roots & connections instructor guide

A culturally integrated ESL curriculum
for community orientation in Alberta

NorQuest COLLEGE
CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements and Thanks ***2***

Welcome to the Roots and Connections Instructor Guide ***4***

Background Information *4*

Guiding Principles *5*

Goals *9*

Instructor Roles *10*

Roots and Connections at a Glance *11*

Getting Ready! ***12***

Stage 1: Assess your strengths *12*

Stage 2: Facilitation Steps *15*

Step 1: Assess your learners *15*

Step 2: Build a Lesson Plan *17*

Step 4: Reflect on the cultural perspective *24*

Step 5: Connect to the Community *26*

Step 6: The First Day *28*

"Multiculturalism is an invitation to learn"
- Bateson

Welcome to the Roots and Connections **Instructor Guide**

This training guide is a self-guided tool to help instructors use the Roots and Connections curriculum resource. It will help you develop your knowledge, skills and awareness in the three roles you will play using this curriculum resource: ***ESL Instructor, Cultural Bridge and Community Connector.***

While we recognize that many instructors may lack much additional preparation time, we highly recommend going through this guide to maximize both your satisfaction in teaching *Roots and Connections* as well as the satisfaction and benefit of your learners

Before teaching using *Roots and Connections*

✓ Be familiar with the knowledge, skills and awareness needed to perform the three recommended roles for effective delivery of *Roots and Connections.*

1. ESL Instructor
2. Cultural Bridge
3. Community Connector

✓ Be familiar with the key components of the *Roots and Connections* resource including:

- background information
- guiding principles
- goals of *Roots and Connections*
- three part planning process
- five steps to successful facilitation
- instructor resources

Background Information

Roots and Connections arose from NorQuest College's Rural ESL Enhancement Project, launched in response to challenges associated with immigration to rural communities. These challenges include isolation, need for community cultural awareness and the desire to build welcoming communities.

Creating welcoming environments involves encouraging immigrants to stay and establish roots while removing barriers that prevent them from becoming full participants in community life. Currently there are many excellent language training resources and settlement programs[1] especially in larger centres.

However, in small Alberta communities, settlement services are not always readily available. There may be a gap between the time when some newcomers arrive in a community (especially those who may not intend to enter the job market) and when or if they access language training programs such as Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC).

Community organizations want to meet the needs of all new immigrants, including those who are at a higher risk of isolation such as seniors and stay at home mothers. To achieve this, they need to be able to offer an effective community orientation to newcomers and have a ready-to-use tool that teachers and volunteers can use, regardless of their teaching experience.

Guiding Principles

Roots and Connections is a culturally responsive ESL curriculum resource that focuses on orienting newcomers to the community, establishing connections to reduce isolation and, with support, laying the groundwork for integrated participation in all aspects of community life. It is built on the following principles:

1. Based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks

Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) provide a common standard for describing and measuring language proficiency. Many provincially funded workplace, settlement and academic language programs have adapted goals and standards aligned with

[1] *For more information about Language Training visit the NorQues College website www.norquest.ca. Other language training resources are also available on the website under Corporate Resources.*

the CLB. *Roots and Connections* aligns with the CLB and supports the development of novice instructors.

The *Roots and Connections* curriculum is not designed to raise benchmark levels. Rather, it is designed primarily to give specific language that enables greater access to community services and activities. *Roots and Connections* modules are built on a series of components that fit easily into lesson plans that support a communicative language approach. Success is measured by learners' ability to access their community.

Information about the Canadian Language Benchmarks is available in documents at www.language.ca.

- *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: English as a Second Language for Adults*
- *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*
- *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: Implementation Guide*

These online resources help language instructors learn more about CLB guided language instruction and include sample lesson plans, background theory and more.

Roots and Connections incorporates core CLB principles:

1. **Task-based teaching and learning**
   The program addresses the four skill areas – reading, writing, speaking and listening – through basic tasks:
   - routine tasks using illustrations
   - personal connections tasks
   - survival English tasks
   - dialogue tasks
   - numeracy tasks

2. **Learner-centered study**
   Learners are involved in the decision-making process to determine course content and tasks. Their full participation is encouraged through:
   - awareness of the purpose of *Roots and Connections* as a language-based community orientation curriculum
   - involvement in deciding the priority of the units
   - involvement beyond the classroom through meaningful cultural encounters in the community

3. **Needs-based programming**
   Using *Roots and Connections* tools and resources, instructors assess learners' needs to help identify priorities and key gaps through:
   - An informal cultural needs assessment to determine cultural distance ***(see Understanding Cultural Distance sidebar on page 8)***, students' context and relevance of materials
   - A Community Knowledge and Skills Assessment to assess cultural distance, students' prior experience and priorities (interests)
   - A language assessment to determine English skill levels

2. Culturally integrated

A culturally integrated resource…

- builds on a principle that sees newcomers and participating community members as partners
- is grounded in knowledge of the needs and backgrounds of all stakeholders through a cultural needs assessment and self-assessment tools

- serves the interests of the target populations by being relevant and sensitive to their needs and challenges including expressed goals of newcomers to feel safe, settled and welcome
- enables communities to support and welcome immigrants
- answers fundamental questions about orientation, cultural adaptation and support
- empowers newcomers to feel increased control over their adaptation challenges
- prepares communities to welcome newcomers in culturally competent ways
- encourages ongoing cultural competence[2] development of instructors using the resource

[2] *Cultural competency refers to the capacity to shift perspective and adapt behaviour when encountering cultural differences. Furthermore it involves the movement from a monocultural to an intercultural mindset that reflects increasingly more complex perceptions and experience of cultural difference. (Hammer and Sebera Advanced IDI Facilitator workshop notes, 2008)*

3. Capacity Building

Often people who do this work in smaller communities come to it without formal training in language teaching. This resource is designed to develop some of the basic knowledge, skills and awareness that can make the experience more satisfying and fruitful for both instructor and student.

1. Self-guided instructor training manual provides basic information about ESL instruction and how to work cross-culturally through a variety of tasks.
2. Culture bytes included with every unit help instructors become aware of how culture may impact what we notice, how we interpret it and what we might miss as an important cultural difference.
3. Tools included help integrate cultural knowledge into recruiting, registering and assessing learners needs.
4. A collection of additional resources and reference are provided.

Understanding Cultural Distance

Cultural distance is a measure of the difference between two cultures with regard to politics, technical and economic experiences, language, the size and cohesiveness of the group, cultural attitudes (relations between dominant and minority groups) and cultural patterns (gender, hierarchy, self, time, etc.).

Small Cultural Distance

P, a newcomer from country X, has been successful in formal education. She is confident in her abilities and has a sense of how she learns best. Today you are working on the Community Unit. You ask about where she lived before moving to your community. She tells you about her apartment—the lighting, plumbing and garbage disposal services. (She may draw a picture if she does not have the language to express it in words.) You learn that the place where she lived before had many of the same amenities as her new home in Canada, and that she knows how to operate most of them. What is new and concerning to her includes learning how to stay warm in the winter and how to understand her utility bills. When you ask her about the rights of tenants and landlords where she comes from, you find out that there are a lot of differences, including a law that does not allow a landlord to evict a tenant. For the Community Connections activity, you think about inviting a landlord to come to your class, or taking your class on a tour of a landlord's property.

Large Cultural Distance

T is a newcomer from country Y. He has lived in a refugee camp for the past 14 years and has not been to school for a long time. You realize that the best way for you to work with him is to be open and respectful, and to minimize the amount of paper you give him. As you start the Personal Connections section in the Community Unit, you discover that many things typical to homes in Canada, from light switches and kitchen appliances to hot and cold running water, are unfamiliar to him. He also is not familiar with the expectations for caring for his rental home and is unaware of the consequences of not taking proper care of it (having a poor reference or risking being asked to leave). Furthermore, he is not familiar with the concept of landlord and tenant rights. You realize that your time may be best spent helping him to understand things you consider basic knowledge about housing in your community. You decide to take this group to a Canadian home or to one of the learners' homes for a Community Connections field trip.

Goals of Roots and Connections

The goals of the *Roots and Connections* curriculum are based on needs identified by stakeholders in small communities in Rural Alberta.

The four main goals of *Roots and Connections* are to:

Provide survival English by…

- teaching survival language for access to many key services following the Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) guidelines
- addressing beginning language proficiency at CLB 1–3
- allowing opportunities for language practice and mastery in a variety of contexts and functions
- developing relevant vocabulary

Build community knowledge by…

- including eight instructional themes that provide necessary information in the community context
- identifying key information about community systems, services and history
- helping newcomers learn how to get things done
- helping newcomers build a "Community Map" that indicates important services and how to access them
- answering questions related to settlement themes such as accessing health care, using an ATM, buying clothes and other household goods, staying safe, communicating with schools and participating in community learning and recreational activities

Increase cross-cultural awareness by…

- providing tools to deliver a program that reflects the cultural context and needs of participants
- including "Culture Bytes" at the beginning of each unit and module to reveal the assumptions present in the concepts and expectations of each unit
- including a "Personal Connections" activity that grounds each module in the experience of the learners, and offers an opportunity to discover cultural differences and similarities

Establish community connections by…

- promoting field trips to connect newcomers with professionals and service providers in the community
- holding "coffee encounters" for people to get involved and connected
- providing tools to get conversations going between community members and newcomers
- inviting guest speakers into class to share essential information and establish relationships
- encouraging simulation activities in class to prepare learners for real-life experiences
- exploring community information through promotional and informational media such as brochures, newsletters, newspapers, bulletin boards and radio

Instructor Roles

Instructors play three key roles in teaching *Roots and Connections*. Your ability to perform these roles is critical in achieving the course objectives. Going through this instructor guide will help to prepare you for each role.

1. ESL Instructor

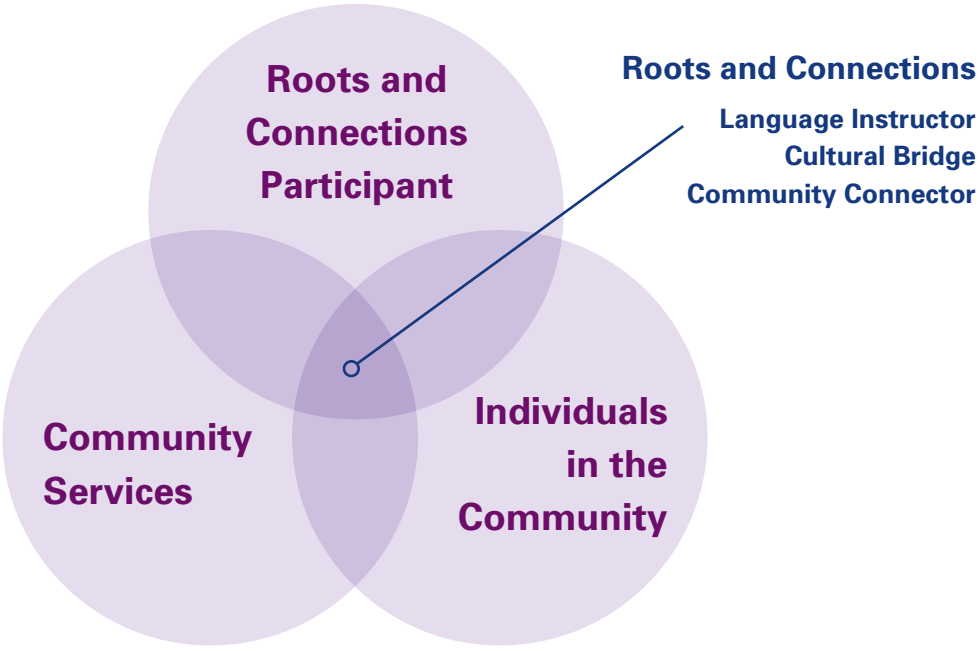
a. Assess language level
b. Plan lessons
c. Teach and support the development of vocabulary, functional language and fluency

2. Cultural Bridge

a. Conduct a cultural assessment
b. Be informed and provide cultural information/lens beyond personal experience
c. Notice and make sense of learner behaviour without judgment

3. Community Connector

a. Provide opportunities for community members and newcomers to have positive and meaningful interactions
b. Be knowledgeable of local, provincial and federal resources for newcomers
c. Be knowledgeable of aspects of the "Canadian system" (i.e. health care) beyond one's own personal experience



Roots and Connections at a Glance

Roots and Connections is a community-focused ESL curriculum made up of eight units, each containing five modules. Each unit has been designed to enhance participants' capacity to obtain and understand basic community information and services needed to make appropriate decisions and communicate in a variety of contexts.

The order in which units are presented should correspond to the needs and interests of the participants. **The exception to this is the first unit, Getting to Know You, which is required and must be taught first.**

This unit is designed to enhance learners' capacity to cope with the challenges of cultural transition and to create new and meaningful connections with people in the community. It introduces learners to classroom routines and expectations as well as to core elements of the curriculum. It helps to establish a sense of community among the participants and offers some basic vocabulary for participating.

8 Units (each with 5 modules)	
Getting to Know You	Health and Wellness
Community	Recreation
Education	Safety
Personal Finance	Shopping
Curriculum Features (within modules)	
Identity Wheels (Unit 1)	Dialogue Practice
Illustrations	Working with Numbers
Vocabulary: Class Dictionary	Community Map
Survival English	Community Connections
Instructor Supports	
Module outcomes	Teaching Notes
CLB outcomes	Suggested Activities
Additional Resources	Culture Bytes
Assessment Tools	
Community Knowledge and Skills Checklists	Learner Profiles
Language Assessment Tool	Cultural Assessment Tool

Task: Please locate the Roots and Connections Curriculum and refer to it as we move through the next part of this guide.

Getting Ready!

This section will take you through a two-stage process to prepare you to deliver *Roots and Connections*. Additional material to complete the activities in each stage is provided in the Teaching Toolkit.

Stage 1: Assess your strengths: Instructor Self assessment

- What do I need to know about each of my three roles (ESL instructor, Cultural Bridge and Community Connector) to help me facilitate learning?

Stage 2: Curriculum Components and Facilitation Steps

- How do I facilitate and support learning using the components of the *Roots and Connections* curriculum?

This self assessment will introduce you to key concepts and skills for guiding and supporting language learning and community orientation.

The assessment tool helps measure your perception of your knowledge, experience and confidence on various traits associated with each role (ESL Instructor, Cultural Bridge and Community Connector). It is for your own use to help focus your attention on core knowledge, skills and awareness.

Note: Once you have finished the assessments, completed the training guide and again after teaching the Roots and Connections curriculum you can return to these self assessments for a subjective measure of your own professional development. If you find that you have ranked yourself low don't worry! It takes time and practice to learn new things and if you've taken the time to assess yourself it means you already have two very important elements for success – motivation and interest.

Stage 1: Assess your strengths: Instructor Self Assessment

Helping you build capacity as an instructor is a key emphasis in *Roots and Connections*.

Instructions for Self Assessment:
For each of the questions indicate how you feel about your knowledge, experience, and confidence. Circle one number in each of the three boxes.
Example:

	Knowledge					***Experience***					***Confidence***				
	low				*high*	*low*				*high*	*low*				*high*
1) Change a flat tire	1	2	3	4	(5)	1	2	(3)	4	5	(1)	2	3	4	5

This would mean that I have a great deal of knowledge (response of 5) about changing a flat tire, I have an average amount of experience (response of 3) with changing a flat tire, but I am not confident (response of 1) in my ability to change a flat tire (application of knowledge).
Now continue to fill in all boxes of all items below.

Roots and Connections Instructor Self-Assessment

ESL Instructor Role	Knowledge					Experience					Confidence				
	low				high	low				high	low				high
I am familiar with the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB).	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
I can assess learners needs (Language, Learner Profiles, Community Knowledge and Skills).	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
I can clearly state the purpose of my lesson using learning outcomes.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
I can use different kinds of communicative tasks to support language learning.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
I know how to help learners build vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
I know how to help learners improve their pronunciation.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
I know some ways to help learners improve their form and function.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Cultural Bridge Role															
	Knowledge					**Experience**					**Confidence**				
	low				high	low				high	low				high
I recognize how my cultural values influence my behaviour.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
I am familiar with common adjustment stages and issues for immigrants and refugees.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
I know how to provide a Canadian cultural perspective for my learners that is based on generalizations and not only my personal experience and opinion.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
I identify when I am speaking from my experience rather than a broader cultural perspective by saying "in my experience…"	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Community Connector Role																
	Knowledge					***Experience***					***Confidence***					
	low				*high*	*low*				*high*	*low*				*high*	
I am familiar with organizations and services available in my community.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
I know where to get information about living in Canada.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
I am comfortable sharing culture general knowledge with community members.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
I have community contacts who can help me when I run into a situation I am not comfortable dealing with on my own.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	

Stage 2: Curriculum Components and Facilitation Steps

Now that you have finished stage one and we've talked about you as an instructor let's take a closer look at how to use the curriculum to support your learner's success. For learners, success is measured by their ability to access their community. The components of this curriculum are designed to support success by:

- Providing survival English
- Building Community Knowledge
- Increasing cross-cultural awareness
- Building community connections

This section will help you feel prepared to facilitate learning using the *Roots and Connections* curriculum through a six-step process:

Step 1: Assess your learners
Step 2: Frame your lessons using learning outcomes
Step 3: Build a lesson plan
Step 4: Reflect on cultural considerations
Step 5: Connect to the community
Step 6: The first class

As we move through this part of the instructor guide keep the instructor resources and the curriculum beside you. This will help you understand the steps of facilitation preparation.

Step 1: Assess your learners

The purpose of assessing your learners is to make your program relevant to the learners.

There are three ways to assess your learners:
1. Language ability
2. Culture perspective
3. Community knowledge and skills

1. Language Assessment

Why do I need to assess my learners' language?

It is useful to assess your learners' language level at the beginning and end of the program to measure their development. The Language Assessment Tool is designed for use with the *Roots and Connections* curriculum to give a picture of a learner's language competence using CLB 2 performance indicators as a guide.

The Language Assessment Tool and the Learner Profiles are available in the Teaching Toolkit.

How to use the Language Assessment Tool

a. Make a copy of the tool for each learner.

b. Fill in the learner information.

c. Meet with each learner, follow the step by step instructions included and check the appropriate boxes.

d. Interpret the results and approximate the learner's CLB level. Use the learner profiles (source: ERPAC[3]) to help you gauge the learner's level.

e. Create a learner portfolio using a file folder. Keep the language assessment in the portfolio and use it to reassess the learner again at the end of the program.

[3] *ERPAC is the English Resource Package for Alberta Communities and can be downloaded for free from http://www.norquest.ca/corporate/edresources/index.htm*

For additional information about language assessments using the CLBs, go to www.language.ca. Look for these helpful tools:

- online assessment tool (www.clb-osa.ca)
- CLB "Can Do" checklists

2. Cultural Assessment

Why do I need to do a cultural assessment?

The cultural assessment helps you collect information to better understand your learner's context and get a feeling for the cultural distance learners may be experiencing. It identifies potential barriers associated with language, culture and the immigrant experience that might impact their learning experience with you. There are three parts to this tool:

- A cultural guide to registration. This guide can help you ask important questions and interpret information.
- Culture general framework to help you gain some insights into the cultural value orientations that may be informing your learners' perspectives and behaviours.
- A culture specific research tool.

How to do a Cultural Assessment

a. Gather information (registration, culture specific research)

b. Use the interpretive guide and background information resources to determine potential barriers or other challenges to keep in mind as you prepare and teach *Roots and Connections*. (Barriers are things that could prevent your learner from engaging in your class, doing assignments, etc.) The **Background Information Resources** available in the **Toolkit** are:
   - Immigrant and Refugee Learners
   - Refugees
   - Barriers Faced by New Immigrants
   - Characteristics of Settlement, Adaptation and Integration

c. Use culture specific information to get to know your learners, build rapport and anticipate aspects of Canadian culture that may not be obvious or

familiar to them. Use the Culture specific research tool in the **Toolkit**.

d. Add your notes to the learner's portfolio. As you interact with learners use this place to make notes about cultural differences and similarities that come up through activities such as the Identity Wheel activities in Unit 1 and the Personal Connections activity. This is one way to increase your sensitivity to important cultural differences and similarities and help you in your cultural bridge role.

The Cultural Assessment Tools are available in the Teaching Toolkit.

3. Community Knowledge and Skills Assessment

Why do I need to assess my learner's community knowledge and skills?

The purpose of this assessment is to help learners check their own experiences with some of the services provided in the community. These checklists consist of items that are sometimes considered "common sense" and we might mistakenly assume that everyone knows. There is one checklist for each unit. Part of the cultural bridge role is to become aware of services, processes or concepts that are different in other countries.

How to use the Community Knowledge and Skills Checklists

a. Introduce checklists one at a time through the delivery of unit one to determine the interests and needs of your learners.

b. Treat checklists as a learner self assessment. You may need to involve an interpreter to help learners complete the checklist. Through this tool, learners can look at what is available in each unit, and express their preferences as to what units they want to study.

c. Revisit the checklist at the start of a new unit to help inform the conversation.

d. Use the checklist at the end of a unit or at the end of the course to assess learning.

e. Keep the checklists in the learner portfolio.

The Community Knowledge and Skills Checklists are available in the Teaching Toolkit.

Now that you have gathered important information about your learners you are ready to put together a plan to deliver the modules.

Step 2: Learning Outcomes

The first step in lesson planning is to identify your learning outcomes. These are your guides and signposts for teaching. Outcomes-based education addresses one fundamental question – "What do learners need to be able to do upon completion of the lesson or course?" – and then bases curriculum decisions on the answer.

In the curriculum section of this resource beginning in Unit 1: Module 1, there are two sets of learning outcomes: CLB outcomes and the module outcomes. These are your guide to what you aim to accomplish with this module. You may cover one module in one lesson or in several lessons.

1. Module Outcomes

   The overall learning outcomes for each module are included at the beginning of each module and follow a pattern. This helps establish a predictable routine that makes it easy for learners to participate and prepare for content changes.

   Module outcomes format:

   By the end of this module, participants will have:
   - Identified vocabulary
   - Practiced basic survival English
   - Placed locations on the Community Map
   - Explored cultural perspectives

2. Canadian Language Benchmark Outcomes

   The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) reflect specific performance outcomes as well as associated tasks.

   - Use the learner profiles and learner assessment tools to determine the approximate CLB level of your learner.
   - Look at the CLB 2 outcomes. If your learner is higher or lower you can adjust the outcomes to their language level. (For example use CLB 1 or 3)

5 Instructional Conditions for Language Learning

This next part of your lesson planning involves combining curriculum components. The curriculum components found in *Roots and Connections* are designed to help learners achieve the learning outcomes, and together incorporate five instructional conditions that we know from research you can use as an instructor to guide and support language learning.

Step 3: Build a Lesson Plan

Plan your lesson to include a balance of the following five instructional conditions for language learning.

1. Expose learner to new language **(Input)**

   Learners at beginning CLB levels benefit from lots of exposure to the language through listening, watching and working with real materials to develop a sense of how English is used (e.g. listening to English, observing, watching video, real materials from the community). The ability to internalize a second language is developed in lower level learners through this input. This essential component is necessary for learners to become able to produce the language accurately, fluently or confidently.

   Examples of how to make sure input is part of your lesson:

   - It is important for learners to hear language associated with the *Roots and Connections* units and module themes

but not necessary that they understand everything or that they produce language accurately at this stage.

- Try the *Personal Connection* activity and include your own story.

2. Draw learners' attention to something **(Noticing)**

   Noticing can be considered a basic learning process in classroom second language learning and is an important step between input and memory. Even though the instructor can help noticing happen it is up to the learner to notice. Instructors can help learners notice by drawing their attention to items by frequently including a language item, by giving learners a task that requires them to use a language item or through comparison.

   Examples of how to make sure noticing is part of your lesson:

   - Use illustrations in patterned ways (people, places, things, actions).
   - Highlight repeated vocabulary words when they show up during the course of the lesson.
   - Underline grammar forms in the *Survival English* activities and dialogue practice activities.
   - Fill in the blanks by listening (blanks identify the forms and functions in the module). Dialogue activities can be adapted to accomplish this.

3. Introducing **forms** and **functions**

   Form: To be able to use language appropriately, students need to know some basic structures such as singular and plural constructions, prepositions, adjectives, tenses and how to ask and answer questions. As well as learning the vocabulary, learners benefit from learning the framework.

   Function: There is always a purpose to our communication: for example, expressing a wish, apologizing, asking for help. *Roots and Connections* modules teach common phrases, structure and vocabulary for specific situations. The language functions are based on the CLB guidelines for CLB 2.

   Examples of how to help learners understand the meaning of form and function in your lesson:

   - Survival English activities develop this framework by highlighting forms, such as the past tense, needed to describe an event. An overview of the forms and functions addressed in the *Roots and Connections* curriculum are available in the Instructor Resources.

4. **Production**

   Production refers to language produced by the learner either through speaking or writing. In your class there are controlled production activities focused on accuracy (i.e. Class Dictionary and Survival English) and free production activities focused on fluency (i.e. Personal Connections, Identity Wheel, Community Mapping and Community Connections).

   Accuracy: Accuracy refers to the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences that are comprehensible.

Fluency: Fluency refers to the ability to produce rapid, flowing, natural speech, but not necessarily grammatically correct speech.

5. **Feedback:**

   Feedback from the instructor is usually focused on helping learners be more accurate. As a language teacher you have to decide if the purpose of a production activity is accuracy or fluency. If the focus is on accuracy there are a number of effective ways to provide feedback listed below. If the purpose of the activity is fluency then the teacher takes a step back and lets learners produce language.

   Examples of how to give production feedback for accuracy as a part of your lesson:

   - Directly by correction
   - Indirectly pointing out an error (requesting clarification: You *goed* to the park? Oh, I went to the park)
   - Indirectly providing the correct form by repetition (S: I ***goed*** to the park. T: Oh, you ***went*** to the park! S:Yes, I ***went*** to the park)

Curriculum Components

Now you are ready to build your lesson plan. There are six components that make up each module. Following them in the order they are presented will ensure that the above conditions for language learning are covered. Suggested activities are included to help with lesson planning. Additional resources are listed for instructors who would like to supplement the materials to further tailor the curriculum to learners' needs. Each component is explained in this section.

1. Illustrations

A picture is worth a thousand words! Every unit in *Roots and Connections* is presented through detailed illustrations. The illustrations have been drawn specifically

to offer a visual way to introduce the vocabulary, content, processes, and cultural context for each unit and the modules. If you think something in an illustration is not accurate for your context, that's ok. Use it as an opportunity to talk about the differences and make links to your community. Use photos of places in your community alongside unit illustrations.

Illustrations help comprehension by:

1. Providing context (What is the subject focus of the module, i.e. health?)
2. Providing a cultural context (How is this subject being expressed in the Canadian cultural context, i.e. how does a health clinic in Canada look similar or different from one in your first country?)
3. Providing access to ideas and content regardless of language proficiency

Ideas for using Roots and Connections illustrations:

- Use the illustration to elicit vocabulary.
- Laminate each illustration poster. Use erasable markers to write directly on the illustration. Use four different coloured erasable pens to identify people, places, things and actions.
- Set up a practice routine for asking questions using the words what, when, where, why, how and who. Repeat the routine each time you have a new illustration. For example:
  - Who is this?
  - What is this?
  - What is she doing?
  - Where is this?
  - How many … can you see?
- Copy a set of illustrations for each learner (Available at the beginning of each unit in the ***Toolkit***)
- Make the illustrations available to Community Facilitators to use when they engage with your learners.
- Draw four columns and separate what you see in the pictures into four categories: people, places, things, and actions. Add them to a class dictionary.

2. Personal Connections activity

Purpose

Personal Connections is an activity that reveals what learners bring to the learning experience, and reaffirms that being new to Canada doesn't mean that they don't know anything—even though it might feel like that sometimes! This feeling of disorientation is the result of culture shock and cultural identity stress, and is influenced by cultural distance. There is no "typical newcomer" but they all share the challenge of adapting to a new culture.

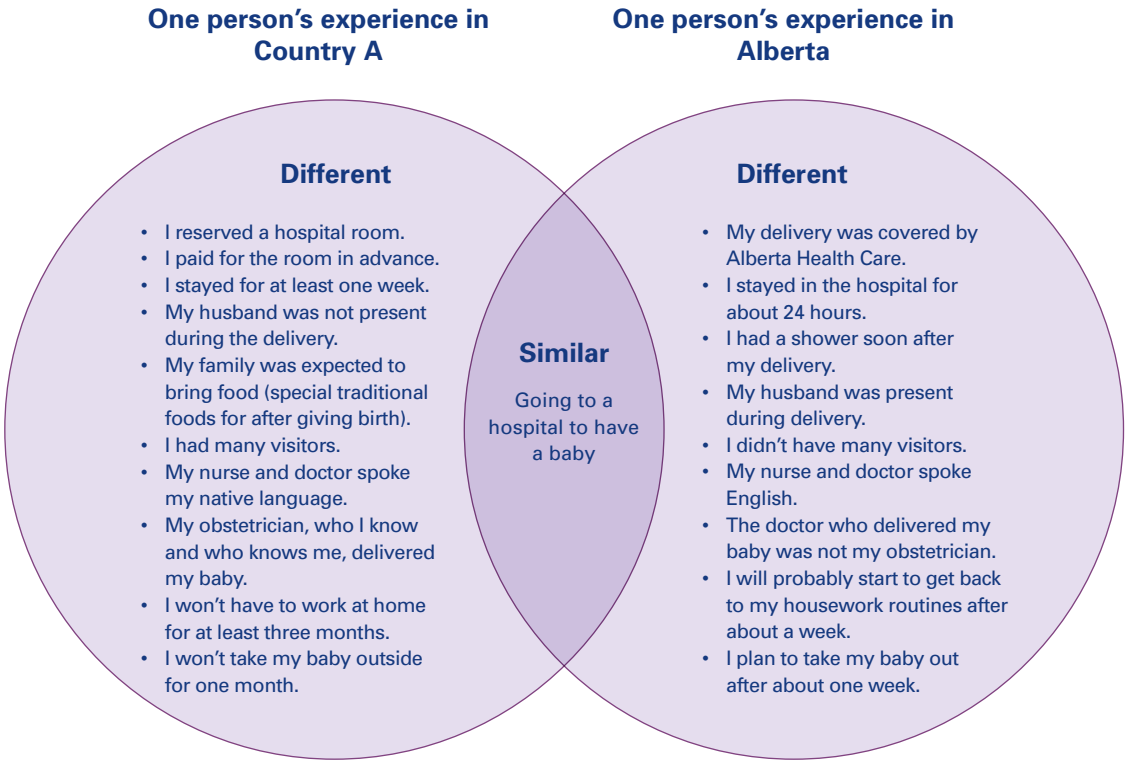
Learners' answers to the questions will help you determine how to approach the content of each unit based on the concept of cultural distance.

How to do the Personal Connections Activity

This activity is an extension of the Cultural Identity Wheel (Unit 1) because, in the course of exploring our experience of each topic through the Personal Connections activity, participants can compare how different people experience the world. *Cultural competence increases when we are able to shift perspective by exploring the cultural perspectives of others*. This exercise is especially valuable for participants with a large cultural distance. You are helping them feel safe, and by drawing on their experiences, you can reassure them that they bring their knowledge into learning about their new community. Learners are not likely to have the vocabulary to describe this information to you so use pictures, patience and routine to help them get accustomed to doing the activity. You should also pay attention to the fact that some people may not feel comfortable sharing personal information.

Steps

1. Draw a Venn diagram.
2. Ask learners to think about what aspects of the illustration are similar to their previous



experiences and what aspects are different.

3. Vocabulary - Class Dictionary

Purpose

Words are the tools we use to access our background knowledge, express ideas, and learn new concepts. For second language learners, vocabulary is very important for language skill development. *Roots and Connections* focuses on vocabulary development activities that increase learners' fluency and accuracy inside and outside the classroom. While vocabulary may be introduced in separate vocabulary development activities, and through the process of building a class dictionary, it is interwoven into all aspects of the lesson. The vocabulary relates to the content of each unit and to the structures that learners must be able to use to communicate at a basic level in the community.

Class Dictionary (Suggested activity)

The class dictionary helps learners build their own personal learning dictionary.

To make a learner dictionary, participants need a notebook separated into several categories. Learners can lay out their dictionaries in many ways; the *Roots and Connections* class dictionary suggests these categories:

- People
- Places
- Things
- Actions (verbs)
- How do I say that? (language functions)

Learners should be encouraged to take ownership of their personal learning dictionary and feel free to organize it in the way that works best for them.

Additional Ideas for teaching vocabulary are available in the Teaching Toolkit.

4. Survival English- Form and Function

Survival English focuses on form or function and provides suggested activities. The suggested activities are designed to raise learner's awareness of and make them think about a particular language form or function and create an opportunity to practice.

Additional tips for teaching form and function are available in the Teaching Toolkit.

5. Fluency - Dialogue Practice

Practicing English by following a written or recorded dialogue is a valuable way to develop the ability to converse freely. Using dialogues helps students move from a low risk to a higher risk activity. They can practise reading new language in a structured format, move on to acting out a dialogue, try making substitutions in the dialogue, and advance to role-playing in which the language is less predictable. The dialogues in *Roots and Connections* are the culminating activity. Learners combine the vocabulary and language structures, and apply them to a context of community orientation.

Additional tips for teaching using dialogues are available in the Teaching Toolkit.

6. Using Numbers

Numbers are integral to many aspects of communication and numeracy is an

[4] *For more information go to Living Literacy: A Literacy Framework for Alberta's Next Generation Economy www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca*

essential component of basic literacy[4]. You will find a special section to practise numbers included in those modules where numbers are relevant.

Step 4: Reflect on the cultural perspective

Now you have examined all the curriculum components you have to work with and are familiar with the five instructional conditions for language learning. At this time we will revisit your Cultural Bridge role.

People move to Canada from all parts of the world for many different reasons, with different combinations of education, experience, interests, culture and occupations. As welcoming community members, we are seen as the "experts" on our community. As "experts" we understand our cultural norms and expectations (even though we may not be able to articulate them) and the language used to express them. The Cultural knowledge available in this resource is there to prompt you to be more intentional and articulate some of your own cultural norms and expectations. It will help you recognize behaviours associated with these norms and help your learners find their way in a new and different culture.

To bring a cultural perspective to your teaching you will use the information you gathered from doing a cultural assessment, cultural insights from ***Culture Bytes*** for each unit, your intercultural toolkit and a collection of teaching tips. The Identity Wheel and Personal Connections activities provide a chance to explore culture-specific knowledge of both the participants' and the host culture.

Process: Bringing a cultural perspective to the classroom involves:

1. **Anticipating:** Using cultural knowledge provided in this resource to anticipate and notice cultural knowledge gaps

2. **Asking:** Using culture knowledge and information gathered through cultural assessment to ask the right questions to help you get more information about your learners' experiences.
3. **Bridging:** Using cultural knowledge to help learners and community members make sense of why and how things are understood or done in Canada compared to other cultures.
4. **Absorbing:** Adjusting to a new culture can be difficult and disorienting. Helping learners name and normalize their experiences can offer them great relief and reduce feelings of isolation. You will find information in this resource to build your understanding of the immigrant experience and you will learn a lot more from listening to your learners!

In *Roots and Connections*, the Identity Wheel and Personal Connections activities provide a chance to explore culture-specific knowledge of both the participants' and the host culture. broad Culture-general characteristics patterns are introduced through the Culture Bytes.

Tools: Bringing a cultural perspective to the classroom is supported by:

1. Culture Bytes

Culture Bytes are snapshots of cultural information. They include basic information for working cross-culturally, information about the newcomer experience, stories and explanations of common misunderstandings. They are a tool for checking your own assumptions regarding the concepts introduced by *Roots and Connections*. There is a culture byte at the beginning of each unit that examines each content area from a cultural perspective. Along with the Personal Connections activity, Identity Wheel activities and Community Knowledge and Skills Checklists culture bytes help instructors and volunteers to estimate the degree of cultural distance being bridged by participants, and to adjust their expectations and lessons accordingly. Culture Bytes are designed to highlight "culture-general" generalizations and patterns.

Definitions

Cultural knowledge

Cultural knowledge is made up of culture general and culture specific knowledge. Learning specific things about a culture will serve you well but learning culture general frameworks will serve you even better.

Culture general knowledge:

General categories facilitate our exploration of values, beliefs, and behaviours in any culture and provide a perspective for comparing and contrasting cultures.

Examples: Nonverbal behaviour, Communication style, Cognitive style, Cultural values and language use (pragmatics)

Culture specific knowledge:

Culture specific knowledge builds on culture general knowledge with deeper and subtler interpretations of cultural patterns within a specific culture.

Example: Many Canadians greet each other with a handshake (non-verbal behaviour: eye contact, touching, conversational distance, facial display etc.) There is a pattern to the length of time it takes and how firm it needs to be. (Three pumps on average and firm but not too strong, definitely not weak)

The firmness of the handshake results in interpretations of things like character or trustworthiness.The handshake will vary depending on gender, how well the two people know each other, age etc. There are also rules for eye contact in this situation.

2. The Intercultural Toolkit

The Intercultural Toolkit is a collection of key terms and two culture general knowledge frameworks to help you recognize and make sense of behaviour, norms and expectations of both your own and your learners' cultural contexts.

The Intercultural Resources are available in the Teaching Toolkit.

3. Teaching Tips for Working with Immigrant and Refugee Learners

This is a useful collection of tips to consider and help you make sense of challenges you may see your learners facing.

Teaching Tips for working with immigrant and refugee learners are available in the Teaching Toolkit.

Step 5: Connect to the Community

The last step in your planning process is to consider how you can connect your learners to the community and vice versa. There are three activities in *Roots and Connections* to help you do this.

Community Mapping

The *Roots and Connections*' Community Map is as much about discovery and making connections as it is about making a map. The engaging process of map-making can bring the students together to create common understanding. The resulting map will be a symbol of the students' journey through their orientation to their new community, and of their pooled knowledge of their places of origin.

When we are lost, a map helps us find our way. We can locate where we are and the possible routes to our destination. A map can also point out the important features and assets of a community, and can even identify the values of those creating the map. Through the process of creating and revising maps, students will become better equipped to actively address their interests and concerns. On a practical level, this ongoing project creates a visual tool for knowing about community resources, ways of accessing these resources, and identifying possible barriers (such as child care and transportation). Don't forget to put up a world map too, so that everyone can show where they are from and where they have been!

The Community Map activity is started in Unit 1 and then each module contains a community mapping activity.

Note: Some learners may not have developed map reading skills. If this is the case:

1. Start with a map of the world – locate their country of origin/birth, show Canada and introduce North/South/East West.
2. Then show a map of Canada – locate Alberta, where they first lived in Canada if different from now, major cities (Edmonton and Calgary).
3. Then show a map of your community – use this as a template to draw your own

community map or add Community Map items directly to it. Many communities have large maps available.

4. Point out key features of a map such as the legend, scales and directions (N, S, E,W).

A complete description and ideas for how to build a community map are available in the Teaching Toolkit.

Community Connections

Making connections in the community is an important part of achieving the goals of *Roots and Connections*. This feature of the curriculum is an opportunity to connect newcomers to both services and people and visa versa. Each module contains suggestions for making community connections

Community Connections can happen in a variety of ways:

1. Go on a field trip in the community.
2. Invite a guest speaker to come to your class.
3. Use local resources (newspaper, websites, information brochures, etc.) in your class.

How to plan a Community Connections Activity:

1. Identify people in the community who might be interested in volunteering to be a community facilitator. Look in the Planning Guide for more information about Community Facilitators.
2. Contact them and explain the program. If necessary send them some additional information (brochure, Community Facilitator Package – available in the Instructor Resources).
3. Use the instructor planning checklist to focus your planning.
4. Involve the learners in a meaningful language task by getting them to participate in the planning. Use the Community Connection Learners checklist.
5. Follow up with a thank you note from the class to the community facilitator.
6. Follow up with a review of language and community knowledge learned.

Coffee Encounter

Coffee encounters are supported opportunities for others in the community to get involved and connected. This can be anyone! Find people who are interested in having a cup of coffee with a newcomer from the class. Coffee encounters are a way for people in the community to get involved and connected. It provides a way to establish personal connections between the participants and people in the community. Coffee encounters can happen once or participants can agree to meet more than once.

A Coffee Encounter Guide is available in the Teaching Toolkit. It provides information on Roots and Connections and offers some guidelines and expectations for the relationship, especially around language and conversation.

Step 6: The First Day[5]

A. Ways to establish a welcoming atmosphere

You will be experimenting with different styles and ways to communicate with your learners. There is a lot to remember (and do) as the facilitator of the class; however, there are certain constants to remember when teaching *Roots and Connections*.

1. Build a sense of security in the classroom

Building a sense of security in the classroom is vital for success. Instilling a sense of security in the classroom will encourage learners to open up and participate.

- Follow through on actions.
- Develop a sense that "we are all in this together."
- Show acceptance and respect.
- Create "connectedness."
- Create a community.
- Listen effectively: respond with understanding.
- Don't make assumptions.
- Make time for discussion.
- Respect each others' personal rights.
- Don't wait for things to get better on their own.

2. Build trust

The meaning of trust is deeply embedded in culture. People have certain, often unspoken, expectations another person must meet before they trust them. Or if trust is given it can be quickly lost if certain expectations are not met. The more culturally different we are from another person the more challenging it can be to feel trust. This is certainly evident in public conversations as groups with different values, beliefs and practices come together and share spaces in communities.

Here are some things you can do to work with 'trust' in an intentional way:

- Be a keen observer and use mirroring to adapt to learners behaviour as they learn and feel more comfortable with yours. For example be aware of how someone uses personal space, touching, eye contact, choice of topics and formalities.
- Greet learners individually and personally. Learn how to pronounce someone's name correctly. You might feel awkward making unfamiliar sounds just as they may feel awkward producing English sounds.
- Let learners know they are important and being listened to.
- Ask questions about family, everyday life, favorite things and so on.
- Validate learners and their experience. (Use the knowledge builders to help understand learners' experiences, name it, ask questions that show that you know something about it and want to know more.)

[5] *Adapted from Common Ground English in the Workplace, Facilitator's Guide NorQuest Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education. 2010 www.norquest.ca/cfe/intercultural*

- Find commonalities and interesting differences (ways of greeting new people, family roles, likes, dislikes).
- Share relevant parts of your personal journey (change and transition, experiences in new cultures).

3. Create a Learner-Centred Classroom

The goal of facilitating is to create a learning environment that encourages learners to speak out loud and practice their learning in a safe environment. The classroom tasks you give will allow the learners to engage mentally, socially and emotionally with the *Roots and Connections* materials. The purpose of the classroom is to take what is being taught and transfer that knowledge back to everyday life. Learners need to leave impressed with themselves and what they have accomplished in their learning, not with how much the teacher knows!

4. Teach with a clear purpose

There are specific outcomes identified in *Roots and Connections* that need to be met. Meeting them can give learners a sense of progress. When creating lessons, set clear goals and make the commitment to achieve them but don't be so rigid that there is no space for teachable moments and unexpected needs. *Roots and Connections* can also be a place where the learner can:

- be purpose-driven
- learn vocabulary
- learn language around procedures
- take initiative
- ask for clarification
- do the most that can be done in a limited time

5. Experiment with Different Styles of Teaching

Whether or not you are an experienced instructor, you will be attempting new teaching techniques that will take you out of your comfort zone. Embrace this; it will allow you to learn about yourself and how you communicate with others as a facilitator in the classroom. Varying the way lessons are taught will allow you to connect with all the learners in your class. People like to learn through three different ways: seeing, listening and doing. Included in the *Roots and Connections* manual are ways to teach a single topic. Remember that your learners come from different cultures, different age groups and different levels of education. All of these factors will affect how a person learns.

6. Be Flexible

You will quickly learn that the lesson plan you laboured over will never go exactly as planned. There is great comfort in knowing that! Being prepared for your class is job number one, but remember that lesson plans are made to be modified "on the fly." Learners in your class may ask a question or answer one of yours in a way that you did not expect. Follow these strands and see where they take you. But be mindful of your learning outcomes. Can you follow the thread and achieve the learning outcomes?

7. Just Be You

Many second-language learners come from

a culture where the teacher is seen as the one with all the knowledge. The teacher's words are the truth and the student would not think otherwise. You may not see yourself this way and getting used to a "different" culture of "good teacher, good student" can be a part of the learning that takes place. Building trust and respect with your learners is essential for fostering long-term success. Be honest with your learners and share your experiences with them but at the same time honour your boundaries and know when something is outside of them. Doing too much for your learners can get in the way of them achieving independence in their daily lives in the community.

8. See the Bigger Picture

The teaching of *Roots and Connections* lasts for a brief period of time. What is taught in the class is to be used in everyday life. This is a long-term commitment made by the learner to improve their standing in Alberta. In every class you will not only give key elements of information but provide long-term motivation. Help your learners become inspired and motivated to keep learning long after the course is over.

A. Tips for enhancing communication when there is a language barrier

- When you are speaking
  - Speak clearly and slowly.
  - Repeat important ideas using different words to explain the same concept.
  - Use simple sentences.
  - Use active verbs and avoid passive verbs.
  - Avoid using colloquialisms and slang.
- Be aware of non-verbal tools
  - Use Visuals. Use as many visual restatements as possible, such as pictures, graphs, tables and slides.
  - Gestures. Use appropriate facial and hand gestures to emphasize the meaning of words.
  - Demonstrate or act out what you want to say whenever possible.
  - Pause more often. Leave a slightly longer gap between sentences.
  - Summaries. Provide written summaries of your verbal presentation (orientations and trainings).
- Take care to make accurate interpretations
  - Silence. When the other person is silent, wait. Do not jump in to fill in the silence. The other person may just be thinking more slowly in their non-native language, or translating between languages.
  - Intelligence. Do not equate poor grammar and mispronunciation with lack of intelligence; it is usually a sign of non-native language use.
  - Differences. If you are not sure, assume difference, not similarity.
- Comprehension
  - Understanding. Do not just assume they understand; assume they do not understand.
  - Checking comprehension. Have colleagues paraphrase their understanding of what you have said. Do not simply ask if they understand. Let them explain what they understood.
  - Paraphrase what you have heard and confirm understanding.

- Designing training and orientation
  - Breaks. Take more frequent breaks. Second language comprehension is exhausting.
  - Small chunks. Divide the material you are presenting into smaller chunks.
  - More time. It takes more time so plan for it.
- Create a welcoming environment
  - Verbally and non-verbally encourage speaking by ESL participants.
  - Encourage marginal and passive speakers to contribute by considering alternative meeting formats.
  - Do not embarrass novice speakers.

Some Guidelines for Working with an Interpreter

There may be some times when you feel like an interpreter is needed. The following guidelines will help you with some important things to keep in mind.

Choosing an Interpreter

1. Use a professionally trained interpreter for sensitive or legal matters.
2. Avoid using personnel if they have not had training as an interpreter especially for sensitive matters.
3. Be sensitive to the learners' right to privacy and their choice of who should act as an interpreter. Problems may arise when the interpreter is of the same social group, different social class, educational level, age or gender.
4. Be sensitive to the relationship of the interpreter to the broader ethno-cultural community. People may hesitate to share personal information – especially sensitive matters – if they feel like it would "get out" to the community.

Working with an Interpreter

1. Encourage the interpreter to meet with the learner before the session. When possible, meet with the interpreter yourself ahead of time in order to:
   - Ask the interpreter to provide feedback.
   - Tell the interpreter where you want him/her to sit.
   - Establish the context and nature of the visit.
   - Ask the interpreter if she/he has any concerns to share with you before the visit.
2. Introduce the interpreter formally at the beginning of the interview.
3. Direct questions to your learner, not to the interpreter, unless they are meant for the interpreter.
4. Avoid technical terms, abbreviations, professional jargon and idioms.
5. Encourage the interpreter to repeat verbatim the learner's own words rather than paraphrasing or omitting information.
6. To check understanding and accuracy of the interpretation, ask the learner to repeat instructions/advice in their own words, with the interpreter facilitating.
7. Watch nonverbal communication.
8. Be patient. An interpreted interview takes longer.