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Chapter 2: Diversity and International Business Relations

OVERALL TEACHING STRATEGIES

Teaching Resources

Visit the instructor and student companion websites for access to all chapter resources.

Teaching Suggestions

1. Encourage students to consider what multiculturalism means, and how cultural awareness impacts the workplace. Open the chapter discussion by providing some background on the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. Follow with an instruction to The Canadian Human Rights Act is a statute passed by the Parliament of Canada in 1977.

2. Define diversity providing some examples of how individuals are unique and how this impacts the workplace. Explore the range of elements that contribute to diversity. Encourage students reflect on what makes them unique. Have them also consider someone who has had a significant impact in their life, what makes them unique. Share some of the descriptive words used.

3. Discuss the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Human Rights Commission, employer obligations, protections and equity standards that are found in organizations today. Ask students to share some experiences of discrimination they have experienced or have witnessed.

4. The topics in this chapter can provide an opportunity to consider what the administrative professional should do when confronted by acts of discrimination.

5. Ask students to identify cultural practices associated with diverse arrays of cultures. This could lead to a significant amount of discussion simply based on the sheer volume of different cultures and associated practices.

6. Discuss the similarities and differences between Canadian culture and international cultures. Emphasize the importance of being aware of the norms of the culture that you are working in.

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7. Share steps for developing cultural awareness and guidelines for cross-cultural encounters.

8. List some (three or four) of the advantages for diversity in the workplace. Ask the students to add to this initial list. Encourage students to identify benefits from both diversity in the workplace and international business diversity.

9. Use examples of how time management is interpreted depending on the culture, identifying specifically how this impacts the workplace.

10. Discuss communication barriers that may occur with international business relations as well as steps for managing international client relationships.

11. Provide some guidelines for hosting international visitors. The administrative assistant will play an important role in terms of ensuring the stay of the visitor is comfortable and pleasing.

12. Assign Production Challenges 2-A and 2-B just before, or immediately after, their topics have been studied in class. Assignments will not, of course, be due until you have finished the related topic. However, assigning a Challenge immediately before a topic is discussed encourages students to pay attention and allows those who do to complete the assignment accurately.

13. Reading Assignment: Ask students to preview the Questions for Study and Review on page 44 and jot down answers as they go along.

Points to Emphasize

1. An administrative professional who understands the goals and purpose of a multicultural and diverse workplace is a valuable asset.

2. An administrative professional should learn the importance of diversity and equity in the workplace, along with employer obligations. The workplace of today involves working with teams comprised of individuals from diverse backgrounds.

3. Explain the purpose the Canadian Human Rights Act. Highlight the goals of the act and its impact for the workplace. Discuss the Canadian Human Rights Commission which acts upon claims of discrimination both inside and outside of the workplace.

4. Mention the various diverse groups that can be found

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5. Today's working environment often spans numerous cultures. Define what both diversity is and culture contrasting the two. As well as stereotypes and the harmful effect of having preconceived ideas about certain groups based on a stereotype.

6. An administrative professional should develop as a soft skill, cross-cultural awareness. Adapting to different cultural beliefs and practices requires flexibility on and a respect for other's viewpoints.

7. Workplace cross-cultural awareness has become an increasingly important aspect of business. The administrative professional is often the front-line person in an organization and should be able to convey an understanding and appreciation of other's beliefs and practices.

8. Discuss guidelines for handling cross-cultural encounters considering steps the administrative professional can follow.

9. Emphasize the benefits of diversity in the workplace highlighting advantages of this for the administrative professional as well as the organization as a whole.

10. Highlight the nature of business today with so many business "going global and the requirements for communication practices.

11. The administrative professional should be aware of the significance of time management in other cultures and its impact.

12. When conducting business globally the administrative professional may encounter language barriers that require making some adjustments in the communication process.

13. Recent innovations in communication technology have allowed employees to work more closely with international clients. Discuss some of the unique challenges that may be experience in this dynamic.

14. The administrative professional may find themselves working in a foreign country for a short- or long-term experience. Specific requirements may need to be met in order to work in another country.

15. being able to build positive working relationship when hosting international visitors and or clients. The administrative professional can follow tips for building and sustaining these relationships.

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Related Activities

For Instructors

1. Special reports 1 & 2 could be assigned prior to the in-class discussion of this chapter. This would encourage a more thoughtful discussion in class.

2. Invite an administrative professional who works in a diverse workplace to talk to your class about the benefits and challenges in of this environment.

For Students

1. Consider what is unique about your cultural background. List some of your ideas and prepare to share them with your classmates.

2. Think of an incident that you observed or were involved in where communications were strained or hampered because of cultural differences. Recall as much detail as you can and then try to gain insight into what probably caused the problem. What do you think could have been done to avoid the incident?

3. Have the students choose one foreign country that they would like to work in and have them research intercultural communication skills that they must possess to be successful in an office in this country.

ONLINE TOOLS

1. In addition to classroom activities, instructors are able to use web links found at the end of this chapter to create online activities, provide in class/online demonstration and assigning research. Surfing the net exercise are available on the instructor companion website to provide online assignments for this chapter. Consider using the delivery suggestions to enhance online interactions.

2. A video supplement is available for this chapter. The video is available on the companion website.

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Online Delivery Suggestions

Journal/Blog Post Activity

A. Have students locate a job posting for an international opportunity in the administration field.

B. Ask students to virtually review the job location to gain insight of the culture.

C. Ask student to write a reflective blog or journal on what they might anticipate would be the most challenging aspect of the assignent and by contrast the most exciting.

D. Make sure to have students include some strategies they might use to combat culture shock.

TEXTBOOK ACTIVITIES

Answers to Questions for Study and Review

1. Diversity encompasses acceptance and respect for others, as well as an understanding that each individual is unique. It involves recognizing individual differences, including culture, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical abilities, and religious beliefs. (page 34)

2. There are significant advantages to diversity in the workplace. By integrating workers from diverse backgrounds into the workforce, organizations become much stronger. (page 36)

3. Race is the word used to describe the physical characteristics of a person. These characteristics can include everything from skin colour to eye colour and facial structure to hair colour. Ethnicity is the word used to describe the cultural identity of a person. (page 35)

4. Canada officially adopted the Canadian Multicultural Act in 1971. (page 34)

5. Culture refers to a system of shared values, beliefs, morals and social standards embraced by of group of people. (page 38)

6. Many cultures exist within the workplace. Diversity is everywhere you look. Businesses are increasingly conducting their activities globally. By understanding of cultural diversity an administrative professional can and will be more effective in their job. (page 38)

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7. The concept of workplace diversity incorporates awareness of, and respect for, differences in the way people communicate, approach tasks, and interact. To be effective in business an administrative professional must take steps necessary to develop an awareness of diversity. Cultural competence and awareness of the variety of beliefs, morals and practices of individuals. (pages 30, 38-39)

8. Fours ways to develop cultural awareness:
    a. Become more self-aware. Avoid thinking your way is the only way.
    b. Avoid stereotyping. You may have a preconceived idea about someone's behaviour that is simply not true.
    c. Don't generalize. Everybody is unique.
    d. Ask questions. Keep the questions professional you will minimize misunderstandings. (page 39)

9. Depending on our own cultural background we may have certain expectations of a leader. These same views may not be shared by all members within the organization. In some cultures, the role of the leader experiences an elevated status, while in other cultures the leader is approach with skepticism. (page 40)

10. Any four: (ways to improve international business communication)
    a. Learn common greetings.
    b. Use simple English. English is a difficult language to master so speaking in short concise sentences with help the communication process.
    c. Speak slowly and enunciate. Speaking in a rush tone will prevent your message from being understood.
    d. Watch for blank stares. A glazed expression tells you the listener may not comprehend your message
    e. Ask the listener to paraphrase. When they repeat the message, it is a better chance it is understood.
    f. Accept blame for misunderstandings. This will ease any embarrassment the listener may have.
    g. Listen without interrupting. Don't finish sentences for others. This will only heighten their concerns if they are made to feel their English communication skills are not appropriate
    h. Follow up in writing when negotiating. This helps to summarize an agreement ensuring the results of the negotiation have been achieve and to avoid misunderstandings
    i. Observe nonverbal messages. Looking for gestures that portray a message to better communicate. (pages 40–41)

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11. Gestures convey different things depending on your culture or country of origin. A gesture may appear harmless in your culture could have a profoundly different meaning in another. (pages 41)

12. You will need a passport before working abroad. A work visa or special permission in the form of a work permit will be required. If you are planning to go for a long time you may also require a residency permit. Additionally, some countries may require a medical certificate as an entry requirement. Another consideration may be obtaining an international driver's license. (page 42)

13. Time management perceptions can be culturally driven. Consider business communication with a colleague in another country the time difference between the two countries can vary dramatically. Even work days can differ. Even the way tasks are performed can vary as well as well as the sequencing of tasks. Multi-tasking is usually looked upon as favourable in Canada but in another culture or country it may not be. (page 40)

14. Any four of the following:
    a. Take time to learn a few courteous greetings.
    b. Locate the client's nearest consulate office and contact information in case your visitor requires it.
    c. Research what cultural attitudes exist about time management.
    d. Preferred eating habits.
    e. Consider international differences in terms of customs and greetings.
    f. Learn about body language and their interpretation.
    g. Pronunciation of names.
    h. Be aware of any national holidays and important events occurring in visitor's country.
    i. Physical space for personal communication.
    j. Prepare information about the city your visitor is in so they can see some points of interest. (pages 43–44)

15. You want your visitor to have a pleasant and positive visit to Canada by making yourself knowledgeable about a variety of matters that could affect your visitor's stay. Be available to answer questions they may have or be prepared to direct the visitor to someone who can provide an appropriate answer. (page 44)

16. Three considerations for travelling for business
    a. Work etiquette of the host country.
    b. Work environment in terms of expectations for commitment.

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c. Importance of time. Learn how time is handled in the host country.
d. Learn about workplace legislation.
e. Pay how is payroll handled.
f. Learn the language.
g. Learn the cultural view of women in the workplace.
h. Learn the host country's cultural view toward authority. (pages 42–43)

17. Cultural systems encompass features such as social norms. Understanding something as simple as physical space distance when talking to someone is part of the social norms for that culture. (page 44)

18 Culture shock is the emotional and physical reactions experience while settling or visiting a new cultural group. Some people experience homesickness, irritability, and depression during the adjustment to a new culture. (page 42)

Possible Response to Everyday Ethics—Dating the Boss

Solutions to Problem Solving

1. Due to the importance of needing an interpreter it would be wise to try to arrange another interpreter immediately there are many services available in most metropolitan areas. Searching for these services should generate significant results. If that is not possible check with other personnel at your company to see if anyone can refer an interpreter.

2. Since your visitors are staying for a week it may not be necessary to present the gifts immediately upon their arrival. Suspend presenting the gifts until you can arrange a suitable replacement gift for the visitor who is Hindu. Be sure to inform your manager of the situation to ensure the gifts are not presented without knowledge thus risking offending your visitor.

Suggestions for Assigning and Evaluating Production Challenges

1. **Production Challenge 2-A: Cultural Self-Awareness**

   Form 2-A is required (available on the companion website)

   Since students hail from a variety of cultural backgrounds answers will vary greatly.

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2. **Production Challenge 2-B: Cultural Understanding**

   This exercise challenges students to come up with a unique interactive activity to celebrate and explore backgrounds. The results will vary significantly.

3. **Production Challenge 2-C: Celebrations**

   Students will each answer a series of questions based on their own background. The answers will greatly.
   Debrief as a class and share the findings.

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Chapter 2

Diversity and International Business Relations

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Chapter 2 Focus

- Understanding Components of Diversity & Cultural Awareness
- Importance of Diversity Management
- Human Rights, Equity Standards

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Diversity and Equity

Diversity-acceptance and respect for others by understanding that each individual is unique

Culture, race, ethnicity, gender,

Sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical abilities, and religious beliefs.

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Diversity in the Workplace

- **Demographics** refers to a structure of populations
- **Cultural diversity**, integration and acceptance of multiple cultures in a specific place or demographic location.
- **Race** is the word used to describe the physical characteristics of a person.

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Diversity in the Workplace

- **Ethnicity** is the word used to describe the cultural identity of a person.
- **Religion** in Canada encompasses a wide range of groups and beliefs.
- **Sexual orientation** is an inherent or absolute continuing emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people.

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Diversity in the Workplace

- **Discrimination** is an action or a decision that results in the unfair or negative treatment of person or group because of differences such as race, age, religion, sex, etc.

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Human Rights & Equity

Canada is committed to ensuring equitable and fair treatment of all citizens in and outside of the workplace.

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* as well as the *Canadian Human Rights Act,* express these protections.

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Human Rights Goals

1. **Equal Opportunity**-ensure equal opportunity exists for individuals who may be victims of discrimination based on grounds of gender, disability, or religion

2. **Non-Discriminatory Practice**-ensures in the workplace the right to be treated fairly based on age, gender, race, physical abilities, or religious beliefs

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Benefits of Workplace Diversity

In Canadian business we have many cultures living and working together. In the workplace, significant advantages exist focusing on diversity.

- **Fairness & Equality**-open lines of communication, each contribution is valued
- **Hiring & Promotion**-policies based on qualification and performance. Most qualified gets the job or promotion

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Benefits of Workplace Diversity

- **Ideas Shared**-Varying perspectives are shared. Encourage an atmosphere where it is all inclusive.
- **Strengths & Weaknesses**-the talents of each team member can be utilized and realized.
- **Differences**-build upon individual differences and use this for the business in a positive way.

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Cultural Competence & Awareness

Culture-refers to a system of shared values, beliefs, morals, and social standards embraced by a group of people these can include:

- Language
- Religious practice
- Social interaction

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Human Rights and Equity

Canadian Human Rights Act is a statute passed by the Parliament of Canada in 1977.

The Act outlines the creation of the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC)

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Human Rights and Equity

The goal of this act is to ensure equal opportunity to individuals who may be *disadvantaged due to discrimination based on set prohibited grounds such as gender, disability, or religion.*

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Human Rights and Equity

- [[catch Fig. 2-1, p. 37]]

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Discriminatory Workplace

Employment Equity Act (EEA)

Hours of work, minimum wages, sick days, vacation provisions, and many more related items are stipulated as employment standards.

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Cross-Cultural Competence

Cross-Cultural Competence-the ability to interact with people from a variety of different cultural backgrounds.

- Business is often conducted on an international scale
- Develop it on both a business and social level

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Developing Cultural Awareness

Steps for developing an awareness:

- **Become self aware**-avoid thinking your way is the only way
- **Avoid Stereotyping**-your expectations may be based on a stereotype
- **Don't Generalize**-Everybody is unique

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Awareness *(continued)*

- **Ask questions**-Keep your questions professional and keep the lines of communication open
- **Be Positive and Enthusiastic**-Show a willingness to work together and your co-workers will appreciate your cooperative approach

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Self-Check

1. What are two goals of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*?

2. State why it is important to be aware of diversity.

3. What is cross-cultural competence?

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Guidelines for Cross-Cultural Encounters

Following some basic principles during cross-cultural encounters will limit the potential for misunderstandings.

- **Greeting**-Acknowledge the person in every cultural a greeting is appropriate
- **Responsiveness**-demonstrate a willingness to get to the know the person

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Guidelines for Cross-Cultural Encounters

(continued)

- **Clarity**-Give as much detail as possible the more transparent you are in your communication the greater understanding
- **Create Connection**-Be friendly. Show that you want to connect with the other person
- **Flexibility**-Your message may need to be conveyed in a variety of methods

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Global Diversity in Business

- Diversity is a challenge in business considering the growth in the global marketplace.
- The administrative assistant should develop an awareness of how business is conducted internationally.

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Time Management in Cultures

Time management practices may be perceived differently in cultures.

For instance in some countries Sunday is a normal business day, while in North America offices are usually closed on Sundays.

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Communication in the Global Market

Sometimes language barriers exist when conducting business on a global scale. Even when the same language is spoken misunderstands can still occur. Consider some strategies for making communication easier

- Learn common greetings
- Use simple English
- Speak slowly and enunciate
- Watch for blank stares

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Communication in the Global Market *(continued)*

- Ask the listener to paraphrase
- Accept blame for misunderstandings
- Listen without interrupting
- Follow up in writing when negotiating
- Observe nonverbal messages

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International Client Relations

Since innovative technology has made it possible to conduct business easily on an international scale we can work closely with our clients better than ever before.

- Keep track of your customer's time zones, by prearranging a time that works
- Pay attention to cultural differences
- Do research on local customs and etiquette

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Working in a Foreign Country

As discussed, many companies are going global and the opportunities to work in a foreign country may be possible within your own company.

Remember you will need to seek permission from the country you wish to work in.

You will also need a passport and even a work visa.

Foreign Affairs Canada provides services to Canadians working abroad

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International Workplace Challenges

If you find yourself working in a foreign country you may experience culture shock as the cultural may be very different from your own. Become familiar with these points to help reduce the culture shock potential:

Work Etiquette	Work environment
Time	Laws
Pay methods	Language

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Self-Check

1. Describe culture shock
2. What documents may be required prior to accepting a work assignment in a foreign country?

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Hosting International Visitors

Your office may host international visitors. Being able to build positive relationships and international clients is highly desired and worth achieving

You may be asked to provide tours of your office to your international visitors

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