



@OttawaOCISO

RAISE Workplace Language Training

November 2022



Workshop presenters:

- **Hiba Fazl Ullah** – Manager, Community Economic Development program, OCISO (Carleton University, SLALS Alumni)
- **Michael P. H. Rodgers, (PhD)** – Director, School of Linguistics and Language Studies (SLALS), Carleton University
- **Alexis Dominguez** – RAISE Workplace Language Training Facilitator, OCISO, (Carleton University, SLALS Alumni)





Workshop Outline

- Opening activity - perceptions about workplace language training programs
- Program background
- The RAISE Workplace Language Training Model
- Program successes
- Research on Learners' Motivation
- Closing activity – bringing ideas together
- Future direction



Opening Activity

- Perceptions about Workplace Language training programs
 - Based on your experience/knowledge, what are the key elements of a successful employment retention-focused workplace language training model?

Instructions:

You will see examples of key elements in an employment retention-focused workplace language training model on the flipchart boards. - **5 minutes**

Put up a sticky note under the element that you think is:



**Most
important**

**Somewhat
important**

**Not so
important**

Key elements of a successful employment retention-focused workplace language training model

1. Flexibility to learn on the job
2. Experiential learning
3. Caters to the learning needs of non-traditional learners
4. Offers blended learning options (in-person, online & self-directed learning)
5. Focuses on real life/work situations
6. Focuses on the needs of vulnerable newcomers with limited English skills
7. Grounded in current research on second language learning methods
8. Focuses on explicit instructions of the unwritten rules in the Canadian workplace
9. Centered around learner motivation
10. Trainers are TESL certified



Background



Having adequate workplace language skills and understanding Canadian workplace culture remain two topmost barriers facing vulnerable newcomers entering employment within NOC Skills C&D in Canada (Cheng, Im, Doe, & Douglas, 2020).



Workplace language skills and understanding Canadian workplace culture are two factors influencing employers' ability to recruit and retain the target newcomer demographic.



What is the RAISE Workplace Language Training Program?

- Employment retention program with a focus on developing workplace language and cultural understanding for newcomers with limited language skills on the job
- Sits under the Refugee & Immigrant Supports to Employment (RAISE) program at OCISO
 - Unique program that offers employment supports to newcomers with limited education and English levels at the CLB 3-5
- Developed under joint collaboration between OCISO and Carleton University's School of Linguistics & Language Studies



What is the RAISE Workplace Language Training Program?

- Research-backed program incorporating current second language teaching methods and the needs of the target newcomer group
- Non-traditional language learning model
 - Blended learning combining in-person language instruction with self-learning modules on an e-learning platform
 - Experiential learning settings with a work-life-learning balance
- Tested on-the-job at employer sites that employ from the target newcomer group



RAISE Workplace Language Training Program & Stakeholders



RAISE WLT curriculum



**Greetings
& Request**



Complaints
(Recognizing &
resolving complaints)



Small Talk 1
(Front of the house)



Small Talk 2
(Back on the house)



**Giving &
Following instructions**



Refusals



**Raising concerns,
Responding to conflict,
Giving Advice**



**Reporting Accidents
& Giving Warnings**



**Asking for
accommodation**
(Expressing needs)



Self Advocacy
(Asking for help,
explaining a problem)

What has the program accomplished?

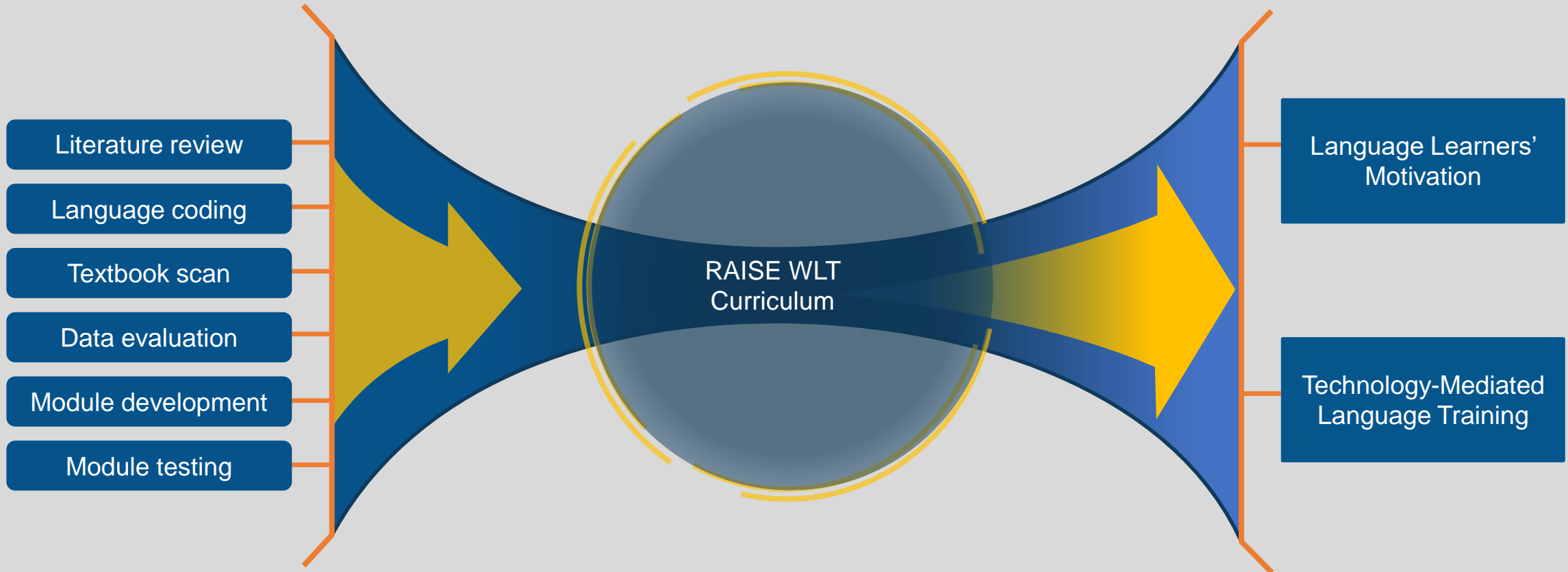


The RAISE Workplace Language Training – Program Stakeholders

- Research
- RAISE Clients
- Language Instructors
- Partner employers



RAISE WLT - Research





What motivates our language learners? WLT vs. General ESL

Based on this published study:

Ady, F., Kartchava, E., & Rodgers, M. (2022). Exploring underlying elements of the motivational self system among learners in two instructional contexts. *ITL-International Journal of Applied Linguistics*.

Contact us for a copy!



Research Impetus

- Lack of research on newcomers' language learning experience
 - Little in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes
 - Even less in Workplace Language Training (WLT) programs
- With the increase of immigrants and refugees settling in North America, there is a need to widen the scope of research for practical and theoretical purposes (Plonsky, 2016; Tarone & Bigelow, 2005)



Factors related to language learning success in settlement

- Resources
- Social status
- L2 learning experience
- Motivation
- Aptitude
- Identity and integration



Background

- Historically, language learning primarily thought to be dependent on aptitude (Gardner & Lambert, 1972)
- Gardner and Lambert (1972) introduce attitudes in motivation
 - Study conducted on Canadian learners of French and English
 - Identifying with and adopting aspects of target language (TL) community important for successful learning
 - Categorized attitudes as being either **instrumental** or **integrative**



Attitudes in Motivation

- Instrumentality
 - Views language as an instrument, a means to get by for work or survival
 - Language learning seen as practical and advantageous (Gardner & Lambert, 1972)
- Integrativeness
 - Interest in the L2
 - Positive attitude toward:
 - the language,
 - the L2 community
 - its culture
 - its members (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner & Lambert, 1972)



L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS)

- Expands on the idea of integrativeness
- Made up of 3 parts that affect and overlap with each other
 - L2 Learning Experience
 - Current or past experiences may shape the long-term goals and trajectories of learners
 - Ought-to L2 Self
 - Attributes a learner thinks they **should** possess to avoid negative outcomes
 - Often related to instrumental attitudes
 - Ideal L2 Self
 - Learners' ideal version of themselves using the target language in the future; attributes they would **like** to possess
 - Often related to integrative attitudes



Identity and Integration

- Acculturation and integration into the host country/culture:
 - influences intended learning effort
 - mediates the intended effort(Gu & Cheung, 2016)
- A learners' national interest “may be viewed as a large-scale relational motive, stimulating them to invest effort into learning English for the sake of the wider community” (Islam et al., 2013, p. 240)



Context

- Little known about if/how motivation affects second language (L2) learning in the workplace
 - which elements may improve or hinder the learning process (Siadaty et al., 2012; Yuit & Lee, 2009)
- Little research on development of national identity through learning English in non-traditional research subjects (Gu & Cheung, 2016; Noels, Pon, & Clément, 1996)
 - Important to facilitate non-traditional/minority learners' socialization with the host country and its local culture (Gu & Cheung, 2016)



The Study

- Participants from non-traditional learning contexts
 - RAISE vs. General ESL Program (e.g., LINC)
- Investigates motivation through L2MSS
- Integrates aspects of identity into the survey
- Mixed-methods
 - Questionnaire and follow-up interviews





Research Questions

1. What elements of the L2MSS do newcomers to Canada believe to be more responsible for their motivation to study English?
2. What motivational attitudes differ between the WLT language learners and the General ESL learners?



The Two Instructional Contexts

- RAISE (n = 29)
 - learn at work; workplace language skills taught
 - Program provides one-on-one language training that supplements newcomer's employment
 - Introduction to employers for job opportunities; also provides employment maintenance and job development
 - Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) level of 3-5
- General ESL Program (n = 37)
 - learn in a classroom; everyday language skills taught
 - Program provides basic language instruction to facilitate economic, social, and cultural integration into Canadian society
 - CLB levels can range from 1-7



Questionnaire

- 2 versions
 - One for WLT students
 - One for General ESL students
- Targeted 7 variables
 - Integrativeness
 - Ideal L2 self
 - Ought-to L2 self
 - Promotion
 - Prevention
 - Canadian identity
 - General attitudes
- 6-point Likert scale

Question		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
		1	2	3	4	5	6
...							
3.	Whenever I think of my future, I imagine myself using English without the help of someone else (e.g., my child, co-worker etc.)						



Variables Measured

- **Integrativeness (IN):** Connecting with the L2 community, interest in the L2 culture, personal satisfaction
 - “Learning English is important for me to understand Canadian culture.” (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002)
- **Ideal L2 Self (IS):** Learners’ ideal version of themselves using the language in the future
 - “When I imagine my future in Canada, I imagine myself using English.” (Taguchi et al., 2009)
- **Ought-to L2 Self (OS):** Features or attributes a learner thinks they should, or ought-to, possess based on external pressures in order to avoid negative outcomes
 - “Learning English is necessary for me to survive in Canada.” (Taguchi et al., 2009)

Variables Measured

- **Instrumentality – Promotion (PM):** Need for nurturance, joy, and happiness
 - “Studying English is important to me because I am planning to live in Canada for a long time.” (Taguchi et al., 2009)
- **Instrumentality – Prevention (PV):** Need for security, safety, and calmness
 - “I study English to avoid having a tough life in Canada.” (Papi, 2018)
- **Canadian Identity (CI):** Canadian identity through learning and using English
 - “It is important for me to feel like I am Canadian by learning English.”
- **General Attitudes (GA):** General attitudes toward Canada and Canadians
 - “Canadians are kind and friendly people.” (Taguchi et al., 2009)



Overall Results - Questionnaires

	<i>Integrativeness</i>	<i>Ideal L2 Self</i>	<i>Ought-to L2 Self</i>	<i>Promotion</i>	<i>Prevention</i>	<i>Canadian Identity</i>	<i>General Attitudes</i>
<i>Mean</i>	4.7	4.9	4.5	4.8	4.5	4.8	5.0
<i>Median</i>	4.8	5.0	4.6	4.8	4.6	4.8	5.0
<i>Mode</i>	6.0	5.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
<i>Std. Deviation</i>	.65	.58	.60	.37	.51	.47	.72
<i>Minimum</i>	3.0	3.5	3.0	3.8	3.4	3.2	3.0
<i>Maximum</i>	6.0	6.0	5.6	5.6	5.8	5.8	6.0

RQ1 – What elements of the L2MSS do newcomers to Canada believe to be more responsible for their motivation to study English?

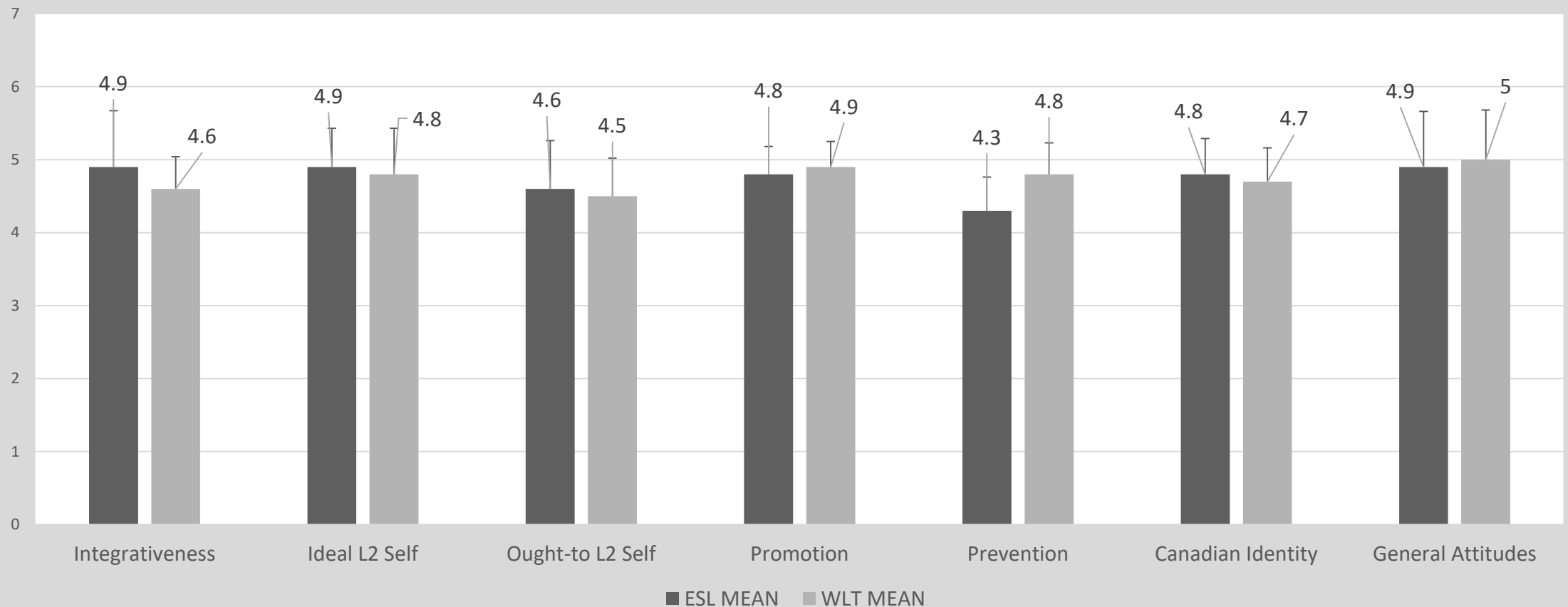
- All elements of the L2MSS manifest in these two populations
- Both groups have similar response patterns for the L2MSS multi-item scales
 - have positive attitudes toward language learning (6 = strongly agree)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Integrative-ness</i>	<i>Ideal L2 Self</i>	<i>Ought-to L2 Self</i>	<i>Promotion</i>	<i>Prevention</i>	<i>Canadian Identity</i>	<i>General Attitudes</i>
<i>Group Total Average</i>	4.7	4.9	4.5	4.8	4.5	4.8	5.0



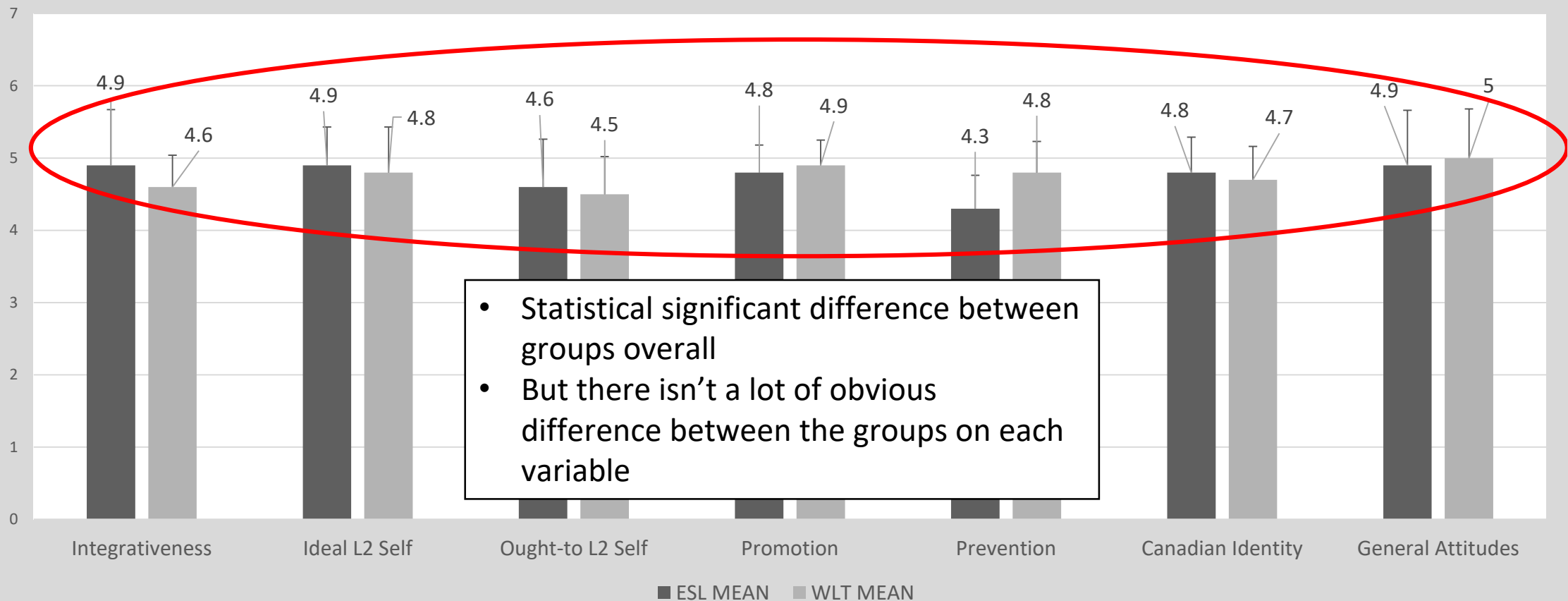
RQ2 – What motivational attitudes differ between the WLT language learners and the ESL learners?

Comparison of L2MSS Factors Between ESL and WLT Learners



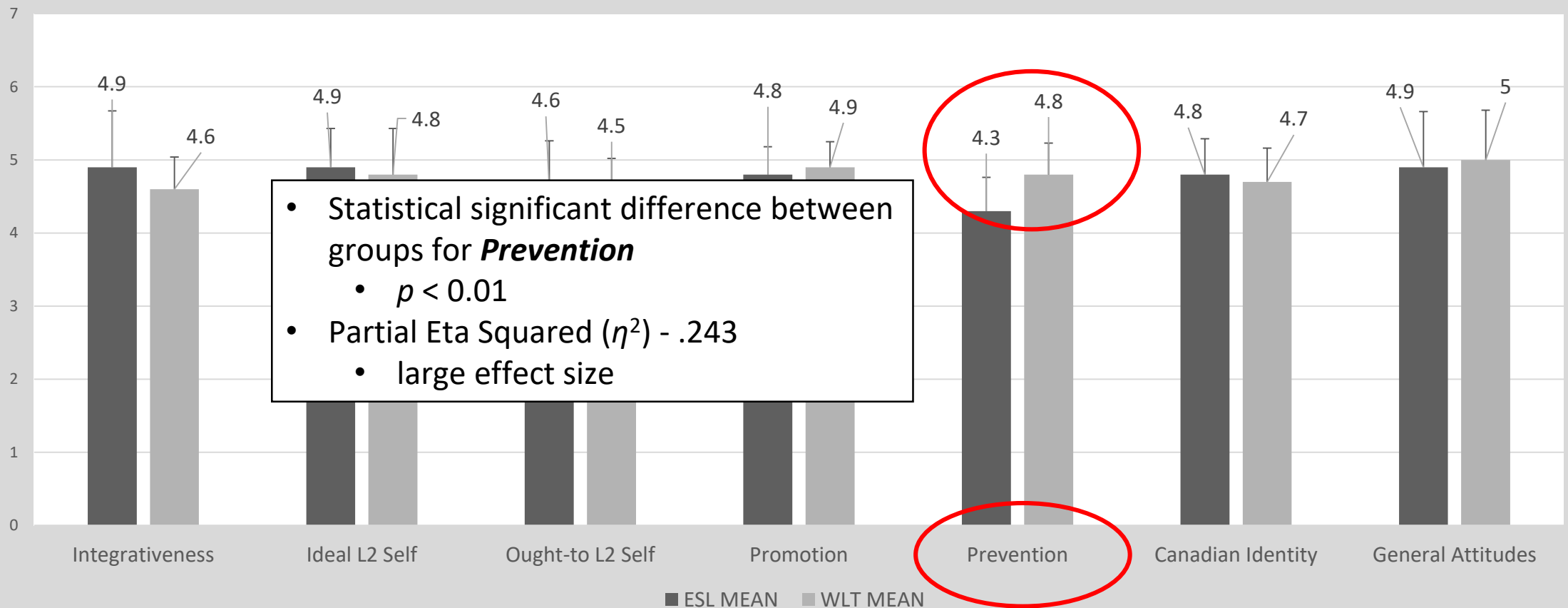
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Comparison of L2MSS Factors Between ESL and WLT Learners



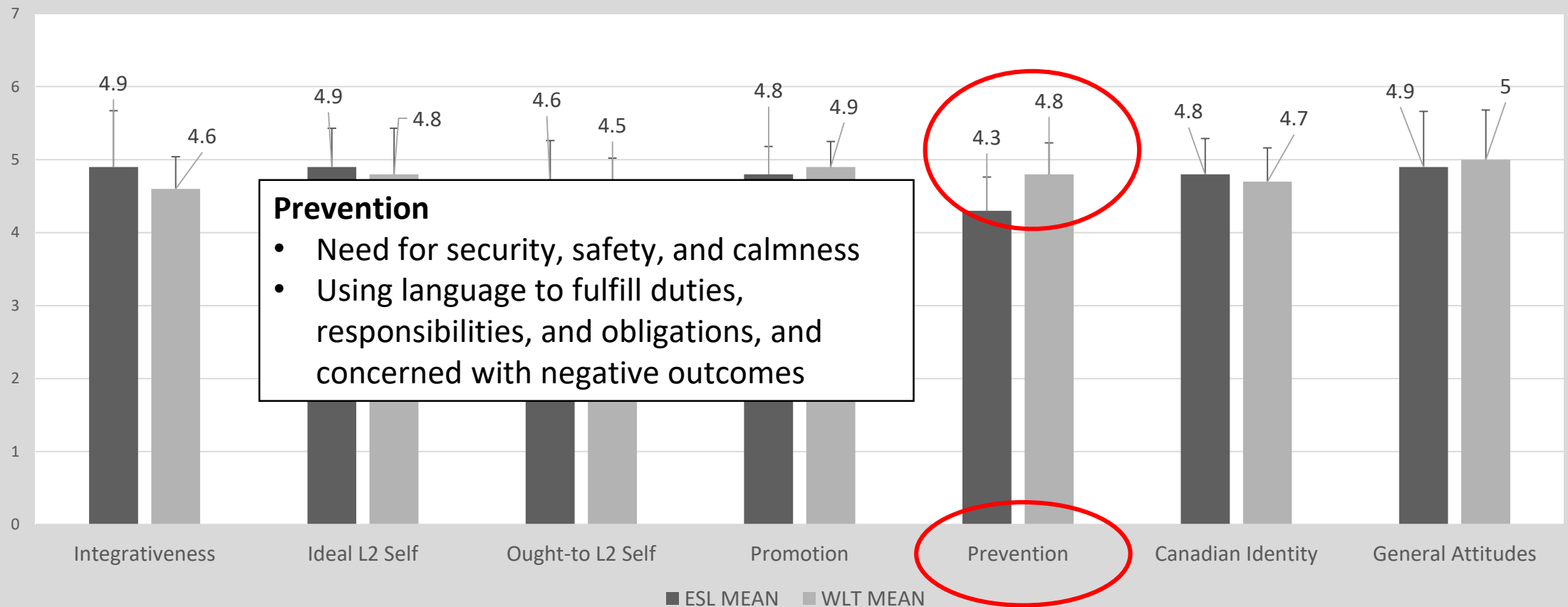
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Comparison of L2MSS Factors Between ESL and WLT Learners



RQ2 – What motivational attitudes differ between the WLT language learners and the ESL learners?

Comparison of L2MSS Factors Between ESL and WLT Learners



Findings Supported in Interviews

- Participants saw English as important to their successful settlement in Canada
 - The ability to understand and interact in English seen as being Canadian
 - Willingness to work hard on their language skills not only for personal gains, but also to give back to the country that had taken them in
 - *“I want to be something in this country to return the favor of this country”*
 - *“I must do something active in this country”*
 - *“What I did for this country? What I serve her? I must learn, I must serve, I must do something because she will be, it will be our country”*



Findings Supported in Interviews

- English was seen as a means to survive in the new host country
 - aka Prevention
 - Allows the newcomers to understand and act on the mail they receive (e.g., dealing with bills and important correspondence), to get by at the grocery store, bank, and airport, and to interact with the Canadians around them
 - Ahmed, an ESL participant: *“I must [learn English] because I want to survive. Otherwise I will, I’ll feel sad, or nervous, or whatever”*



General ESL

WLT



English language instruction



English language instruction



Employment



Employment



Link b/w English and work



Link b/w English and work



Discussion

- Generally, participants with the same situation (i.e., immigrant status) tend to have the same attitudes toward language learning
- Findings also suggest that immigrants and refugees in this context view their **Canadian identity and attitudes toward Canada** and Canadians as contributing factors in their motivation (CI M = 4.8; GA M = 5.0)
- Identifying the relationship between their identity and host country is linked to stronger feelings of acceptance (Gu & Cheung, 2016; Islam et al., 2013)



Discussion

- Significant difference in *prevention* may suggest that those in the WLT program:
 - see a tangible need for English + work
 - see how higher levels of English = able to work + able to succeed
- Link between work and English satisfies the need for safety, security, and calmness
- When it comes to real-world situations (i.e., finding and keeping a job), motivation to continue studying English increases



Implications

- Providing RAISE clients with support they may need to positively affect their willingness to engage in and sustain the study of English
- Promoting positive attitudes may increase cognitive flexibility
 - Learners may display growth in learning and improvements in working memory, classification skills, and problem-solving (Papi, 2018)
- More WLT is needed in both contexts
 - Both programs could now provide the appropriate support learners believe they need to successfully integrate into the Canadian society and workforce
 - For participants in General ESL who were employed, we found similar motivation patterns as those in the RAISE program



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Q&A



RAISE Clients (Learners)

What have we accomplished?

60 Interventions

Within 1 year at least 60 RAISE clients have been matched with certified trainers on a 1-1 basis.



8 groups of employees

8 groups of employees from partner employers have received WLT either virtually or on the employer's site.

- In food manufacturing, supermarkets, fast food and customer service sectors.

93% Positive Satisfaction Rate

Participants have provided high ratings on the design and structure of the WLT modules





RAISE Clients - How have they benefitted from the program?

- The Workplace Language Training curriculum is relevant to my job (**80% strongly agree** and 20% agree with this statement).
- The WLT program has helped me communicate better at work (**80% strongly agree**, 20% agree with this statement).
- The workplace language skills I learned in the program is important for me at work (**57% strongly agree** and 43% agree with this statement).
- After the WLT program, I feel more familiar with the workplace culture in Canada (**51% strongly agree** and 49% agree with this statement).





RAISE Clients (Learners) - How have they benefitted from the program?

- Increased sense of belonging towards organization for the opportunity to learn at work
- Feeling more confident with the communication skills gained
 - Elements of politeness more evident in conversations with participants towards the end of the program
- Brighter career prospects - being able to seek promotion owing to stronger communication skills.





Feedback from clients:

- *"The program had a good structure to learn, I appreciated the role-plays that **helped** me in my daily life at work"*
- *"In general, I can say other people will really benefit from the program. They will feel more **confident** and friendly with others at work".*
- *"I am grateful with this program, because I could **improve in the communication at work**"*



Language Instructors - Support to clients

- Language instructors, who are all TESL certified, act as mentors to clients
- Instructors create engaging instructional content based on clients' workplace specific language needs to enhance clients' soft skills
- General feedback from learners on WLT trainers:
 - "The teacher really took care of our learning and gave us **specific feedback** to each of us".
 - "The instructor helped me to **learn ways to communicate** with my **coworkers** and my **manager**".
 - "I feel more friendly with other co-workers and **now I understand more instructions I didn't understand before**"



OCISO's Support to Language Instructors

- Instructors receive an orientation and thematic trainings to understand the scope of the program and the curriculum
- Ongoing support throughout the life cycle of the program, including:
 - Access to a rich teaching and learning resource bank
 - Guidance on adapting learning materials to clients' needs
 - Support with the online e-learning platform
 - Assessment tools, planning and implementation support
- Professional development opportunities





Benefits to partner employers

- **Helped them promote Retention:**
 - Employees feel supported by their employers leading to a feeling of greater trust between the employee and employer
 - Increased employee self-confidence promotes a ‘sense of security’ and ‘job-safety’ which may increase retention
- **Increased Productivity:**
 - Better communication skills with co-workers
 - Employees can take up additional roles/responsibilities that require enhanced workplace language skills





Benefits to partner employers (Cont'd)

- **Increased Canadian workplace culture focus:**
 - Employees learn to use aspects of Canadian workplace culture specific communication
- **Reap the benefits of a Diversified workforce:**
 - Our program supports Employer's Diversity & Inclusion Strategy by supporting inclusion of a diverse cultural workforce
- **Give back to the Community:**
 - Employers play an active role in community development and integration of newcomers into the Canadian labour market



January 11, 2022.

OCISO Advisory Committee Meeting

Dear Advisory Committee members, unfortunately I am unable to attend the January 11, 2022 meeting for the OCISO Advisory Committee. I did however want to share a couple of notes from my experience with the program.

I had three staff members take part in the course at my restaurant. Here are some of my biggest takeaways from the course:

- *Staff looked forward to the weekly classes.* The participants told me how much they *Staff looked forward to the weekly classes* they felt they were learning.
- *It was a positive and professional learning experience.* I cannot think of any negative issues with this tutoring. *The teacher was always pleasant and professional.*
- *Applied real work/ life scenarios.* *The teacher was always pleasant and professional.* useful and relatable to the *workplace.*
- *After the classes, staff would discuss among themselves the concepts they had learned and how much more comfortable they felt with the English language.*
- *All my employees rated the course extremely positive.*
- *Their level of engagement was high. They were all actively participating.* This was not a *setting where people just sat there and listened to someone lecture.*
- *The course was scheduled at a convenient part of our day where it became part of the staff's regular shift.*

Overall, I would rate the program as an extremely positive experience for the restaurant and my staff. I would highly recommend this course to other groups with individuals who are learning a new language/culture.

Yours truly,
Steven Schamer
Owner/operator
Harvey's 2801
1650 Merivale Road
Nepean, ON
K2G 3K3

Steven Schamer – Harvey's Store Operator



Closing Activity

Instructions: This is a 2-step activity.

Before your discussion begins, please **identify a speaker, a timekeeper and a notetaker.**

Step 1: You will receive a handout. You have **5 minutes** to reflect individually and add your comments to the question in the handout. Do write down your ideas here so that they can be shared and built upon with your group going forward. Point form is fine.

Question

What opportunities and challenges do you foresee for the uptake of the RAISE workplace language training model? Write your comments in the worksheet.

Step 2: You have **5 minutes** to discuss the question as a group and identify 2-3 key ideas raised that your group feels are most applicable/actionable. Each group will have **5 minutes** to share their ideas.





Where we are at now?

- Started off as a one-on-one service provided to barrier-facing newcomers entering employment within customer-service (front-line and back-of-the-house)
- Expanded to piloting the program at employer sites (under a one-year funding from MLSTD)
- Continue to offer the program as a one-on-one support to the target newcomer RAISE clients



Where would we like to go from here?

- Building on the success of the pilot with employers, actively looking for funding to offer the program to employees on-the-job at employer sites
- With renewed funding, we can expand the program to include additional sectors e.g., the trades or healthcare in Ottawa
- Expand the program to employers across Ottawa and beyond
- Funding for further research:
- Expanding research on Motivation
 - Language acquisition in the workplace
 - Development of learning materials





Carleton University



Thank you!



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