

Intercultural Communication in WorkBC Model Context: Creating Employment Inclusion with Racialized Newcomers and Indigenous Communities

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ABSTRACT

This Poster presents an empirical study that aims to explore how to effectively map and analyze the diversification of public employment services and ecosystems, creating employment inclusion for racialized newcomers and Indigenous communities. This research documents new context of geographies, modes, diversities, identities, and flags challenges of intercultural conflict and transitions. It employs intercultural communication theories and methodological approach, draws on key findings to highlight some fundamental characteristics of effective intercultural communication, presents effective intercultural communication strategies that tailored for diverse audience reflecting diversity and inclusion and eliminating barriers.

CONTEXT

WorkBC Employment Services is the largest network of employment services providers in BC province of Canada. It provides integrated employment services to British Columbian in finding job and training. Approximately 80,000 British Columbian use Work BC services annually (Blackman, 2022). In the digital era, WorkBC has been offering in person and virtual government employment services and supports to clients including the targeted racialized newcomers and Indigenous communities that with multi-barriers. WorkBC is one-stop window to the world of work in BC.



Image 1: WorkBC Mobile APP Image (2022)

FINDINGS

This study draws on key findings to highlight some fundamental characteristics of effective intercultural and governmental communication. The key findings show that engagement in the Canadian context public employment service is a complex phenomenon involving government agency, contextual circumstances and intercultural communications. The findings of this research suggest that racialized newcomers and Indigenous communities are more vulnerable than majority groups in terms of culture, language context and proficiency, new context of geographies, identities and the ability to use technology and access to digital WorkBC Platform.

Immigrants are a fast-growing group in BC province. BC has the second highest immigrant population compared to any other province or territory in Canada. Census 2016 reported that a total of 1,292,675 immigrants made B.C. their home, representing 17.1% of Canada's total immigrant population (NewToBC, 2018, p. 3). Indigenous communities are another fast-growing group in BC. Strong labour demand conditions will benefit immigrants, the Indigenous and their communities. The Indigenous working-age population is growing at 3.9% per year, twice the overall population rate of 1.8% per year (WorkBC, 2022). According to BC government statistics, in the WorkBC Employment Services client demographic, Immigrants percentage is 24.8% and Indigenous Peoples percentage is 7.7% for the fiscal year of 2021/22 (Blackman, 2022). Immigrants and Indigenous communities are more vulnerable to use and access virtual WorkBC Platform for employment services and support.

Indigenous Peoples come from a rich oral culture, and they learn from the land. Without an understanding of truth and reconciliation towards Indigenous Peoples, matters of recruitment and retention in the workforce will be an uphill battle (Davey et al., 2020, p. 16). We can introduce Canada's newest residents to its oldest peoples Indigenous Peoples, including content and relationship-building. It will connect immigrant newcomers to Indigenous culture, history, issues, and peoples. These guides are intended to support the systemic change occurring across WorkBC employment services network through indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation. Indigenous ways of knowing, being, doing, and relating (epistemology, axiology, and pedagogy) are reaffirmed through resilience of spirit, resilience of knowledge retention, and the ability to share and transfer these gifts to subsequent generations. These knowledge systems can be brought into newcomer education through experiential and on-the-land courses and programs (Allan, et al., p. 11).



Image 2 Credit: Dion, A. (2017). Our Home and Native Landscape (the Spirit of BC)

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

WorkBC consider diverse community needs & acknowledge that norms and modes of communication differ between various social and cultural communities, creating multilingual languages Digital Platform to engage in a diversified approach to reach culturally & linguistically diverse groups, bridging communication gap and leading to demonstrable communication success.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Government agencies and Indigenous organizations continue to provide and increase awareness of support and access to Indigenous entrepreneurial resources and tools (Davey et al., 2020, p. 24). Indigenous ideology must be a part of reconciliation moving forward (Davey et al., 2022, p. 18).

RECOMMENDATION 3

WorkBC model can develop the skills infrastructure for WorkBC digital platform, such digital skills toolkits, roadmaps, frameworks, culture competency programs and other tools and resources. WorkBC can commit to increasing newcomer education and awareness on Truth and Reconciliation.

RECOMMENDATION 4

WorkBC and Indigenous organizations can develop the skills infrastructure using the Medicine Wheel within a structural social work framework and an anti-oppression stance. Expand and enhance services throughout Indigenous communities for diversity, inclusion and equity, address the gaps and emerging needs of the communities.

CONCLUSIONS

By utilizing intercultural communication in WorkBC model context, it can create a more holistic service model with inclusion to racialized newcomers and Indigenous communities leading to practicing culturally sensitive employment services. It's an essential step to continue REDI+ journey for systemic change. More diverse client groups will access the skills, tools and opportunities they need to maximize their labour market potential and provide employers with the skilled workers they need to succeed, better together economically, socially, and culturally.

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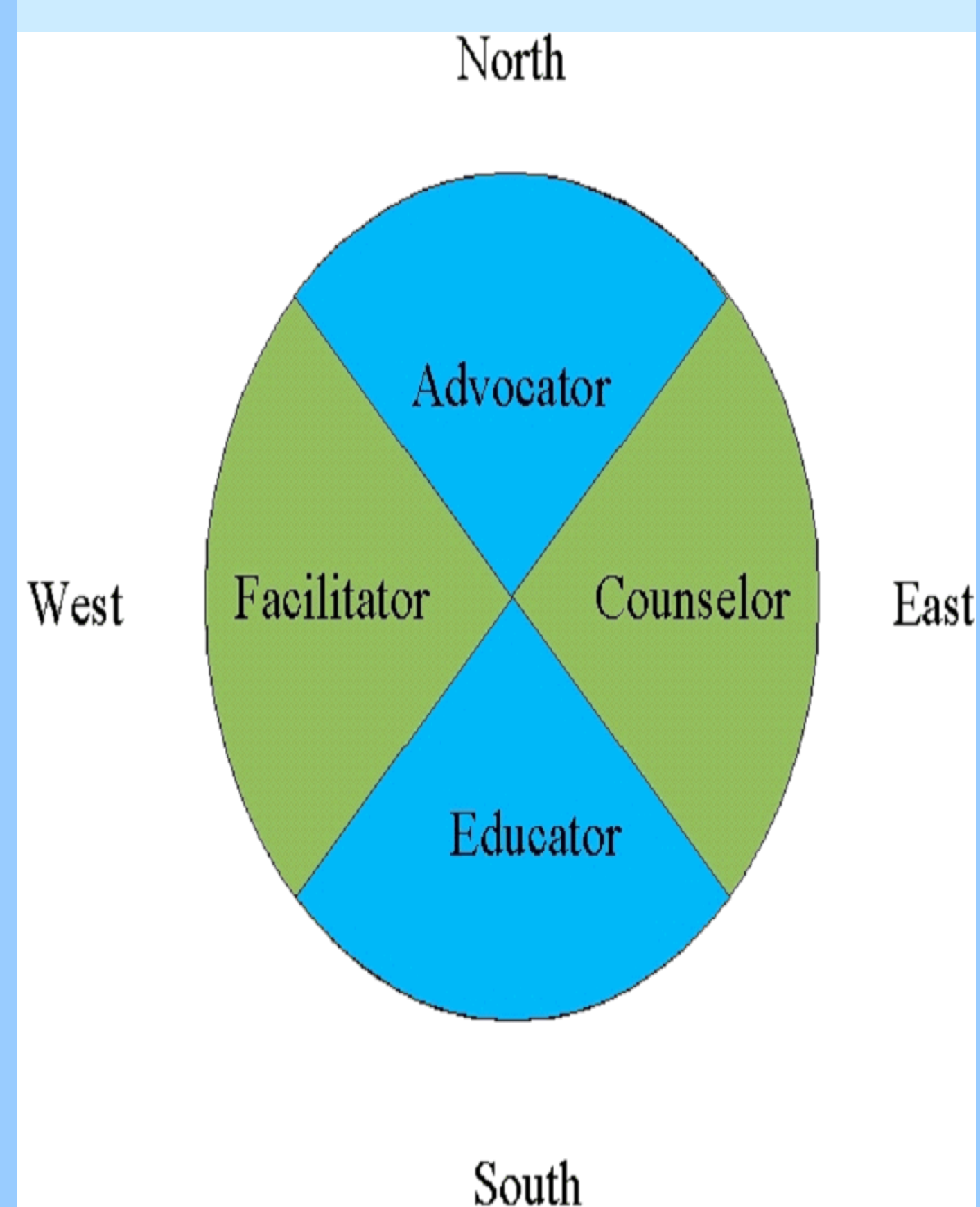
THEORY & METHODOLOGY

❖ **Intercultural Communication Theories and Methodologies** Six Dialectics of Intercultural Communication, Culture, Communications and Conflict, Identities and Intercultural Communication (Martin & Nakayama, 2018). Co-cultural Communication Theory (Martin & Nakayama, 2018, p. 240)

❖ **Medicine Wheel** The processes of four community development in four interdependent areas of activity and focus are: Political and administrative, social, economic and environmental, cultural and spiritual (Boop, M., 2011; Boop, J., 2011). In social service, the Medicine Wheel guides the social worker to holistic and balanced practice. The practice tailored to the treatment of the client's belief systems encourage healthy identity development. The role of a Social Worker should be an Advocator (North), Facilitator (West), Counselor (East), Educator (South) (Verniest, 2006).

❖ **Qualitative Method *Interpretive Approach***—Field studies, observations and participation observations tend to see communication as influenced by culture (Martin & Nakayama, 2018, p. 57).

❖ **Focus Group** Racialized newcomers and Indigenous communities



Roles of Social Worker Medicine Wheel (Verniest, 2006)

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