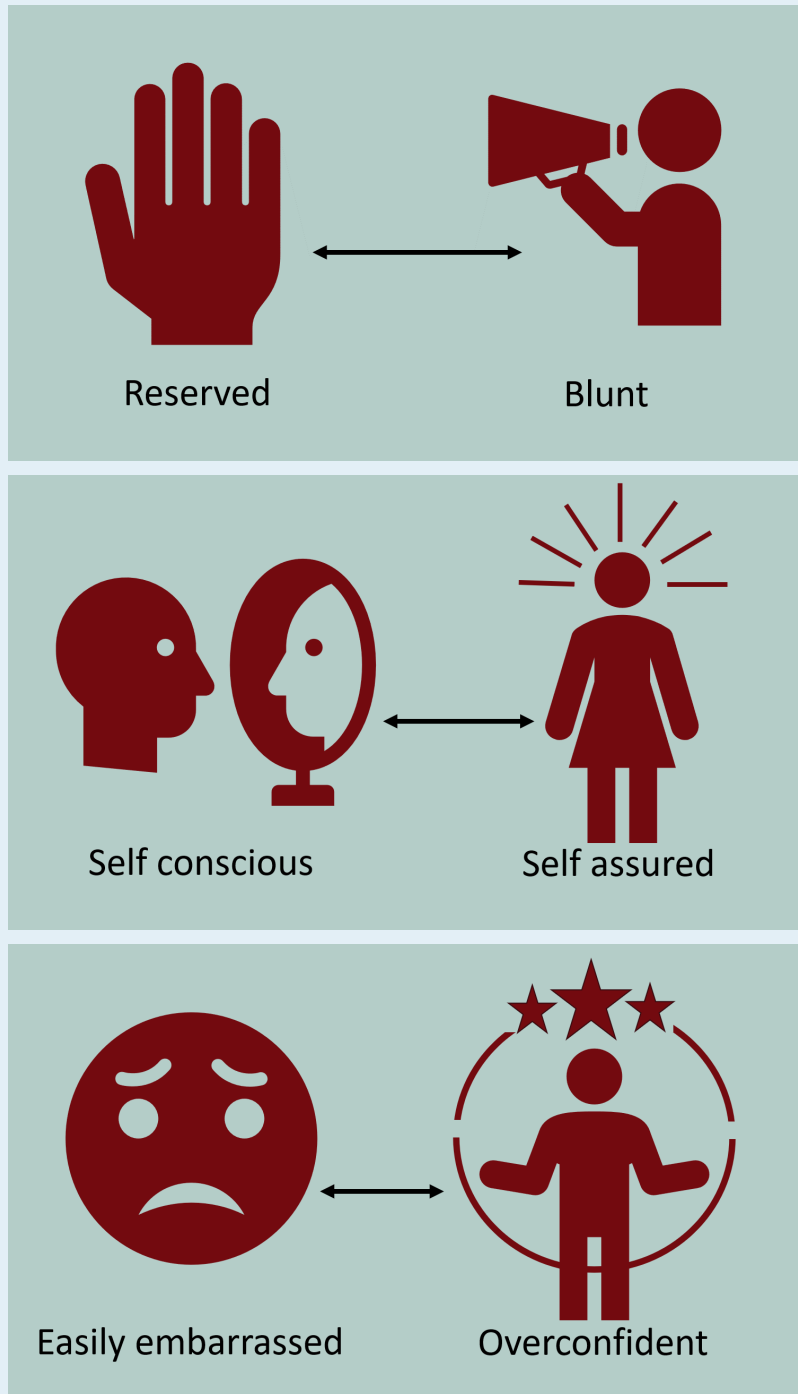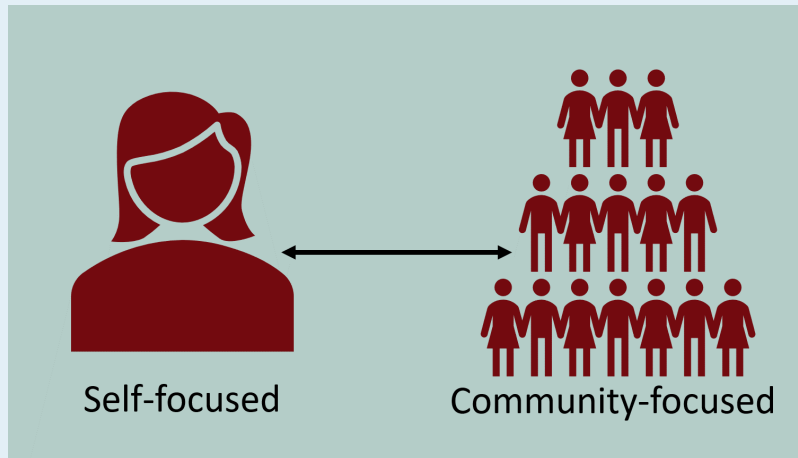
Identify Evidence of Your Qualifications

No matter how you feel about self-promotion, a good way to start your preparations is to make a list or a chart. Start by pulling up the job ad you applied for and the cover letter/resume package you submitted to the employer. Try making three columns:

Job Qualification	How I Meet the Qualification	Evidence, Examples, Stories
In this column, identify the most important qualifications in the job ad	In this column, describe how you meet the qualifications. Use the work you already did in your cover letter and resume!	Expand on your qualifications with more detail. What specific evidence, examples, or stories will help illustrate that you have the skill?

The first column should be filled in using the job ad. The second column can be filled in based on the details you provided in your cover letter and resume. The final column should be for your notes. In a job interview, you are going to need to expand upon the information you provided in your initial job application. You will need to be able to tell stories that explain with more detail how and why you meet particular qualifications.

Case Study: Maryam Prepares Her Evidence

Maryam recently applied to be a customer service agent for a bank and is preparing for her interview. She is very nervous about speaking about herself. In her culture, it is considered rude to boast about yourself. However, she knows she needs to promote her skills and experience if she wants to get this job. So, she starts her interview preparation with a list. First, she identifies the top five skills in the job ad. She writes these into

the first column. Then, she notes some objective evidence that shows she has the skill. Lastly, she expands on that evidence with more detail and stories that help demonstrate her experience.

Job Qualification	How I Meet the Qualification	Evidence, Examples, Stories
Customer service	retail customer service representative at Pantaloons	• rang up transactions • selected items to flatter clients' natural shape • provided customers with feedback about fit and style
Maintains customer confidence	retail customer service representative at Pantaloons	helped a woman with cancer purchase a new wardrobe after a double mastectomy
Negotiation skills	participated in Model UN in Grade 10	• researched the country of Denmark • acted as a delegate to represent Denmark and negotiate • debated with other delegates about world issues and helped pass a draft resolution
Writing and documentation skills	• completed bookkeeping course • wrote essays in English class	• last term, got an A in Fundamentals of Bookkeeping • learned how to track transactions using double entry system
Computer skills	took a computer class in high school	story: competed in regional code-athon
Sales skills	retail customer service representative at Pantaloons	• met the items per transaction goals set by the company for average sales • signed up customers for loyalty rewards program • promoted to fitting room agent
High School Diploma	• Bookkeeping Certificate, College of New Caledonia (to be completed next year) • All India Senior School Certificate (AISSCE)	• may need to explain my board exams and their results • specialized in Commerce

Types of Interview Questions

The internet is full of examples of common interview questions and answers. As with all things you find on the internet, some advice is better than others. Instead of focusing on how to answer specific questions, let's talk more generally about the types of questions that are common in interviews. For example, the British Columbian public service website describes four different types of information that they ask for in job interviews, which includes questions about the candidate's knowledge, response to different scenarios, behaviour, and awareness about the position and organization (British Columbia, 2021a). Each interview is unique, so do not rely on preparing for specific interview questions based on what you read online or here in this book. Examples are just that: examples to help you prepare.

Background Questions

Background questions are general questions that focus on learning more about you as well as gauging your interest in the job. Typically, background questions will ask you to talk about your previous job experience, employment history, skills, and other qualifications. Background questions might also be about the employer and research you have conducted to prepare you for the interview. For example, interviewers may ask you what you know about the organization, its values, and the work that it does.

Here are some examples of background questions:

- Tell us about yourself and your experience.

- Why did you decide to apply for this job?

- What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?

- What would a co-worker or past employer say about you? What would they say are your strengths and challenges?

- What do you know about our organization's mission and values?

Behavioural Questions

Behavioural questions are questions to help determine how you act in the workplace. The questions are designed to help get a sense of how you acted in past situations and at past workplaces. Often, the behavioural questions that an interviewer asks are linked to the major skills identified in the job ad. If you will be working on a team, the questions likely will be about teamwork. If you will be working with customers, the questions may deal with conflict or challenges related to customer service.

Here are some examples of behavioural questions:

- Tell us about a time you failed to meet a deadline. What did you do? Why?

- Tell us about a time you worked on a team. What role did you play? What did you accomplish? What would you do differently next time?

- Tell us about a time you had to calm down an angry customer. What happened? How did you respond?

- Tell us about an accomplishment you are proud of.
- Tell us about a time you failed.

Situational Questions

Situational questions are questions where you apply your past experience to a new or hypothetical situation. Think about these questions like a case study. The interviewers will present you with a problem or describe a common scenario at their organization and ask how you might approach it. These questions are also often linked to the major skills identified in the job ad.

Here are some examples of situational questions.

- You are working on a team to complete a goal. One of your team mates is working slowly and you are waiting on them to proceed. When you email them, they don't respond. What do you do?
- You are working on three different projects that all have upcoming deadlines. How would you prioritize tasks to get all three projects done?
- What would you do if you heard a co-worker complaining about their manager?
- What would you do if your till was short at the end of the night?

Activity

Click on a choice to identify the skill that each of the situational questions is asking you to demonstrate.

1. What would you do if you missed a deadline?

    A. Time Management
    B. Continuous Learning
    C. Oral Communication

2. How would you explain the procedure to the patient and their family?

    A. Conflict Resolution
    B. Writing
    C. Oral Communication

3. A customer is complaining that a discount was not applied on their past order. How do you respond?

    A. Time Management
    B. Continuous Learning
    C. Conflict Resolution

4. Someone slipped and fell at work. What would you document in an incident report?

    A. Oral Communication

    B. Writing

    C. Conflict Resolution

5. What do you do when you need to learn a new policy?

    A. Time Management

    B. Continuous Learning

    C. Writing

Competency-Based Questions

Competency-based questions are questions that ensure that you have the knowledge necessary for the job you have applied for. These questions will be very specific to the job you have applied for. In most cases, these questions will not focus on soft skills. Instead, they will ask you more about the hard qualifications of the job.

- Tell us about your experience with JavaScript.
- Do you have any familiarity with the Microsoft Office Suite?
- Have you worked with children with Down Syndrome before?
- Have you worked in an endocrinology department before?

Questions for the Interviewers

Often the end of the interview is reserved for as a time for you, the interviewee, to ask questions. In this situation, the employer will be interested in determining your interest in the position. The questions you ask will tell them what parts of the job you are most interested in, or what logistical considerations you raise as a candidate. Usually, the question is asked as a version of this:

- Do you have any questions for us?

Responding to Interview Questions

Now that you know a bit about what question types you might be asked, it is time to figure out how you might answer. Sometimes in tv and movies you see prospective job candidates exaggerate their skills and abilities in their resume and in interviews. While that might make for a good joke, those misrepresentations are not appropriate. It is your responsibility to present yourself and your experiences truthfully and accurately. If you are new to the labour market, that's okay! It is better to be direct about how you want to develop as a working professional then to pretend that you are someone you are not.

Your credibility as a professional is dependent on your ability to represent your experience, knowledge, and skills truthfully. When it comes to interviewing, this means making sure your answers are thoughtful, complete and honest.

Embrace the STAR Format

For people early in their career, it can sometimes be helpful to prepare your answers using a particular format. Using a format may help you to be less nervous on the day of your interview. It will also help you to make sure that you provide enough detail in your response. One of the most common challenges with interviews is providing enough evidence to show that you are a well qualified candidate. This means that you need to take the time to answer each question with clear, concrete examples.

We recommend you start with the STAR format to help ensure that you have provided enough information to tell a good story in each and every one of your answers. The leadership consulting firm DDI designed the STAR format to help effectively answer interview questions (Development Dimensions International, 2021). It is now used all over the world. British Columbia's provincial government also encourages its public service candidates to answer questions using this technique (British Columbia, 2021a).
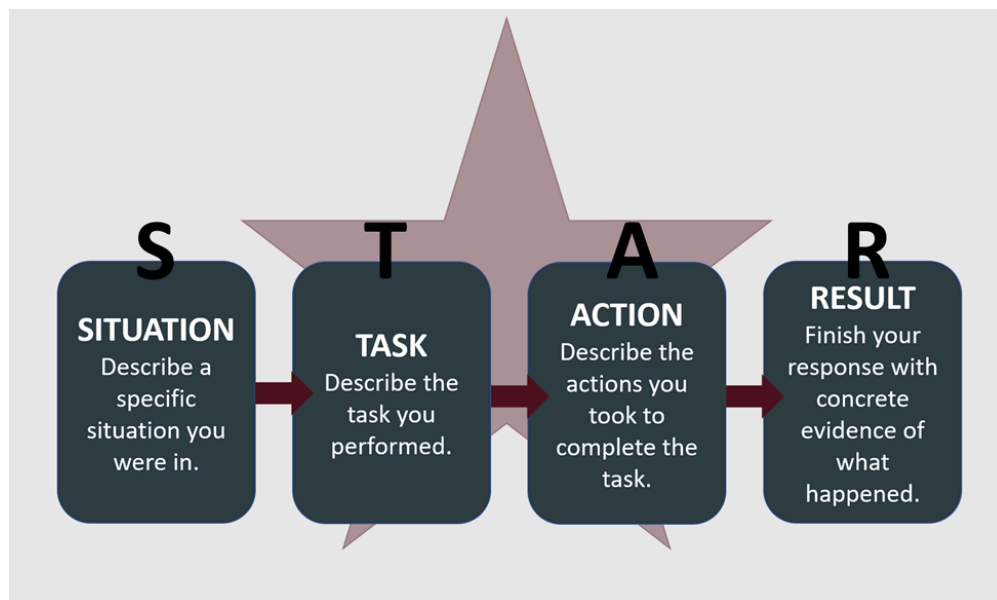
Figure 3.1 STAR format

Here is how you would organize a response using STAR format:

- **Situation.** Start by describing a specific situation you were in. This can be drawn from your work history, from volunteer experience, from school or even from your personal life. Just make sure it is relevant to the question you were asked.

- **Task.** Next, describe the task you performed. If there were multiple tasks, describe each of them in a logical order. This is where you describe what you were expected to do.

- **Action.** Describe the actions you took to complete the task. This is where the detail is important. Take time to describe exactly what you did. You may also want to describe why

you did it, or what resources you used to complete the task.

- **Result.** Finish your response with some concrete evidence about what happened. If you can, try to quantify your results. Focus on the benefits that resulted, any awards or recognition you received. This is a chance for you to explain the positive outcome of your actions, including what you learned or the skills you gained. For extra points, make a connection back to the position you are applying for! How will you bring the results forward to your new role?

Case Study: Maryam Practices the STAR Format

Maryam is reviewing common interview questions as she prepares for the interview. She knows that customer service skills are the most important part of the job she has applied for. So, she writes out a STAR response and then practices it in front of a mirror.

Tell us about a time you went above and beyond to help keep a customer happy

Situation	Customer needed new clothes after a double mastectomy
Task	Provide emotional support and appropriate selection of items to increase customer
Action	• Showed her compassion • Selected clothes to flatter her new shape • Encourage the other sales associates to compliment her • Spoke with the manager about a discount
Result	• Able to secure a discount • Completed a transaction for 10 complete outfits • Became a regular

---

Activity

After Maryam wrote up her STAR response, she practiced saying it out loud. She practices by recording herself on her phone.

Click on the play button to listen to Maryam practice her response, then *then answer a few questions.*

It was about two years ago when I was working at pantaloons that a customer came in who was really self-conscious. When I checked in on her at the fitting rooms, I could hear her crying on the other side of the door.

She was really upset because the clothes just didn't fit properly. I asked her what was wrong, and encouraged her to let me take a look so I could help figure out what she needed. She told me she had recently undergone a double mastectomy as part of a cancer treatment. It was clear that she wanted to feel more comfortable in her body. So I empathized with her, and I told her I knew how to help. I went back onto the sales floor and selected a variety of natural fiber, loose fitting tops and crossbody dresses. Now at first she refused to try them because they just weren't her style but one of my coworkers encouraged her by saying she'd look great in the dress I picked. She tried it on and it really showed off her delicate collar bone and drew attention away from her cleavage. She was just so thrilled. I offered to find her more options. Now when I went back on the sales floor explained the situation to my manager, and we decided that we would offer her our employee discount as a way to acknowledge her situation. In the end, she left with a new word row above 10 complete outfits. We made a great sale, but we helped a woman regain her confidence. And more importantly, we made a customer for life. She still asks for me when she goes to pantaloons.

1. What were some of the actions that Maryam took?

2. What results does Maryam describe?

3. How does Maryam's answer show she went above and beyond to make a customer happy?

Make Connections to the New Job

The STAR format is a great way to ensure that your answers are complete, positive, and action oriented. However, it focuses more on the past. For some of your interview questions, you may want to go a bit further and describe the way that experience connects to the job you have applied for. You want your interviewers to imagine you at the organization and doing the work. So, answering their questions means more than just speaking about your past experience.

Here are a few sentence starters you can use after you finish your STAR response to make sure you connected your past experience to the new job.

- This experience would benefit your company…

- This example shows you can expect me to be…

- I would be able to do this for you by…

- As you can see, I am…

- This example relates to…

Your Rights as an Interviewee

As an interviewee, there are also certain kinds of questions that an employer should avoid. In BC, employers are permitted to ask questions about your personal characteristics, unlike other provinces where they are prohibited (Blair, 2018). These questions are connected to human rights legislation and discrimination concerns. Your employer should avoid asking you personal questions as a part of the interview (WorkBC, 2021). If they do ask personal questions, the question should directly connect to the details of the job (e.g. you might be asked if you identify as a member of an underserved population

if there are preferential hiring practices for a particular underserved group). You are allowed to ask how the question is relevant, or can avoid answering questions that make you feel uncomfortable.

Potential employers have to follow the BC Human Rights Code, which means that your potential employer is not allowed to discriminate based on personal characteristics. According to the BC Human Rights Tribunal (BCHRT), the following personal characteristics are protected against discrimination:

- Race, colour, ancestry, place of origin,
- Religion, Political Belief
- Sex, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, Sexual Orientation
- Mental or Physical Disability
- Marital Status, Family Status, Age
- Summary or Criminal Conviction (BCHRT, 2021)

If you do choose to respond, be honest. You could lose the job offer if an employer realizes you lied in the job interview, even if it is about personal characteristics (Blair, 2018).

Interview Etiquette

There are a number of expected behaviours associated with an interview. Etiquette are the rules and conventions that we follow to be considered polite and professional. Here are some of the conventions and behaviours you should expect to follow as an interviewee.

- **Dress professionally.** Interviews are usually considered business casual. You should look professional, neat and tidy. This means you may need to dress up more than you usually do. In some cases, a suit is appropriate. As a work-integrated learning student, dress pants and a button-down shirt is a good option. Dresses or a modest blouse are also good options. It is also a good idea to avoid scent.
- **Arrive early.** Try to arrive about 15 minutes before the scheduled start time. Give yourself extra time to find parking and get familiar with your environment, especially if it new to you. It is considered very unprofessional to be late.
- **Turn your phone to silent and put it away.** Be sure your phone is on silent. You do not want to have notifications interrupting the conversation. It is a good idea to put it away to avoid being distracted by it.
- **Make eye contact.** Look at your interviewers as you respond to their questions. If you are on a panel, focus your attention on the person who asked you the question. In addition to making you look professional, eye contact may also give you clues about the interviewers feel about your answers. Look for smiles and nods or frowns and furrowed brows.
- **Bring your resume, a pen and paper.** Your job application documents will serve as a useful reference for you. They might help you remember key dates or experiences. You can bring a few notes or reminders as well, but try to keep these minimal and do not read directly from them.
- **Make small talk.** There may be a few minutes before the interview begins where the

panelists chat with you. Sometimes people will bring up topics like traffic, parking or the weather. Follow the lead of your panelists, and avoid personal or controversial topics.

- **Take notes.** It is totally appropriate to take note of the questions as they are asked. Use your note paper. You can also take notes when the interviewers are describing the position and the company to you. You do not need to take notes if this is uncomfortable for you.

- **Ask the interviewer to repeat the question if you need to.** If you aren't sure what the interviewer said, or if the question had multiple parts, it is okay to ask them to repeat the question. At the end, you can also ask the interviewers if you have answered all of their questions.

- **Pause if you need it.** You don't need to start talking as soon as the question is asked. Take a few moments to collect your thoughts and think about your STAR format.

- **Thank the interviewers.** At the end of the interview, thank the interviewers for their time. Sometimes, it is also appropriate to shake hands. If someone offers you their hand, grip it confidently and move your hands up and down a few times. During COVID, this is a formality that you will likely forego.

How Interviews Are Assessed

There is a lot of variety in how interviewers approach the assessment of candidates in an interview. Often, the hiring committee will have devised a rating scale, rubric, template, or even score card that they use to help rank and reflect on the candidates for the position. Typically, this information is internal and is not shared with the candidate before or after the interview.

Here is an example rating scale template used to assess Public Service interviewees in British Columbia:

Use a rating scale to assign numerical scores to candidate responses to interview questions. Weighting may vary depending on the importance of the competency, knowledge, skill, or ability. Adjust the point values or use a multiplier as required.

Government of British Columbia Interview Rating Scale

Planning and Conducting Interviews: Information for Hiring Managers (British Columbia, 2021b)

Beyond Recruitment Level	Recruitment Level	Below Recruitment Level
9-10 points	6-8 points	0-5 points
Excellent response	Good to very good response	Less than acceptable or unacceptable response
Competency Questions: Should ensure extremely effective performance; significantly and consistently above criteria for successful job performance. **Knowledge or Skill/Ability Questions:** Ideal response or surpassed expectation; covered all the points looked for in a response; reserved for the exemplary set of skills that yield a particularly sophisticated approach or response; no errors.	**Competency Questions:** Should be adequate for effective performance; meets criteria relative to quality and quantity of behaviour required for successful range of skills for handling the situation and the desired result, or outcome is obtained. **Knowledge or Skill/Ability Questions:** Clear response; includes most of key information; minor errors; demonstrates or describes the range of appropriate skills. At the lower point rating, some deficiencies exist in the areas assessed but non of major concern.	**Competency Questions:** Insufficient for performance requirements; does not meet criteria relative to quality and quantity of behaviour. Described plausible but inappropriate behaviours for handling the situation or the desired result or outcome is not obtained. **Knowledge or Skill/Ability Questions:** Includes little or incorrect information; demonstrates a lack of understanding; does not describe a sufficient range of appropriate skills; many deficiencies; no answer provided or inappropriate answer; response would have negative outcomes.

After the Interview

You might think that the interview is over when you walk out the door. However, there are still a few things you can do to leave a positive impression with your employer.

Follow up with a thank you. It is appropriate to reach out once to check in and thank the interviewer for their time in the days immediately following the interview. You can do this via email or phone. However, do not send multiple messages. Use the format that the interviewer used to contact with you. If the interviewer told you when to expect to hear back from them, follow-up based on the timelines they set.

Provide references, if you are asked. If the interviewers decide to proceed with your application, they may request that you provide them with references. The first thing you should do when this happens is ask your references if they will speak on your behalf. You can even ask your references before your interview! Don't include references that haven't agreed. Typically, your previous employer is a good starting point. If this is one of your first jobs, you may also consider a personal reference like one of your instructors at school or a respected family friend. If you can, provide the interviewers with your references' names, job titles, email addresses and phone numbers, unless the interviewers ask for something specific.

Ask for feedback if you are not selected. It is hard when you are not the chosen candidate. However, each job interview can be a learning experience! It is appropriate to ask for feedback on your interview performance and on your qualifications. Some interviewers will provide feedback and some will not. If you do get feedback, use that to practice and improve for your next interview!

Key Takeaways

- An interview is an opportunity to sell yourself to a potential employer.
- Prepare for potential questions
- Plan your responses using the STAR format.
- Be polite and professional throughout the interview process, even if you don't end up getting the job.

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SECTION III

Each of us holds an individual and collective responsibility to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation's Calls to Action and to seek an understanding of Canadian and Northern BC First Nations as the traditional Indigenous people of the land that is now occupied by modern day Canada. Section III provides perspective on how one First Nations community fits into a larger network, Colonialism in Canada, and how to participate in providing cultural safety through the practice of cultural humility.

Please note, section III contains sensitive material and discusses anti-Indigenous racism, colonialism, and oppression. As a result, it also discusses the horrific impacts of Canadian settler colonialism on Indigenous peoples, including genocide, cultural annihilation, language loss, forced displacement, intentional infection, residential schools, incarceration, murder, and abduction.

Chapter 4: Indigenous Peoples, Communities, and Cultural Safety

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, the reader will be able to:

- Discover the Indigenous communities that live in the region where you reside
- Define Indigenous, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis
- Define cultural safety and cultural humility
- Reflect on your culture
- Promote truth as well as reconciliation and culturally safe work and school environments

Terms to Know

- **Indigenous** – Is used around the world to describe people with historical ties to territories prior to invasion or colonization that have been deeply impacted by the dominant society (United Nations, 2004). In Canada, Indigenous is used as a collective term for a variety of different groups, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people.
- **Métis** – Refers to Indigenous peoples whose heritage includes First Nations and European settlers, particularly French, who share a distinct cultural identity.
- **Inuit** – Refers to Indigenous peoples who inhabit the North and Arctic.
- **First Nations** – Used in Canada to describe Indigenous people and groups that are not Inuit and Métis. The majority of Indigenous people in British Columbia belong to First Nations.
- **Cultural safety** – "an outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the healthcare system. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe when receiving health care" (FNHA, 2016, p. 5).
- **Cultural humility** – "[i]s a process of self-reflection to understand personal and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust. Cultural humility involves humbly acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another's experience" (FNHA, 2016, p. 7).

- **Reconciliation** – Taking concrete actions to positively change the relationships and experiences that Indigenous people have with Canadians. It is the process of regaining trust, respect and relationship with Indigenous peoples, communities and Nations.

Content Warning: This chapter discusses anti-Indigenous racism, colonialism, and oppression. As a result, it also discusses the horrific impacts of Canadian settler colonialism on Indigenous peoples including genocide, cultural annihilation, language loss, forced displacement, intentional infection, residential schools, incarceration, murder, and abduction. There are also examples of stereotyping and microaggressions against Indigenous peoples described in the case studies.

Case Study: Mikaela (She/Her) learns about the Lheidli T'enneh.

Mikaela just started her work term at Smiles Family Dental in Prince George, BC. She was introduced to the other staff. One of the dental hygienists greeted her by saying "Hadih! Si soozi Imeli ts'utni. My name is Imeli." Mikaela responded warmly, "Great to meet you! What language was that?" Imeli smiled and said, "The language you just heard is Dakelh, a dialect of Carrier. Me and my brother are learning it to learn about our culture! I'm from the Lheidli T'enneh territory, right here on the unceded land of Prince George." Mikaela had been living in Prince George for a year, but after meeting Imeli, realized she didn't actually know very much about the people indigenous to the land she lived, worked, and played on. As her first day continued, she reflected:

- Where could she learn more about Lheidli T'enneh?
- What other Indigenous Nations resided in BC?
- How could she be a good ally to Indigenous people in her work placement?

4.1 Getting it Right: Terms to Know

How much do you know about the First Peoples of Canada? How much do you know about the First Nations communities in the territory upon which you reside? Do you know whose ancestral territory you live on? Is it the same or different than the place where you work? Go to school? What is the history of these communities? As a work-integrated learning student, you should take the opportunity to answer these questions and engage in personal learning if you don't know.

You may get the opportunity to work with First Peoples as co-workers, clients, educators, parents, friends, and community members. You may yourself identify as an Indigenous person. As a Canadian student, you are participating in an education developed by Canadian colonial settlers. In our collective quest to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation's Calls to Action, which you will learn more about later in this chapter, this chapter is meant to help you engage in a process of decolonization and reconciliation through engaging with Indigenous knowledge, history, and contemporary lived experience.

Getting it Right: Terms to Know

You may have heard the First Peoples of Canada referred to using fifferent names, both individually and collectively. The best thing you can do when you are talking to a person is to ask how they self-identify or which community they are connected with. Pay attention to social cues that might signify that a person is uncomfortable with sharing and allow their comfort level to guide the conversation. They may identify as having a clan, band, or nation, in addition to their family. Whenever possible, use the term that the person uses to describe themselves.

When you are referring to different groups collectively, here are a few terms you should know:

- **Indigenous:** This term is used around the world to describe people with historical ties to territories prior to invasion or colonization that have been deeply impacted by the dominant society (United Nations, 2004). In Canada, Indigenous is used as a collective term for a variety of different groups, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people.
- **Métis:** This term refers to Indigenous peoples whose heritage includes First Nations and European settlers, particularly French, who share a distinct cultural identity.
- **Inuit:** This term refers to Indigenous peoples who inhabit the North and Arctic. An individual who is Inuit is referred to as Inuk.
- **First Nation:** This term is used to describe Aboriginal peoples of Canada who are ethnically neither Métis or Inuit. This term came into common usage in the 1970s and 80s and generally replaced the term "Indian," the term "First Nation" does not have a legal definition. While First Nations refers to the ethnicity of First Nations

65

peoples, the singular First Nation can refer to a band, a reserve-based community, or a larger tribal grouping and the status Indians who live in them. For example, the Stó:lō Nation (which consists of several bands), or the Tsleil-Waututh Nation (formerly Burrard Band) (Indigenous Foundations, 2009).

Words matter. The terms above aren't the only terms you may hear, but these are terms that you should start with. Other terms may be offensive, outdated, or simply inappropriate. For example, avoid using the word Indian. Many people find this term offensive because of the derogatory ways that it is used to discriminate and stereotype First Peoples of the land. Although this word still has a significant legal connotation in Canada because of the *Indian Act*, it is not the most appropriate choice.

At the same time, some Indigenous people and groups prefer the term Aboriginal. This term has an important political and legal history in Canada. It is the collective term used to describe First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people as a group in Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution (Hanson, 2009). After many years of advocacy by Indigenous women, in 1985 the *Indian Act* was amended so that Status Indian women maintained their Status if they married Non-Status men and were eligible to apply for lost status. Since that time, Aboriginal has been in common use in public institutions and government. Your school might have an Aborigianl Studies program or an Aboriginal Liaison, for example. More recently, Indigenous has become the more common term internationally, as it was the term adopted in the United Nations 2007 *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. In Canada, we also use the term Indigenous as a collective term for a variety of different groups of First Peoples. One reason for this is that Indigenous comes from the Latin term, *indigenia*, which means "sprung from the land; native" (Wilson, 2018, n.p.). This term is replacing the previously used term, Aboriginal. One reason for this is that the prefix "ab" means "away from" or "not" therefore aboriginal means "not original" (Wilson, 2018, n.p.). Indigenous is the best term to use if you are referring to groups of Indigenous peoples outside a Canadian context.

Again, specific is always better, so avoid general terms whenever you can use a specific one. Here is a brief introduction by Inuk journalist Ossie Michelin to the terms Indigenous, First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and Aboriginal and when to use them: How to talk about Indigenous people.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://opentextbc.ca/workintegratedlearning/?p=256#oembed-1

Michelin shares these simple rules in the video:

1. Be as specific as possible. If you are referring to one person or community, then name it. Don't generalize using terms like Indigenous if you can be more specific.

2. If you are referring to more than one community, use broader terms like First Nations, Inuit, or Métis.

3. If there are different groups together, then say Indigenous.

4. If you don't know, ask. (Michelin, 2017).

H5P: Indigenous Terms Matching

First Nations Terms: Read the following statements and using the knowledge from Michelin's video, choose the most appropriate term to refer to the person or community in the sentences below:

1. Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada announces new funding for the Arctic communities of Nunavut.

2. Noreen Vance, a Tahltan woman from Telegraph Creek, describes her process of preparing moose meat to a CBC reporter.

3. The College of New Caledonia responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action by creating a learning circle that is open to Metis, Inuit, and First Nations peoples.

4. Doreen Logan was elected as the chief of the Lheidli T'enneh in April 2021, the first woman to hold the position since 1969.

5. The BC court of Appeal recently ruled in favour of the fishing rights of five Nuu-chah-nulth Nations.

Terms: Metis, Inuit, Nuu-chah-nulth, First Nations, Indigenous, Tahltan, Ahousaht, Lheidli T'enneh

Media Attributions

4.2 Indigenous Communities in Northern BC and Canada

First Nations are the traditional Indigenous people of the land that is now occupied by modern day Canada. Though First Nations are often described collectively by the Canadian government, they are not one community, but many individual and complex nations. There are 203 First Nations communities just in British Columbia (BC Assembly of First Nations, 2021). According to the last Canadian census in 2016, Indigenous people are 5.9% of British Columbia's total population, with 63.8% identifying as First Nations; 33% identifying as Métis; and 0.6% identifying as Inuit (Statistics Canada, 2017).

While each First Nations community is distinct, they also have their own internal affiliations, connections, and governance structures. These structures are both traditional and derived from colonial models of governance structures. In the past, First Nations communities in Northern BC were self-governing and oriented toward the good of the collective. Members of different clans worked together as a part of one government. For example, many Carrier, Dene, and Coast Salish communities brought clans together for collective decision making. At the centre of these decisions were potlatch ceremonies which combined governance with spiritual traditions (Gadacz, 2019). Decisions were made together to redistribute wealth, establish status for individuals, groups, and clans, and determine rights related to territory (Gadacz, 2019). However, First Nations governance structure was drastically impacted by the Canadian federal government, who broke up communities into individual and distinct bands, and banned the potlatch. Each band (later First Nation) were funded independently, breaking up the collective decision making of the past. In more recent times, First Nations communities have joined together through tribal councils to engage in some of the collective decision making.

For example, let's look at how one First Nation community fits into a larger network. The Ulkatcho First Nation has approximately one thousand members, and its traditional territories include the Chilcotin Plateau (Carrier Chilcotin, 2021). The Ulkatcho has a government that is responsible for 22 Indian reserves (Carrier Chilcotin, 2021). Its people are Ulkatchot'en, an ethnic subgroup of Carrier (Ulkatcho First Nation, 2021). Ulkatcho belongs to the Carrier Chilcotin Tribal Council.

The Carrier Chilcotin Tribal Council includes four member First Nations:

- the Lhoosk'uz Dene Nation
- the Lhatako Dene Nation
- Tl'esqox of the Tsilhqot'in
- the Ulkatcho First Nation (Carrier Chilcotin, 2021).

This is one of the two Carrier tribal councils, with the other being the Carrier Sekani. The Carrier Sekani Tribal Council includes six member First Nations including:

- Ts'il Kaz Koh First Nation
- Nadleh Whut'en

- Saik'uz First Nation
- Takla Lake First Nation
- Stellat'en First Nation
- Wet'suwet'en First Nation (Carrier Sekani, 2021).

In addition to these two tribal councils, there are also eight additional independent Carrier Nations (Wikipedia, 2021). More information on specific nations can be found by searching the web.

Today's Communities

Although still negatively impacted by the past and current colonial policies, Indigenous peoples are working hard to revitalize their languages and cultures. This is why it is important to learn about the Indigenous communities where you live because too often, we only learn about the social devastation and poverty. When the Indigenous people host a cultural event at your school or in your community, be curious to learn about the strength, vitality, and resilience of their cultures.

There are many Indigenous people leading the way and affecting change in their communities whether through government policies, climate change, technical industries, media, and commerce. Indigenous people are at the forefront of conversation for future sustainability methods and in constant relations to all things governing the communities in which we live.

Here are some examples of entrepreneurs and leaders in Canada and what they are doing:

- [Meet the Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders 2022 Participants](#)
- [Celebrating International Women's Day with Zoë Craig-Sparrow '15](#)
- [Indigenous-owned Businesses to Support](#)

Things You Can Do to Learn Mo re about Indigenous Communities Near You

Individually

- Start with some online research. Many communities maintain their own websites with events, resources, and history of their people. You can also use the Internet to learn more about the protocols and etiquette appropriate for visiting and engaging with Indigenous communities.
- Attend a public event. Visiting a local community can be a great way to build relationships with local Indigenous communities. Be sure to be respectful and follow appropriate protocols. Not sure what to do? Take the advice of Indigenous Corporate Training (2021), "when in doubt about what to do, ask the host or a friend of the community to explain the ceremony's participation process. If all else fails, follow the lead of the people in front of you" (28).

At School

- Visit the Indigenous or Aboriginal Resource Centre on campus. You can learn about the programs, events and resources put on by the department. These centres also often run local events, so you can visit the office or website to find out what events are open to the public.

- Engage with an Elder in Residence, Visiting Elder, Indigenous/Aboriginal Support Worker, Advisor or Liaison. Many campuses engage in programs to bring Indigenous Elders to campus. These staff maintain office hours, so you can schedule an appointment.

- Take a class in an Indigenous Studies or Aboriginal Studies program. Many colleges and universities have degree programs and electives that can immerse you in language and culture of local First Nations communities.

Activity

Do you live in British Columbia? Take a look at the First Peoples' Map of BC. It shows all of the different First Nations communities. Which ones are near you? What languages do they speak? What art and heritage can you learn about? Use this map as a starting point to learn more about the cultures that shape the place where you live.
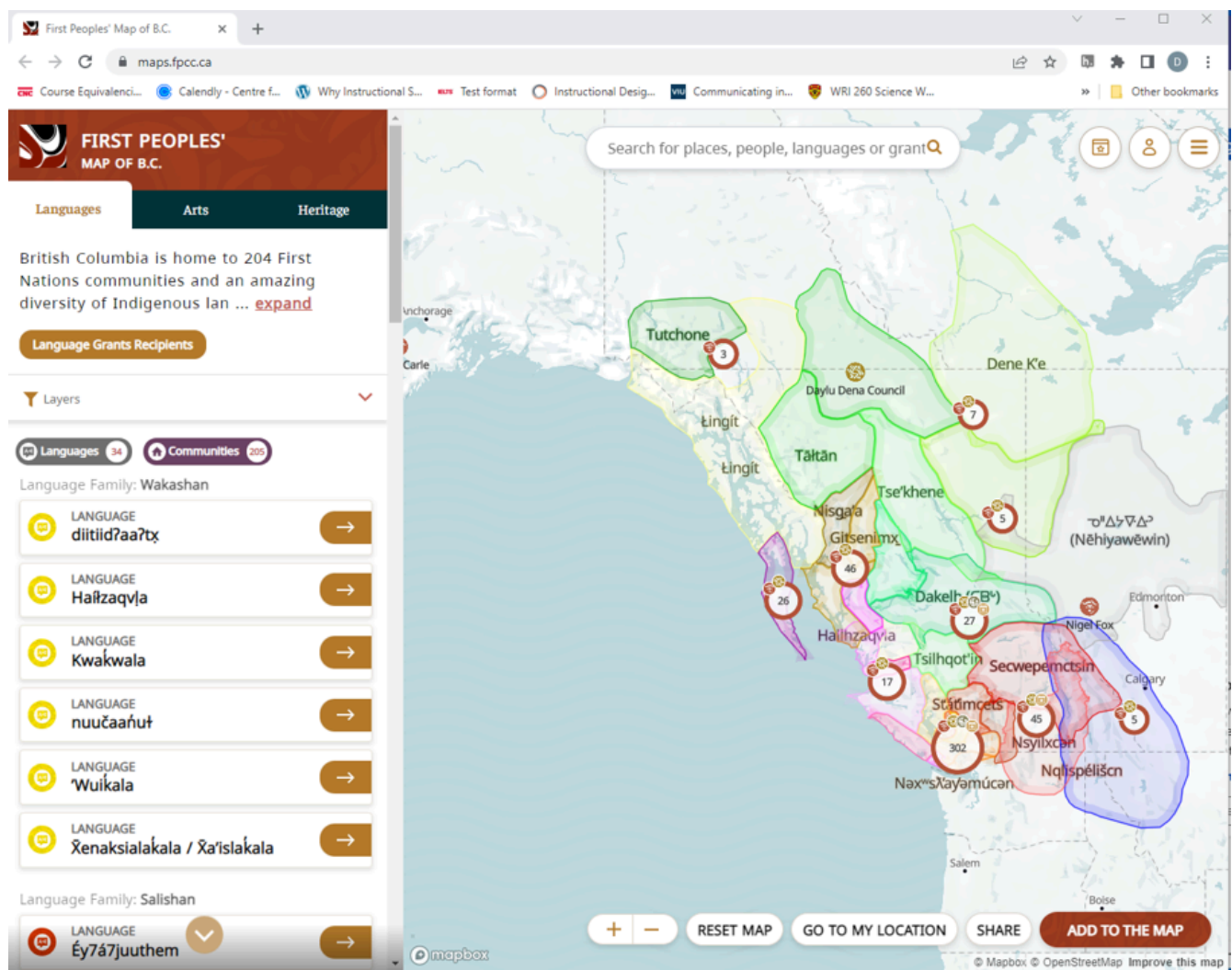
Figure 4.1: First Peoples' Map of BC. This screenshot is for personal and non-commercial use only.

Media Attributions

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4.3 Colonialism in Canada

Canada is a settler-colonial nation. This means that the country as it currently exists came to be by encouraging the settlement of people on the land from other places, primarily from Europe initially. The history of the relationship between settlers and Indigenous peoples is complicated. While there is some history of engaging in trade together and sharing the land, even signing treaties that governed agreements between the settlers and individual Indigenous communities. Treaties are formal legal agreements between two or more nations, which often included clauses **ceding** land to the settlers. Since the Indigenous peoples already had their own governance structures, these agreements were between two different governments, each with their own agency. Were these treaties fair? Like more recent agreements, like the North American Free Trade Agreement between Canada, United States, and Mexico, the conditions tend to favour those with more power. Over time, the settlers gained more and more power and retained power through inequality. The treaties were not followed by the settlers, were interpreted in favour of the settlers, and were taken advantage of by settlers, who continued to take more and give less.

Colonization controlled Indigenous people through a number of different formal means. Wilson (2018) summarizes these as: treaties, laws and acts of parliament, the reserve system and residential schools. We recommend you read Wilson's [Pulling Together: A Guide for Indigenization of Post-Secondary Institutions](#) for a more complete explanation of colonization in Canada. Though treaties existed throughout Canada, they were not common in British Columbia. As the province of British Columbia's website "[History of Treaties in B.C.](#)" (2021) summarizes, "[w]hen British Columbia joined Canada in 1871, the Province did not recognize Indigenous title so there was no need for treaties. However, the Province did accept the rights of Indigenous people as written in the Canadian Constitution and recognized the federal government's authority to make laws for Indigenous people and their lands" (n.p.). This means that the majority of the land in British Columbia is unceded land. In cases where land is unceded, Indigenous peoples' traditional territory was unrecognized by the colonial government and was taken without consent or formal agreement. As the quotation suggests, BC did not recognize the land rights of Indigenous people, but still applied policies and laws about the people themselves through the Canadian government.

> Today many Indigenous people still struggle, but it is a testament to the strength of their ancestors that Indigenous People are still here and are fighting to right the wrongs of the past. *(Wilson, 2018. n.p.).*

After the initial treaties, formal laws, and acts of parliament codified treatment of Indigenous people both before and after Canada became its own country. The Indian Act of 1876 is one of the more important of these documents, because it defined who was and who wasn't an "Indian" and determined how Indigenous people would live, where they would live, what kind of education they would receive, and more. The Indian Act is still an active law, it still impacts all Indigenous peoples in Canada, and

continues to outline Indigenous rights and structures including reserves, education, healthcare, and internal government.

Because the land the settlers wanted was already occupied by Indigenous peoples, settlement of these new people eventually resulted in violent forced displacement of Indigenous peoples. The settlers were not just controlling and governing themselves, they were also controlling and governing Indigenous people. Many Indigenous communities were removed to land 'reserved' for them by the settlers, sometimes far from their traditional territories and often on land that was deemed less valuable or conducive to life than the land the settlers occupied. The reserve system is how the Canadian government allocates land to First Nations communities. Though not all Indigenous people live on reserve land now, there was a time when this was actively, sometimes violently, enforced by the Canadian government.

The Canadian goverment also attempted to assimilate Indigenous people into Canadian society. There were many policies intended to strip Indigenous people of their Indian status so that they would become more like their settler-colonial rulers. To help break cultural, spiritual, and family ties, the Canadian government sponsored special schools for Indigenous children, called residential schools. These were mandatory schools that took children away from their families, sometimes sending them far from home. Most of the schools were boarding schools where students received a Western education, which included religious teaching in Christianity and English language. The idea of this assimilation policy was that Indigenous people would adopt the lifestyle they were taught and that their cultures would become a thing of the past. The children would be punished if they spoke their language or sang their songs. To make this happen, force, violence, and deprivation were sometimes used in schools. Abuse was emotional, physical, spiritual, and often sexual. When students came home after attending these schools, they were traumatized and often unable to communicate or connect with their families and communities.

More information about [Residential Schools and Health, Death, and Disease at Residential Schools](#).

> In all, about 150,000 First Nation, Inuit, and Metis children were removed from their communities and forced to attend the schools. *(CBC News. 2016. n.p.).*

Colonization has taken unimaginable tolls on First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities. In addition to the horror of being displaced and unable to practice their traditional ways of life, the Canadian government has actively controlled and regulated every aspect of Indigenous life. It has also imposed a combination of sexism and racism that motivates gender-based violence against Indigenous women. For example, the 725 km of Highway 16 between Prince George and Prince Rupert in British Columbia known as the Highway of Tears. There are dozens of murdered and missing Indigenous women who have been lost on this route. The violence against Indigenous women is motivated by race, gender, economic factors, all of which has direct roots in colonization. The governmental control and subjugation of Indigenous people has been brutal and you can still see its effects everywhere today. Some of these current issues impacting Indigenous people are summarized by Indigenous Corporate Training Inc (2019): poorer health, lower levels of education, inadequate housing, crowded living

conditions, lower income levels, higher rates of unemployment, higher levels of incarceration, higher death rate among children and youth due to unintentional injuries, and higher rates of suicide.

Case study: Mikaela learns about language

Mikaela never forgets the warmth that Imeli showed her on her first day. Though they don't work together often, she looks forward to the days when they work a similar shift. When Mikaela gets to the breakroom, Imeli is eating her lunch. "How is your language class going?," Mikaela asks. Imeli responds, "It's a lot of work, but I am learning a lot! My parents don't speak Dakelh, but my grandparents did. They are gone now. I wish I could ask my Grandma for help. Dakelh grammar is very different from English. My teacher says the word order is similar to Japanese!" Mikaela thinks for a moment. "I never thought about that! You aren't just learning new words, you are learning a whole new way to see the world." Imeli smiles, "Definitely!"

One of the many consequences of residential schools has been a massive loss of Indigenous language. In 2016, the most common Indigenous languages spoken as a mother tongue in British Columbia are Carrier, Gitxsan, Chilcotin, Cree, and Shuswap (Statistics Canada, 2017). However, only a small percentage of Indigenous people spoke their language as their mother tongue, while slightly more had the ability to conduct a conversation in their language (Statistics Canada, 2017). Many languages are on the verge of extinction. This is an example of the cultural aspect of the genocide that continues to impact Indigenous people in BC and beyond. Though this reality is tragic, there continues to be resilience within Indigenous communities and there is a resurgence of language learning. As the work of Truth and Reconciliation continues, as you will learn below, the intergenerational trauma will continue to surface along with research that brings to light a broader extent of the cultural loss Indigenous communities continue to live with and come up against. The fact that Indigenous people continue to advocate for justice and equality is a tribute to the strength and resiliency of Canada's First Peoples.

The First Peoples Cultural Council (2021) explains that "our languages are the roots of our culture—connecting us to the land, traditional knowledge and stories offered in our Language Program. All that we know and all of our relationships grow from the words of our ancestors" (n.p.). The First Peoples Cultural Council is specifically mandated in British Columbia to support language revitalization, as well as arts and culture revitalization. They are currently investing deeply in the reclamation, revitalization, preservation, and strengthening of First Nations languages.

4.4 Discrimination and Oppression in Indigenous Healthcare

Case study: Mikaela observes Indigenous racism

Early in her work term, Mikaela was observing her workplace supervisor as she checked in clients and processed payments. Midmorning, a client came in with her two children. Her supervisor greeted the clients and asked for their names. When her supervisor pulled up the file and read the details, she exclaimed to the parent, "Oh my goodness! You haven't brought your kids in for over a year! Don't you care about your children's health?" Then, she turned to Mikaela and muttered, "You know those people get free dental care just because they are Indigenous, and they still don't come."

Mikaela was distressed. What had just happened? How should she respond? She looked over at the family. The parent looked shocked and taken aback. She shrunk back from the counter, clearly hurt. Mikaela wanted to do something, but didn't know what to do. She looked from the upset parent back to her angry supervisor. This was not okay, but Mikaela felt that there was nothing she could do because she was just a student. She couldn't risk losing her placement. She felt shamed into silence. As she observed for the rest of the morning, she tried to reflect on how she could have handled the situation better.

- How should she confront her supervisor about her inappropriate behaviour?
- How could she support the client and help them feel welcome?
- What issues were underpinning her supervisor's statements?
- What role did she play in enabling her supervisor's behaviour?

Widespread Indigenous-specific stereotyping, racism, and discrimination exist in the B.C. health care system. *(Turpel-Laford, 2020, p.36)*

Even though healthcare is supposed to be a place people come for healing and support, Indigenous people frequently encounter blatant, overt, and systematic racism. Indigenous people commonly report that the discrimination and racism they have experienced has led them to feel unsafe when accessing healthcare (Turpel-Laford, 2020). This feeling of being unsafe is only one expression of multiple oppressions that impact the level of healthcare that they receive. The legacy of colonialism, social inequality, oppression, and trauma all have a direct impact on the current experiences that Indigenous communities have when they access health care. The primary finding in a 2020 investigative report on healthcare was "[w]idespread Indigenous-specific stereotyping, racism, and discrimination exist in the B.C. health care system" (Turpel-Laford, 2020, p.36). Northern Health (2017), the health authority for

Northern BC, recently apologized for both their "actions and inaction in righting wrongs" in contributing to the stereotyping, racism, and discrimination in the healthcare system (n.p).

These experiences don't just hurt people's feelings, they have real impacts on every aspect of a person's health. The First Nations Health Authority (2016) write that "[a] Status First Nations person in BC is expected to live 7.5 fewer years than a non-Aboriginal BC resident born in the same period" (p. 11). Seven and a half years is an unacceptable disparity in life expectancy. Change needs to happen, and we should all be a part of it.

Case study: Mikaela takes action

Mikaela is extremely uncomfortable with what she witnessed at work. She emails her supervisor to ask to talk and writes up a reflection on her experience for her work integrated learning teacher. She takes the time to brainstorm actions and to learn more about some of the comments her new co-worker made. She determines that the comments are untrue and racist. She wants to do more. She learns that many health professionals are engaging in a social media campaign called #itstartswithme. She takes the time to express the changes she plans to make using the hashtag on her Instagram. Her boss works with the leadership at Smiles Dental to engage in a larger effort to make change. Smiles Dental staff attend San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training through BC's provincial health authority.

Cultural Safety and #itstartswithme

Broader Canadian society, Canadian workplaces, and Canadian government services like healthcare systems need to change to do a much better job of ensuring that Indigenous people feel safe. It is the practitioners and providers, including students in workplace integrated learning placements, who need to lead this change by making safety a priority in their interactions. To accomplish this, the First Nations Health Authority reminds us that change can only happen when we all commit, and began the hashtag #itstartswithme for health professionals to make their own personal commitments to improving the quality of care they offer to Indigenous populations.

One of the main agents of change is to learn and implement cultural safety so that all people accessing healthcare can feel safe while receiving care. The First Nations Health Authority (2016) defines cultural safety as "an outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the healthcare system. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe when receiving health care" (p. 5). This means changing behaviours and attitudes that lead to racism and discrimination in the workplace. How do you know if you are practicing cultural safety? That indicator is determined by each person based on each interaction they have within the bigger healthcare system. So, the only way to know for sure is to look to your clients, co-workers, or other Indigenous stakeholders.

First Nations Health Authority March 2016

Figure 4.2 Leading a Framework for Cultural Safety and Humility for First Nations in BC© First Nations Health Authority, for personal, non-commercial use only

What is Cultural Humility?

One of the first steps of providing cultural safety is learning how to practice cultural humility. Cultural humility "is a process of self-reflection to understand personal and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust. Cultural humility involves humbly acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another's experience" (FNHA, 2016, p. 7). To engage in cultural humility means that you need to start by understanding that you hold biases within you that you need to work to unlearn. Sometimes, it is even about trying to identify what you don't know you don't know.

Here are some questions you can use to start your own reflection process:

1. What cultures do you consider to be your own?

2. What cultures do you interact with in your workplace?

3. What beliefs do you have about each of those cultures?

4. Where did you learn those beliefs?

5. How might your beliefs impact the healthcare service you provide?

Strategies for Cultural Humility

Cultural humility will require a process of lifelong learning. You are going to have to unlearn and relearn ideas and values that you may have held onto for a long time. This process is hard, and may leave you feeling demoralized or uncertain what to do next. Don't give up! Instead, focus on a useful next step that you can take on your own, at school or at work.

Things You Can Do

Public commitments/declarations. The First Nations Health Authority encouraged all BC health professionals to take part in the #itstartswithme campaign. Consider using social media, or a group of family and friends, to make your pledge. They can help keep you accountable and will give you a safe place to track your progress.

Self-Reflection Journal. Check in with yourself at regular intervals in writing, or using audio or video. Self-reflection can be a fantastic way to respond to questions and to help you track your growth. Don't forget to go back and re-read your own entries. You can use them to help you see what is changing and what have you have learned.

Counselling. Oppression and racism are very triggering topics that impact all of us. If you are struggling with your mental health as you engage in this work, consult an expert who can help you. You don't have to do this work alone! Mental health professionals may have tools and techniques that can help you with your own experience with these challenges.

Things You Can Do in Class

Class Discussion. As a student, bring these topics up when you discuss your professional practice and ethics. Use your teacher and your classmates to help you engage in cultural humility and in engaging more deeply with other cultures. Learn together!

Role Play. Take part in simulations where you play the role of healthcare professional and client. Do the hard work of imagining what it might be like to be the other person. Reflect on how it feels as you move throughout the patient-healthcare professional interaction at each stage of the process.

Report. Formally describe your experience. There may even be templates you can use that are designed for this process. If you encounter blatant acts of discrimination and oppression, tell an authority you trust. A teacher can be a good choice in a work integrated learning context. They may have resources and be able to work with your workplace to improve the situation.

Debrief. Throughout your work placement, take the time to debrief with your classmates and your teacher. If you can, try to do this in different forms. Talk, write, reflect on your experience.

Things Your Workplace Can Do

Disclose or report. Though you may feel uncomfortable telling on your co-workers, talk to your supervisor when you experience or witness microaggressions, covert, or overt examples of racism. Prioritize and protect vulnerable community members.

Engage in policy review. As a work-integrated learning student, you won't be leading these kinds of efforts. However, you may participate in them. Let your boss know you are interested in this topic and offer to flag policies that may negatively impact Indigenous workers, clients, or customers.

Attend training, workshops, and events. Many workplaces offer additional professional development. These activities might focus on reconciliation, cultural safety, promotion of Indigenous cultures, cultural competency, or anti-racism efforts. For example, you might choose to participate in a blanket exercise. Your workplace may also choose to bring in external speakers or experts or engage in a reading circle.

Media Attributions

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4.5 Truth and Reconciliation in Canada

Indigenous Peoples are resilient. Though they have experienced genocide, cultural annihilation, language loss, forced displacement, intentional infection, residential schools, incarceration, murder, abduction, and countless other unforgiveable tragedies as colonized subjects, it is important to see them as more than just Canada's victims but survivors, as well. Indigenous people are strong advocates for change who resist and persist despite the systemic oppression that came to them with Canadian settler-colonialism.

Colonization is not just a historical event in Canadian history. The impacts of colonialism continue. Thanks to the ceaseless advocacy of residential school survivors and their families, the Canadian government has taken some action and is moving toward reconciliation. Many survivors of residential schools are still alive and experiencing the impact of their traumatic experiences which also includes intergenerational trauma. The largest class action settlement in history were a result of these efforts, which included approximately 86,000 Indigenous people. The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement included a multi-billion-dollar compensation package, processes for claim of sexual or serious physical abuse, commemoration activities, healing measures, and the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Government of Canada, 2019). The Canadian government also publicly apologized for residential schools and their effects on Indigenous people, families, communities, and Nations. You can watch this important speech: Canadian Federal Government Apology to First Nations.

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://opentextbc.ca/workintegratedlearning/?p=262#oembed-1*

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was formed in 2008 to document the truth of people impacted by residential schools and then inform all Canadians of their findings. They listened to the stories of people impacted by the experience, gathering over 7000 impact statements and over 5 million government and church documents (Moran, 2021). These testimonies helped to demonstrated the ways that residential schools contributed to cultural genocide and intergenerational trauma for families whose parents and grandparents suffered in residential schools. One of the best-known results of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was its final report, which included recommendations in the form of 94 calls to action. These actions were identified as steps we could all participate in to engage in reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous peoples (Government of Canada, 2020).

Reconciliation means taking concrete actions to positively change the relationships and experiences that Indigenous people have with Canadians. It is not enough just to apologize. Instead, we all have a role to play in regaining trust, respect and relationship Indigenous people, communities, and nations. Ry Moran, director of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, offers this definition of reconciliation:

> Reconciliation … means arresting the attacks on the indigenous ways of knowing and being, and working from this day forward in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding. *(Moran, 2021, n.p.).*

Reconciliation is a goal we can all work toward. As a work-integrated learning student, you can positively contribute to reconciliation as an individual, as a student, and as a worker. Respond to the Calls of Action by becoming informed, advocating for change, and creating cultural safety at school and work.

It is also important to understand the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). To see how Canada is implementing the UNDRIP, watch this short video: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples explained.

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://opentextbc.ca/workintegratedlearning/?p=262#oembed-2*

Actions for You

- Learn more about the Indigenous communities and their history. There are a number of strategies early in this chapter that you can use to expand your knowledge.
- Advocate for change. Take an interest in Indigenous-led social justice movements starting with Idle No More.
- Call out racism and injustice when you encounter it.
- Use a Community Action Tool-Kit. Reconciliation Canada has designed Kitchen Table Dialogues for talking with friends and families as well as a Young Leaders guide to work with post-secondary student unions, associations, and clubs on campus.

Actions for Your School (TRC Call to Action 11, 16, 62 and 65)

Find out which of the following calls your own school has already responded to:

- Allocate funding for Indigenous students. This might include scholarships, bursaries, designated positions in programs for students who identify as Indigenous, or other support services to help Indigenous students achieve a post-secondary education.
- Create programs in Indigenous languages. Look to see what Indigenous language courses are offered at your school and what the requirements are to enroll.
- Integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods. This can be interpreted many ways. Look for Indigenous experts, content, reading on your course outline, or in class techniques like experiential learning or learning on the land.

- Research and document reconciliation efforts. Explore how your school is engaging in research and publication related to reconciliation.

Actions for Your Workplace (TRC Call to Action 92)

Reflect on the ways that your work placement engages in culturally safe and inclusive engagement with Indigenous people and communities.

- Ask and consult before you act. This means that your workplace engages with Indigenous people as partners. This means asking for permission before your workplace impacts Indigenous land, knowledge, or economies.
- Hire and support Indigenous workers. This means that your workplace works to hire and retain Indigenous workers.
- Get training. Your workplace might start by learn more about Indigenous histories and cultures. It may also mean receive relevant training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights and anti-racism.

Key Takeaways

- Use the correct and most specific language possible when you are talking about an Indigenous person, community, or group.
- Learn about the Indigenous communities in your area.
- Engage in cultural safety by calling out acts of anti-Indigenous racism and creating a respectful and inclusive workplace.
- Reflect on your own culture, bias, and assumptions.
- Participate in reconciliation efforts at home, at school, and at work.

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- "The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Explained" by Department of Justice Canada is licensed under the Standard YouTube License.

SECTION IV

Section IV provides content helpful to understand safety and develop skills for productivity and reliability in the workplace.

Chapter 5: Workplace Safety

By the end of this chapter, the reader will be able to:

- Identify the rights and responsibilities of employees, employers, supervisors, and owners in the workplace.
- Find appropriate workplace regulations both at work and through the WorkSafe BC website.
- Explain the difference between a hazard and a risk and be able to identify them.
- Define personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Define the terms incident and accident.
- Identify the need for good documentation regarding accidents and injuries.
- Define the term due diligence.
- Describe what a safe working environment looks like.

Learning Objectives

- **Accident** – "an unplanned event that interrupts the completion of an activity, and that may include injury or property damage" and often includes an element of fate or chance (CCOHS, 2019).
- **Ergonomics** – The science or system of ensuring safe workplace conditions for the worker and can include but is not limited to lifting, desk positioning, lighting, driving, and repetitive tasks such as using hand tools.
- **Hazard** – The harm that something can cause to a person's health, to property, or to the environment (Government of Canada, 2009).
- **Incident** – Any "occurrence, condition, or situation arising in the course of work that resulted in or could have resulted in injuries, illnesses, damage to health" or property (CCOHS, 2019).
- **PPE** – Personal protective equipment.
- **OHS or OH&S** – Occupational Health and Safety.
- **SDS** – Safety Data Sheets, sometimes referred to as MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets). These are summary documents that outline the hazards of a product and advise regarding proper

handling and use.

- **Supervisor** – According to WorkSafeBC, a supervisor "is a person who instructs, directs, and controls workers in the performance of their duties. A supervisor can be any worker – management or staff – who meets this definition, whether or not [they] have the supervisor title. If someone in the workplace has a supervisor's responsibilities, that person is responsible for worker health and safety" (WorkSafeBC, 2021a).

- **WHMIS** – An abbreviation for Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System, which is the system for providing information about chemicals used in the workplace. This information should be provided through product labels, material safety data sheets (MSDS), and worker education programs. (CCOHS, 2021)

- **WorkSafe BC** – The provincial organization that governs work safety in British Columbia. Each province and territory have a designated agency. WorkSafeBC provides work health insurance, information and education, compensation, and support around workplace safety.

Case Study: Niko (He/Him) Gets a Safety Orientation

Niko is starting his workplace assignment today at Paint 4 Less as a shop assistant. Upon arriving, the manager, Ben introduces Niko to all of the staff and shows him around the shop giving him an orientation at the same time. Ben emphasizes that one of the most important parts of his training will be workplace safety. Ben encourages Niko to make notes and ask any questions. After the orientation, Ben sets up Niko on the back desk to begin his WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System) training on the computer and shows Niko where to find the safety data sheets (SDSs). Ben explains some of the common hazards of the store and explains how to identify and respond to those hazards. Niko is ready to complete his WHMIS.

5.1 What is Workplace Safety

Your safety is at risk as a new employee. Thankfully, there are protocols in place to help keep you safe. According to WorkSafeBC statistics, "more than half of workplace accidents involving young and new workers occur during their first six months on the job" (WorkSafeBC, 2017). Two reasons for this are improper orientation and a reluctance of new workers to ask too many questions. This is why your first days on the job are so important. It is also why you need to ask questions and ensure you are following proper protocols. While we cannot cover every protocol and job in this chapter, we will give you foundational knowledge for basic workplace safety. Feel empowered to educate yourself and ask questions when you need to. Remember, your health is on the line.

To understand the importance of workplace safety for new and young workers, watch the story of Jack Thomas: Injured Young Worker.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://opentextbc.ca/workintegratedlearning/?p=59#oembed-1

This WorkSafeBC orientation checklist is often used by employers but is also helpful to understand the types of information you should be aware of: Young and New Worker Orientation Checklist.

Access a pdf of the orientation checklist document here: Young and New Worker Orientation Checklist [PDF].

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5.2 Rights and Responsibilities

The first thing you should know as a new worker are your rights and responsibilities. You also need to know the rights and responsibilities of employer, supervisor, and business owner. In some cases, these roles might be the same person but in others, this may be three different people.

In terms of workplace safety, a **right** is something that you are legally entitled to and a **responsibility** is a duty or something you are accountable for.

Worker Rights

According to WorkSafeBC (2021a), workers have three key rights:

1. The right to know about hazards in the workplace
2. The right to participate in health and safety activities in the workplace
3. The right to refuse unsafe work (WorkSafeBC, 2021a)

This means the owner and/or employer has the responsibility of alerting workers like you to hazards of the job. For example, if you are a cook, you may get burned or if you are a tree planter, you may encounter wildlife. Some hazards, as in these two examples, are obvious and something most people would recognize as hazards. However, there may be hazards that are not obvious. Have you ever tripped on a computer cord? It's no fun at all and could lead to an injury.

> Case Study: Niko Identifies Hazards at Work
>
> *Niko just started at a paint store. The store has a sales floor with a cashier, paint mixing station, and various displays of paint, brushes, stains, and other products. The store also includes a back warehouse for employees only where pallets of extra cans of paint and other goods are stored. In Niko's case, what do you think some of the hazards of his workplace at Paint 4 Less could be?*
>
> Use the following interactive activity to point out some of Niko's workplace hazards.
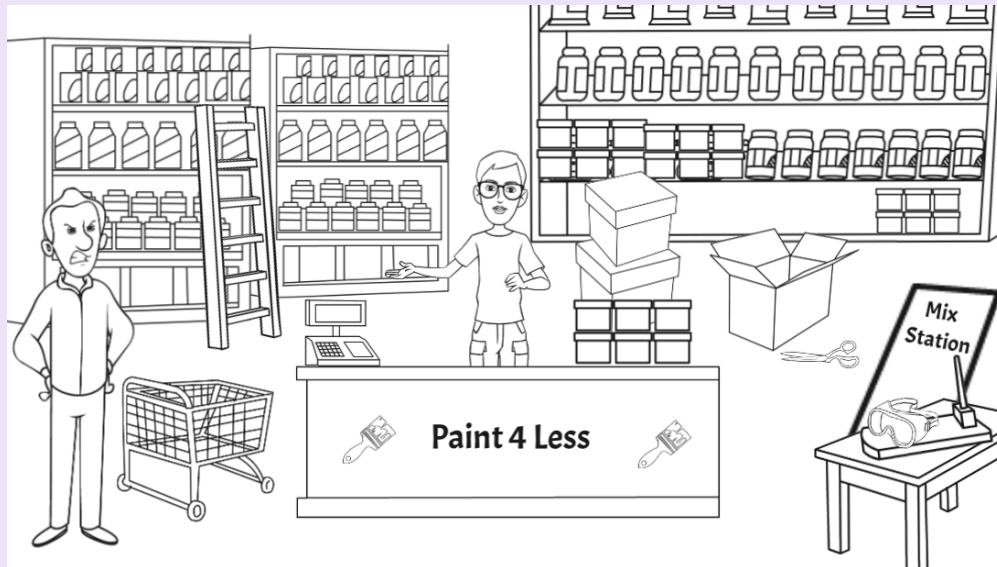
- Ladders are commonly used in a number of work settings and they are a frequent source of injuries in the workplace.

- Lifting injuries can occur in many occupations. Workers are exposed to risk of injury when they lift, lower, or carry objects.

- Eye injuries can happen when you are required to mix paints or chemicals, safety eyewear is to be provided by your employer.

- Cutting injuries can happen easily, be careful with cutting tools such as scissors and box cutters. Only use tools and equipment you have been trained to use safely.

- Aggressive customer interactions can happen. In retail settings, your employer may have procedures in place that enable a worker to call a manager or mall security if a customer bullies and harasses workers.

Some unmentioned hazards that could also exist in Niko's workplace are: fumes, working alone, closing the shop, tripping, electrical shock.

Worker Responsibilities

You also have responsibilities to help keep your workplace safe. These require you to be active and engaged. Even though you are a work-integrated learning student, you are accountable for your actions. Be safe, be prepared, and follow the rules that are communicated to you either verbally or in writing. Be sure to read all the safety and orientation material that you are given. Sometimes employers will require that you sign off on information, in other words, sign a statement saying you read and understood the document given to you. . These responsibilities are common to all workplaces, whether you are working at a desk, in customer service, at a construction site, in a warehouse, or anywhere else.

- **Look for hazards.** Your most important responsibility is to look for hazards and report any concerns right away to the person in charge (WorkSafeBC, 2021a).

- **Follow the rules.** You also need to do your job in a safe way, which means obeying the rules and following all standards.

- **Wear the safety equipment.** In addition to behaving safely, you also need to correctly wear the appropriate personal protective equipment, which we will discuss further in the chapter. You also need to cooperate with all workplace safety personnel, including joint health and safety committees, workplace safety representatives, WorkSafeBC prevention officers, and anyone conducting health and safety duties.

- **Report injuries or other problems.** Another one of your responsibilities that is less obvious is to quickly treat any injury that occurs on the job as well as report this to the appropriate person. Additionally, you are responsible for ensuring that any medical treatment personnel understand that this is a workplace injury and to follow the treatment plan set out for you. You also have a responsibility to not re-injure yourself which may mean returning to work when it is safe to do so and with modified duties if appropriate.

- **Only go to work when you are fit to work safely.** Your final worker responsibility involves being fit and able to perform the duties of your job, therefore "never work under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or any other substance." This also means that you should not work if you are overtired and cannot perform your duties safely (WorkSafeBC, 2021a).

Rights
- Know about hazards in the workplace
- Participate in health and safety activities
- Refuse unsafe work

Responsibilities
- Be aware of hazards and report them immediately to the appropriate person
- Follow safe work procedures and act safely
- Use the personal protective equipment provided properly
- Cooperate with health and safety personnel
- Get treatment for injuries and inform health professionals that it is a workplace injury
- Follow treatment advice of health care providers
- Return to work safely after an injury with modified work duties if needed
- Never work under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or any other substances, or if you are overtired.

Figure 5.1 Worker rights and responsibilities according to WorkSafeBC. 2021a. [Image description]

Case Study: Niko's Rights and Responsibilities

Check your understanding of roles and responsibilities by thinking about Niko. What are his rights and responsibilities at Paint 4 Less?

Fill in the missing words with determining whether the statement is Niko's right or responsibility.

1. Niko should complete paid WHMIS training at work. This is Niko's _____.

2. Niko should call in sick if he is exhausted or is taking a drug that impairs his judgment. This is Niko's _____.

3. If Niko slipped on spilled paint in the warehouse, Niko should tell the hospital staff that his accident took place at work. This is Niko's _____.

4. Niko should identify any spills, chemicals, or fumes that should not be present in the store font. This is Niko's _____.

Due Diligence and Workplace Safety

You have rights and responsibilities when it comes to being safe. However, your boss and the other people in charge also have an important role to play in keeping you safe. Your employer must take due diligence. This means that they must ensure that all reasonable measures have been taken to provide a safe workplace. If any risks or hazards are reported to an employer, they must carry out measures to ensure that the hazard or risk has been eliminated or there are precautions in place to reduce the risk.

Here are a few of the key responsibilities that are related to due diligence. These are the safety responsibilities of the various leadership groups at your average workplace.

Owner Responsibilities

An owner is the person who owns the business or workplace. The owner is responsible for:

- Maintaining the business premises in a healthy and safe condition.
- Disclosing to employees and any contract workers potential hazards in and around the workplace that need to be eliminated or controlled.

Employer Responsibilities

An employer is a person or company that hires workers or unregistered subcontractors. An employer can be a self-employed proprietor, partnership, corporation, society, or any other type of legal entity (WorkSafeBC, 2021b). The employer is responsible for:

- Establishing an occupational health and safety program.
- Training or ensuring their employees are trained to do their work safely and have proper supervision.
- Ensuring the workplace has adequate first aid equipment, supplies, and trained attendants on site to handle injuries.
- Ensuring the workplace is regularly inspected for health and safety concerns.
- Fixing any problems reported by workers.
- Transporting injured workers to the appropriate medical treatment location.

- Reporting all injuries that require medical attention to WorkSafeBC.

- Investigating incidents where workers are injured or equipment is damaged.

- Submitting the necessary forms to WorkSafeBC.

Supervisor Responsibilities

A supervisor is the person responsible for others at work. WorksafeBC defines a supervisor as "a person who instructs, directs, and controls workers in the performance of their duties. A supervisor can be any worker – management or staff – who meets this definition, whether or not [they] have the supervisor title. If someone in the workplace has a supervisor's responsibilities, that person is responsible for worker health and safety" (WorkSafeBC, 2021a). The supervisor is responsible for:

- Ensuring the health and safety of all workers under their direct supervision.

- Knowing the WorkSafeBC requirements that apply to the work under their supervision and ensure those requirements are met.

- Ensuring workers under their supervision are aware of all known hazards.

- Ensuring workers under their supervision have the appropriate PPE, which is being used properly, regularly inspected, and maintained (WorkSafeBC, 2021a).

Prime Contractor Responsibilities

A prime contractor is the person in charge at a work site. WorksafeBC defines it as when "there are two or more employers working at the same time, a written agreement should identify a prime contractor" or the person who is liable and responsible for the workplace health and safety is defined by WorkSafeBC (WorkSafeBC, 2021a). The prime contractor is responsible for:

- Coordinating the occupational health and safety activities of all employers, workers, and anyone else at the workplace.

- Establishing and maintaining procedures to ensure occupational health and safety requirements at the workplace are followed by all parties (WorkSafeBC, 2021a).

Instructor Support for Workplace Safety

You can also work with your instructor to help keep you safe at work. WorkSafeBC does not recognize the role or responsibility of instructors. However, in a work-integrated learning context, these authority figures are there to support you and help you reflect on safety at work.

In class, this means your instructor is responsible for the safety of your classroom. In a work-integrated learning context, this also means your instructor will introduce you to workplace safety, and help you with questions you might have about safety as you prepare for and complete your work term. Your class can be a safe place to debrief any incidents you encounter and to help you prepare for your work site. Use reflection, group work, and consultations with your instructor as additional supports to help you stay safe at work.

Activity

Use this activity to check your understanding of the roles and responsibilities. You do not need to memorize these but know where to find the information that you need.

Based on the following statements determine if the answer is role and responsibility of an employer, employee, supervisor, or owner. Type your answers in the blank boxes.

1. There is a huge piece of the concrete missing on the stairs going into the shop. This is the role and responsibility of the _____.
2. Wear the eye protection provided when tinting paint. This is the role and responsibility of the _____.
3. Provide eye wash solution in case of an injury. This is the role and responsibility of the _____.
4. Ensures that employees use the proper protective equipment provided. This is the role and responsibility of the _____.

Case Study: Niko Uses a Ladder

Back at Paint 4 Less Paint, Niko has finished his training and Ben, to help Niko learn the layout of the store, asks Niko to stock the shelves. This task requires Niko to use a box cutter to open boxes and a ladder to reach the top shelves.

Activity

Go to the WorkSafeBC website and find the document called **Safe Ladder Use**.

Which of the following rules listed in the document?

1. Always face the ladder.

    a. True
    b. False

2. Always carry heavy, bulky, or hazardous materials when climbing a ladder.

    a. True

b. False

3. Use a three-point contact climbing method.

a. True

b. False

4. It is acceptable for two workers to be on the same ladder at the same time.

a. True

b. False

5. Never stand on the top two rungs of the ladder.

a. True

b. False

In addition to the Safe Ladder Use rules, Ben reminds Niko to always inspect the ladder to ensure that it is in good working order and to report any concerns to one of the managers. Ben reminds Niko to use a proper lifting posture when lifting the boxes and not to lift more than feels comfortable.

For more information and practice on using a ladder safely, take the WorkSafeBC Ladder Challenge.

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment, often referred to as PPE, is clothing or equipment used to provide protection against hazardous substances or environments that could cause injury or infection. PPE is usually used against physical hazards that can range from poor weather to electric shock, heat either from a heat source or working in the heat, and chemicals, biohazards, and airborne particles, such as sawdust. PPE varies depending upon the worker's role or industry but can include hard hats, work gloves, high visibility vests, steel toed work boots, or protective eyewear depending upon the work involved.

Who Pays for PPE?

Always check with your jurisdiction. In British Columbia, the worker is responsible for wearing appropriate clothing for the weather conditions and the general work conditions such as work gloves, appropriate footwear, and a hard hat when necessary. The employer is required to provide and pay for any other PPE required by workers (CCOHS, 2021). If the worker feels that they need additional equipment which is not sanctioned by WorkSafeBC, it is the responsibility of the worker to get the employer's permission and to supply this equipment at their own cost.

Case Study: Niko's Safety Glasses

Ben feels that Niko is making good progress and encourages Niko to work with the other staff while he returns to his office to work on some paperwork. A customer comes in to have some paint tinted. This is a great opportunity for Niko to put into practice the lesson shown to him earlier today. When he goes to put on a pair of work gloves and eye protection before opening the paint can, one of the other workers tells him he doesn't need the glove or eye protection, that it wastes too much time stopping to put those on every time you tint paint. Niko feels conflicted, this morning when Ben showed him how to tint paint, Ben instructed Niko to always wear the gloves and eye protection. What should Niko do? He doesn't want to make a fuss or seem weak.

Niko is right to question the advice not to wear the gloves and eye protection. Remember the statistic about the majority of workplace accidents occurring to new workers early in their job. Think about the roles, rights, and responsibilities for workplace safety, what are Niko's rights and responsibilities? Do any of these apply to this situation?

One way to cope with this situation is for Niko to say that as a new employee he should follow the rules as laid out to him. He could check with Ben after the situation to ensure that he understood correctly, and Ben may need to remind the other workers of the importance of safety equipment and personal protective equipment.

Image Descriptions

Worker rights and responsibilities according to WorkSafeBC. 2021a.

Rights:

- Know about hazards in the workplace
- Participate in health and safety activities
- Refuse unsafe work

Responsibilities:

- Beware of hazards and report them immediately to the appropriate person
- Follow safe work procedures and act safely
- Use the personal protective equipment provided properly
- Cooperate with health and safety personnel
- Get treatment for injuries an informed health professional that it is a workplace injury
- Return to work safely after an injury with modified work duties if needed
- Never work under the influence of alcohol drugs or any substance or if you're overtired

[Return to place in text]

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5.3 Asking Questions

When you have questions about workplace safety, ask! Know that you can and should ask questions. You should always know who questions should be directed to. It is okay to ask questions, even if it feels uncomfortable. Your safety is more important than any embarrassment that you may feel.

Your workplace may have a formal process that you will need to understand. If you have safety concerns, it is your responsibility report any hazards immediately to the appropriate person.

Sometimes, you might not be sure what questions to ask. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- What are the safety rules here?
- How will I know if I am following the rules correctly?
- Who do I talk to about safety at work?
- How do I report a concern?

Where to Find Information about Workplace Safety

It is important for you to know where and how to find information concerning workplace safety. For official information in British Columbia and Canada, you can find most information you need from WorkSafeBC. The WorkSafeBC website is searchable and includes Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) regulations, as well as a number of specific resources like new and young workers and how to lift correctly. On the WorkSafeBC site, you will find the "I Am a …" menu on the bottom left of the web page, where you can choose to find information specific to your workplace role.

Another good source of information is the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS). This is the federal governing organization for workplace health and safety in Canada. Similar to WorkSafeBC, there is a specific section for workers with the tab on the top navigation menu. The information on CCOHS is directed more toward employers and the education and promotion of workplace safety.

While it may be tempting to turn to Google for answers to your workplace safety issues, avoid this as most of these issues have legislation to support them and for a topic as important as your health and safety, you will want a trustworthy source of information.

Activity

Let's practice finding information from the [WorkSafeBC website](). Go to the website, and using the search feature type in working alone. What types of information did you find?

- What are two examples provided in the WorkSafeBC resource, Working Alone: A Handbook for Small Business.

  - Examples provided in the WorkSafeBC resource, Working Alone: A Handbook for Small Business are: retail employees, convenience store, taxi drivers, truck and delivery drivers, home care workers, social services employees, by-law officers, security guards, forestry workers, warehouse workers, night cleaners, night custodians, cleaners, custodians, night-shift employees.

- Now provide one example of a potential hazard they might face.

  - Examples of potential hazards they might face are: tripping, falling, violence, motor vehicle accident, car accident, burns, sprains, strains, chemical exposure

Take a moment to reflect…

These hazards are the same for many people working, reflect on why would this be more hazardous for someone working alone or in isolation?

Recognizing Hazards and Preventing Injuries

The words risk and hazard are often used interchangeably; however, when it comes to workplace safety these two words have quite different meanings. Hazard is something that will cause harm to a person, property, and/or the environment. Whereas, according to Health Canada, "risk is the likelihood that a hazardous material will cause harm" and to what extent. When looking at risk, two factors are considered, "the seriousness of the hazard" and "how much exposure there is to the hazard" (Government of Canada, 2009).

One of the standard training programs you will likely encounter as a worker is the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS). This worker education program is designed to help you to understand the way that Canadian workplaces classify and document hazards. WHMIS also explains how to create and maintain safety data sheets (SDSs). Safety data sheets explain what hazards exist with a particular product and explain how to safely use it. If you aren't sure how to safely use something, start by reading the safety data sheet. If you don't know where the safety data sheet is, ask!

After completing his WHMIS training, Niko understands the importance of reading the safety data sheets the accompany the paint.

For example, after completing his WHMIS training, Niko recognizes the hazard of breathing in vehicle exhaust working in the warehouse while one of his co-workers is driving the forklift. However, the risk is low because this only occurs for a short period, about 20 minutes each day, and Niko can wear a face

mask to decrease the effect of the fumes. In addition, by opening the exterior warehouse doors and allowing air circulation, the risk of this hazard is further decreased.

Risk and hazard need to be considered together when assessing if a workplace situation is too hazardous or if there are steps that can be taken to make the hazard less risky.

For example, Niko recognizes the hazard of breathing in vehicle exhaust working in the warehouse while one of his co-workers is driving the forklift. However, the risk is low because this only occurs for a short period, about 20 minutes each day, and Niko can wear a face mask to decrease the effect of the fumes. In addition, by opening the exterior warehouse doors and allowing air circulation, the risk of this hazard is further decreased.

Let's look at a scenario and see if you can determine the hazards and the risk involved. Also, consider if there are ways to decrease the risk by using PPE or other means.

Activity

Paint 4 Less has just received a huge shipment of new stock and the staff is busily trying to unpack the boxes and check the invoices against what they have received. Twenty boxes are stacked in front of the customer counter in stacks 5 boxes high and several have been opened and their contents set on the floor beside the boxes. The boxes weigh approximately 50 lbs or 23 kg each. There is a box cutter open on the customer counter and a scattered pile of invoices. In the store there are also two customers, one buying and having paint tinted and another one looking at wallpaper sample books in the far corner of the shop. She has several books open to various pages and the books are piled haphazardly on top of each other. Niko was vacuuming before the customers and the stock arrived and the vacuum is still plugged in and in the middle of the floor.

What hazards do you see? What are ways that you could decrease the risk?

- Vacuum

    ◦ Hazard: tripping over the cord
    ◦ You could decrease risk by: putting the vacuum away

- Boxes

    ◦ Hazard: lifting injury
    ◦ You could decrease risk by: practicing proper lifting procedures

- Boxes

    ◦ Hazard: falling boxes
    ◦ You could decrease risk by: practicing stacking procedures

- Boxes

    ◦ Hazard: tripping
    ◦ You could decrease risk by: opening one box at a time and moving the boxes to a less

busy area

- Box Cutter

  ◦ Hazard: cutting

  ◦ You could decrease risk by: ensuring the box cutter is closed when not in use and keeping it someplace safe

- Wallpaper Books

  ◦ Hazard: falling

  ◦ You could decrease risk by: providing a table for the customer to view the books

- Paint Tinting

  ◦ Hazard: splash risk

  ◦ You could decrease risk by: wearing eye protection

For more information on lifting, pushing, or pulling, use the [WorkSafeBC Push/Pull/Carry calculator](#).

Incident Versus Accident

Sometimes bad things happen at work. Even if you and your co-workers are good at identifying and eliminating workplace hazards, things can still go wrong. When they do, you need to be prepared. There are two main terms we use to talk about times when things go wrong: incident and accident. Like the words hazard and risk, incident and accident are two terms that seem interchangeable; however, in terms of workplace safety, these terms have different meanings. The distinction is that an accident implies an element of fate or chance; whereas the term incident can be applied to all events, including accidents, that could or could not be prevented, and that caused or didn't cause injuries.

Accidents usually means that someone got hurt. For example, someone might slip and fall, injuring their knee. In contrast, incidents do not necessarily have to result in injury. For example, an incident would take place where someone trips but lands on their feet. It may also be an incident when something falls but no damage takes place and no one gets hurt, like if a heavy item falls down off of a shelf.

Most of the time, accidents are preventable. That is why reporting hazards and following the rules is so important. Often when accidents are investigated it is found that "if the right actions were taken" they could have been prevented (CCOHS, 2019).

Reporting an Incident or Accident

If there is an incident or you are injured on the job, you may be required to complete some documents. This could be a formal incident report provided by the company or WorkSafeBC, or something less formal. In either case, remember that the goal of reporting is to help prevent further issues. When

investigations and reporting take place, the goal should not be about finding fault but "finding the root cause of the incident so you can prevent the event from happening again" (CCOHS, 2019).

- **Provide as much description as you can.** It is important for you to record as much information as possible in a clear, objective, detailed way.

- **Include details about when it happened.** Make note of the time and date. Anyone who was present and could potentially have witnessed the incident or injury.

- **Use objective language and stick to the facts.** Using objective language means simply stating the facts without judgement or blame and while remaining neutral.

- **Keep all relevant documentation.** Keep a copy of all documents regarding an incident, accident, or injury that you are involved in. Even if something appears to be a small incident, it is good practice to keep notes, any emails or other communication associated with the incident because there might be long term consequences.

- **Note if medical treatment was required.** If you require medical treatment, ensure the medical staff know that this occurred at or because of work. They will have their own documents that will need to be completed.

Key Takeaways

- Don't be afraid to ask questions or find out more information.
- Know your rights and responsibilities.
- Maintain an awareness of your surroundings and potential risks or hazards.
- Communicate potential hazards and when possible, identify solutions.
- Keep detailed notes about any incidents or injuries.

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Chapter 6: Workplace Essential Skills

Terms to Know

Collaboration – Working with others to complete a task.

Continuous learning – Learning throughout your life and constantly striving to improve your skills.

Critical thinking – The process of analyzing information for solving problems.

Digital skills – Skills "needed to understand and process information from digital sources, use digital systems, technical tools, and applications" (Skills/Compétences Canada, 2021).

Document use – Reading, interpreting, understanding, locating, and creating common workplace documents.

Numeracy – "the use of numbers and [the] capability to think in quantitative terms" (Skills/Compétences Canada, 2021).

Verbal Communication – "any type of interaction that makes use of spoken words" including answering the phone, personal discussions, staff meetings, presentations, and informal conversations (Inc., 2020).

Case Study: Samira's (She/Her) First Office Job

Samira has just started a new position as an office assistant at Perez, Patel, and Erickson, a local accounting firm. She is excited to start her first office job and keen to demonstrate the new skills she acquired through the Business Administration diploma program. Her primary duties will be to answer the phone and emails,

greet the clients, make appointments, and take payments, along with other project-type assignments. Her WIL instructor suggests that this will be a great opportunity for Samira to work on her essential employability skills. Samira has never heard of these, but they sound… essential!

6.1 Introduction to Workplace Essential Skills

What is an essential employability skill? According to Skills/Compétencies Canada (2021), essential skills are those skills necessary to "carry out activities or job functions involving ideas, things, and/or people". These are skills you can develop throughout your whole life. If you are worried that you are weak in one of these area, don't worry! You can acquire or further develop essential skills through practice, training, and education (Skills/Compétencies Canada, 2021). The nine essential skills are:

- Reading
- Writing
- Verbal communication
- Document Use
- Numeracy
- Collaboration with others
- Digital use
- Critical thinking
- Continuous learning

Not only are these skills essential for success at work, but they are necessary skills in an education setting and in life as these nine skills provide the foundation of all other learning. To some degree, these nine skills are used in nearly every job and industry.

To get started, start with a self-assessment. A number of websites have free self-assessment activities for these skills. Skills/Compétencies Canada has a free, online assessment tool that you can take here as well as download as an app for your phone, and WorkSafeBC has an employability skills self-assessment.

In this chapter, you will learn a little bit about each of the nine skills, what each one means, what the role they play at work, and why they are important for your work integrated learning experience.

Reading, Writing, and Verbal Communication

The ability to communicate clearly and concisely is one of the skills employers look for when hiring employees. Communication skills are discussed in depth in Chapter 8: Interpersonal Skills. Chapter 9: Effective Communication, and in Chapter 10: Writing at Work. Instead of reviewing each of these skills again, let's look at an example of how these work together.

Effective communication is a communication between two or more persons where the intended message is successfully delivered, received, and similarly understood in a clear and concise format (Business Jargons, 2021).

Reading

It is important to be able to read accurately and quickly in the workplace. There are many different documents, all with different purposes, audiences, and strategies for understanding. You might engage with invoices, customer requests, emails, instructions, schedules, and financial documents. Each of these types will require attention to specific pieces of information. You need to know how to look to find the information you need. For example, when the photocopier is jammed and an important client is waiting for their documents, you will need to navigate the photocopier manual quickly, going directly to the page you need. You can't read the manual from beginning to end. In contrast, some documents do need to be read more closely. For example, if you have received a large order of supplies, you will want to read carefully to ensure that you have received everything you ordered.

Case Study: Samira Checks an Invoice

Samira has received an order of office supplies and needs to ensure the invoice is correct before she submits it for payment. Let's look at it together.

123 Office Supplies
Your Printing Needs

INVOICE

600 Main Street
Pleasantville, BC V2N 1Z1
Phone: 250-555-1234 Fax: 250-555-5678

INVOICE #2021-156
DATE: MAY 12, 2021

TO:
Samira Bakir
Perez, Patel, and Erickson
100 – 330 First Ave
Pleasantville, BC V2N 7R7

FOR:
General Office Supplies
P.O. 23

DESCRIPTION	UNIT	PRICE PER	AMOUNT
Photocopier Paper, 8 ½ x 11	4 boxes	$16.99	$67.96
Invisible Tape with Dispenser	5	8.09	40.45
Standard Paper Clips	4 boxes	4.79	19.16
Round Stick Ballpoint Pens	6 boxes	1.00	6.00
Fine Tip Permanent Markers, Black	3 boxes	5.00	15.00
White-out Easy Correct	1	9.89	9.89
Eraser (2 pack)	2	1.89	3.78
Lead Pencil Refills (2 pack)	3	1.99	5.97
Dry Erase Starter Kit	1	11.99	11.99
Dry Erase Markers (8 pack)	4	5.00	20.00
Retractable Ballpoint Pens, Blue (10 pack)	2 boxes	5.89	11.78
Photocopier Paper, 8 ½ x 14	3 boxes	17.99	35.98
White-out Easy Grip Tape	4	4.49	17.96
Mechanical Pencils (2 pack)	10	5.29	52.90
Permanent Markers, Chisel Point (4 pack)	3	5.99	17.97
Extra Comfort HB Mechanical Pencils (5 pack)	2	3.99	11.97
White-out Easy Correct Correction Tape (12 pack)	3	28.99	86.97
		TOTAL	$435.73

Make all checks payable to 123 Office Supplies
Total due in 15 days. Overdue accounts subject to a service charge of 1% per month.

Thank you for your business!

Figure 6.1 Sample invoice

Activity

Looking at the invoice above, answer the following questions.

1. What is the per unit price for the 8 ½ x 11 photocopier paper?

    a. $6.00

    b. $16.99

    c. $11.99

2. How many boxes of retractable ballpoint pens were ordered?

    a. 6

    b. 4

    c. 2

3. What is the price of one White-out Easy Grip Tape?

    a. $5.89

    b. $4.79

    c. $4.49

How to Improve Your Reading

Here are a few of tips to help you improve your reading skills:

- **Read regularly and with a purpose.** As you read, think about the information you need to find. Reading is a skill that you can improve by doing more of it. If you are a reluctant reader, find something that you enjoy reading and it will get easier.

- **Look for document design.** Read similar items to those you encounter at work and look at how and where things are laid out. These are clues you can use later..

- **Limit distractions while you read.** If you are reading on paper, uUse a ruler or piece of paper to move down the page line by line. This is helpful for quite complex reading. On your computer, close other windows, turn off notifications, and increase the font size.

- **Take notes.** If you are reading something complicated or that you need to completely understand, it can be helpful to make notes or highlight words or sections. Really engage with the material and ask questions or reflect on what you are reading. Keep a dictionary handy to look up unfamiliar words (Jordan, 2020).

- **Slow down.** Reading quickly is not always best, if you need to fully comprehend the material.

- **Skim or scan for information.** If it isn't critical that you understand the full document but

are searching for specific information, it can be helpful to simply scan the document.

- **Listen instead.** See if the book is available as an audio book. For work documents, you can have the computer read them to you using a built-in screen reader.

Writing

In most jobs, you will need to do a variety of writing tasks. Remember, your writing may be the first or only contact with a client, and you will want to set a good first impression by writing clearly, concisely, and professionally. Since not all writing will be the same; , you might be asked to send an email a client, take a message for a staff member, or write a piece of the company's website; ensure you understand the appropriate audience and purpose as discussed in Chapter XX. Using proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling shows professionalism, as do proofreading and editing. Using these skills in your resume and cover letter will demonstrate to potential employers your professional writing proficiency.

How to Improve Your Writing

Here are a few of tips to help you improve your writing skills:

- **Use the features in your word processor.** Pay attention to the spelling and grammar errors that most word processing programs automatically underline. You can also adjust your word processing program to catch other errors. You can also consider using other writing support software like Grammarly.

- **Know your weaknesses as a writer and check for them.** If you tend to make a common error or have trouble with a particular piece of punctuation, grammar, or spelling, use the Find feature to help you scan the document for that specific error. For example, if commas are troublesome for you, search all the commas and ensure they are used correctly.

- **Ask for feedback.** Your coworkers, supervisor, and instructors can all give you feedback on your writing strengths and challenges. If you want a broader context for writing, consider taking a course in business writing.

- **Read and write regularly.** Read good writing and ask yourself what you like about it. Then, try to emulate it! The more you write with a purpose and goals, the better you will get.

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication in a professional environment includes "any type of interaction that makes use of spoken words" including answering the phone, personal discussions, staff meetings, presentations, and informal conversations (Inc., 2020).

Case Study: Samira's Phone Etiquette

In Samira's position, she is usually the first person to greet the clients either over the phone or in person. She has a nice smile and a clear voice. It seemed like a bit of a mouthful to say "Good Morning, Perez, Patel, and Erickson Accounting" but now that she's familiar with it, it's actually quite easy. She slows down and takes her time. She keeps a notepad by her phone and has a sticky note with key questions to ask customers to complete a basic invoice.

Demonstrating strong verbal communication skills, including "speaking clearly, confidently, and with poise" means you will be seen as confident and someone able to build rapport (Hawkins, 2021).

Figure 6.2 Effective verbal communicator word cloud

Characteristics of an effective verbal communicator at work are:

- Active listening.
- Adaptability. This is the ability to adapt your communication style to support the situation. Some situations allow for a relaxed, informal style such as talking with co-workers, others, such as a client who has financial concerns will require a more solemn, professional tone.
- Clarity.
- Confidence and assertive.
- Constructive feedback both giving and receiving.
- Emotional intelligence.

- Interpersonal skills.

- Interpretation of body language. This will help you understand how someone is feeling but we aware of cultural differences which can lead to incorrect assumptions.

- Open-mindedness. Open-mindedness is the willingness to consider new or different ideas or opinions that are different from our own (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021).

- Patience. Patience guides our ability to listen to and to deliver a message that is fully understood. This can sometimes take time depending on the information divide between parties.

- Simplifying the complex.

- Storytelling. It is understood that storytelling "enables the listener to convert the ideas presented in the story into [their] own ideas and experiences …mak[ing] the content … more personal and relatable" (Nandy, 2017).

We discussed communication at length in Chapter 9 Effective Communication, so here we will focus on one common example of verbal communication skills: making work presentations.

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6.2 Presentations and Public Speaking

How do you feel about giving presentations? Fear of public speaking is the most common phobia, and. Iit is estimated that 75% of individuals suffer from some form of speech anxiety (Black, 2021)., tThat's 3 out of every 4 people. So, what's the remedy to your fear of public speaking? Confidence. How do you gain that confidence?

- **A word on presentations.** You may have noticed that many of your college courses include giving a class presentation. This is intentional as instructors understand the importance of this skill in workplace success and hope that through the classroom students begin to feel more comfortable speaking in front of others. Instructors also know that the best way to get better at public speaking, is to practice this skill. Though it might not feel this way, the classroom is a safe, low stakes way to practice and receive feedback aimed at improvement before you get into the workplace.

- **Acknowledge the challenge**. It won't necessarily be easy, but it will be worth it. In addition to its being a common fear, it is also a conquerable challenge. Start by practicing in school. Though it might not feel this way, the classroom is a safe, low stakes way to practice and receive feedback aimed at improvement before you get into the workplace.

- **Recognize the cost and benefits**. You can have great ideas, but if no one ever hears them, it's like not having them at all (Smith & Last, n.d.). Sharing your great idea in a staff meeting may lead to a promotion, whereas having an answer and being afraid to present it, may cost your company money or an important client.

- **Commit to learning the skills by watching and practicing**. Watch good presentations, TEDTalks, and YouTube videos and make notes of what the presenters do well and where they need more practice. Learn from their mistakes. And then practice. Practice in your courses, in front of the mirror, on video, with your friends, and even at work. In addition to practicing, reflect on what you do well, what feels comfortable, and where you need to improve.

Are you ready to start now? Watch the following Chris Anderson's TEDTalk and reflect on what he does well: [TED's secret to great public speaking](#).

How to Improve Your Verbal Communication

Remember, when it comes to verbal communication, the more you do it, the better and more comfortable you will feel. Here are a few of tips to help you improve your verbal communication skills:

- **Be prepared**. Do your research, write your presentation, and practice saying it out loud. The better you know your topic, the less you will need to rely on notes. If you are using technology, test it before the presentation and have it ready to go. Nothing is worse than realizing the projector isn't set up or the computer isn't logged on.

- **Maintain eye contact.** Don't lock eyes with one person but acknowledge your whole audience with eye contact.

- **Match your body language to the content.** Most of the time, assume a relaxed, upright posture and use natural gestures. Don't over gesture because it can be distracting. If you are discussing a serious issue, have a solemn facial expression.

- **Take care with your appearance and attitude**. Don't over-dress, but wear professional, neat, and clean clothes. Be confident, be friendly, and especially if trying to convince your audience, be energetic about your idea.

- **Use your voice as a tool**. Speak at a good volume, pause after important information, and emphasize key points. Also slow down, most of us speak more quickly when we are nervous, so take a deep breath and slow down. Recognize your use of crutch words, such as um, eh, ah, oh, like, etc. If you notice these when you are practicing, keep practicing and work on not using them. If you make a mistake, don't let that to fluster you. Stay calm and keep on.

- **Be aware of your audience and timing.** Are they with you? Have you paused for questions? Do they want you to move faster or slow down? How long were you scheduled for? For example, if you have 10 minutes to present, keep to that limit.

- **Practice some strategies beforehand to calm or to empower yourself.** Deep breathing works for some, and others use power stances to engage their confidence.

- **Take opportunities to present.** Join a debate or theatre club., take a class, or join your local Toastmasters club, a non-profit organization for those wanting to improve their public speaking skills.

6.3 Numeracy and Document Use

Numeracy

Skills/Compétences Canada (2021), defines numeracy as the "use of numbers and [the] capability to think in quantitative terms" . Numeracy is used in "numerical estimating, money math, scheduling or budgeting … and analyzing measurement or data". It involves understanding the role of math, spatial information, and quantitative data at work, whether in small tasks such as taking a customer's payment, or more complex like calculating the cost analysis of a service contract.

There is no such thing as being bad at math! You may have been told in school that you are not good at math; however, math is a skill that can be improved. Adopt a growth mindset and keep trying. Several researchers agree that "[i]n today's data-driven world, [it is] … crucial to employment success" (as qtd. in Brumwell & MacFarlane, 2020, p. 5). Additionally, Moffat and Rasmussen (2016), state that "[n]umeracy skills affect an individual's economic and social well-being. Inadequate numeracy skills can negatively impact an individual's ability to get a job and feel engaged and valued in society".

Some numeracy skills that you might use in the workplace include:

- Working with percentage and discounted pricing
- Calculating time estimates
- Calculating taxes
- Budgeting
- Understanding trends
- Data analysis
- Measurement

Want to learn more about your own numeracy strengths and weaknesses? Complete the [Numeracy Self-Assessment](#) from the Government of Canada's Skills for Success website.

How to Improve Your Numeracy Skills

Here are a few of tips to help you improve your numeracy skills:

- **Identify the kind of math skills your job requires.** Math is a big subject. Learn about what kind of numeracy your job requires, and then practice and get feedback on your performance of those tasks.
- Have fun and pPlay games that involve numbers, counting, or measurement. There are several games that involve adding and subtracting but also games like pool and darts, which can improve your use of spatial information (Mcaninch, 2020). When playing card games,

keep score.

- **Complete drills, tutorials, or take a course.** The [Khan Academy](#) offers a wide range of free tutorials on mathematics at all levels and targeted to specific types of math skills. You could also try this [numeracy workbook](#) produced by Skills/Compétences Canada.

- **Adopt a growth mindset.** Don't get set back by your own emotions! Be kind and patient with yourself. Practice, and track your successes. You can do it!

Case Study: Samira Compares Data on Photocopiers

Today, Mr. Erickson expressed how pleased he is with Samira's work and asked her to take on a project. The office needs a new photocopier, and they would like Samira to source some options and give a report at the next staff meeting. Samira has contacted a number of business equipment suppliers regarding purchasing a photocopier for the office. Not every supplier has given her the information in the same format, so she has had to convert cost per copy into a standard term as well as cost per month for leasing. One salesperson warned against purchasing a machine and told her that leasing would be the best option. She created a list of factors to consider:

- Cost per copy
- Price of ink
- Tax deduction implications of buying versus leasing
- Service contracts
- Cost of upgrading
- Maintenance costs
- The amount of copying the business will do
- Leasing periods and the average life expectancy of the machine

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Document Use

The essential skill of document use includes reading, interpreting, understanding, locating, and creating common workplace documents. Document use includes entering information from multiple sources into forms, locating specific information in documents using the index, table of contents, keywords, headings, and subheadings, interpreting a map or a set of blueprints, recognizing common symbols, and creating lists, charts, and graphs (Government of Canada, 2021).

If you are unsure about your document use skills try using a self-assessment, like the [Document Use Self-Assessment](#) available on the Government of Canada's Skills for Success website.

Case Study: Samira Requests More Information

In researching the information about photocopiers, Samira will need to rely on several of the specific skills covered by document use. Initially, Samira creates a checklist of office equipment suppliers to contact. Looking at their websites, she notices that not all the information is easily found or given in the same terms as other companies. On a few websites, Samira needs to complete an online form to receive an initial quote. When the quotes come in, Samira needs to read the price quotes and specifications of the photocopier she receives from the suppliers, and then integrate them into her own document. Then, she creates a graph that illustrates the comparison of the price per copy to integrate into her written report. Her initial report was written using Microsoft Word, but it was easier to create the graph using Microsoft Excel and integrate it into the Word document.

How to Improve Your Document Use Skills

Here are a few of tips to help you improve your verbal communication skills:

- **Know what you are looking for.** Read for details and practice skimming and scanning documents.

- **Engage in activities that train your focus.** Focus is connected to attention to detail (Glassdoor, 2021). There are a few games that require attention to detail, such as spot the difference or memory types of games. Apps like Peak and Elevate have activities to help train for this skill (Karrera, 2020).

- **Eliminate distractions when you need to focus**. Avoid multi-tasking as it can negatively impact your ability to focus (Glassdoor, 2021).

- **Familiarize yourself with several different types of documents.** Know their purpose and value. Learn to identify where key information is located so you can predict where to find the information you need.

- **Practice with support.** Try using this [document use workbook](#) produced by Skills/Compétencies Canada.

Collaboration Skills

In all jobs you will need to work with others. Like class presentations, group work is one way your college instructors try to prepare you for collaborating with others in the work force. Here you will need to draw on several of the other skills we have identified in this book's chapters, Effective Communication , Interpersonal Skills, Critical Thinking, and Time Management, along with many more skills such as goal setting, motivation, and assertiveness.

Starting a new project? Here is a great checklist you can follow:

- Start with a clear objective and/or direction. Write out the team's goals.

- Set ground rules and timelines up front.

- Agree to open and honest communication.

- Ensure mutual accountability.

- Define roles.

- Identify action items and set time goals.

- Support risk taking and change. If a team member wants to learn a new skill allow that growth opportunity whenever possible.

- Determine how conflict will be managed and deal with any conflicts quickly and fairly.

- Encourage differences in opinions in a respectful, appropriate way.

How to Improve Your Collaboration Skills

Here are some ways to improve your collaboration skills:

- **Know and communicate your strengths and weaknesses.** Reflect on your group work experiences and honestly assess your strengths and areas where you could improve.

- Communicate to fellow group members about your skills and areas you would like to develop.

- Work on projects or skills outside your comfort zone to increase your capacity, but don't be afraid to ask for help if things aren't going well.

- **Engage with a mentor.** If a member of your team has a skill you would like to develop, ask them for guidance.

- **Be a reliable, positive member of the group**. Communicate and complete tasks in a timely manner. There will be issues to address but avoid complaining and use constructive feedback (see Chapter 9: Effective Communication).

6.4 Digital and Collaboration Skills

Digital Skills

One of the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic is that digital literacy has become more important than ever. Skills/Compétences Canada (2021), refers to digital skills "as those needed to understand and process information from digital sources, use digital systems, technical tools, and applications" including but not limited to "cash registers, word processing software, and computers". Digital skills work with other essential skills to help you produce and share ideas, work together, and find solutions to problems (UNESCO, 2018).

Your workplace will likely require you to demonstrate your digital skills in some of these ways:

- use a computer
- send and receive messages
- use a search engine
- protect propriety and confidential information
- design and disseminate documents (European Commission, 2021)

Common Digital Skills at Work

Choose the right device and software for the task. You will likely work using different types of devices, such as a desktop computer, laptop, tablet, or mobile device and be able to shift between them easily. However, for efficiency, know what device is best for which purpose. For example, it will be more difficult and time consuming to create a spreadsheet on your phone. Employers will also expect that you will know certain types of software and be able to learn others, you may be familiar with Google Docs, but you could translate that knowledge and quickly adapt to Microsoft Word. Similarly, when a new software is introduced, embrace it and learn it (Live&Learn, 2021).

Create content. As we discussed in XX, writing for work means that you acknowledge the audience and purpose of the document. Don't forget to chunk information into manageable pieces and embed hyperlinks and multimedia. More advanced skills in this area may include creating infographics, audio, video, and visual materials and editing images (Live&Learn, 2021).

Source reliable information. Googling is easy, but assessing the results of a search is challenging. You will need to learn how to identify credible data that is relevant and specific to your purpose. One method for this kind of evaluation is the CARS system: credibility, accuracy, reasonableness, and support.

Credibility
- Is the information from a credible source?
- Is there evidence of a quality control system?
- What are the author's/creator's credentials?

Accuracy
- Is it up-to-date?
- Does it provide the whole picture or show a strong bias?
- Are the facts complete?

Reasonableness
- Does the source appear to be fair and objective?
- Is there an apparent conflict of interest?
- Does the information account for both sides of the story or at least acknowledge the opposing side?

Support
- Is the author clear about where the information came from?
- Is the information supported by other sources?

Figure 6.3 CARS Method of Evaluating Research. [Image description]

Use data ethically. Plagiarism matters even after college! You need to understand how to use online information without breaking copyright rules or committing plagiarism. This can be achieved through using a citation style for referencing materials and information, using open educational resources, and resources shared with a creative commons license.

Practice online safety: In the area of online safety, you need to know the safety rules. For example, you should:

- identify the characteristics of a reliable website,
- practice safe online habits such as using strong passwords,
- keeping passwords and other confidential datasecure,
- understand confidentiality,
- know what is appropriate information you should share,
- be aware of cybercrime trends, such as phishing (Live&Learn, 2021).

Collaborate online. Know how to use collaborative writing tools like Microsoft Teams and Google Docs that allow users to create, revise, comment, and edit simultaneously is a definite bonus in today's job market. You also will be expected to be familiar with virtual meeting software, like Zoom (Live&Learn, 2021).

Use social media. Social media for work is more directed and restrictive than for your personal use. You may be asked to maintain and create content for the company's social media accounts following

clear procedures. On the personal front, you will be expected to know how to appropriately manage your own online presence in a professional manner. Never assume that a future employer won't search for you on social media platforms.

Organize and store your files logically. It is easy to create files but it can be harder to find and share them. If your employer has a file organization structure and rules about security, follow that. Decide which documents are meant to be shared, and which ones can be stored on your computer. You likely will need to learn about shared drives and cloud sharing. Establish a system that is logical and easy to remember.

Problem-solve on your own first. Employers value those who take initiative and attempt to troubleshoot issues first before seeking help from others. Don't be afraid seek out an answer. Some problem-solving digital skills include the ability to research an answer, use a live chat customer service, read advice forums, and use FAQs (Dixon, 2019).

Complete transactions. Know the safe and efficient ways to order, sell, and purchase online, book appointments, and manage money. Again, most organizations have protocols and preferred providers you will need to use.

How to Improve Your Digital Skills

Here are some ways to improve your digital skills:

- **Use the tools regularly**. Start with something basic and as you gain confidence, integrate more advanced use into your work.
- **Take advantage of virtual supports, forums, and tutorials.** You can take free online courses and tutorials, such as Microsoft free tutorials and DigitalLearn.org. You can also try to access the LinkedIn Library of courses or Udemy.
- **Follow the rules and be risk adverse.** As a new employee, it will be difficult to learn the digital culture of your workplace. Until you learn the norms, look for guidance from those around you. If you have questions, ask a computer savvy coworker for help.
- **Look for professional development opportunities.** Your employer may sponsor you to take a course, or engage in a training session with the IT department.

Collaboration Skills

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- Work on projects or skills outside your comfort zone to increase your capacity, but don't be afraid to ask for help if things aren't going well.

- **Engage with a mentor.** If a member of your team has a skill you would like to develop, ask them for guidance.

- **Be a reliable, positive member of the group**. Communicate and complete tasks in a timely manner. There will be issues to address but avoid complaining and use constructive feedback (see Chapter XX).

Image description

Figure 6.3 CARS Method of Evaluating Research.

Credibility

- Is the information from incredible source?

- Is there evidence of quality control system?

- What are the author's/creator's credentials?

Accuracy

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- Are the facts complete?

Reasonableness

- Does the source appear to be fair and objective?
- Is there an apparent conflict of interest?
- Does the information I count for both sides of the story or at least acknowledge the opposing side?

Support

- Is the author clear about where the information came from?
- Is the information supported by other sources?

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6.5 Critical Thinking and Continuous Learning

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking includes your ability to analyze, interpret and reflect on the world. Critical thinking skills include the ability to:

- Understand the links between ideas
- Determine the importance and relevance of arguments and ideas
- Recognize, build, and appraise different points of view
- Identify inconsistencies and errors in reasoning
- Approach problems in a consistent and systematic way
- Reflect on our own assumptions, believes, and values (Skills You Need, 2021).

Watch the following video on 5 tips to improve your critical thinking:

Collaborate
- I work with others to achieve better outcomes.

Examine
- I use a variety of methods to explore and analyze.

Communicate
- I use clear language to express my ideas and share information.

Adapt
- I adjust my actions and strategies to accomplish tasks.

Reflect
- I review my thoughts and experiences to guide my actions.

Inquire
- I seek information that excites my curiosity and inspires my learning.

Create
- I use my knoweldge and imagination to express new and innovative ideas.

Link
- I apply knowledge to reach new understandings.

Strive
- I use effort and determination to focus on challenging tasks.

Figure 6.4. Nine traits of critical thinking. [*Image description*]

Answer a Problem with Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is something you do, not something you have. To develop this skill, you will need to start by thinking about your method or approach to decision making.

Figure 5 outlines one path of steps that indicate critical thinking. Imagine these as the thoughtful actions that lead to your decision. First, identify the problem or question being as specific as possible about what you are asking. Next, gather and organize information. Find several sources that present a variety of perspectives to ensure you avoid bias. Then, analyze the data and sources to ensure credibility and reliability. This is another spot to be aware of your biases. Look for the data that is most relevant to the question you are trying to answer. Determine if you have enough information to make an informed decision and if not, go back to the information gathering step. When you are ready, make your decision based upon the evidence and information. Finish by communicating your decision to the stakeholders (Indeed, 2021).

1. Identify the problem or question.

2. Gather and organize information.

3. Analyze the data and sources.

4. Determine the significance of the data.

5. Make a decision.

6. Communicate your conclusion.

Figure 6.5. Steps in Critical Thinking. [Image description]

Case Study: Samira's Final Photocopier Recommendation

Step 1, Samira identifies the problem – recommend a new photocopier for the office to purchase. She needs be as specific as possible about the features the copier needs to have. Making a list would be a great place to start. On her list, Samira writes durability, ability to scan and email documents, and large capacity.

Step 2, Samira begins to gather and organize the information. Here she uses her digital skills to find office equipment suppliers and her document use skills to create a Microsoft Excel sheet to record and organize the information as she receives it. She is aware of any biases she might have to either the brand of machine or suppliers.

Step 3, she analyzes the data and sources to ensure credibility and reliability. In this step, she looks for recommendations and reads consumer reports.

Step 4, while the office has several needs, the photocopier must be able to handle heavy copying jobs and will run continuously all day. Samira reviews the quotes and copier specifications to determine the machines that meet the office's needs. Samira looks over the information she has and realizes that one supplier has forgotten to give her information on the service cost. She sends a query to get this information.

Step 5, Samira is not the one making the final decision on the copier, so she presents her report at the staff meeting. The group reviews all the information that Samira has gathered, asks some clarifying questions, and agree on the copier to purchase. They thank Samira for her hard work and the time that she has saved them in pulling together all of this information.

Step 6, Samira contacts the successful supplier and places the order for the copier. She then contacts the supplies by phone and thanks them for their quotes.
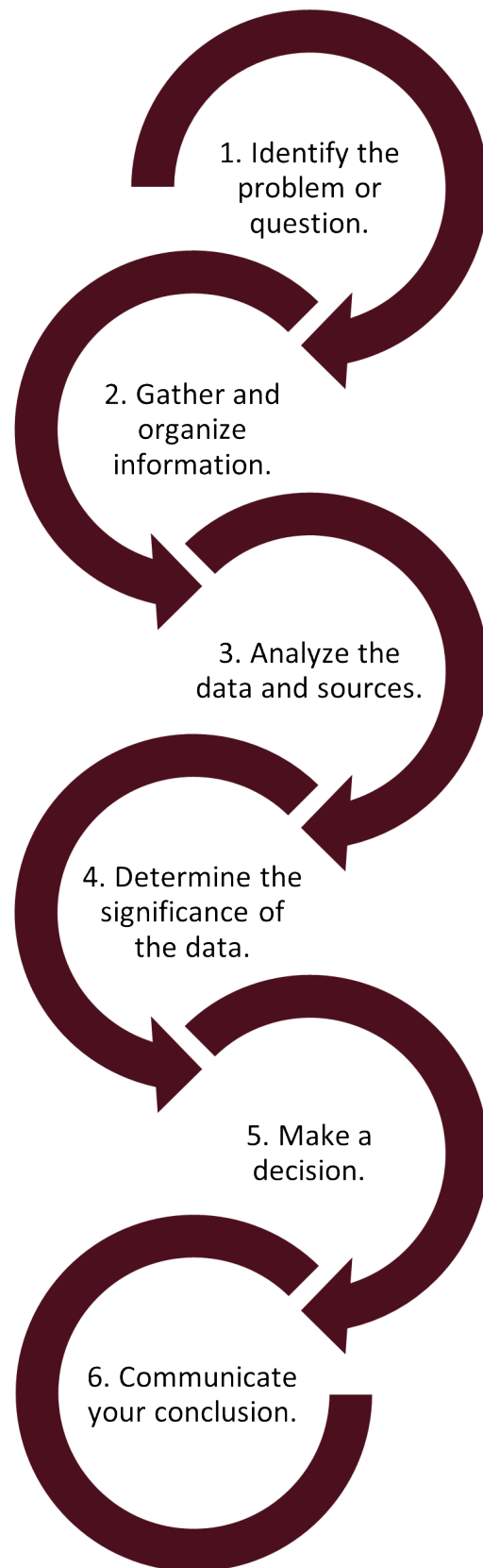
How to Improve Your Critical Thinking Skills

The following are some ways to improve critical thinking.

- **Become more self-aware.** This includes considering your thought process, values, morals, ethics, and other beliefs as well as thinking objectively about your personal preferences. Know your strengths, weaknesses, and biases as these will help you better understand your perspective.

- **Develop foresight.** Think about the possible outcomes and what positive and negative changes might occur. Knowing this will help you predict the actions and reactions of making a choice.

- **Practice active listening.** Active listening and practicing empathy are key to understanding others' perspectives. It is important to gain a full understanding of what others' need, want, and expect.

- **Ask clarifying questions.** Never assume or guess, confirm what you think you know. It is better for others to have to repeat or for you to rephrase points to ensure correctness. Another key point is to ensure whether something is "a fact, an opinion, or an idea" (Indeed, 2021).

- **Evaluate existing evidence.** Rely on your "previous experiences and [the] facts [you have] to help make your current decision" (Indeed, 2021). Organize the information you have and

consider the source of that information.

Continuous Learning

Did you notice that in all of the "how to improve" lists, you always are encouraged to learn more? That is intentional! The most important thing about essential skills is that they are skills that you can continue to improve. Employers value employees that are willing to learn and take on more responsibility. Continuous learning is a skill that will pay dividends in a long-term beneficial relationship with your employer.

Continuous learning is also commonly known as constant learning or lifelong learning. You already know two important components of continuous learning from [1.3 Reflective Practice in WIL](#).

Remember that growth mindset is about you embracing the unknown, including criticisms and challenges. You need to finding strength and determination in even the most challenging situations. Imagine the possibilities that open up to solve a problem when you set your thinking from "well I guess that won't work" to think instead "what else could work to solve this". You demonstrate a growth mindset when you celebrate and learn from your peers' and colleagues' successes, put forth efforts to pursue new learning. Have a look at the information below to explore how your mindset can shape your behaviour.

Growth Mindset		Fixed Mindset
• Result of hard work • Can always improve	**SKILLS**	• Innate • Unchanging
• Embrace • Opportunity to change • Calls for perseverance	**CHALLENGES**	• Something to avoid • Will reveal lack of skill • Overwhelm
• Essential • Leads to mastery	**EFFORT**	• Not necessary • Linked to not being good enough
• Useful and positive • Welcomed • Identify areas to improve	**FEEDBACK**	• Produce defensiveness • Personalized
• Opportunities to learn from • Focus on making changes	**SETBACKS**	• Blame others, not my fault • Easily discouraged

Figure 6.6 Growth mindset versus fixed mindset. [Image description]

Continuous learning is about you wanting to increase your knowledge, expand your skills, and take on challenges when they come up. It is said that continuous learning is strongly linked to adaptability. There will be shifts and changes in your various jobs and work environments, so adapting a continuous

learner attitude will motivate you to embrace the changes and the learning involved that come along with that change.

How to Improve Your Continuous Learning Skills

- **Set a goal.** That's right! Take a look at Chapter XX on goal setting, and use your goals to determine what you want to learn and when.
- **Plan to learn.** Set aside time each week, month, and year to learn new things. If it is a part of your routine, making learning continuous is easier accomplish.
- **See learning as a motivator.** You are investing in yourself when you prioritize taking classes, researching online, watching videos or tutorials.
- **Feed your passions.** Take time to learn things that interest you, and they might energize you when it is time to focus on learning tasks that you find less interesting.

Key Takeaways

- Practice reading for different purposes by skimming, using document design, and understanding the conventions of the documents of your workplace.
- Fear of public speaking is common, but there are lots of things you can do to build your confidence and get comfortable sharing your ideas.
- Apply critical thinking to your internet searches to better evaluate your sources and come up with stronger solutions for your employer.
- Never stop learning! All essential skills can be improved with patience, practice, and dedicated learning time.

Image Descriptions

Figure 6.4 Nine traits of critical thinking.

Collaborate – I work with others to achieve better outcomes.

Examine – I used a variety of methods to explore and analyze

Communicate – I use clear language to express my idea and share information

Adapt – I adjust my actions and strategies to accomplish tasks.

Reflect – I review my thoughts and experiences to guide my actions.

Inquire – I seek information that excites my curiosity and inspires my learning.

Create – I use my knowledge and imagination to express new and innovative ideas.

Link – I apply knowledge to reach new understandings.

Strive – I use effort and determination to focus on challenging tasks.

[Return to place in text]

Figure 6.5 Steps in critical thinking

1. Identify the problem or question
2. Gather and organize information
3. Analyze the data and sources
4. Determine the significance of the data
5. Make a decision
6. Communicate your conclusion

[Return to place in text]

Figure 6.6 Growth mindset versus fixed mindset

	Growth Mindset	**Fixed Mindset**
Skills	• result of hard work • can always improve	• innate • unchanging
Challenges	• embrace • opportunity to change • calls for perseverance	• something to avoid • will review lack of skill • overwhelm
Efforts	• essential • leads to mastery	• not necessary • link to not being good enough
Feedback	• useful and positive • welcomed • identify areas to improve	• produce defensiveness • personalized
Setbacks	• opportunities to learn from • focus on making changes	• blame others, not my fault • easily discouraged

[Return to place in text]

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2017.

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Chapter 7: Time Management

Terms to Know

Self-sufficient – Able to provide for your own needs; capable of relying on self; includes sense of ownership and responsibility; as a worker you feel empowered as you work toward completing goals, objectives, and tasks.

Stress – An internal bodily response to initiate the need to prepare and take on a challenging situation.

Pressure – An external environmental factor that indicates urgency in a matter and the need to respond to a request or complete an action.

Procrastination – A delayment in the process of completing accumulating tasks and attending to a growing list of responsibilities. This notion results in a snowball effect of stress, pressure, and negative outcomes.

Time management – How you use your time and spread it out across different parts of your life.

Prioritization – How you identify the importance or value of tasks. You may prioritize based on time, importance, and complexity.

Case Study: Mohammad's (He/Him) Busy Schedule

Mohammad never seems to have enough time! Since he is now in his second term of the Web and Graphic

Design program, he has been hoping things would get easier. He has so many commitments to juggle and sometimes he forgets an important deadline or is late to work. Sometimes he gets distracted and overwhelmed. He was diagnosed with ADHD in high school but found a good routine there. College is very different. Even though his school has provided some helpful accommodations like extra time on assignments, he is finding the transition challenging. He knows he needs to manage his time better, but he doesn't know where to begin. He is trying his best to be a good student at college, a good employee at his part-time job, and a good son to his parents. It is hard!

7.1 How Do You Manage Your Time?

We have all seen the memes. We know that adulting is hard. Managing time is perhaps the hardest part of college life. College requires you to plan your own time. You may have a schedule of classes, but the rest is up to you. You need to determine when and how to complete your assigned course work, engage in group work, write your assignments, and create your final projects. Figuring out how and when to get that work done is a challenge. Your life outside of school also doesn't stop just because you have decided to get an education. Sure, you have schoolwork, but you also have your own unique balance of personal life, friendships, family, work, play, and rest to fit in. Now, add a WIL experience on top. The best way to balance it all is to pay careful attention to your time.

Juggling commitments and deciding what to do when is a task in and of itself. There are also plenty of distractions, demands, and desires. You may feel pulled in many directions. You may also feel a bit stuck. These experiences are normal and are all rooted in your relationship to and feelings about time. So, let's start with some reflection to get a sense of how you approach time.

Start with Your Values and Goals. You have a clear inner sense of what is important to you. Whether you recognize it or not, your values may impact how and where you spend your time. In the chapter XX, you also identified your short, medium, and long- term goals. You can use those goals to determine what activities you need to prioritize. Ask yourself:

- Where do I need to spend my time in order to achieve my goals?
- Do I embrace my values based on what I spend my time doing?
- What tasks am I spending a lot of time on that don't align with my goals and values?

Consider Your Cultural Approach to Time. Much of Canadian culture is oriented around a linear sense of time that privileges the present and the future over the past. Time is managed carefully using clocks and calendars that tick away the hours and days. You will see that in your work and school schedules, with distinct start and stop times that are often inflexible. However, this may be different than your cultural approach to time. Ask yourself:

- What are my expectations of time at home and in my community?
- Are my expectations similar or different than the expectations of my workplace or school?.

Identify Your Commitments. These might be commitments you choose, or commitments you have taken on as a part of your family or community. They also include the time you need to spend at school, at work, studying, writing assignments, and communting. Ask yourself:

- What do I need to spend time working on?
- How can I fit everything in?
- Are there any commitments I can let go of?

Name Your Challenges. Think about your current work/school/life balance.   Ask yourself:

- How accurately do you estimate how long a task will take?

- Do your commitments match up with the time you allocate to them?

- Do you struggle with lateness? With getting started? With getting bored in the middle?

What outside factors contribute to your challenges with time? Now that you have reflected on your current time situation, you can work toward improving it.

Dig into Your Motivation

Motivation, values, goals, and time go together. Often, motivation helps us to focus on our goals and be rigorous in our scheduling. We often devote more time to tasks based on our motivation, so it is important to understand where our motives come from.

If I were more motivated, I would find a better job. If I had more willpower, I would run 3km every day. Do these sound familiar to you? Have you ever caught yourself saying something like this? Ellis et al. (2016) say that many people believe that motivation, willpower, and self-discipline appear to be something mysterious that we either have or don't have. However, these are neither mysterious nor something we are born with or without, motivation, willpower, and self-discipline are things we all have and something that we can continue to develop.

Motivation comes from having clear goals and taking steps to accomplish them. Conversely, motivation is also essential in accomplishing our goals. Cherry (2020) refers to motivation as the "process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviors … whether that is getting a glass of water to reduce thirst" or getting the job that you want. According to Cherry (2020) "motivation involves the biological, emotional, social, and cognitive forces that activate behavior" and not only initiates our action towards a goal but also "direct[s] and maintain[s] the goal-directed behaviors". There are several psychological theories behind motivation such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Figure 7.1), which states that we must satisfy the basic needs for food, shelter, safety, before we are able to work on satisfying higher order needs, such as relationships, self-esteem, and one's full potential.
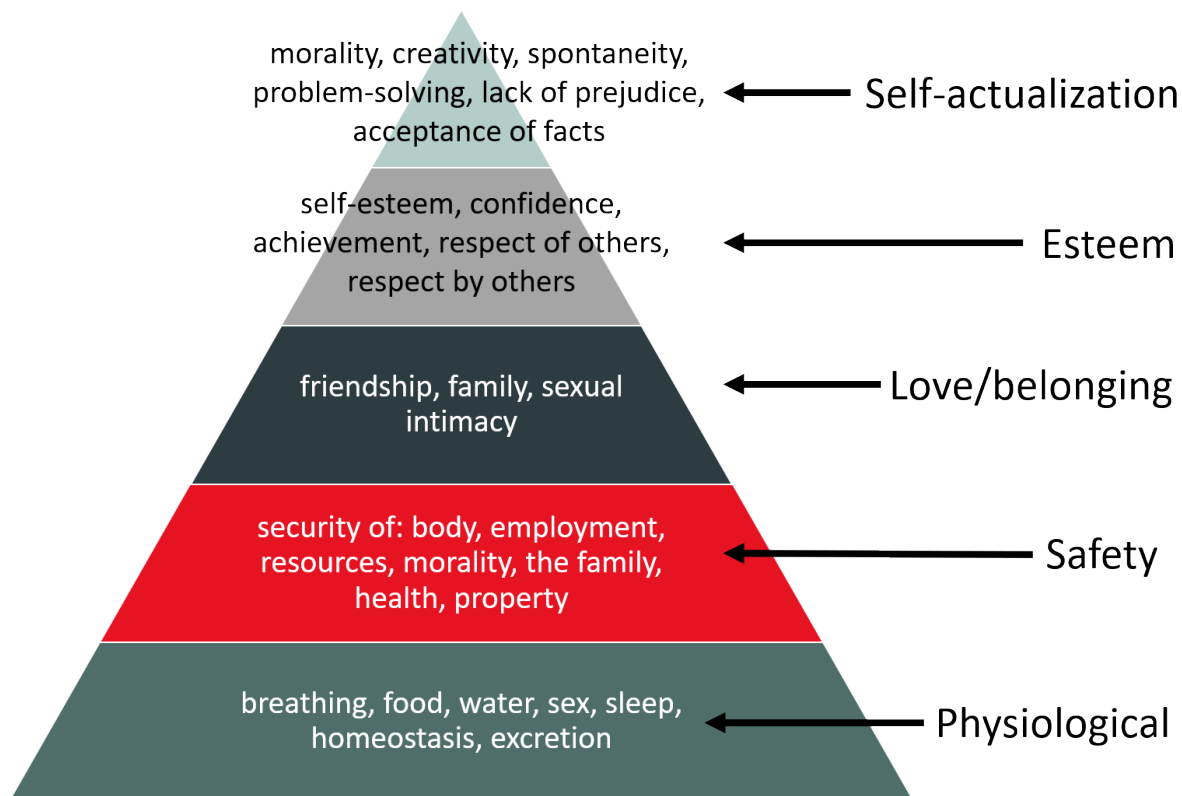
Figure 7.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. [Image description]

Reflect on where you are on the hierarchy of needs and what you may need to have in place to self-actualize and achieve your goals.

Click on the following link to take the Self-Motivation Quiz and find out what motivates you:

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

There are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is internal. It is when you are motivated to do a task for the satisfaction you feel. It is when you feel you have accomplished something or have done a good job. Extrinsic motivation comes from external sources and can be either a reward or avoiding a punishment, such as a compliment on your work from your boss (reward) or fear of losing your job (punishment) (Healthline, 2019) When it comes to school, intrinsic motivation often comes from an interesting case study, an exciting video or reading, or an engrossing project. Extrinsic motivation may be getting a good grade or fear of a late grade. Neither intrinsic or extrinsic motivations are good or bad. However, extrinsic factors are sometimes outside of our control. Choosing a career path or a work task that intrinsically motivates you will often be easier to sustain. So, as you approach your work and your schooling, don't forget about intrinsic motivators like curiosity, challenge, control and cooperation.
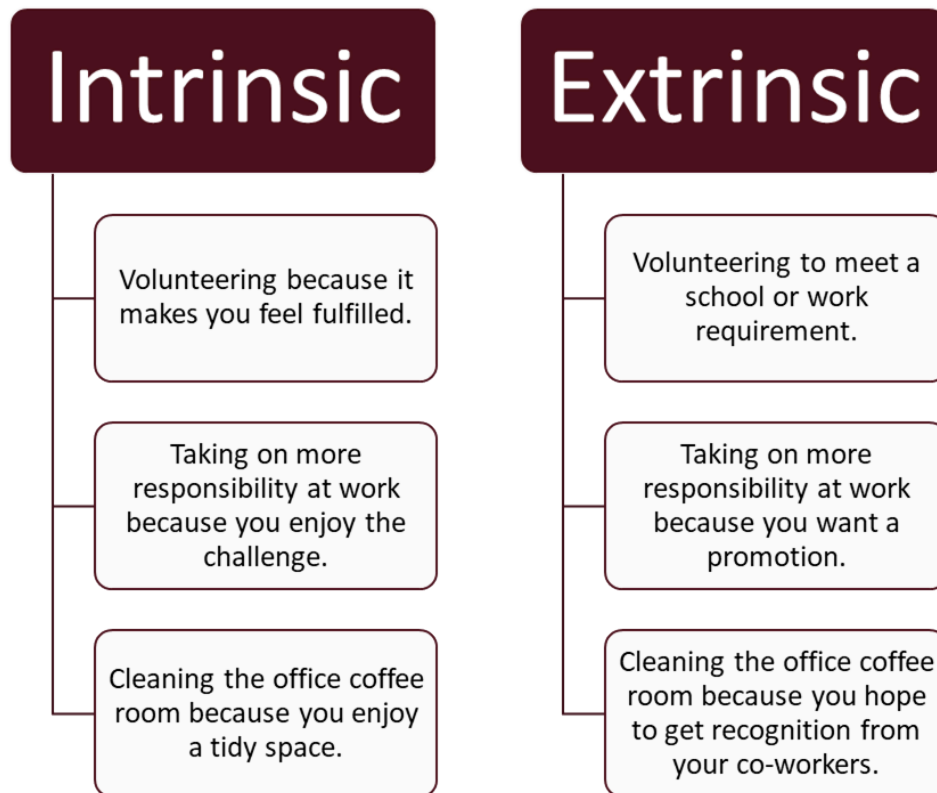
Figure 7.2 Examples of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. [Image description]

<div>

Activity

Review the following statements and identify whether they are intrinsic or extrinsic motivation.

1. Playing cards with your friends to win money.

   a. Intrinsic
   b. Extrinsic

2. Growing a vegetable garden because it makes you feel calm.

   a. Intrinsic
   b. Extrinsic

3. Growing a vegetable garden and selling your vegetables at the farmer's market to make money.

   a. Intrinsic
   b. Extrinsic

4. Joining the local golf club because you enjoy the outside activity.

   a. Intrinsic

</div>

      b. Extrinsic

5. Joining the local golf club because it will raise your social standing in the community.

      a. Intrinsic

      b. Extrinsic

6. Running the 5km charity run to raise money for cancer research.

      a. Intrinsic

      b. Extrinsic

7. Learning a new language to get a promotion at work.

      a. Intrinsic

      b. Extrinsic

Case Study: Mohammad's Motivations

Mohammad wants to get a better sense of what his motivations and values are. He starts by brainstorming his major commitments. His typical week includes five classes four days per week, ten hours of projects and homework, fifteen hours working at his uncle's restaurant, running errands for his mom, dropping off his sister at violin practice twice per week, and translating for his grandfather at the hospital during his blood transfusion treatments. To get a handle on what he does and why he does it, he organizes his brainstorm into a list. Then, next to each one, he tries to identify what his motivation is for doing the task. By the end of the process, he feels more motivated because he remembers why the work he is doing is important.

My Tasks	My Motivation	Intrinsic/Extrinsic
Intermediate web design project	I want to complete my website so that I can add to My Portfolio to attract future clients. I also like making a beautiful site.	Extrinsic – future work Intrinsic – beauty
Typography homework		
Communications readings	I like	
Group work		
Waiting tables at Flavorful Beirut	I need to	
Errands for mom and Bariqa	I want to be a good son and give my mother a break. It feels good to help.	Intrinsic – Extrinsic – family support
Translating for Jaddi	I want to make sure Jaddi gets good medical care during his blood transfusion	Extrinsic

Image Descriptions

Figure 7.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs illustrated in the shape of a pyramid. From bottom to top:

Physiological: breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion

Safety: body, employment, resources, morality, the family, health, property

Love/belonging: friendship, family, sexual intimacy

Esteem: self esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, respect by others

Self-actualization: morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem-solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts

[Return to place in text]

Figure 7.2 Examples of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

Intrinsic:

- Volunteering because it makes you feel fulfilled.
- Taking on more responsibility at work because you enjoy the challenge.
- Cleaning the office coffee room because you enjoy a tidy space.

Extrinsic:

- Volunteering to meet a school or work requirement.
- Taking on more responsibilities at work because you want a promotion.
- Cleaning office coffee room because you hope to get recognition from your coworkers.

[Return to place in text]

Media Attributions

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"Figure 7.2 Examples of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation" by Deb Nielsen, Emily Ballantyne, Faatimah Murad and Melissa Fournier is licensed under a CC BY-NC 4.0 licence. Based on information from Healthline (2017).

7.2 Making Time and Dealing With Pressure

Have you ever head people talk about making time for what matters? This concept of making time is about making conscious choices about when and how much time we devote to different tasks. In order to make time for something, you need to make a plan. There are a number of tools out there to help you do this. If you want more time, you may find it is worth investing your energy in organization and time management tools.

- **Use a Planner.** There are planners that help organize your time at daily, weekly, and monthly. Some are open-ended and others will provide you with prompts to help you stay on track. You may find it helpful to try a whiteboard calendar or invest in an application for your phone to help.

- **Set a Schedule.** Daily and weekly schedules will help you fit things in and track important dates and times. If your work schedule changes from week to week, then it will be helpful to use general principles for workdays, school days, and off days.

- **Make a List.** A list will act as a mind extender. It will help you to keep track of tasks that are easily forgotten. If you find colour helpful, consider investing in coloured sticky notes or highlighters to help distinguish between work tasks, school tasks, and home tasks.

- **Use a Timer.** If you struggle with staying on tasks, try to do your work in controlled conditions. Set a timer to help segment your time on task and your time on break. You might even consider trying the Pomodoro technique, where you work in 25-minute intervals on a single task with a 5-minute breaks (Cirillo 2021).

- **Set Reminders.** These might be something you set up electronically, add in your calendar, notify you via email, or post to your computer monitor. If something is important, document it! This may help to reduce stress and pressure in a critical moment.

- **Embrace a Routine.** Routines help reduce stress and give you more thinking time. They are particularly important when it comes to beginnings and endings. Follow a pattern when you get up in the morning, get to work, go to school, as well as when you complete a project, leave your workstation, or get ready for bed.

- **Review, Reflect and Revise.** Take time to see how your planning is working. Did you buy a planner you never use? Are there certain tasks you are always forgetting? Take time each week for 30 minutes to plan, reflect on how your strategies are working, and to tweak your strategies to maximize your performance.

Dealing with Pressure at During Work and School

One of the biggest time sucks you will experience at work and school comes from pressure. You may feel like you never have enough time, but the demands and expectations of others continue to grow. This is what happens when the extrinsic motivators begin to pile up unchecked, and the fear takes over. There are many factors that can increase the pressure you feel. You may have an upcoming deadline, a

meeting with your supervisor, or a new task added to your plate you didn't expect. You may have fallen behind on a task which others are waiting for. These kinds of situations are normal but have big emotional costs.

How does this pressure impact your work? For many, pressure leads to feelings of overwhelm and avoidance—a fight or flight response. You might also feel less motivated. You may start to dissociate or day dreamdaydream. You may feel stress. When things get serious, you may even feel that pressure impacts your credibility, work ethic, and success.

In order to properly deal with pressure, you need to get organized. This means you need to think about how you schedule your time. Reflect on your work skills self, the tasks you need to complete, and any external/personal factors that are impacting progress.

Responding to Pressure in Three Stages

Sometimes, in the moment, you need to deal with the pressure you are feeling. Instead of exploding, try this simple three partthree-part strategy. It should help you calm down, get organized, and get your work done. Completing each stage will not only hopefully motivate you and help you feel more successful as you return to your tasks.

Stage 1: Prepare Your Mind

- Get comfortable in your mind and body.
    - Take deep breaths and remind yourself that you are capable and that you can accomplish your tasks. If you are totally overwhelmed, consider starting with a guided meditation exercise.
- Boost your energy with positive affirmations.
    - Remind yourself that you are capable and can do hard things.
- Remind yourself of your purpose.
    - Ask yourself, "What will completing this task help you achieve?" For bigger projects, you can also reflect on your goals, priorities, and values.
- Remind yourself what the task is that you need to do.
    - Try saying it out loud or writing it down.
- Break down the task into steps.
    - Instead of seeing the big task, focus on the smaller pieces. Ask yourself "what steps do I need to do?" Again, say them aloud or write them down. If you like, turn them into a checklist.

Stage 2: Prepare Your Space

- Prepare your workspace.

- ◦ Set yourself up to get in your zone – your space and time in which you often find yourself most relaxed and productive.
- Give yourself a healthy routine and diet.
    - ◦ This cannot be done in one sitting, rather it is a gradual effort that builds into a habit, following through will improve your personal stage over time.
- Remove excessive distractions from your surroundings.
    - ◦ Distance yourself from their sources. This may mean closing tabs, putting papers to the side, or closing your email. You can try disabling notification on your devices, placing your phone on silent, or setting your status to "Busy".
- Block your time.
    - ◦ Set a time or specified period in which you would like to achieve a single task. You may even want to work with an alarm or timer.

Stage 3: Tackle the First Step

- Look at your list of steps.
    - ◦ If you can break it down further, start by doing that.
- Complete the first task step-by-step.
    - ◦ Check off the steps as you go. Work on the task to completion. Focus on one step at a time.
- Report on your progress.
    - ◦ Do one step at a time. Send an update to your supervisor or collaborators if they are waiting for you as soon as you feel the task is sufficiently completed. If you are working for yourself, your report can be as simple as a checkmark! You can also take some notes to help you track your progress.

You did it! At the end of this stage, celebrate your victory. You have completed a task and hopefully reduced some of the pressure you feel. If it helps, take a short break (5-10 minutes). When you are ready, and complete the next task. Remind yourself that small steps lead to big successes.

7.3 Procrastination and Improving your Productivity

Procrastination

You procrastinated in your schoolwork, you continued to somehow succeed and procrastinate in your post-secondary, and now you are working. You realize you are always in a state of tension, as if you are swimming, as the water is deepening, you are now getting tired but are only managing to keep your head above enough to not drown.

No one wants to procrastinate. If you can break this habit, you can ease the pressure, reduce the stress, and refresh your mind. The internal and constant mental strain can be daunting, so how can you cope with it? A good strategy is to view your long-term goals: are you in the field of work that you want to see yourself in over the next 5 years? Are you enjoying your work? The work environment? The difference between the years of study and the years of work lies in the application of the skills. Do the skills you obtained, and the experience you have accumulated, enable you to feel satisfaction? The answers to these questions should lead back to resetting your goals.

Procrastination can restrict your potential and undermine your success. Procrastination is the avoidance of difficult tasks by seeking or not resisting distractions. Many people believe that procrastination is simply laziness, but it has more to do with the fear of failure or being overwhelmed. For this reason, many perfectionists procrastinate, they fear that they cannot complete the task perfectly and resist beginning or completing it. Some people believe that they work better under pressure and use this to justify procrastination, but this is just a myth – so don't fall into that trap. The following illustration depicts some of the distractions that we fall prey to. Are any of these familiar to you?

Figure 7.3 Map of Procrastination [Image description]

Now that we understand what procrastination is, let's look at some ways to tackle it. This is where identifying, either by using the illustration and/or using self-reflection, can be helpful in reducing procrastination. If you know what things distract you, you can plan for them.

One of the most important things is to recognize that you are procrastinating. It might be obvious that you are, but sometimes it is more difficult to see that that is what we are doing. Then reflect on why you are procrastinating. Is the work unpleasant, difficult, feels overwhelming? Knowing this will help you know what strategy will work for you.

Here are some strategies that you can use to conquer procrastination:

- Break large or overwhelming tasks into smaller, achievable tasks.

- Reward yourself for tasks that you complete.

- Make yourself accountable to someone else, for example, set up a study buddy system where you and a friend commit to working independently on a task for one or two hours. Peer pressure can work, and it feels less lonely. Ensure though, that the friend is also committed, and you don't simply distract each other.

- Rephrase your inner dialogue from "I need to" to "I choose to". The messages we give ourselves are important.

- Minimize distractions – go to the library if home is too distracting, go home if the campus is too distracting.

- Tackle unpleasant tasks first if it helps to get those out of the way.

- Tackle the easy pieces first if it helps you build momentum. This is where it helps to know what motivates you.

- Identify your peak times for work. Are you better in the morning? Or do you prefer to work later at night? Also, what types of tasks are easier for you to complete at different times, for example, I find my mind is clearer in the morning and this is a better time to accomplish writing tasks.

- Set a timer. One strategy that works well for me to break procrastination is commit to one hour and actually set a timer, often at the end of the timer I feel energized and more to work longer, but there are times when once the timer is up, I'm relieved but ultimately, I feel better for doing at least an hour's work.

- Focus on starting, not finishing.

Remember motivation often comes after starting, not before.

Also, don't forget to give yourself some down time. And on that note, this TEDTalk by [Tim Urban: Inside the mind of a master procrastinator](https://opentextbc.ca/workintegratedlearning/?p=95#oembed-1) (2016) offers great insight on procrastination in a humorous way.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://opentextbc.ca/workintegratedlearning/?p=95#oembed-1

Improving Your Productivity

Productivity is a way of measuring how much work you get done. It is a word people use to describe

the relationship between the work you do and the time it takes. Productivity helps determineing your efficiency. When you are working, especially for the first time, you may need to take longer complete tasks. Efficient workers are often able to get more done in less time. Here are a few ideas to try that are connected to improving your productivity.

The 80/20 Principle

This is a rule, sometimes called the Pareto Principle, that suggests that some of your time and energy is more meaningful than others. In general, the principle is that 20 percent of the input yields 80 percent of the output. From a productivity perspective, it means that "20% of your time produces 80% of your results" (Lavinsky, 2014). To use this principle effectively at work or school, you need to reflect on what you are doing and how you are doing it. Look for the most effective practices and focus on those. When it comes to your workplace, pay attention to inefficiencies and to the high-impact practices you see that make up that magic 20%.

The Time Constraint Method

In a humorous essay from 1955, historian Cyril Northcote Parkinson developed Parkinson's Law, which states that "work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion" (Wen, 2020). In other words, work will take up all of the time you allocate for it. So, to be more efficient, you need to set deadlines and parameters on your work. The more time you allocate, the less productive you will be. So, consider adding constraints to you work. Set aside 30 minutes or 1 hour to work intensively on a project, instead of planning to work all afternoon.

The To-Do (Not) List

You have already heard about the benefits of a to do list. However, some people improve their productivity by identifying things that don't work for them. This means you need to set your boundaries and list the things you will not do. For instance, some employees refuse to answer their email first thing in the morning, schedule meetings in the middle of the morning or afternoon, refuse to accept every project that comes their way, or don't accept meetings that come without prior notice or have a specified ending time. While you may not be able to control meetings as a new worker, you may decide when you will choose to answer emails, complete challenging or mindless tasks, or set a limit on how much time you spend engaging in small talk (Leonardo, 2021).

Prioritizing Your Work

It is easy to feel like every task you are assigned is equally important and valuable. Though they likely do all need to get done, they probably don't all need to get done right now. You need to reflect on the importance and amount of time the tasks will take when you attempt to prioritize tasks. In truth, your tasks will take different amounts of time, energy, and focus to complete. One of the most important skills you can learn on the job is how to prioritize. Don't forget to get help when it comes to identifying priorities. Often, your supervisor or instructor will have a better sense of the big picture. They can help you take a list of tasks and turn it into a schedule.

Organize Your Tasks Based on Complexity

To help with your time management, here are a few ways to manage your time based on complexity. These techniques focus on the nature of a task, the level of difficulty, and the amount of time it requires After you try out these techniques, consider checking in with your boss to make sure your prioritization matches theirs!

The Sequence Method. Sequence your tasks in order of complexity. You might want some sticky notes! First, write down all the different tasks you are assigned in any order. Then, assess each task and arrange them in an order of most important to least important, and most urgent to least urgent. This will help you figure out where to begin and provide you with a clear sequence for your work and where to focus is required.

The Eisenhower Matrix. This technique adds a visual component to the sequence method. Draw a table with four quadrants. Place your tasks onto the quadrant based on their importance and urgency. Tasks that are important are rarely considered urgent whereas those considered urgent are may not be important tasks. This method will help you to understand to understand which tasks you must do, schedule, delegate, or eliminate. See below for an example of a visual representation of this matrix.

1. Do First	2. Schedule
First focus on important tasks to be done the same day.	Important, but not-so-urgent stuff should be scheduled.
3. Delegate	4. Don't Do
What's urgent, but less important, delegate to others.	What's neither urgent nor important, don't do at all.
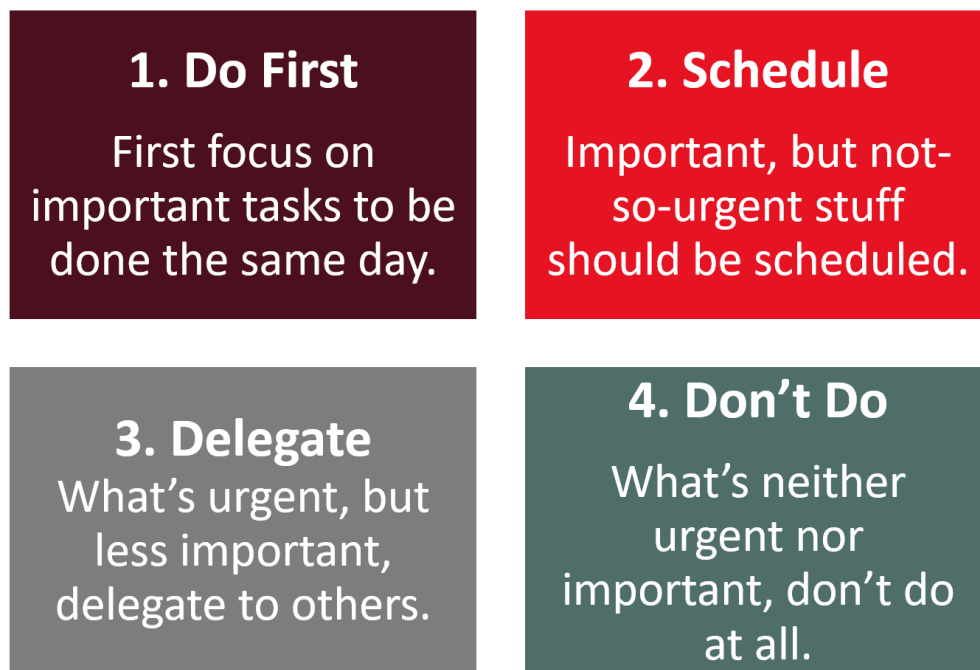
Figure 7.4 The Eisenhower Matrix [Image description]

In this matrix, allocate the most amount of time to the important but not-urgent tasks because they are directly associated with your productivi

ty. The absence of a deadline but the requirement of their completion indicates the weight these tasks carry in relation to your work.

The ABCDE Method. In this method, you will group tasks into four categories. The "A" tasks are those that are the most significant and highest priority. "B" tasks are important but don't have a binding

component (i.e., time, a pending client response…etc.). "C" tasks are low priority tasks that you don't necessarily need to complete in order to achieve your goals. "D" tasks are those that can be delegated, meaning that they can be carried out by others for you. As a WIL student, you may end up completing your supervisor's "D" tasks!, and "E" tasks are those that can be eliminated or deleted from your list because they are not important or even a burden to the rest of your productivity (Roomer, 2019).

Case Study: Mohammad's Tries Out the ABCDE Method

Mohammad is learning more about time management, but there are just too many techniques to try. He does not want to get caught up in too many options. So, he starts by trying out the ABCDE technique. First, he writes out all of his tasks. Then, he organizes his tasks into priorities. Here are his tasks for next week organized using ABCDE:

A (Highest Priority)

- Complete web design project by Wednesday
- Finish communications readings by Friday

B

- Provide peer feedback on Noah's website

C

- Update my web portfolio to account for my new web design project
- Grab dinner with my classmates after class

D (Delegate)

- Ask Bariqa to carpool to school this week

E (Eliminate)

- Lay out my closes for tomorrow

Divide and Conquer Your Tasks

Another way to maximize your efficiency is to know how to group, organize, and divide your tasks. The techniques in this section are based on the idea of enhancing your productivity through maximizing your efficiency. Ideally, you should focus on one task or a set of similar tasks. Doing this is more rewarding than constantly having to switch between different tasks. When you are switching all of the time, you will spend more time reorienting yourself and refocusing.

The Clustering Method. List all of your projects and tasks. Then, cluster those of similar types together. Begin with the most important tasks and get a head start on them. You may also begin with

short and urgent tasks to remove them from your list of items that would otherwise hinder progress on more important tasks.

The Energy-Based Method. Assess your overall state, your energy levels throughout the day, and the space and times where you feel most driven and focused. Then, remove as many distractions as possible as they would negatively affect your energy levels. Once you have a good sense of your own patterns, plan your tasks using these patterns. Divide your tasks over the different times, based on your discretion.

Another method that will likely not apply to you in your WIL role, but would be good to know as you progress through your career is **the Delegation Method**. In this method you divide your tasks into a category of which you would need to complete yourself, tasks that can be delegated to a team, and a set of tasks that can be done automatically.

Stress in Relation to Time Management

Stress is what happens when pressure overwhelms us, and we don't know how to cope. Though we all deal with stress, some stressors are more than we can handle. Stress is often seen in a negative light, it is described as something that has adverse effects on your health, a harmful feeling if not dealt with. One reality that hasn't been often included in the descriptions of stress is that it is a natural response. It is your body's way of telling you that you need to prepare for something, make a change, or face a new challenge. Embracing stress means making a change in your perspective. You need a new outlook where you realize stress is not harmful, but instead indicates you need to do something differently.

In order to properly cope with it and deal with its impacts on our bodies and minds, we need to develop coping strategies. Here are a few:

1. **Identify the cause of your stress.** Is it work related? Is it stemming from a specific task or deadline? Identifying a cause will help you to work toward a solution, clarify the situation you face and choose a course of action.

2. **Visualize all your tasks.** Either write them out or look at the list you created. Prioritize tasks. Eliminate all distractions and all unnecessary, non-urgent, and unimportant tasks.

3. **Gather your resources.** Prepare as your stress informs you. What do you need to do to overcome the stress? Think of all your abilities, your network, and your connections.

4. **Devise a plan.** Structure your approach, create a mind map or a schedule to help you carry out your plan. Hopefully by this step, you will start to feel your stress levels decrease. Remind yourself that you have chosen to be proactive rather than reactive.

5. **Use your support systems.** Can you discuss your concerns with your supervisor or a colleague? Can you speak with your supervisor to extend a deadline? Can you request technical supports to aid in the proper completion of a task? A WIL perspective on time management does not solely emphasize your productivity and efficiency in a process, it also intends to prevent the possibility of losing time over incorrect task completions, increase your accuracy in your work, and aid in the development of positive and helpful habits.

Technology and Time Management

We have all spent more than our fair share of time lost down a Wikipedia rabbit hole, stuck in a Netflix binge, or scrolling endlessly on our phones. Technology is often treated in popular culture as a time suck, and, well, it certainly can be. At the same time, many of us will work in fields where we spend lots of time using technology for our jobs. Technology can be a time saver and can help us succeed. Here are a few tips to make the most of your technology to enhance your productivity:

- **Embrace the Scheduler.** There are so many different apps that can help you with to do list, calendars, etc. Pick just a few and try to set aside time to use them.

- **Manage Your Notifications.** Turn on notifications that will help with your work but turn off notifications that will encourage you to get distracted.

- **Review Your Usage.** Many phones now track how much time you spend on them and what you are doing. Take a look at those reports and tweak your behaviour if you are spending too much time scrolling.

- **Block Time and Distractions.** Schedule time just to work without distraction. This might mean you need to block websites and notifications that keep you out of your work zone.

Getting Help with Time Management

Time management is a life-long skill. Most of us will struggle with aspects of time management throughout our professional lives. Remember, you aren't alone. Understanding time-management from a WIL perspective requires initiative from you, your supervisor, and your instructor. When you work together to identify priorities and tasks, you will find it much easier to determine when and how to complete the multiple and shifting deadlines you encounter in school and work.

If you need help, get help! Don't forget that you can access services on campus and in some workplaces to help you with time management needs.

- **At School.** Start with your WIL teacher! Ask them questions and seek out their advice during office hours. You can also check in with your academic advisor, a learning strategist, or with Accessibility Services.

- **At Work.** Start with your supervisor. They will be able to tell you what is important and why. You may also be able to access support and programs through Human Resources. Many larger organizations provide a free Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which includes access to counselling and support.

- **At Home.** Turn to your friends and family. Many of them will have faced similar challenges in their own life. They can help you to prioritize, organize and refocus during times of trouble.

> **Key Takeaways**
>
> - Your motivations help you to understand and prioritize your goals and values.
> - Take time to plan and organize your work.
> - Prioritize tasks based on their importance and complexity.
> - Break down large tasks into smaller steps.
> - Remember that stress and pressure are normal processes.
> - Ask for help when you need it.

Image Description

Figure 7.3 Map of Procrastination

A monopoly style12-cell board starting at:

- Start assignment
- Go out for pizza with friends, lose turn
- Bake healthy muffins, go back 1 space
- Watch 2 hours of cat videos, skip turn
- Wash floors, go back 2 spaces skip turn
- Daydream about sunny beaches, miss your turn
- Online shopping, go back 3 spaces
- Play Fortnite until 3 am, return to start space
- Nap through your turn
- Watch 4 hours of Tik Tok, lose track of time and your turn
- Take a coffee break, go back 4 spaces
- Clean out your closet, go back 5 spaces

[Return to place in text]

Figure 7.4 The Eisenhower Matrix

1. Do First. First focus on important tasks to be done the same day.
2. Schedule. Important but not so urgent stuff should be scheduled.
3. Delegate. What's urgent but less important, delegate to others.
4. Don't do. What's neither urgent nor important don't do at all.

[Return to place in text]

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Chapter 8: Interpersonal Skills

Terms to Know

Emotional intelligence – The ability to recognize and manage your emotions.

Empathy – The ability to understand others' perspectives and situations.

Humility – The ability to see yourself honestly in interactions and situations.

Optimism – The ability to have a positive future outlook.

Self-awareness – The ability to recognize your strengths and weaknesses.

Self-efficacy – Belief in self and advocacy for self.

Case Study: Pat (She/Her) Prepares for a Collaborative Work Term

Pat wants to give back to her community and honour her mother's career by working with adults with physical and mental disabilities. She is looking forward to her WIL placement. She will be acting as a student assistant for Connect the North. It is a non profit organization that provides social and employment opportunities for adults with disabilities. Her new boss Sandra describes the workplace as a high-energy, fast-paced work environment where collaboration and teamwork are constant. Pat will help plan programming with several counsellors and then support the delivery of various programs with clients. Pat has done quite a bit of group work in her program this past semester and feels ready to participate. At the same time, she is

nervous about working exclusively with adults with more experience and education than she has. She is worried that she will make too many mistakes, or that she won't have enough ideas to add to discussions. How will she contribute best to the team and with her clients?

8.1 What Are Interpersonal Skills?

Have you ever heard of the term "people skills"? If you are a person, does that mean you have people skills? How can someone have, or not have, people skills? People skills, or interpersonal skills, are the techniques and behaviours you use when you are working with other people. We are using the term interpersonal skills in this chapter to explain a bit about what we mean by people skills. Inter means between or among, so interpersonal skills are the skills you use between and among other people.

Interpersonal skills are the basis of relationships and involve how you interact with, adjust for, and consider others. In other words, these are the skills you need to succeed when you are working with other people, including when you are collaborating with others, dealing with difficult situations, listening, and expressing yourself. Individuals who regularly practice interpersonal skills become adept at speaking openly, being appropriately assertive, reading body language cues, practicing humility, and empathizing with others.

You will learn and adopt people skills as natural qualities throughout your life. As you reflect upon yourself, your goals, and your skills, you will identify areas for growth, and then be able to develop and expand on these skills intentionally. Poorly developed interpersonal skills can negatively impact your ability to build relationships, adapt to new circumstances and change, and be perceived as insincere in your interactions.

Activity

Use the following interactive activity to explore some examples of interpersonal skills.

Interpersonal Skills

- Interpersonal Communication: Includes listening skills, our abilities and skills to interact with others, how we flow thoughts and ideas to others, how information is received, reading body language cues, making eye contact, our facial expressions, empathy, conflict resolution, and teamwork.

- Adaptability: This is how we adjust to change, how we transition during change, working in uncertainty, being solution-minded, having a willingness to learn, and seeking information.

- Emotional Intelligence (EI): EI is understanding and managing our own emotions in responses, recognizing the emotions of those around us, self-awareness, social awareness, responding to the situational environment, coping with pressure, dealing with stress, having empathy, and practicing patience.

- Self-Management: Includes setting goals, continuous learning, seeking responsibility, being responsive, productive, accountable, punctual, and dependable.

- Assertiveness: Is the ability to successfully communicate thoughts and ideas, be open to feedback, respectfully communicate opposing thoughts and ideas, defend your views calmly and politely, negotiate rather than passively agree, and have self confidence.

Reflect on Interpersonal Skills

Taking time to reflect on your interpersonal skills is an important way you can work toward professional growth. There are many resources available through workshops, online, and in print that

you can engage in as you try looking to better understand and expand your interpersonal skills. To start, try using the interpersonal skills assessment with Skills You Need. Their free assessment investigates the interpersonal skills listening, communicating, emotional intelligence, and group work.

What did you think of your assessment results? Consider spending some time reflecting (see 1.3 Reflective Practice in WIL) on your responses, results, and how you would like to move forward with interpersonal skills in your professional practices. As you reflect, ask yourself:

- Which skills should I focus on improving?
- How accurate am I in assessing my own strengths and weaknesses?
- Are there skills where I have overvalued my own skills compared to others?

How is Interpersonal Communication Different From Effective Communication?

Interpersonal and effective communication go hand and hand and are often mistaken for the other. The difference in interpersonal and communications skills comes down to context versus content. Interpersonal skills are the ways you create the context for communication, including the way you engage with others and build relationships. Effective communication, as we see in Chapter 9, is about the content of what you say, how clear it is, and how easy it is for your audience to understand. In other words, interpersonal communication includes your behaviours and abilities to interact with other people , while effective communication is how you convey information in a comprehensible way while taking into account your audience and how your information may be received (McPheat, 2019). Interpersonal communication reflects emotions, thoughts, ideas, and empathy in our approach and responses, while effective communication reflects the types of communication styles and how to best reach the listeners and reciprocate what is being heard.

What goes into communication that isn't words? Take a moment to brainstorm. Here are some ideas that you may have thought of.

- How we stand or sit
- Posture
- Arm placement
- Where and how we move our eyes
- Our facial expressions
- Our feelings toward the people
- How we are using technology
- Emojis
- Hand gestures

Figure 8.1 Word Cloud of Non-Verbal Communication

Interpersonal communication relies on gestures, body language, and on the needs, motivations, and goals of each participant in the interaction. This means interpersonal skills are is also about feelings and behaviours. Beyond just the sharing of information, William Schutz (1966, as cited by DiCioccio, Rubin, Westmyer, 1998), expressed that interpersonal communication helps us to achieve connection with others including feelings and behaviours that promote inclusion, control, and affection.

Interpersonal communication helps us to achieve connection with others including feelings and behaviours that promote inclusion, control, and affection.

The Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO) theory developed by Schutz conceives that:

1. Beliefs of self drives feelings
2. Feelings drive behaviour
3. Behaviour drives results
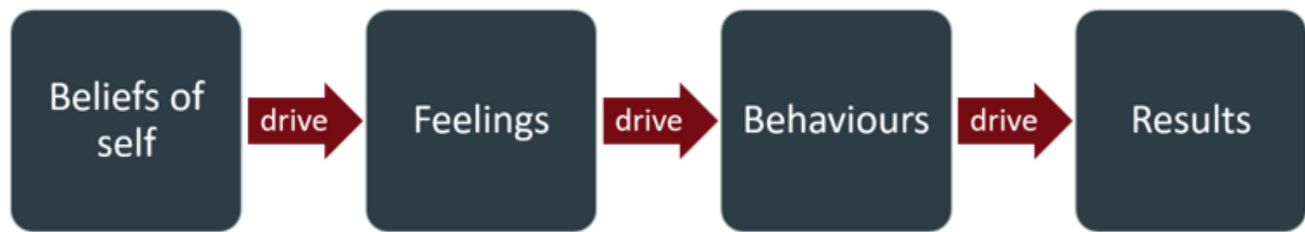
Figure 8.2 Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO) theory

Schutz's theory also suggests that successful relationships are based on understanding and managing self-esteem, valuing and respecting others, and adjusting your styles as needed to either support yourself or accommodate others (Blackman, n.d.).

Learn more about FIRO theory with the following video: [Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO)](#)

📽️ *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://opentextbc.ca/workintegratedlearning/?p=102#oembed-1*

Interpersonal communication requires you to pay attention to how others perceive you. You need to do three things at once:

1. Pay attention to the words you are using and how they might be interpreted.

2. Pay attention to your non-verbal signals and body language and how they might be interpreted.

3. Listen carefully to your communication partner(s). Interpret their words and non-verbal signals.

Case Study: Pat Responds to a Bad Communication Context

Pat has now been in her work placement for two weeks, and it is just like Sandra described! She is busy and spends a lot of time engaged in meetings and group discussions. She is learning a great deal through the people and tasks assigned to her. However, she has a big problem. She is worried that the counsellors she is working with are mad at her. She has been having trouble with meetings at the beginning of the day. Most days, the programming doesn't begin until 11am, so the team uses the first part of the day for planning and collaborating. Pat has been late for two separate team meetings because she has missed her bus connection. Both times, it wasn't her fault because the bus was behind schedule. The first time the team was very forgiving and Sandra didn't prompt for a reason. This morning was the second time and some of the team members now seem frustrated with having to wait to get started with the meeting. Pat looks around the room.

No one is saying anything, but the room feels tense. One counsellor has his arms crossed, and another lets out a huge sigh. Sandra keeps looking at her watch. Pat knows her behaviour may have contributed to this context, and that she should address it. She does her best to remain positive and prepares to speak. She comes up with a plan:

- **Apologize for being late.** This will show respect.
- **Acknowledge that my lateness impacts that group**. This will show empathy and help acknowledge the group feelings.
- **Suggest they start without me in the future**. This will help solve the problem more effectively if it happens again. Since I can't control the bus, it could happen!
- **Explain the reason for my lateness and a plan to change it**. I can take an earlier bus. This provides context and shows a willingness to respond to the needs of the group.
- **Ask if there is anything else I can to do.** Since I don't know all of the factors shaping people's behaviour towards me, and I am still getting to know everyone, it is worth it to check. and
- If she explains herself, maybe she can reset the context and help encourage everyone to focus on participation in the meeting discussion.

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8.2 Adaptability

Change is hard and often it is totally out of your control. In the workplace, you will need to be ready for anything. This is especially important early in your work placement. You will still be getting used to working and to your workplace's culture. This means you need to be adaptable. To be adaptable is to be able to respond appropriately to shifting demands and situations. This is easier said than done! Here are some ways you can cultivate adaptability as an interpersonal skill.

- **Observe your co-workers.** If you don't know what to do, you can always start by noticing what others are doing. How are they behaving? What does their writing look like? What are the norms or common behaviours at work that you can emulate?

- **Don't be afraid to try something new**. Sometimes it can be uncomfortable. It is okay to tell your coworkers you don't know how to do something or that you haven't done it before. Don't get others to do it for you. Try it out for yourself, as long as you have the supports you need to do it safely.

- **Ask questions.** It is normal when you are working somewhere new to not understand processes or expectations. Clarify what your team needs you to do. If something changes and you are uncertain about how to proceed, ask! It is always better to ask than to find out later that you are doing it wrong or will need to redo something.

- **Use the resources available to you.** Every workplace is different, but you can still consult employee handbooks, talk to your colleagues or boss, or engage in independent research. Sometimes a Google search is the best place to start!

- **Adopt a Growth Mindset.** Adaptability speaks to the growth mindset discussed in Chapter 1. A growth mindset means you will be flexible in your thinking and open to feedback.

Your personal approach to adaptability will guide how well you react and adjust when you confront change. This means that how you think shapes how you act. Your adaptability is hindered when your thinking is rigid. Approaching situations with rigidity speaks to a fixed mindset and can resemble unwillingness to acknowledge the ideas and suggestions of others.

Compare these two ways of thinking.

Rigid Thinking (Fixed Mindset)	Flexible Thinking (Growth Mindset)
- It's my way or no way - There is no time - It can't be done that way - We've already tried that	- I want to learn from the experience of others - What can I shift to prioritize my time? - There are multiple ways to get it right - Could I try again?

Don't forget to be positive!

When a situational shift is happening, approaching the situation with positivity can adjust your outlook to create optimistic responses towards new outcomes. Setting a positive mind frame and attitude is not always easy, especially during times of adversity. It requires mindful effort, attention, and willingness to learn. Developing a new skill takes practice. Journaling and reflective practices are great ways for you to track your goals and improvements. Remember that to cultivate positivity, you need to come from a place of curiosity, seek to understand your emotions, and be open to the ideas of others.

Take a moment to reflect..

- Consider a situation that did not have an ideal outcome. Could your approach have affected the outcome?

- Would taking an outside perspective to view the situation objectively provide you with the same information?

Strategies for Flexibility

Adapting to change can be difficult. If you find yourself resisting, this is normal and common. Preparing for adaptability can often be the best mechanism to eliminate the element of surprise. Greek philosopher Heraclitus said that "change is the only constant in life" (King, 2019). If change is the only constant you are best to prepare for adjustment rather than resist it. If you want to evaluate how you adapt to change, there are three elements of adaptability that can be practiced: cognitive flexibility, emotional flexibility, and dispositional flexibility (Calarco & Gurvis, 2006).

- **Cognitive flexibility** for adaptability is to be nimble in your thinking and to anticipate multiple ideas and scenarios to shift and change for best outcomes (Calarco & Gurvis, 2006). This approach speaks to seeing opportunity where there is challenge and coming from a place of curiosity and inquiry.

- **Emotional flexibility** for adaptability is to understand, be attentive, and flexible with your emotions and those of others (Calarco & Gurvis, 2006). This approach speaks to empathy and the ability to put yourself in others' shoes to understand their perspective.

- **Dispositional flexibility** for adaptability is to maintain a positive outlook and attitude (Calarco & Gurvis, 2006). This approach requires humility and the ability to be genuine, open, and honest in your interactions.

Activity

Using the information above, choose the correct answer for each multiple choice question.

1. Cognitive Flexibility for adaptability is to:

    a. adapt to the situation and be positive.

    b. be nimble and see opportunity where there is challenge.

    c. outgoing and anticipate the ideas of others.

2. Emotional Flexibility for adaptability is to:

    a. adapt to the situation and be positive.

    b. be empathetic and be flexible with our emotions.

    c. ensure our situation is understood no matter what it takes.

3. Dispositional Flexibility for adaptability is to:

    a. maintain positivity and practice humility.

    b. practice assertiveness and how to change the situation.

    c. ensure our situation is understood no matter what it takes.

Take a moment to reflect..

- Consider a situation that you handled well and what the outcome was. What was your attitude, mindset, and reaction in your approach?

- From the following perspectives which speak to the situation and which could you see yourself exploring further?

    ◦ I accept change as positive

    ◦ I see change as an opportunity

    ◦ I adapt plans as necessary

    ◦ I listen and consider my response to proposed change

    ◦ I engage others in conversations and implementation of change

    ◦ I adopt new technology, vocabulary, and operating rules quickly

Calarco & Gurvis, 2006

8.3 Emotional Intelligence and WIL

Emotional Intelligence and Self-Management

Feelings matter at work! Emotional intelligence, also known as EI or EQ for emotional quotient, is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage your own emotions. You have your own characteristics, personality, wants, and needs. It takes time and reflection to understand how those parts of yourself feed into your emotions. Once you start to know yourself, then you can start to interpret and how your emotions affect the people around you, and how the effect your perceptions of others.

What can emotional intelligence look like? As a child, you demonstrated early signs of emotional intelligence every time you gave another child a turn on the playground swing or slide, kept your cool when your turn was taken, or every time you asked to have a turn. As a WIL student at work, it might look like taking responsibility for your actions when you make a mistake, pulling your weight on group tasks and priorities, and helping to resolve conflicts. In class, it might look like sharing notes with a classmate, offering personal reflection during class discussion, and engaging productively in group work.

Watch the following video for an introduction to emotional intelligence.

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:* [*https://opentextbc.ca/workintegratedlearning/?p=107#oembed-1*](https://opentextbc.ca/workintegratedlearning/?p=107#oembed-1)

Use Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Framework

Goleman's Emotional Intelligence framework (1998) can help you understand emotional intelligence and guide your composure and decisions. The five components are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and relationship management (Goleman, 1998, p.24). Take a look at this framework and reflect upon which competencies you have, and which competencies you need to build.

Goleman's emotional intelligence framework includes the following five components and competencies. Use the left and right arrows in this interactive activity to explore the framework.

1. Self-Awareness

   - Emotional Awareness
     - People with this competence are able to:
       - understand their emotions and why they are feeling them

- link what they do, think, and say to their feelings
- recognize how their feelings affect their performance
- be guided by values and goals

- Self-Assessment
  - People with this competence are able to:
    - be mindful of their strengths and weaknesses
    - reflect and learn from their experiences
    - be open to feedback, perspectives of others, continuous learning, and self-developement
    - have and show humour about themselves

- Self-Confidence
  - People with this competence are able to:
    - have presence and are self-assured
    - voice their views even if unfavourable
    - be decisive

2. Self-Regulation

- Self-Control
  - People with this competence are able to:
    - handle impulsive feelings and distressing emotions well
    - remain composed and positive in adversity
    - think clearly and stay focused under pressure

- Trustworthiness
  - People with this competence are able to:
    - act ethically
    - build trust
    - admit their mistakes
    - take a stand
    - meet timelines and commitments
    - hold themselves accountable
    - organize their work

- Conscientiousness
  - People with this competence are able to:
    - be punctual

- carefully consider their work
- be self-disciplined
- tend to their responsibilities and commitments

- ◦ Innovation & Adaptability
    - People with this competence are able to:
        - pursue and generate fresh ideas
        - pursue original solutions
        - handle multiple demands
        - handle rapid change

3. Motivation

- ◦ Achievement Drive
    - People with this competence are able to:
        - be results-driven
        - take risk and set challenging goals
        - find work-arounds and efficiencies
        - seek performance improvement

- ◦ Commitment
    - People with this competence are able to:
        - strive to meet overarching organizational goals
        - find purpose in the organizational mission
        - use core values to guide decisions
        - seek opportunities that align with the mission

- ◦ Initiative & Optimism
    - People with this competence are able to:
        - be ready for opportunity
        - pursue goals
        - work through red tape
        - be persistent through challenges
        - hope for success instead of fearing failure

4. Empathy

- ◦ Understanding Others
    - People with this competence are able to:

- pay attention to emotional cues and are good listeners
- be sensitive to others' perspectives and situations
- support others' needs and feelings

- ◦ Developing Others
  - People with this competence are able to:
    - acknowledge and reward accomplishments and strengths or others
    - support others' future growth
    - offer feedback and foster others' skills

- ◦ Service Orientation
  - People with this competence are able to:
    - be service-minded to meet customer needs
    - anticipate and match customer needs to services or products
    - foster customer loyalty
    - make themselves available to help

- ◦ Leveraging Diversity
  - People with this competence are able to:
    - seek to understand worldviews
    - seek to understand their own biases
    - create an inclusive environment
    - come from a place of respect for all

- ◦ Political Awareness
  - People with this competence are able to:
    - understand organizational relationships
    - identify beneficial social networks

5. Relationship-Management

- ◦ Influence
  - People with this competence are able to:
    - detect and navigate emotional undercurrents
    - win people over
    - adjust when presenting to appeal to the listeners

- ◦ Communication
  - People with this competence are able to:

- notice emotional cues and adjust with give and take
- deal with difficult issues straight on
- listen well
- seek mutual understanding
- welcome sharing of information
- foster open communication and are responsive to bad and good messaging

  ◦ Conflict Management
  - People with this competence are able to:
  - be diplomatic and tactful in response to difficult people and situations
  - anticipate potential conflict and dispute
  - foster open discussion
  - foster win-win solutions

  ◦ Leadership
  - People with this competence are able to:
    - foster enthusiasm for shared vision and mission
    - maintain authenticity
    - guide performance
    - lead by example

  ◦ Change Catalyst
  - People with this competence are able to:
    - model the needed change
    - challenge the status quo
    - remove barriers
    - champion the change and enlist others

  ◦ Building Bonds
  - People with this competence are able to:
    - develop networks
    - seek mutually beneficial relationships
    - build rapport
    - build friendships among work peers

  ◦ Collaboration and Cooperation
  - People with this competence are able to:

- balance task with relationships
- cooperate and work with others
- embrace opportunities to work with others
  - Team Capabilities
    - People with this competence are able to:
      - respect, cooperate, and help others
      - foster participation and commitment
      - share credit

Case Study: Pat Reflects on Emotional Intelligence

Pat is working with a group of young adults as a part of a brand new program focusing on social skill development. There are six clients participating in the program and two counsellors, Marlene and Jody. Today, Marlene and Jody have asked the group to work in pairs. They are brainstorming activities they like to do in the summer. Pat is working with Melody and Trey. In the middle of the conversation, Melody starts teasing Trey for liking to garden, "Gardening is for old ladies! Are you an old lady, Trey?" Trey gets very angry and starts screaming "SHUT UP SHUT UP SHUT YOUR MOUTH!" Pat wants to intervene, but is overwhelmed by this sudden outburst. Melody should not have teased Trey, and Trey definitely should not be yelling! How should Pat deal with this? Before she has time to decide what to do, Marlene comes over, separates Melody and Trey, and talks to them each one-on-one. Then, Trey and Marlene talk to Melody together. After a few minutes, everyone is smiling. The situation calms down. Afterward, Marlene debriefs with Pat and focuses on how to handle difficult emotions.

These are Pat's notes about what Marlene did:

- **Start with safety.** If there is a risk of physical harm, start by dealing with that. By separating the two adults, Marlene ensured safety when emotions were too high.

- **Acknowledge strong emotions.** Marlene asked each person about how they felt and why they were upset. Melody and Trey put their feelings into words and explained why they behaved the way they did.

- **Put clients in the position of the other.** Reflecting and building empathy help self-regulate. Melody and Trey each were asked to explain how the other person felt. Then, they were asked how they felt. Melody felt guilty for bullying and Trey felt uncomfortable for yelling.

- **Help them recognize their mistakes.** Melody and Trey mended their friendship by apologizing and sharing their feelings with Marlene there for support. Both identified behaviours they would avoid in the future.

- **Reflect or debrief afterward**. Reflection with co-workers is important when supporting clients. I should go to Marlene or the other counsellors to discuss what I notice, how I feel, and what I should do differently next time.

Strategies for Emotional Intelligence for WIL

Emotional intelligence is the ability to pay attention to and evaluate your emotions and the emotions of others and groups. Emotional intelligence evolves and shifts depending on our situations over our lifetime and is something that you can work on everyday in all aspects of your life. To help you start on this journey, here are some useful steps you can take to build your emotional intelligence at work and school.

Self Awareness

Self-awareness brings together three different parts of yourself: emotional awareness, self-assessment, and self-confidence. It is about connecting how you feel with how you act. It is also about how assertive and comfortable you are in making decisions and stating your preferences. Much of this work you will need to do on your own, as it is reflective in nature. Take time to do it on break, on the way to work, or at the end of the day.

- **Check in with your emotions.** Try to use clear descriptions to clarify how your are feeling (even if you just do it in your own head). See if you can connect how you feel to how well you engaged and participated. You can also think about how productive you were and how attentive you were during your work time.

- **Reflect on your strengths and weaknesses.** You can do this on your own or get help from someone with more experience in the field. Ask an instructor or supervisor for feedback. When you receive feedback, try and explain it in your own words. Ask questions if you aren't sure.

- **Take opportunities to speak publicly.** Whether it is in the safety of a classroom discussion or in a department meeting, practice voicing your opinion. Work on your body language, your non-verbal gestures, and your tone of voice. If you want private practice, record yourself and analyze the results.

Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is all about consistency. It is about building up confidence over time, and continuing to be reliable, even when things don't go your way. Trustworthiness comes from honesty, ethics, timeliness, and organization. Conscientiousness comes when you increase your ability to work independently without direction. Innovation and adaptability are linked to creativity and, of course, your ability to handle (and even embrace!) change.

- **Be honest when you do something wrong.** Own up to your mistakes quickly and efficiently. At school, this may mean apologizing if you fall behind with coursework or asking for a makeup test. At work, this may mean explaining to your supervisor when you make a mistake and then describing your plan to fix it.

- **Stick with a task even when it is hard.** Work isn't always easy. It may be draining to tackle certain projects, but getting your work done on deadline will help your co-workers, peers, and employers rely on you.

- **Focus on time management.** The steps you learn in [Chapter 7](#) all come into play as you work to self-regulate. Make those to do lists, organize your calendar and meet all of your obligations.

Motivation

You heard about motivation in [Chapter 2](#) and [Chapter 7](#), and how it can help you with goal setting and time management. When it comes to emotional intelligence, motivation is more about your attitude and about how you are perceived. Do your coworkers, peers, instructors and supervisors see you as motivated?

- **Look for opportunities to grow.** Encourage and embrace feedback . Learn from your mistakes. Take on new challenges and learn as you go. Taking initiative and then following through on it will get the eye of your supervisor or instructor.

- **Show your commitment and loyalty.** Don't be afraid of being too excited about your job or school. If you have passion, let it show. When you start working somewhere new, learn about the goals and purpose of the organization, and keep those in mind when you are working.

- **Be optimistic.** Positivity will help you make it through tough times. It will help you when you are stressed or overwhelmed. Hoping for the best while remaining realistic about your situation will will help you recover and move forward.

Empathy

Empathy is how we connect to the feelings of others. It is how you imagine you would feel from someone else's point of view. In essence, it is a way of trying to feel how others feel, and then reflecting on that experience. Remember that all people have things going on in their lives outside of the contexts where you see them. At school and work, empathy can help you connect with others and better understand their challenges.

- **Acknowledge other peoples' feelings and experiences.** Empathize if someone is having a tough time. Give people space to share their feelings. Practice active listening and try to paraphrase what they are saying.

- **Celebrate the successes of others.** We often focus on the negative and neglect the positive. If someone did well on their last test, had a great interview, or got a promotion, congratulate them. Validation builds trust and connection, and, it's fun!

- **Identify the needs of your clients.** If you work in customer or client service, really focus on their experience. If you can, notice challenges or problems that make it harder for them to get what they need. If it is in your power, make changes or suggestions to your employer to see if you can make things better.

- **Engage in cultural competency and humility.** We all have biases and bring those with us to our jobs. Learn more about other cultures and experiences. Take advantage of the suggestions offered in [Chapter 4](#) and [Chapter 9](#).

Watch this video with Brené Brown to hear the difference in between empathy and sympathy: [Brené Brown on Empathy vs Sympathy](#).

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://opentextbc.ca/workintegratedlearning/?p=107#oembed-2
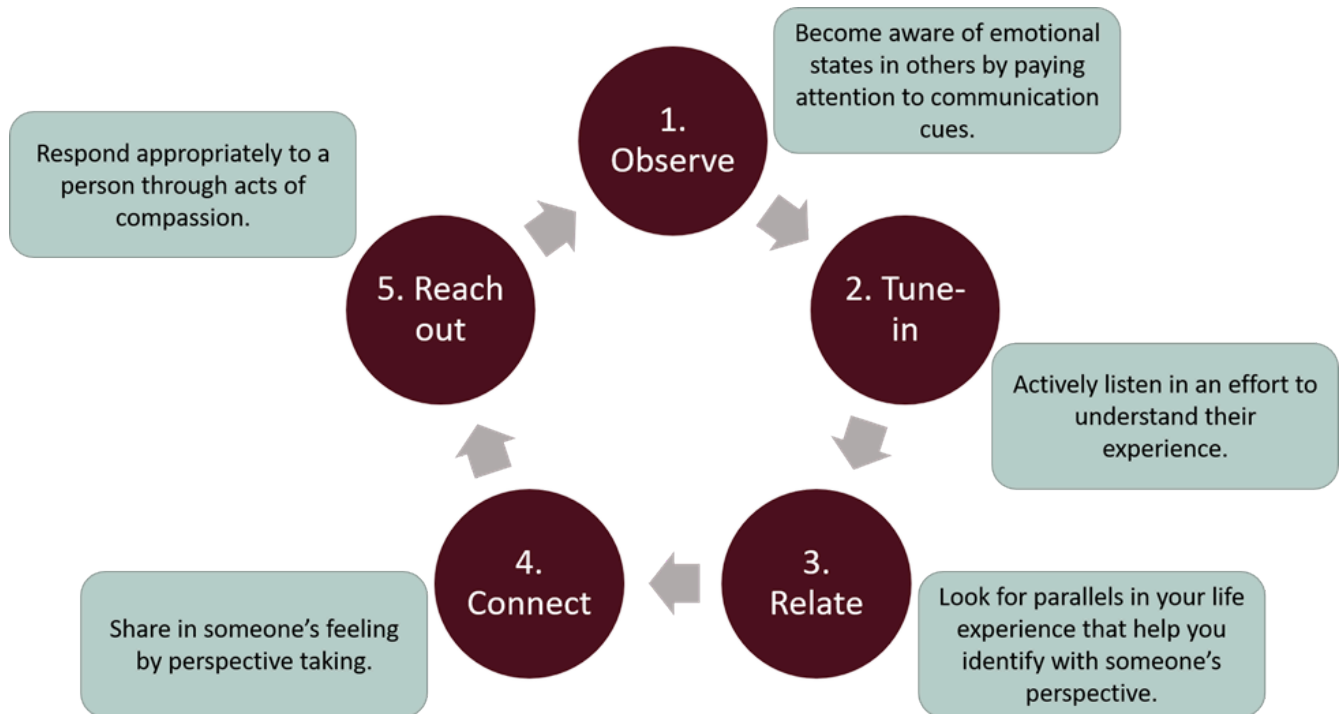
Figure 8.3 The Empathy Wheel [Image description]

Relationship Management

Many of the important parts of relationship management will come from your instructor or supervisor. They set the tone and attend to the needs of their students or employees. That being said, there are two sides to any relationship! As a new worker or a student, you are a kind of apprentice. So, learn from your co-workers and emulate behaviours you see as successful.

- **Read the room.** Look to your audience for clues about your performance and adjust as needed. This might mean speeding up or slowing down, adding detail or skipping ahead.

- **Be the bigger person.** When you are dealing with conflict at work, try to act in a way that is courteous and moral. Try to empathize and deal with challenges right away. Avoid pettiness and embrace feedback. Use appropriate support channels if you are being targeted or mistreated.

- **Embrace group work.** It can definitely be a challenge to work with others. However, if you can learn how to cooperate, share tasks, and contribute to a team, you will be highly valued.

- **Make friendships.** Find co-workers or classmates that you can relate to, even if you only spend time together at work or school. Get to know the people around you, including their interests and a bit about their life outside of work. Even if they seem really different from you, you'll be surprised at the ways you can connect.

Self Efficacy

Self-efficacy is your belief in yourself and the way your advocate for you and your needs. The perception that you have of yourself is important in your professional and personal growth. If you view yourself in a negative light, then likely your outward thoughts and actions will match. When you view yourself in a positive light, you create self-efficacy, positive thinking, and find the good in people and situations. Self-efficacy goes beyond just your skills and leans to your belief in yourself and what you can do with the skills that you have (Goleman, 1998). Simply having skills or knowing the competencies in this chapter is not enough. You must believe in your abilities to perform the skills in order to use them optimally (Goleman, 1998). Part of practicing self-efficacy is for you to communicate your emotions effectively. You know that you are advocating for yourself appropriately when you are able to speak your mind while continuing to create and maintain positive relationships.

> **Key Takeaways**
>
> - Interpersonal skills are the people skills that will help you build relationships and trust as an employee and as a student
> - Interpersonal communication is about the context in which you communicate
> - Remember that everyone at work is a person with their own challenges, goals and emotions
> - Emotional intelligence is about acknowledging your feelings and the feelings of others as an integral part of your workplace
> - Believe in yourself and practice optimism to help you succeed and overcome challenges when they come up

Image Descriptions

Figure 8.3 The Empathy Wheel

1. Observe. Become aware of emotional States in others by paying attention to communication cues.
2. Tune-in. Actively listen in an effort to understand their experience.
3. Relate. Look for parallels in your life experience that help you identify with someone's perspective.
4. Connect. Share in someone's feeling by perspective taking.
5. Reach out. Respond appropriately to a person through acts of compassion.

[Return to place in text]

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Chapter 9: Effective Communication

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, the reader will be able to:

- Explain the communication process.
- Recognize barriers to communication.
- Identify the three major communication styles.
- Develop active listening techniques.
- Develop techniques to communicate professionally (assertively) (appropriately depending upon the situation). (effective complaints, saying no, texting vs calling)
- Receive, utilize, and provide feedback effectively.

Terms to Know

Communication – The act of exchanging information.

Linear communication – The process of one-way communication.

Transactional communication – The process of two-way communication.

Dogmatism – Expressing our opinions and assumptions as fact.

Feedback – Information provided by others and often used for reflection and self-improvement.

Case Study: Talia (She/Her) Worries About Her Communication Skills

Talia is thrilled with her WIL position at the vet clinic, Pawsome Animal Hospital. She loves animals and this will be a great experience to add to her resume and veterinary school application. She's a little intimidated though, about answering the phone, making appointments, and greeting clients. She's always been a little shy and quiet. She would like to know more about the communication process. How should it sound when people are speaking and writing professionally? What if someone makes a complaint? How do

you respond without getting upset? She also knows that feedback will be part of the WIL experience and she's a little nervous about this piece of the process. Let's look at some ways to help Talia feel more comfortable in her new role.

9.1 What is Effective Communication?

It's a common assumption that because we spend most of our days talking, listening, and reading that we are automatically great communicators. However, quantity does not equal quality. We can spend a lot of time reinforcing bad habits. Think of effective communication as a series of skills and practices that you develop intentionally through practice. The great news is that because professional communication is skill-based, you can become more effective at communication and see the results in happier co-workers, clients and even friends and family!

Let's begin with a definition of effective communication. Effective communication is a communication between two or more persons where the intended message is successfully delivered, received, and similarly understood in a clear and concise format. (Business Jargons, 2021).

Effective communication is a communication between two or more persons where the intended message is successfully delivered, received, and similarly understood in a clear and concise format (Business Jargons, 2021).

As noted in [Chapter 6: Workplace Essential Skills](#), oral communication, reading, and writing are three of the nine essential employability skills. These are valuable skills in the workplace.

Effective communication in the workplace saves money and improves morale, efficiency, engagement, and creativity. Bad communication has a lot of costs. For example, think of the money, time, and frustration that occurs when you are trying to read a poorly written set of instructions. Think about the number of times you have received bad service or needed to send multiple emails to get your question answered. You can also think about a terrible worse case scenario: imagine miscommunicating life or death information on a patient file.

Communication Process

First of all, you need to understand the basic communication process. While there are a number of models of communication, including linear, interactional, and transactional, let's start with a few of the key terms. All communication begins with a **source**, also known as the sender or speaker. They will determine the **message** and then **encode**, decide what to say and how to say it, in words, behaviours, or sounds. The source sends the message along a **channel**. When choosing a channel consider the audience (receiver) and appropriate format (for example, a phone call, a text or an email, or a face-to-face conversation). Remember the channel could even be non-verbal. When the receiver, also referred to as the listener, receives the message and **decodes** it, interprets the message. Other factors include the **environment** or space in which the message is sent and received, as well as the **context**, this is the circumstances that form the setting for sending and receiving the message. And finally, communication

is influenced by **interference** or noise, these are the factors that can block or alter the message (WSBCTC, n.d.).

Let's look at this in an example to see it in action.

Case Study: Talia Receives a Message

Talia is on the phone with a client looking to book an appointment. The client, Mr. Armstrong, is the source or sender of the message. The message is that he would like to book an appointment. This is a pretty straightforward message for Mr. Armstrong to encode and for Talia to decode. The channel is verbal and over the phone. This would mean that there is no eye contact or body language cues for the sender or the receiver. Also, neither can see the environment that they are sending their messages in. Mr. Armstrong might be calling from a quiet office with little or no interruption, whereas Talia may be surrounded by busy co-workers and a waiting room full of furry patients and their owners. This is also where context can come into play. Mr. Armstrong may have just gotten a customer complaint and still feel upset about that, or Talia may have just had a puppy patient pee down her clean uniform. And finally, interference can affect the communication process. Talia may not be able to hear Mr. Armstrong well because she is in a noisy room or Mr. Armstrong may have a quiet speaking voice which makes it difficult for Talia to hear.

Communication Models

Looking at some of these communication models will help you further understand these elements. The **linear communication model**, illustrated below in Figure 9.1, describes how a speaker transmits a message to a listener through a channel. The message can be comprised of words, sounds, or behaviours. Obstacles that interfere with the message are considered noise.
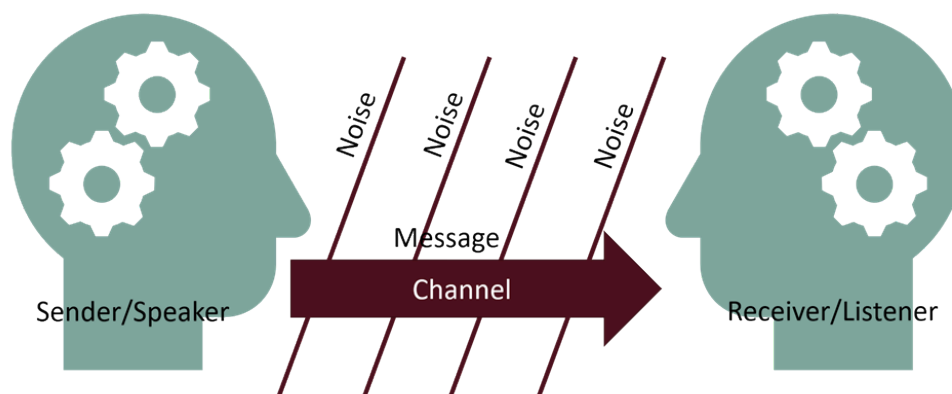
Figure 9.1 Linear Communication Model

The **interactional communication model**, illustrated below in Figure 2, incorporates feedback from the receiver as well as taking into consideration both the sender's and receiver's field of experience. The field of experience includes the environment, culture, experiences, and upbringing that can influence the message for both the sender and the receiver. You may notice that one difference between

the linear and the interactional communication models is the idea of feedback. Seldom are we communicating in a vacuum where our message is not received and reacted to either through words or non-verbal cues. Another difference is the incorporation of the field of experience which acknowledges again that messages are neither sent nor received in a vacuum but impacted by a number of characteristics.
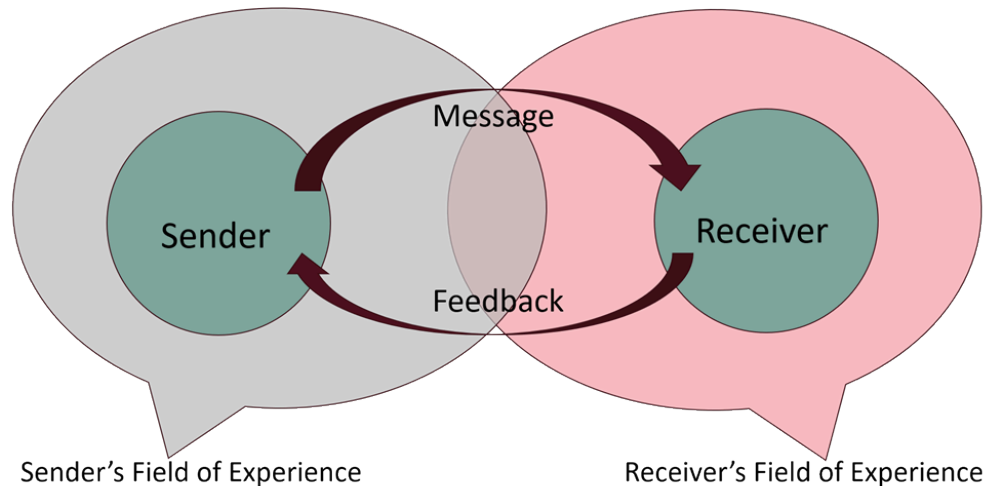
Figure 9.2 Interactional Communication Model

Thirdly, there is the **transactional communication model**, illustrated below in Figure 3, like the interactional model, the transactional model considers and places more emphasis on the field of experience and incorporates more overlap between the sender's and receiver's fields of experience. This principle demonstrates a connectedness between the messages and the people involved in the process are "dynamic" rather than static and each party is engaged in a transaction of give and take building the message together. You see this in the change of terms from sender and receiver to communicator.
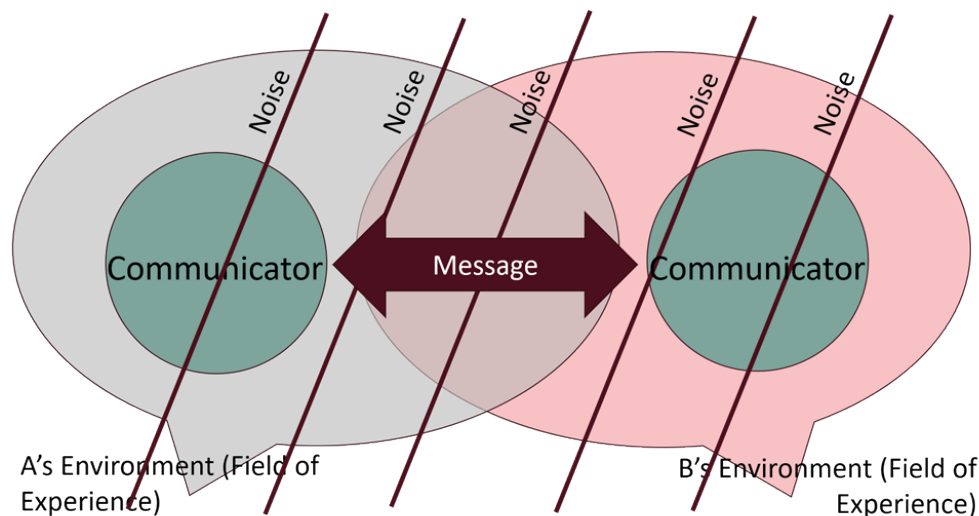
Figure 9.3 Transactional Communication Model.

Watch the following video for more information on the communication process.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://opentextbc.ca/workintegratedlearning/?p=113#oembed-1

Activity

Looking at the three communication styles explained above; linear communication, interactional communication, and transactional communication, fit the best answer to the communication style.

1. The linear communication model is when a speaker transmits a message to a listener through

   a. noise.
   b. a receiver.
   c. a channel.

2. The transactional communication model is the exchange of messages between

   a. message and feedback.
   b. different stages of noises.
   c. communicators.

3. The interactional communication model is a process in which the sender and receiver generate meaning by sending messages and receiving f

   a. feedback.
   b. communication
   c. static.

Verbal, Non-Verbal and Written Communication

All communication can be classified into three main types: verbal, nonverbal, and written. All three use a similar model of the sender encoding a message and sending it along a channel where the receiver decodes it. Each of these types has certain advantages and disadvantages. Verbal communication in a face-to-face format is quick and offers the opportunity for immediate feedback. However, verbal communication may not allow time for reflection and careful consideration.

The second type of communication, nonverbal, includes the elements of body language, eye contact, facial expressions, hand gestures, posture, and even space (Saylor Academy, 2012). There are a number of cultural factors that can influence the interpretation of nonverbal communication. Therefore,

it is important not make assumptions about nonverbal cues and to ask if you need clarity. This could be considered a barrier to communication. Let's look at this topic now.

The third type of communication, written communication, includes emails, texts, signs, cover letters, resumes, job evaluations, and anything else communicated by writing. Written communication may also be advantageous when you need to send the same information to a large group of people. For example, a new policy at work can be written up and posted. Whereas the same information shared verbally one by one to employees of a large organization would take a long time and have more chance of misinterpretation. While written communication allows for more reflection in the writing process and even editing and proofreading, it does not offer immediate feedback from the receiver.. Remember to consider the message and the channel when planning communication.

Barriers to Communication

As shown in the example of Talia and Mr. Armstrong's conversation, there can be a number of things that cause interference in the communication process, such as the busy veterinarian office or Mr. Armstrong's quiet voice. Often this interference is referred to as barriers to communication.

Take a moment to reflect on what might be some barriers to communication that you have encountered. Refer to chapter

Let's look at some common barriers to communication.

Physical Communication Barriers

There are a number of elements of the physical environment that can get in the way of effective communication, such as noise, busyness, having a lot of other people in close proximity, and distractions. Many times, these are simply a fact of the environment that you work in, for example, it's not always possible to ask everyone to leave the room while you take a phone call at the reception desk. However, if Talia needed to talk to a patient whose pet has a serious health condition about arranging a payment plan, she may want to do that in a quieter place. Think about what is possible in terms your physical environment and the circumstances or the context of the situation.

Emotional Communication Barriers

Have you ever found yourself stammering a bit when talking to someone you are nervous around? This is an emotional barrier to effective communication. Emotional barriers can include fear, mistrust, lack of self-confidence, and nervousness about the situation or the person you are communicating to. The scenario above also includes an emotional communication barrier, the client could be experiencing fear for their pet's health as well as anxiety about an expense vet bill that might be hard to budget for. Emotional communication barriers can also come from stress, pressure and anxiety. For example,at the end of Talia's first week her boss, Dr. Jones, would like to give her some feedback on her performance. Performance anxiety is common, as is stress related to a lack of certainty. Knowing that feedback is coming may cause Talia to feel nervous which may interfere with her ability to communicate clearly and concisely.

Language Communication Barriers

Have you ever misheard or misinterpreted what someone said? Language communication barriers can include the words you or your receiver choose or the features of sound and voice. Using jargon, technical terms, or other types of language can interfere with the decoding process and inhibit your complete understanding. Another barrier happens when the person says something in an overly complicated way or gives too much information all at once. Have you ever lost the point in a long email? That could be because of a language communication barrier! Similarly, the volume of someone's voice – either too loud or too quiet – or a heavy accent can get in the way of properly understanding the message. Mr. Armstrong's quiet voice made it difficult for Talia to hear and therefore understand him completely, especially in the context of the busy reception desk.

Watch the following video exploring further common barriers to effective communication:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://opentextbc.ca/workintegratedlearning/?p=113#oembed-2

Activity

Consider what barriers get in the way of you communicating effectively. Is there a way to remove or reduce those barriers? Let's look at a few scenarios and see if you can identify the main barrier and a way to resolve it.

Referring to the above barriers to communication and information from the video determine which communication fits each scenario.

1. Ms. Anderson, a twenty-something client with an obedient border collie named Max, comes up to the reception desk to pay for the services. She is visibly shaken and upset. Talia explains the bill to Ms. Anderson and asks her how she would like to pay. When Talia doesn't receive an answer, she asks again. There is still no response from the client, so Talia needs to ask a third time. Ms. Anderson apologizes for this and explains she has just found out that Max needs a biopsy and she's worried that the condition could be serious.

   a. Language Barrier

   b. Emotional Barrier

   c. Physical Barrier

2. Talia receives a phone call from Mr. Singh inquiring about the bill he received in the mail for the recent treatment of Puddles, his basset hound. He questions why he is being billed for otitis externa when his basset hound only has an inner ear infection. Talia explains that otitis externa is the scientific name for an inner ear infection.

    a.   Language Barrier

    b.   Physical Barrier

    c.   Emotional Barrier

3. It's a particularly busy afternoon at the vet clinic, George comes in with three of his sled dogs. They immediately spy Mrs. Cooper's tabby cat, which causes them to begin barking uncontrollably. Talia is unable to hear the post-op instructions that Dr. Jones is relaying to her.

    a.   Language Barrier

    b.   Physical Barrier

    c.   Emotional Barrier

4. Mr. Nikolovski has been coming to Pawsome Animal Hospital for years with his various pets. He is very friendly and loves to tell the front desk staff long stories about his life in Macedonia. One day after he leaves, Denise admits to Talia that because of Mr. Nikolovski's strong accent she never fully understands what he tells her, rather she just smiles and listens politely.

    a.   Language Barrier

    b.   Emotional Barrier

    c.   Physical Barrier

5. Ms. Potts has brought in her guide dog for a check up. Talia tells her to take the dog "over there to get weighed on the scale". Ms. Potts is vision impaired, so she asks, "Where is over there?"

    a.   Physical Barrier

    b.   Language Barrier

    c.   Emotional Barrier

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9.2 Active Listening

Listening is a key piece of the communication process. Experts say that we only remember 25-50% of what we hear. That means that during a ten minute conversation, we may only keep track of two to five minutes of what was said! Think about the impact of only hearing half of the directions that you receive on the job (Mindtools, n.d.). Think about what you don't hear your employer, client, or co-workers say. We all can work to improve our listening skills so that we are less likely to miss important information in a conversation.

Active listening can help you become a better listener. Active listening takes place when you make a conscious effort to hear the complete message. Think back to our communication model, active listening means paying attention to the message and decoding it to understand the message as the sender intended it. This means not only paying attention to the message but also asking for feedback to check that you're understanding the message as it was intendedHere are some strategies to help you become an active listener:

- **Mentally focus on the sender and the message.** Look at the speaker directly, set aside distracting thoughts, forget about forming your response and focus on listening. Try to shut out all other distractions and concentrate on the words and message. Sometimes repeating key pieces of information can be helpful.

- **Maintain eye contact.** In a Canadian workplace, you will be expected to look someone in the eye as you talk to them. This is a way of conveying respect and showing you care about what the person is saying.

- **Show that you are listening**. Use non-verbal and verbal cues, such as nodding in agreement or saying "I understand" will help you to remain focused. Also, assume a posture that feels confident and interested.

- **Engage in the message.** Offer feedback when appropriate and ask clarifying questions that promote discovery and insight.

- **Paraphrase the information**. To ensure proper understanding, it may be helpful to rephrase or summarize what you heard. This will ensure that the message has been properly understood and clarify meaning in the moment. For example, repeating the date and time of the appointment the client just booked will ensure that you both understand the same information.

- **Control your emotions.** Becoming defensive or anxious will interfere with your brain's ability to take in information. Remain calm and objective, focusing on listening, until you can process all of the information and the emotions that may go with it.

- **Don't interrupt.** Rather wait until the sender has given the full message before asking questions or adding more information.

- **Remove or reduce distractions**. If you can remove any communication barriers, you will be more likely to focus on the message. This may mean you need to put someone on hold, move to a new environment, pause a video, or adjust the volume.

- **Take notes**. Write down key pieces of information to help you remember them. They also will give you a point of reference later, which can be crucial if you do a task infrequently.

- **Read more than once.** If the communication is in print, skim the writing quickly and then re-read for clarity and understanding. Again, make notes or try underlining key points to help you remember.

- **Use a notebook.** It is a good idea to keep a notebook handy when you are new to a job. This ensures that all the notes you take are in the same place. Also, employers and supervisors appreciate it when you don't repeatedly ask the same questions (Mindtools, n.d.).

Activity

Let's look at some more scenarios and see what active listening strategies could be helpful for Talia. *(Check all answers that apply)*

1. Talia is working her first opening shift. Denise, her supervisor, has written her a list of tasks that need to be completed as part of the opening routine.

    a. Talia reads the list before Denise leaves for the day and clarifies any information she is not clear about.

    b. Talia has watched Denise open a number of times and doesn't believe she needs the list.

    c. Talia waits to read the list until her afternoon break when she can sit quietly in the break room.

    d. Talia reads the list and makes notes on the sheet.

2. Talia accidentally forgot to have a client pay for the service before they left. Talia's boss asks her to come to her office to discuss the matter.

    a. Talia sets aside her nerves and focuses on Dr. Jones, listening carefully and setting her emotions aside.

    b. Talia listens to what Dr. Jones has to say and when she is finished Talia calmly asks what she can do about the situation.

    c. Talia immediately begins to apologize and cuts off Dr. Jones mid-sentence.

    d. Talia starts to catastrophize the situation in her and is sure that she will be let go.

3. Due to Talia's comfort with the animals, professionalism, and competence, she has been asked to help assist one of the veterinary technicians with a procedure. Before the procedure, the technician explains carefully what Talia will need to do during the procedure.

    a. Talia has seen this procedure done several times on her own animals and believes she doesn't need the instructions.

    b. Talia is so excited she can barely think straight.

    c. Talia listens carefully to the instructions and asks clarifying questions when

appropriate.

d. Even though Talia knows she won't have time to look at her notebook, she takes careful notes during the explanation and reviews them on her lunch break.

4. The waiting room is busy and there are several lines of the phone ringing at once. The client Talia is speaking with would like to book an appointment for Friday afternoon.

a. Talia opens the booking app on the computer and calmly finds Friday, she books the appointment for the client repeating the pertinent information.

b. Talia politely asks the client on the phone if they could hold for a moment, places them on hold, takes the payment from the client she was working with, and then goes back to the client on the phone.

c. Talia quickly jots down the information barely saying a word to the client.

d. Talia writes the appointment on a scrap of paper promising she will enter it after while taking a payment for another client at the same time.

9.3 Communicating Professionally

Professional communication sometimes means acting in ways that may be different than how you act at home, with your family, or with your friends. In a Canadian context, professional communication is usually direct and assertive. This is because communication tends to be functional and serve the purpose of identifying actions and next steps. This is particularly important in written communication, where receivers are looking for the information they need to act and respond efficiently.

Assertive Communication

Assertive communication is defined as the ability for individuals to "clearly state their opinions and feelings, and firmly advocate for their rights and needs … while being very respectful of the rights of others" (University of Kentucky, n.d.). An assertive communicator is confident in what they are saying, attempting to be direct, brief, and kind.

Here are some qualities of assertive communication, along with some examples.

- **Reflect on what your audience needs.** If you need someone to take an action, ensure that they understood what you asked. Think about their needs and concerns.
    - "I know you often take your lunch break at 12. Would it be okay if we scheduled our debrief at 11am or 1pm?"
- **Explain what you need in simple language.** This means focusing on actions and outcomes, while recognizing the feelings of others.
    - "Could I please come in late next Tuesday? I have a dentist appointment. I can make sure the office is clean and ready to open on Monday evening."
- **Describe your feelings when necessary using I statements.** Try to use objective language when you are describing other people's actions. This means you want to avoid blaming or accusing the person you are speaking to.
    - "I feel frustrated when you don't cover your food in the microwave in the lunch room. After you use it, I need to clean the old food our before I can heat up my lunch."
- **Be respectful.** This can be a challenge when you are upset or when you think you may upset the person you are talking to.
    - "I am sorry to hear that you had a problem with our product's quality. I would be happy to exchange that for you."
- **Stand up for yourself.** Other people may try to manipulate you or try to get you to do their work. In severe cases, they may even try to infringe on your rights.
    - "I'm sorry, but that task is outside of my job description. I don't report to you, so I will need to confirm with my supervisor before I proceed."

How to Say No

An important piece of learning to be assertive is knowing when and how to say no. Although it can be hard to say no to someone, it is better to be realistic about what you can do. As a WIL worker, you may also not have the authority to give a customer what they are asking for. Often, you will need to defer to your manager or other supervisor. Saying yes when you aren't able to do something also has real consequences. If you fail to do something you said to do, you will lose credibility, strain relationships, and even risk job loss. Saying yes is taking on a responsibility. So, even though saying no may feel uncomfortable in the short term, there are ways to do it politely. Here are a few phrases you can try:

- I'm going to have to pass.
- I'd love to but I just don't have time.
- I don't want to say yes and then let you down.
- I don't want to say no but I have to.
- It's just not right for me.
- It's just not the right time for me (Satran, qtd. in The Whoot, 2021).

Difficult Conversations and Managing Complaints

There are times when you will need to have a difficult conversation and this may come in the form of managing a complaint.

Here are some tips that will help you:

- Take a step back and evaluate the situation from the other perspective.
- Process your emotions away from the job. This may take the form of journaling, meditating, talking to a friend. It's fine to vent but do so in a space that is appropriate.
- Reflect on what you are really upset about. The conversation may have triggered a sensitive area for you.
- Pick out the learning opportunities (Guidoccio, 2021).
- Engage in active listening, be curious and ask clarifying questions.
- Take a break. Sometimes a conversation comes to a point where it is best to take a break. Ensure that you do so respectfully and with the intention of revisiting the conversation.

Effective Complaints

No matter how good you are at communicating, mistakes and misunderstandings will still occur. If and when you are on the receiving end of a customer complaint, remember to listen attentively with the aim of understanding. Allow them to finish their message before you offer advice or assistance. Don't be afraid to apologize if you have made a mistake. Work with the customer to find a solution. This may mean you need to be creative or that you may need to get your supervisor's opinion or approval.

Follow up with the customer or client to ensure that it was resolved to their satisfaction. If necessary, learn from the misunderstanding and move on.

Communication Behaviours to Avoid

There are some definite communication behaviours to avoid in the workplace.

- Complaining
- Gossiping
- Negativity
- Making excuses
- Judging
- Exaggerating
- Dogmatism

Figure 9.4 Communication behaviours to avoid.

Receiving Feedback

Feedback. The word alone makes many people anxious. Some people automatically associate this with criticism but while feedback may contain some concerns, it isn't always negative. We should view feedback as a positive experience, "an opportunity to celebrate achievements, and share some difficult

growth points" (Winwood, 2018). Remember the discussion about a growth mindset in [Chapter 1: Work Integrated Learning](#), this is an important aspect of receiving feedback.

Here are some tips on how to receive feedback effectively:

- **Engage in active listening**. Remember to listen fully and wait until the speaker has finished to clarify.

- **Approach feedback objectively**. Try not to be defensive. In most instances, the person providing the feedback is aimed at improvement not criticism.

- **Be aware of your physical body**. Assume an open, comfortable, but confident posture. Take a deep breath. Hold your head up and look directly at the speaker. Your mind will follow these bodily cues and feel calmer.

- **Seek to understand**. If you aren't completely sure of what the feedback is, ask questions and clarify in a non-defensive way. You can also ask for an example of the behavior to illustrate the feedback.

- **Have a growth mindset**. Embrace the feedback as a learning opportunity (Winward, 2018).

- Thank the person for giving you the feedback. If you've ever been asked to give feedback, you'll know that it is difficult and when done well, it requires a lot of time. Be grateful that the person giving you feedback feels you are worth that investment.

- **Reflect on the feedback**. Sometimes it's best not to respond in the moment but to give yourself some time to reflect on what was said, "assess the value of the feedback, the consequences of using it or ignoring it, and then decide what to do" (University of Waterloo, n.d.). It is ultimately your decision how you use the feedback you have been given.

- **Report inappropriate feedback.** If you think the feedback is inappropriate, talk to a trusted friend or colleague and ask for a second opinion. This may help you determine the validity of the comment. If you need to, take action with the help of your WIL instructor, supervisor, or a human resources professional.

Case Study: Talia Receives Feedback

Talia has been in her work placement for a full week now and Dr. Jones would like to meet with Talia to talk about how she is doing. Dr. Jones takes her into his office away from the animals and other employees. He invites her to sit down, and she does. Talia looks at him expectantly, but doesn't say anything. Dr. Jones starts by complimenting her on her gentleness with the animals and with the progress she is making on learning the booking system. Talia relaxes a little. Then, Dr. Jones says he wants to work with her on her customer service skills. Talia starts to panic. Dr. Jones explains that Talia tries to do everything at once. "It's okay to ask a customer to wait or put them on hold," he says. "It will help you focus and avoid errors." Talia nods slowly. Even though she isn't sure if she should respond, she blurts out "I don't want to make anyone mad! I hate being put on hold." Dr. Jones agrees, but explains "People expect to wait sometimes. It is better for them to experience brief discomfort and get your full attention." Talia tries to digest the feedback. She says, "Next time, I will only deal with one customer at a time. I will politely but clearly ask people to wait." Dr. Jones smiles. "That would be fantastic. You are getting more confident every day. Thanks for listening."

Giving Feedback

Early in your career, you may find that you receive feedback more than you give it. However, when you engage in peer learning or are training a new co-worker, you may find yourself in the position of giving feedback. Here are a couple of notes that will help you give effective feedback when you are asked for it.

- Be genuine, humble, and respectful.

- Seek to understand. Don't look to score points or make yourself look superior.

- Be collaborative and supportive.

- Give concrete and specific examples.

- Look for things that can be improved upon.

- Avoid lavish praise (InnerDrive, n.d.).

- Avoid comparisons with others (InnerDrive, n.d.).

- Remember to also add positive comments.

Remember, don't offer feedback for others without being asked for it or asking if they would mind you giving them some feedback.

Key Takeaways

- Watch for communication barriers and reflect on how to remove them.
- Engage in active listening.
- Manage your emotions. Communicate in a calm, respectful, but assertive manner.
- Look at feedback as an opportunity.
- Practice communication skills.

Media Attributions

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Chapter 10: Writing at Work

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this chapter, the reader will be able to:

- Identify the audience, purpose, and tone in writing
- Plan a writing task
- Describe strategies for writing in different formats
- Practice revising writing

Terms to Know

Audience – The reader of your writing. The audience can be specific (like your supervisor) or more general (like customers at your workplace).

Copy – The meaning of the term as it is being used here means written material that is to be published. A short form of copywriting.

Editing – Making changes to your writing to more clearly emphasize the audience, purpose and tone while improving clarity, consistency and organization.

Proofreading – Updating your writing to ensure it is free of grammar, spelling, typos and other minor writing errors.

Purpose – The reason why you are writing. Purpose focuses on action. Some common purposes for writing are to request information, to provide information, to make a complaint or to persuade.

Revision – The process of editing or refining your written work before you share it with your intended audience.

Tone – The way you sound to your audience. It summarizes the attitude of your writing. Professional writing tone typically is direct, confident, sincere, and positive.

Case Study: Aimee (She/Her) Begins her New Position as Communications Assistant

Aimee has just been hired as a Communications Assistant for the airport. She will be supporting her supervisor Mark with a variety of initiatives to help encourage people that airports continue to be a safe and affordable travel option. Mark is planning a media campaign that includes press releases, advertisements, social media, and some event promotion. Though he will oversee and approve any work that Aimee creates, he expects her to come up with ideas, collect copy from the rest of the marketing team, and help with the rollout throughout the next two months.

Introduction

In most jobs, you will need to do a variety of tasks that involve writing. Writing helps make things happen! It creates action, which, in the world of jobs, creates work. In an employment context, writing is a form of transaction. You write to solve problems, make requests, promote sales, describe procedures, and to fix errors. Writing is grounded in purpose and action: you write to get things done, meet your goals, and serve the needs of others.

Good writing is clear, concise, and professional, but the content can change significantly from task to task. Some will be quick and simple, like confirmation emails or even text message updates. Others may take a long time and involve complex documentation, reporting, and carefully crafted language. For example, you might be asked to send an email to a client, take a message for an unavailable staff member, or write a piece for your company's website. While each of these is writing, the audience, purpose, and tone will be different for each. To become a strong writer at work, you need to think about each of these aspects every time you start a new message.

Activity

Sometimes the best way to learn good writing skills is to see what *not* to do. Before you learn more about writing for work, see if you can spot some of the common errors in this message. In this message, Alex is writing to her boss to request vacation.

How could we improve the following email?

> To: m.adelman@sportsplexnorth.com
> From: cat_krazy_alex@hmail.com
> Subject: Annual VACAY!!!

U probably don't remember, but I always take my vacation in July. This year I'm taking the last too weeks of August instead. BTW if you do not approve this you'll create considerible inconvenience for me and you better believe I'll take this up with HR. ☹

A

Choose all answers that apply.

- Leave out Emojis
- BTW – by the way is inappropriate
- Tone is inappropriate, unprofessional, threatening even.
- A more appropriate subject line, such as Vacation Request
- Add a greeting – Hello Louisa
- Email from your company email account
- Spelling error in inconveneince – e and i are flipped around
- Inappropriate salutation – Thanks, Alex
- The wrong form of too – should be two
- Ask, don't demand
- Missing a comma after this
- U should be You
- Shouldn't threaten – it may come to that but don't start there
- Spelling error in considerable – a not i

10.1 Writing for Action: Audience, Purpose, and Tone Audience

One of the first considerations when writing anything is your audience. Are you writing to a colleague, your supervisor, the owner of the company, or a customer? Are you writing to one person or many? Do you know them or not? What do they need in order to take the action you want them to take? Consider your audience to determine how long, how short, how direct, and how friendly you should be.

What do they already know? Start by assessing your audience's familiarity with the information you are sharing. Will your audience understand the specialized language of your industry, or do you need to use more general terms? Do they know the project well, or will you need to provide more details to help them understand? Do they need to know how to do something or why something is significant?

What do you already know about them? Now that you know a bit about your audience's background, assess your relationship with your audience. How familiar are you with your audience? Are you writing an email to a colleague you know quite well and can use more informal language? Or are you writing to an important client, and therefore should use more formal language? What demographics does that person occupy? Is there anything about their employment status, customer status, or client status that should inform your communication?

Who are they in relation to you? One particularly important aspect of your relationship to your audience may be the hierarchical or functional connection you have to them in their position. Similar to familiarity, consider the position of the person you are writing to. An email to the president of the company or a potential investor will have a more formal tone than an email to your colleague about a project you are working on together.

What is the audience reach? Next, try to determine if the communication is public or internal. This means you need to determine if it is only for people within your workplace, or if it is going to be for clients, customers, or other stakeholders. There may be types of information that should not be released to the public but would be appropriate to share internally. If you are sending a public message, definitely have it approved first! You may also need to consider the company image or the need to provide a unified message or brand.

What demographics are represented? You may need to tailor your message for different groups and audiences. If you were developing social media content, for example, it may mean considering TikTok for a younger audience versus Facebook for an older audience. When writing to an older audience, you may want to consider the form of your writing, a letter may be preferable to a text or email. Often, when it comes to writing, you may need to think about how to send a similar message in multiple formats to reach the different groups you want to reach.

Purpose

Next, you want to understand the purpose of your writing. Most professional communication will fall into either giving or requesting information, writing to persuade someone of something, or to instruct.

Like audience, the purpose of your writing will help you choose tone, style, and format. Before you start writing, try to articulate clearly why you are writing. This will help you focus on clarity and may also give you some hints about what kinds of conventions to follow.

- **Requesting Information.** Information requests need to be simple and direct. You want your reader to know right away what to help you with and when. If you are writing a request, keep it short, polite, and to the point. Start with your ask.

- **Providing Information.** When you are providing information, start with a direct response. Answer the questions that the reader asked for first. If you need to provide additional details to explain yourself, do so after. Make it easy for the person to find what they need in an organized and easy to follow manner.

- **Persuading.** Sometimes persuasion requires a different approach. You may find that you need to build up your reader's expectations and identify their values before you ask or suggest they do something different. Really focus on your audience and what they perceive as being credible, emotional, and factual. You may want to leave your request for the end. Check with your employer first.

- **Instructing**. If you are explaining a process or a procedure, make sure your information is organized clearly into that process or order. Take advantage of document design to make it easy to follow the process. Use numbers or images to support your work. Keep it simple. If you are writing instructions, don't explain why you need to do something if it is not necessary. Focus on the how.

- **Problem Solving.** Customer service often requires you to make changes and adjustments when things don't go your way. So, you may need to process a request for a return, exchange, or other adjustment as a part of your work flow. Remember, this is normal! If the person who wrote you is angry, ignore it. Be polite, be professional, and be brief. Begin your message by confirming specifically how you can help. End your message positively to maintain a good relationship.

Tone

Has a parent ever told you to "watch your tone" when you get a bit angry? Tone is present in our speaking voices, but it is also a part of our written voice. What does tone even mean? Tone is the way you sound to your audience. Think of it like your attitude. A professional business tone takes time to develop. In a Canadian context, there are a few different factors that really impact tone: directness, confidence, sincerity, and positivity. These factors work together to convey to your audience that you are competent, respectful, and easy to understand.

- **Be Direct.** It is important to state your purpose immediately and clearly in most everyday writing (especially in your emails). Directness is prized in Canadian workplaces because it makes it easy to turn your writing into action. Being direct means that you make your main point first. Don't hide it or minimize it. However, being direct does not mean being rude. Be direct whenever you think your message is routine. If this is a regular, positive or neutral situation, it is likely best to be clear and succinct about exactly what you want or need.

  - To be direct, try: *I'd like to request a refund.*

- ◦ Instead of: *You made a mistake. I was overcharged. I want my money back!*
- **Be Confident:** Write in an appealing way that projects confidence. One way to do this is to know the information that you are writing about and if you are unsure, check your facts or with someone who can ensure that you are giving the right information. Another way to do this is to write using the active voice rather than the passive. If you would like more information on active and passive voice, check out this video: [Active versus Passive Voice](#).
  - ▪ To be confident, try: *Our trained staff will carry out quick and efficient delivery of your order.*
  - ▪ Instead of the passive voice: *Quick and efficient delivery will be carried out by our trained staff.*
- **Be Sincere:** Sincere writing elicits trustworthiness. One way to achieve this is again to include accurate and complete information, as well as specific terms and even include numbers. The detail in your message adds to your credibility and it makes it more likely that your reader will validate your message.
  - ◦ To be sincere, try: *We have helped 115 customers reach over 22,000 new customers through social media.*
  - ◦ Instead of the more general: *We have helped many customers reach their social media goals.*
- **Being Positive:** Your writing should sound encouraging and enticing. If you put your audience first, you writing almost always can be framed positively. You can even say no in a positive way. Whenever possible, describe what can be done rather than what cannot be done. Whenever possible avoid negative phrasing such as the following example:
  - ◦ To be positive, try: *To guarantee delivery and top-quality service, please accept the contract by Thursday.*
  - ◦ Instead of the negative: *Please accept the contract by Thursday. If not, we will be too busy to process your order and it may not be completed.*

Case Study: Aimee Reviews the Marketing Plan

A few days into Amy's work placement, she sits down with Mark to discuss the airport marketing plan she will be assisting with. During the COVID 19 pandemic, air travel became less common. As vaccines became available, more flights returned to service. However, uptake has remained slow. The airport is losing money and business, even though their safety standards are high. So, Mark and the marketing team want to encourage more people to fly. Amy took notes during the meeting.After the meeting, Amy brainstormed for audience, purpose, and tone based on her meeting with Mark:

Audience

- locals within 300kms who primarily want to go to or from Vancouver, Edmonton, Victoria, and Calgary

- families who want to visit their relatives
- business and government professionals
- time savers who want to avoid long distance driving
- tourists (likely not the biggest draw at the moment)
- people who are fully vaccinated and at low risk of infection

Purpose

- associate air travel with physical health and safety
- get people excited about renewing emotional bonds
- sell more seats
- encourage more travel

Tone

- positive and encouraging
- focused on feelings of reunification
- credibility/trustworthiness from safety facts and statistics

10.2 Planning to Write

Writing is so much more than the finished product! Think of writing as a process with distinct steps and stages. Everyone's process is a little bit different. However, all good writing involves planning. Before you start putting your words to the page, make sure that you have a clear plan of action.
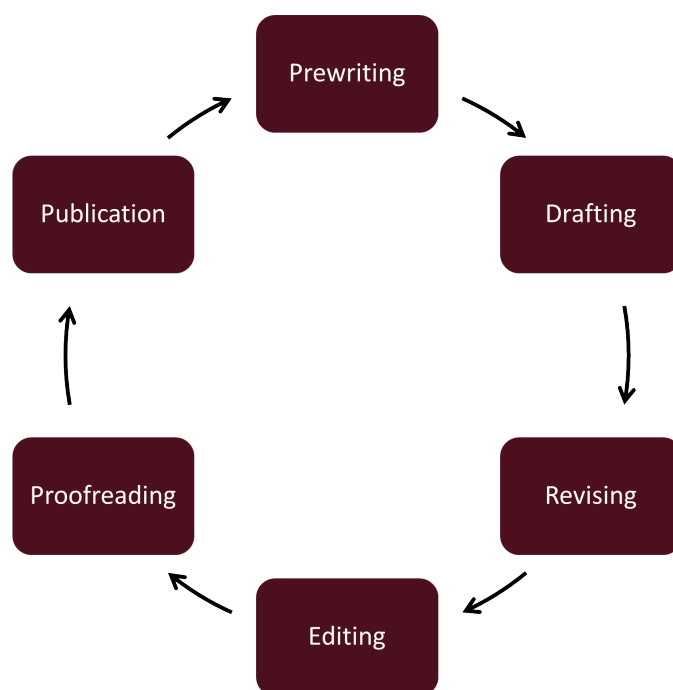
Figure 10.1 The Writing Process

Brainstorming

Have you ever sat in front of a blank screen, watching your cursor flash? There is nothing worse than starting to write! However, there are lots of strategies you can use to make sure that you start with ideas. Brainstorming is a common pre-writing strategy. Here are a few different ways you can use brainstorming at the early stage of your writing process.

Take Notes. Remember that your audience, purpose and tone are most important. So, when you start a new writing task, spend time exploring what each of those things mean for your project. In addition to taking notes, you can also use colour or underlining to emphasize the most important points.

Free write. To avoid the flashing cursor, use time to write. Set a timer for 2, 5, or 10 minutes. Then, write down all of your ideas about the topic, audience, purpose, and tone. You can also write down your ideas about format or direction. The goal with free writing is to write non-stop. It doesn't have to be refined or pretty. The best ideas will shine through when you review them after the time.

Discussion. Sometimes it is better to brainstorm with a partner or as a team. For large projects, you

may want to assign a notetaker to document the flow of your conversation. Ask about different stakeholders and see if you can separate ideas. Some people use post-it notes or other visual aids to help organize or map their thinking.

Mind map or Word cloud. Classic brainstorming often makes associations between concepts and ideas. There are programs like Smart Art in Word, or online mind mapping programs that help generate visualizations of your ideas. A word cloud, for example, will show you the ideas you have developed. It can even so show significance or frequency, so that the most common words and ideas are bigger than the others.

Figure 10.2 Mind Map Guidelines

Figure 10.3 Word Cloud

Word clouds can be created using a number of free online programs such as [WordArt](#).

Conducting Research

A lot of writing requires research first. Often you do not have easy answers about your audience's demographics, or about the formats that might serve them best. If you are looking for a solution to a problem, you may need to see how other people in your field have approached something similar. Research can happen formally and informally. Here are a few research tips:

- Analyze the credibility of your sources using the CARS framework from Chapter XX: Essential Skills

- Select sources that will connect to your audience

- Visualize and summarize data to make it easier to understand

- Ask if you aren't sure how much research to conduct

- Practice excellent citation and notetaking skills to help you track what you found and where

Making an Outline

There are many different writing conventions, based on the type of writing task you are working on. When you are preparing to start writing, use those conventions to help you plan your work. Break a large writing project down into smaller chunks. Some people write very detailed outlines. Others just jot down some key points. We often suggest you start by writing some of your subheadings. That way

you can see how the complete project will be organized. It will help you visualize. If you are preparing to write with a template, use the template to build your outline. If you want to use technology to help you outline, SmartArt can often be a great way to organize your outline.

Outline:

I. Intro

II. First Point
- A. Detail
- B. Detail
- C. Detail

III. Second Point
- A. Detail
- B. Detail
- C. Detail

IV. Third Point
- A. Detail
- B. Detail
- C. Detail

V. Conclusion
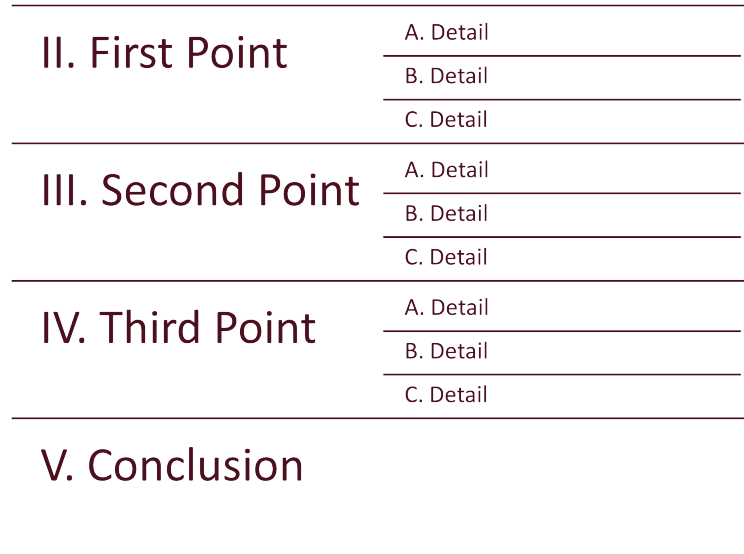
Figure 10.4 Sample outline created using SmartArt.

Following an Example

Many types of workplace writing are routine. That means that you fill out the same paperwork and documents all the time. When you are new to a workplace, you may have no idea where to begin. Start with some examples. Ask your employer, supervisor, or coworker for recent versions of the documents that you have been asked to write.

As you review an example, look for the following clues:

- What sections or headings does the example use?
- How long are the sections?
- How much detail does it include?
- What kinds of sources are cited and how?
- What formatting or other conventions shape the document?

Case Study: Aimee Plans and Drafts Slogans

Aimee has now been involved in three different strategic brainstorming sessions with the marketing team. She served as notetaker and has pages of notes from her colleagues. She has been asked to pull out themes from the sessions and then propose a few slogans of her own. She starts by highlighting and circling key ideas from her notes. She uses different colours to group the ideas into three main areas: connection, convenience and safety. She then turns them into a graphic to make it easier to see the connections. She also notes the proposed slogans offered by her coworkers.

Use the arrows in the following activity to view Aimee's planning

```
                          ┌──────────────┐
                          │  Connection  │
                          └──────┬───────┘
        ┌────────────────────────┼────────────────────────┐
┌───────────────┐    ┌───────────────────┐    ┌───────────────────┐
│  Show family  │    │  Provoke a strong │    │ Focus on positivity│
│ reunification │    │    emotional      │    │      and joy       │
└───────┬───────┘    │    response       │    └───────────────────┘
        │            └─────────┬─────────┘
  ┌─────────────────┐    ┌──────────────────┐
  │ They are ready for│   │ I missed you so  │
  │  you. (Lorna)    │    │ much, mommy.     │
  └──────────────────┘    │   (Mandeep)      │
                          └──────────────────┘
                          ┌──────────────┐
                          │ Convenience  │
                          └──────┬───────┘
        ┌────────────────────────┼────────────────────────┐
┌───────────────┐    ┌───────────────────┐    ┌───────────────────┐
│ Show business │    │ Provide financial │    │  Focus on time    │
│    travel     │    │    incentive      │    │     saving        │
└───────┬───────┘    └─────────┬─────────┘    └───────────────────┘
  ┌─────────────────┐    ┌──────────────────┐
  │ Business better  │    │ Recovery starts  │
  │ than usual. (Mark)│   │  now. (Mandeep)  │
  └──────────────────┘    └──────────────────┘
```
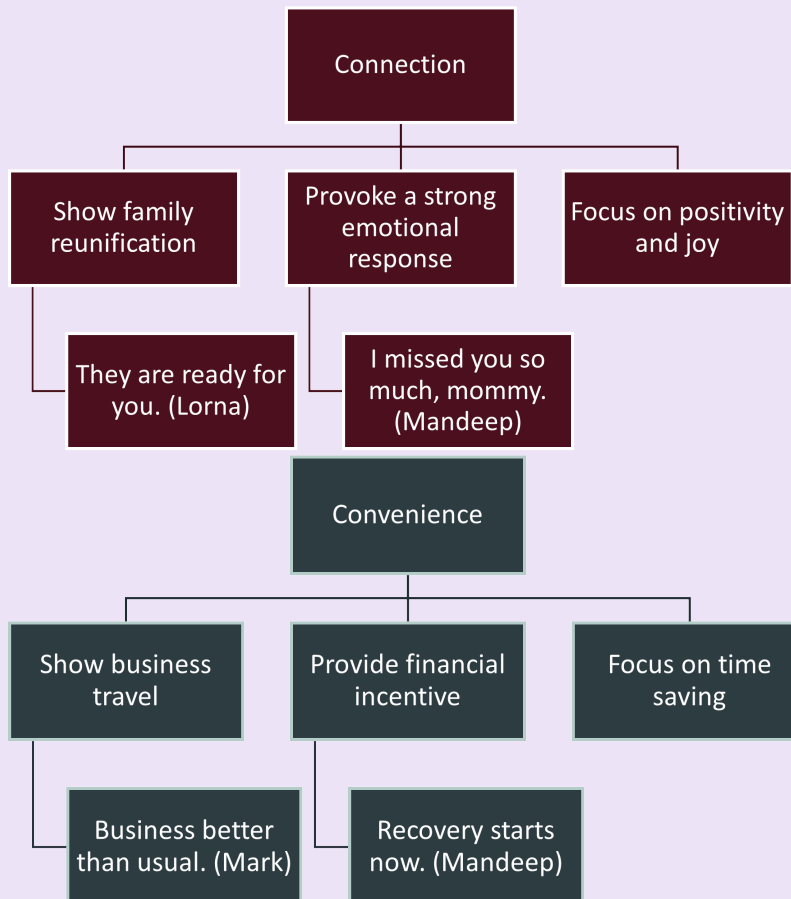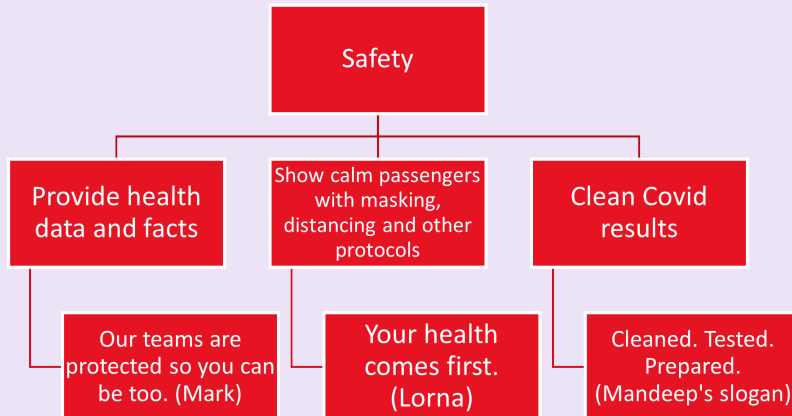
After Aimee creates her graphic summary, she tries to come up with a short sentence, idea, or feeling related to each of the main areas. She models her examples on the ones she heard from her coworkers. Before she writes, she goes back to her notes about the audience, purpose, and tone she needs to reach. She submits this summary and her new ideas to Mark:

- Connection – You're almost home.
- Convenience – Take eight extra hours to act [negotiate, present, bargain, collaborate].
- Safety – Clean filtered safe air.

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10.3 Writing for a Format

Purpose is key to a well-written message. However, your writing also needs to change based on the format the message takes. Once you understand your audience and purpose, you will want to choose the form and format of your writing. Your writing could take the form of a business letter, memo, report, or set of instructions. The format or medium of your writing will either be electronic or in print.

Writing at work means you are always representing your employer. If you are using any kind of official communication channel, like your work phone number, email address, social media accounts, or formal document template, remember that what you say and do reflects on your employer. So, write consciously for that format, thinking both about your audience's perceptions of your content and their overall perception of your employer. Employers have their own identity in the business world. It is your job to ensure that the mission, vision, and values are reflected in any communications you write on behalf of your employer. As per usual, if in doubt, run your writing by your boss if you aren't sure if you got it right.

Branding and Public Relations

Many organizations have their own logos and communication standards. Larger companies are likely to have templates that they use for official communication purposes. This may include a branded powerpoint slide deck, branded email signatures, branded report templates, and requirements related to colour, font, layout, and more. Each organization uses these elements to reinforce the idea and values of their workplace. It is very important that you learn these requirements early and ask questions if you aren't sure what the rules are.

If you are acting in an official capacity, you may need to learn and uphold the conventions of your workplace. This is great information to ask when you are first starting out at a new job. If there is a public relations department or a communications department, they can provide you with an orientation and possibly a style guide to follow. If you work in customer service, you may even find that you are meant to follow specific scripts in both your written and verbal communications.

Email

Learn when and how to use your work email account. Avoid conducting personal matters using that account. Because of confidentiality and protection of personal information, you could run the risk of making those communications available for others. Keep a clear divide between your work life and your personal life.

Here are a few tips for writing emails for work:

- **Include only the people who need to know.** Many employees receive too many emails!

When you decide who to address your email to, less is more. Avoid reply all and unnecessary cc's. If your message needs to be shared later on, it can always be forwarded.

- **Write a detailed subject line.** Believe it or not, that is all that some people read! As long as your message communicates information that is positive or neutral, state your purpose or request clearly and directly in this subject line. It saves time and will motivate your audience to open the message.

- **State your purpose first.** Think of the first sentence of your email like a restatement of your subject line. It needs to very clearly communicate why you are writing and what you need from your audience.

- **Use complete sentences.** All work emails are considered professional correspondence. Avoid using abbreviations, short forms, and overly casual language. You don't want to look like the writer in our first example!

- **Be direct and brief.** Respect the time of your audience by avoiding unnecessary detail. Start with the most relevant information in your first paragraph. If you need to provide more detail, do it later in the message.

- **Offer a clear next step.** Work emails are transactional, so focus on your next step. Before you end the message, be clear about the action that the person needs to take. Be specific and ask for clarification. If you need something done in a particular way or for a specific timeline, explain that clearly. If it is appropriate, you can briefly explain why.

- **Follow the conventions.** If your employer has a script or other expectation for your writing, follow it closely. Otherwise, follow the general suggestions outlined earlier related to audience, purpose and tone.

Reports

Reports follow a variety of conventions and rules. In many workplaces, frequent communication types are often templated. Think back to Chapter XX on Workplace Safety. Did you slip and fall at work? There is likely a specific form you need to fill out and send to your employer. Here are a few tips for writing reports at work:

- **Stick to the template.** If there is already a pre-set form, complete it as fully and accurately as possible. For example, many customer service roles require you to document your interactions with clients or customers. This form of data collection likely happens at many levels, so you will want to use the conventional structure and language to make it easier for others to track and document.

- **Use a model or script.** If you are writing a type of report for the first time, you may want to consider asking your supervisor or coworker for examples. In some cases, there may be information that must be provided each time. Look for scripts and models in your employee handbook or other orientation information. If in doubt, ask!

- **Be careful what you share.** Internal and external reports may also include different kinds of information. Ask your employer if you are uncertain if certain information should be made publicly available. Proprietary information is sometimes protected for a variety of reasons.

Multimedia

Multimedia can be a challenging area to write in. You need to combine the visual and textual combinations with any branding conventions and messaging. Here are a few tips for working with multimedia:

- **Plan ahead.** It always takes longer than you think to put together a stellar presentation or video. Take the time you need to do it right, especially if you are new to this kind of work. Multimedia can come across very unprofessionally if you pulled it together at the last minute.

- **Focus on your audience.** It is easy to use multimedia as a crutch. Often we design in ways that are useful and easy for ourself. Take time to revise. Ask yourself what your audience needs to know, and use that to decide which visual and textual information you need to provide.

- **Less is more.** Try to avoid crowding your communication with too much text or too many visuals. Use white space and document design to make it easy to read and follow. Don't use your slides as your own personal script.

Social Media

Social media conventions and platforms are always changing. As this happens, your organization needs to decide how and when they will engage. Brands often express their personality through their social media accounts. Social media is equally about which platforms your organization uses and how they use them. Think carefully about some of the common ways that companies use social media to promote themselves. Kate Sehl (2021) summarizes for Hootsuite some of the reasons why corporations use social media:

- To increase brand awareness
- To connect with specific audiences
- To gauge customer satisfaction
- To provide customer support
- To boost traffic and sales
- To share corporate communications
- To recruit top professionals
- To build a brand community

Case Study: Aimee Brands Her Message

The marketing team has finalized a few parts of their marketing strategy. They have also paid for a beautiful

photoshoot in the airport to support their message. Aimee's next task is to ensure that her ideas meet the brand standard. She starts by selecting appropriate colours, fonts, and sizes. She then creates a sample version of the same message for all of the airport's social and print media accounts. The same concept needs to be delivered in email marketing, Facebook ads, Instagram ads, and traditional posters for bus stops and billboards. As she revises her message, she focuses less on the words, which were already approved by Mark, and instead on the conventions and requirements for each platform.

Writing with Bad News

There will be times when you need to deliver a message that your audience does not want to hear. Sometimes, it means you need to say no, refuse a service, or discontinue a relationship. While this is unlikely in most entry positions, as your career progresses, you may need build this skill. These kinds of messages can be perceived as negative. However, bad news is a part of life and a part of work. The same rules apply as above. Focus on your tone and use positive language when you can.

Here are some tips to help you deliver a negative message.

- **Consider the form and format of your communication**. Maybe a phone call would be better than an email. If you are communicating verbally, either in-person, or over the phone, make some notes of the key points.

- **Ensure you are calm when you set out to write**. You may need to write the message and wait to send it. You may also want to have someone else read it before you send it.

- **Use objective language and avoid assigning blame when possible.** For example, instead of saying Tony made an error with your order, simply request an adjustment. Focus on the outcome or the results instead of the blame.

- **Apologize if appropriate.** If you or the company are at fault, express what you can do it remedy the situation and be specific about the timeframe or consequences. If you aren't sure about apologizing, ask your supervisor first.

- **Consider an indirect approach.** If the negative message is unexpected or may cause an emotional response, you can use an indirect buffer. Most people recognize these for what they are, but it still helps, for example, "After a number of impressive interviews, we have decided to hire another contractor to do the work for us."

Writing with a Team

Writing with a team can be both fun and challenging! Like with any other teamwork tasks (see [Chapter 8: Interpersonal Skills](#)), writing with a team requires careful planning and organization. Here are a few tips for writing with a team:

- **Clarify the expectations of each contributor.** Coordinating the work is often the biggest challenge. Be clear exactly about what each person's role will be. Some people may have

writing tasks, others may only have editing, revising, or research tasks. Allocate the roles according to people's strengths and knowledge.

- **Set realistic timelines.** Collaborative work can take longer, but the results are often better! Build time for planning and for checking in on your project. Whenever you can, get your pieces done efficiently (early if possible!) so that others aren't waiting on you. If you are waiting on someone else, be sure they know what you need and when. Then, just be patient!

- **Use technology to support collaboration.** Shared documents can make it a lot easier for people to work together, even in real time. You may also consider using technology to outline or plan your writing project. If there is a digitized template to follow, do it!

- **Edit for a consistent voice.** Consistency in shared documents can be a challenge. You may want to identify one team member to edit for a consistent voice. If it helps, you can also establish a common guide or template to help maintain consistency.

Revising Your Work

Revision is a process of editing and refining your work before you share it with your intended audience. It is about reconciling what you have written with your purpose and audience. This can be a long process of making changes, getting advice, and tweaking. It can also be as quick as a spell-check. That being said, did you know that you should spend more time revising your work than you do on the initial draft? When it comes to building the skill of writing, revision is where the learning happens. With all these elements to consider, it may seem like it would take forever to get a simple email written. However, with enough practice these will become automatic things you look for and do.

When you revise, you may have a few different goals in mind. Eric Grunwald (2016) describes revising as "re-seeing your paper in a new way". This means, as you revise, that you are taking the time to think about your paper from different points of view. Here are a few points of view you might consider as you revise.
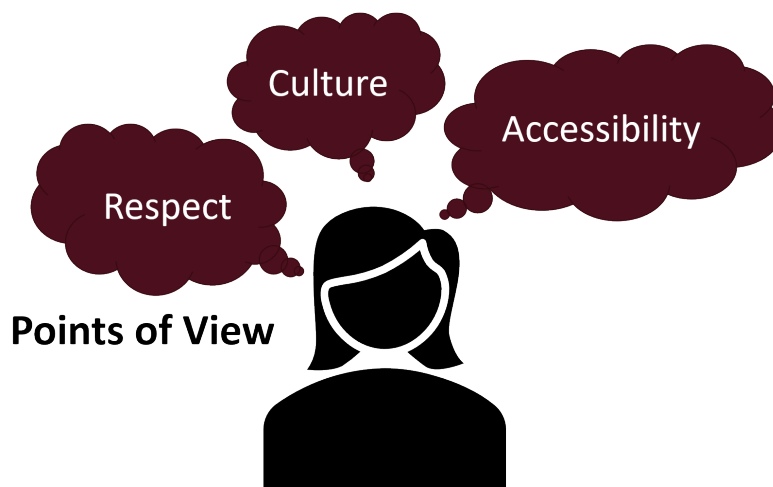

Figure 10.5 Points of view to consider when revising

Point of View 1: Revising for Respect

Using respectful language means being inclusive, using social conventions, and avoiding gendered language. Inclusive writing "respects and promotes all people as valued members of society" (Queen's University, n.d.), avoids stereotypes, and recognizes person-centered language. Use the names, pronouns, and other vocabulary that the person or groups prefer or have given you. For example, look at the name the person uses to end their letter or email, and use that name without shortening it or making assumptions. When you are unsure about which pronoun to use, choose the gender neutral, they. Avoid referring to a person's age, gender or sexual orientation, culture, ethnicity, race, religious affiliation, or disability unless it is within the specific scope of the email. Some examples of neutral terms follow:

- humankind, not mankind
- chairperson, not chairman
- working hours, not man hours
- E.g. First-year students should open his their orientation package
- Be mindful of appropriate terms

For more information on gender-neutral language visit [Legistics Gender-neutral Language](#).

Point of View 2: Revising for Accessibility

Ensure that you use plain and concise language when writing professionally. Keep your message easy to understand and avoid jargon, emojis, and text speak such as BRB (be right back). There will be times when you will need to use the specialized terms of your industry, but using plain language will ensure everyone can read and understand your message. For example, if you read the following would you get the correct message?

The offline engagement process will ensure all stakeholders can provide feedback on the retail expansion project.

Here is the message again in plain language:

A public meeting will be held with local residents to hear concerns over the re-zoning application.

Point of View 3: Revising for Culture

You may need to do a revision for your writing linked to culture. If you are writing for or about a culture that is not your own, you may need to engage in consultation. Some writing cannot be done by a single person! If you are writing about other people's experiences, make sure you get their consent and permission. If you are writing for another culture, you may want to make sure that you make references and use examples that are culturally relevant. As you revise, seek feedback from others to ensure you have not accidentally misrepresented others or misunderstood their needs as readers.

Here are some questions you can ask when you are revising for culture:

• How would I feel if I was a member of the group I represented?

• What experiences did I represent? How do they reflect on the group I represented?

• What biases am I sharing? How can I eliminate these?

• What might be triggering in my content? Should I provide a warning?

• Are there stereotypes or microaggressions I may be contributing to?

Editing

Editing is making changes to your work to make it stronger. Good editing will help refine your writing to make the action clearer. This means that editing means returning to the three concepts you used when you planned your writing task: audience, purpose, and tone. Most of the time, revision's purpose is primarily to help make these three elements clearer and easier to understand.

Editing for audience means going back through the writing to look for cues for your audience. If you revised from their point of view, you should see the audience more clearly reflected by the end.

• Is the style of the writing comfortable for my audience (e.g. level of formality, word choice, viewpoint, argumentation style, citation style)?

• Is the writing organized in a way that makes it easy for my audience to act (e.g. purpose stated up front, direct, action items in order, clear next step provided)?

Editing for purpose is primarily about organization and the clarity of your speech. It means that your purpose is easy to find and easy to understand.

• Is my purpose easy to locate?

• Is my purpose stated as clearly and simply as possible?

• Is there the right balance of detail to help express my purpose?

Editing for tone means reviewing your writing for consistency and for style. Editing for tone is primarily about focusing back on the concepts we described earlier in the chapter: directness, confidence, sincerity, and positivity.

• Did I state my purpose first as clearly and accurately as possible?

• Can I omit hedging, vague language, or redundancy to make my writing more confident?

• Can I add information to make my writing more credible?

• Can I rephrase any of my ideas in a positive and audience-friendly way?

In addition to revising for the major elements you planned for at the beginning, there are a few more big concepts worth reviewing. The Writing Center at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2021) summarizes these main components of as clarity, style, and citation. In other words, revision also tries to answer these big overall questions with a YES:

- Is my writing clear?

- Is my writing consistent?

- Is my writing organized?

Keep it clear. Clarity in writing is often about simplifying. This means you need to omit any extra words, ideas, phrases, or even paragraphs that you don't need. A lot of writing is vastly improved by deleting unnecessary information. Clarity can also be about improving your word choice. Here are a few tips to improve your clarity:

- Have only one main point per paragraph

- Use simple and easy to understand concepts

- Omit long lead ins, repetition, and cliches

- Avoid jargon and acronyms unless your audience expects them

- Use a thesaurus and a dictionary to find the most precise and accurate language

Keep it consistent. Consistency in writing comes from similarity across the writing you do. This means using a similar structure, format, language choice, sentence structures, and level of formality. Here are a few tips to improve your consistency:

- Consistently use branding and other conventions of your workplace

- Use the same font, headings, and document design throughout your writing

- Follow any templates as accurately as you can

- Document your sources in the same style throughout your writing

Organize your ideas. You may even want to do this by jotting down the key points before you start your actual writing. Progress through your ideas in a clear, logical order to ensure that your audience gets the information they need when they need it. Whenever possible, give the most important information first. Most people remember and choose to continue reading based on what they read first, so place the most important points at the beginning (Goodwin, 2018).

Here are a few tips to improve your organization:

- Identify your main point first

- Use a topic sentence to state the purpose of each of your paragraphs or sections

- Use headings and document design to make your organization easier to follow

- Consider providing an executive summary for longer reports at the beginning

- Make a request at the end

- Offer a concrete next step for follow-up

Acknowledge your sources. Remember, all writing, and not just school writing, requires citations. When you use an idea that isn't your own, you need to attribute it. This may look different based on your writing task. You may use weblinks, brief in-text references, footnotes, or other forms of citation

base don the format. If you aren't sure which format you should use, ask! Acknowledgment practices are unique to each organization and also to different types of documents. Here are a few tips to help acknowledge your sources:

- Keep careful notes of where all your sources came from
- Learn your workplace's common citation guidelines
- Become familiar with at least one citation style
- Link to the original source instead of copying content when appropriate
- Uphold copyright guidelines and don't copy anything without permission
- Ask for help from your supervisor or instructor if you are ever uncertain about how and when to provide a citation

Proofreading

Proofreading is when you do a line-by-line or sentence-by-sentence review of your writing. Your focus should be on the grammar, punctuation, and spelling. By the time you get to proofreading, you are no longer trying to refine the ideas. All you are worrying about is the expression of the ideas. Always proofread your work or ask a colleague to look it over. Regardless of the form, audience, or purpose, proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling will influence your audience's perception of you and the company you work for.

Here are some proofreading techniques you can try.

Use spelling and grammar checks. Your word processor has these features for a reason! Carefully review all of the underlines in your document to ensure that you have corrected any errors identified by the checks.

Listen to the flow. Try reading the document aloud. Often you can catch trouble spots through where you make mistakes in your reading. You can also have someone else read the document to you. If the document is written on a computer, you can also use a screen reader to read you the document.

Document your errors and feedback you have received. All of us have particular grammar errors we struggle with. If your teacher, supervisor, or other trusted person gave you feedback on your work, take note! It is a great idea to develop a checklist of your common errors, misspelled words, typos, or punctuation challenges. Then, every time you proofread, you check for your own challenges. You will learn a lot!

Read the content out of order. Some people read one paragraph at a time, starting at the bottom. Others read just one line at a time. Block out the content to focus on the words, sentence structure, and grammatical structure.

> **Key Takeaways**
>
> - Writing for work should be action-oriented with a clear sense of the message's audience, purpose, and tone
> - Plan your writing task and research before you begin
> - Follow an example when you are writing in a new format for the first time
> - Uphold the branding and style conventions of your workplace
> - Spend extra time revising your work to add clarity, consistency, and organization

Media Attributions

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Glossary

Accident

"an unplanned event that interrupts the completion of an activity, and that may include injury or property damage" and often includes an element of fate or chance (CCOHS, 2019).

Audience

The reader of your writing. The audience can be specific (like your supervisor) or more general (like customers at your workplace).

Behavioural questions

Interview questions that focus on how you act in the workplace.

Capabilities

A skill or talent that has potential for development or use.

Collaboration

Working with others to complete a task.

Commitment

Dedication and interactive engagement in a process, loyalty to a cause, and the ability to follow through with a project.

Communication

The act of exchanging information.

Competency based questions

Interview questions that focus on your knowledge and experience related to the job.

Continuous Learning

The practice of looking for opportunities to learn towards expanding knowledge, skills, and capabilities.

Copy

The meaning of the term as it is being used here means written material that is to be published. A short form of copywriting.

Critical thinking

The process of analyzing information for solving problems.

Digital skills

Skills "needed to understand and process information from digital sources, use digital systems, technical tools, and applications" (Skills/Compétences Canada, 2021).

Document use

Reading, interpreting, understanding, locating, and creating common workplace documents.

Dogmatism

Expressing our opinions and assumptions as fact.

Editing

Making changes to your writing to more clearly emphasize the audience, purpose and tone while improving clarity, consistency and organization.

Emotional intelligence

The ability to recognize and manage your emotions.

Empathy

The ability to understand others' perspectives and situations.

Employability

The skills and capabilities required for employment.

Ergonomics

The science or system of ensuring safe workplace conditions for the worker and can include but is not limited to lifting, desk positioning, lighting, driving, and repetitive tasks such as using hand tools.

Etiquette

Rules and conventions to follow to appear polite and professional

Experiential Learning

The process of learning through experience.

Feedback

Information provided by others and often used for reflection and self-improvement.

Goal

The object of a person's ambition or effort; an aim or desired result (Lexico, 2021).

Hazard

The harm that something can cause to a person's health, to property, or to the environment (Government of Canada, 2009).

Humility

The ability to see yourself honestly in interactions and situations.

Incident

Any "occurrence, condition, or situation arising in the course of work that resulted in or could have resulted in injuries, illnesses, damage to health" or property (CCOHS, 2019).

Interview

A question and answer discussion between an interviewer and a potential candidate.

Linear communication

The process of one-way communication.

Numeracy

"the use of numbers and [the] capability to think in quantitative terms" (Skills/Compétences Canada, 2021).

Objective

Similar to a goal, this is a desired aim, or the statement denoting that goal includes a timeline and an endpoint in sight.

OHS or OH&S

Occupational Health and Safety.

Optimism

The ability to have a positive future outlook.

Panel

When you are interviewed by a group of two or more interviewers.

Personal characteristics

Specific characteristics you are protected against discrimination in the British Columbia Human Rights Code

PPE

Personal protective equipment.

Pressure

An external environmental factor that indicates urgency in a matter and the need to respond to a request or complete an action.

Prioritization

How you identify the importance or value of tasks. You may prioritize based on time, importance, and complexity.

Procrastination

A delayment in the process of completing accumulating tasks and attending to a growing list of responsibilities. This notion results in a snowball effect of stress, pressure, and negative outcomes.

Proofreading

Updating your writing to ensure it is free of grammar, spelling, typos and other minor writing errors.

Purpose

The reason why you are writing. Purpose focuses on action. Some common purposes for writing are to request information, to provide information, to make a complaint or to persuade.

Reference

People who support your candidacy in a job by talking about you with your potential employer after an interview has taken place

Reflection

A process of reviewing and documenting that enables an individual to learn from their previous trials and errors, their faults, and their experiences.

Reflective Practice

The ability to spend time to assess situations and our participation to inform learning and future behaviours.

Revision

The process of editing or refining your written work before you share it with your intended audience.

Routine

A set sequence of actions that provide structure, improve time utilization, and enhance work quality.

SDS

Safety Data Sheets, sometimes referred to as MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets). These are summary documents that outline the hazards of a product and advise regarding proper handling and use.

Self-assessment

A process of self-study where an individual identifies their personal traits and attributes which enable them or hinder their progress.

Self-awareness

The ability to recognize your strengths and weaknesses.

Self-efficacy

Belief in self and advocacy for self.

Self-sufficient

able to provide for your own needs; capable of relying on self; includes sense of ownership and responsibility; as a worker you feel empowered as you work toward completing goals, objectives, and tasks.

Situational questions

Interview questions that focus on how you respond to different scenarios.

Skills

"The ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in" implementation "or performance" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

STAR Format

Situation, task, action, result. STAR format is a structure you can use for responding to an interview question.

State

The particular condition that someone or something is in at a specific time.

Stress

An internal bodily response to initiate the need to prepare and take on a challenging situation.

Supervisor

According to WorkSafeBC, a supervisor "is a person who instructs, directs, and controls workers in the performance of their duties. A supervisor can be any worker – management or staff – who meets this definition, whether or not [they] have the supervisor title. If someone in the workplace has a supervisor's responsibilities, that person is responsible for worker health and safety" (WorkSafeBC, 2021a).

Time management

How you use your time and spread it out across different parts of your life.

Tone

The way you sound to your audience. It summarizes the attitude of your writing. Professional writing tone typically is direct, confident, sincere, and positive.

Trait

A personal or professional attribute, when viewed positively this can give a worker an advantage in their task completion process.

Transactional communication

The process of two-way communication.

Verbal Communication

"any type of interaction that makes use of spoken words" including answering the phone, personal discussions, staff meetings, presentations, and informal conversations (Inc., 2020).

WHMIS

An abbreviation for Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System, which is the system for providing information about chemicals used in the workplace. This information should be provided through product labels, material safety data sheets (MSDS), and worker education programs. (CCOHS, 2021)

WIL (work-integrated learning)

Methods of integrating what is learned in the classroom to real-world experience.

WorkSafe BC

The provincial organization that governs work safety in British Columbia. Each province and territory have a designated agency. WorkSafeBC provides work health insurance, information and education, compensation, and support around workplace safety.

Versioning History

This page provides a record of edits and changes made to this book since its initial publication. Whenever edits or updates are made in the text, we provide a record and description of those changes here. If the change is minor, the version number increases by 0.01. If the edits involve substantial updates, the version number increases to the next full number.

The files posted by this book always reflect the most recent version. If you find an error in this book, please fill out the Report an Error form.

Version	Date	Change	Details
1.00	September 7, 2022	Book published.	
1.01	December 22, 2022	Content added.	Added Chapter 4: Indigenous Peoples, Communities, and Cultural Safety.