

MORE THAN ECONOMIC
INTEGRATION:
AN INDEPENDENT EVALUATION
OF ISANS' ENGLISH IN THE
WORKPLACE PROGRAM

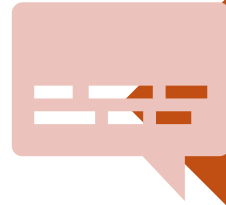
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PATHWAYS TO
PROSPERITY
Promoting Welcoming Communities in Canada

What is
English in the
Workplace?



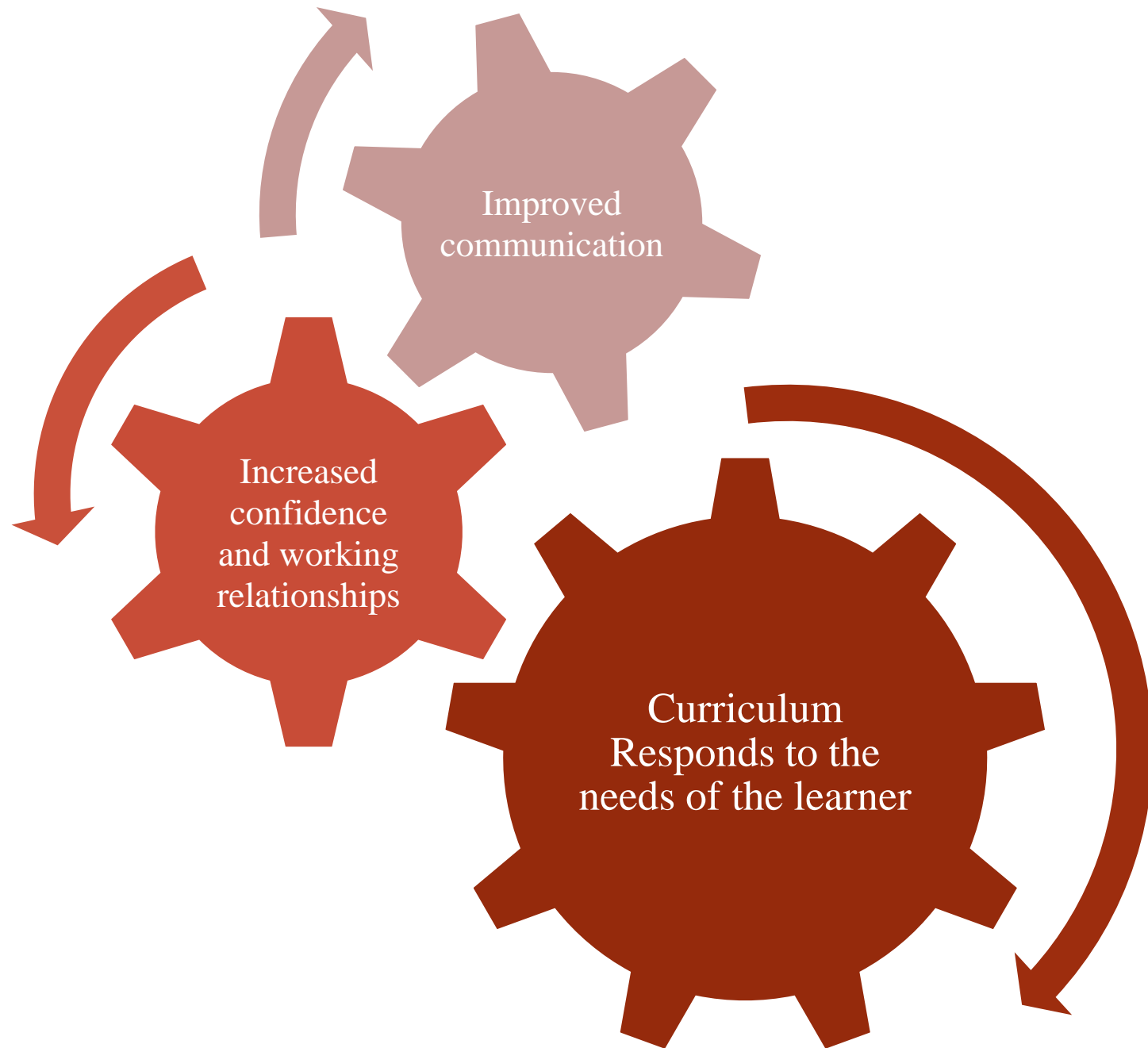
Prioritizes Language
Proficiency for Work Related
Tasks



Accounts for Social Norms in
Workplace



Develops Workplace
Understanding of Newcomers
Immigration Experience



Methodology

30 interviews with EWP participants included: Newcomer Learners (17), Employers (9), and Instructors (4).

Employer Demographics: Hospitality, Food Service Delivery, Information Technology, Government Agency.

Employee Demographics: Entrepreneurial Endeavors, Hospitality, Food Service Delivery, Not for Profit, Government Agency, Education.

Objectives

(1) to understand program objectives and to determine if program objectives correspond to participant objectives;

(2) to offer an assessment of the successes and potential limitations of the program;

(3) to provide recommendations on how the program can be further developed or enhanced to ensure program objectives—as well as those of each subset of participants—are met.

Findings

1. Intensive, individualized language training that fosters task-specific language communication skills and confidence is vital for workplace integration.
2. Workplace-specific language training enables newcomer employees to assume new responsibilities and draw on skills they already have, often developed through training, education, and employment in the country of origin.
3. Newcomers are interested in positive relationships with their Canadian co-workers and enhanced worker relations improve the quality and experience of the workplace.
4. Newcomers are not resistant to adapting to Canadian workplace norms, but they need to understand those norms to do so effectively. Language proficiency is only one part of this process, and local workers and employers need to also be responsive to and respectful ways of interacting that do not immediately correspond to their expectations.
5. Finally, workplace integration is not a one-way street; EWP employer participants noted their increased capacity to support their newcomer employees, and subsequently the likelihood that they would hire newcomers in the future.

#2:
Skills and
Confidence
increased

I use [the skills I learned in EWP] in my emails, on the phone, and in meetings. I'm also able to now prepare very [detailed] minutes. (EWP Newcomer Participant)

Sometimes when we had meeting, I'd have a great idea or business opportunity, and I'd want to explain it, [but] I felt like I was not able to. [After EWP], I am more relaxed [and able to] communicate... [I] use [the skills I learned through EWP] in my emails and in meetings, which I now lead. (EWP Newcomer Participant)

#3:
Enhanced worker
relations improve the
quality and experience
of the workplace.

“I could be more myself” and “My coworkers were starting to start conversations with me.” (EWP Newcomer Participant)

“I feel more relaxed”, “I enjoy working now”, “I feel comfortable again”, “I am able and confident [in my communications with colleagues]”.

#4: Denaturalizing Canadian Norms

“I also felt that um sometimes they were, they were hesitant to work with me because I was perceived to be too “fast forward”... I realized through the EWP, that it’s a matter of changing the form of communication from being very direct, which is my cultural background, to a little bit more indirect.” (EWP Newcomer Participant)

#5:
More Inclusive and
Responsive
Workplace

“I was able to understand other accents of people in the office. I didn’t have to ask them to repeat themselves as often. And they didn’t have to ask me to repeat myself often. I could understand what they were saying.” (EWP Newcomer Participant)

Recommendations

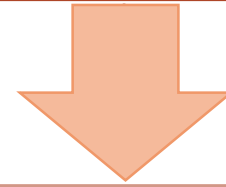
1. Expand the EWP program both in terms of delivery (more sessions over a longer period of time) and access (ensuring a wider client base, including self-employer / small business-owning newcomers).

2. Integrating language instruction in the workplace facilitates attendance, generating an authentic opportunity for learning.

3. Offering a range of options for language instruction strengthens the likelihood of newcomer success across a range of activities.

Recommendations

4. Meaningful communication encompasses both language proficiency and cultural understanding. Learning to communicate, then, must include practices and norms that may be taken-for-granted by long-standing residents, or in the context of a workplace, employees.



5. Cultural competency and integration is a two-way street; developing integration programs that integrate Canadians fosters more authentically welcoming and inclusive workplaces and communities.



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