



# Excelling at a Culturally Diverse Workplace: Organizational Cultural Dimensions

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**RYERSON  
UNIVERSITY**

# Objective and Agenda

## Objective:

To share how Ryerson University addresses the ongoing concern of graduates' job maintenance - the inability to fully understand and adapt to the diverse and ever-changing workplace.

## Agenda:

### 1. Introduction

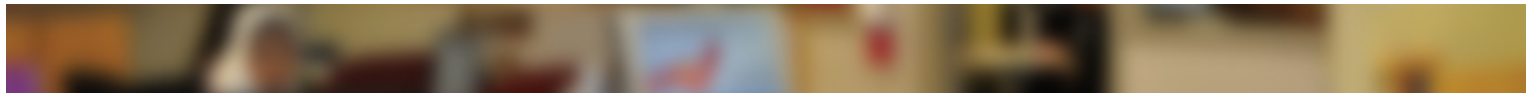
- Needs Assessment
- Objectives of Workshop

### 2. Summary of Workshop

- Culture Shock
- Canada in relation to other countries
- Workplace culture

### 3. Outcomes

- Summary of findings
- Future potential



# Background

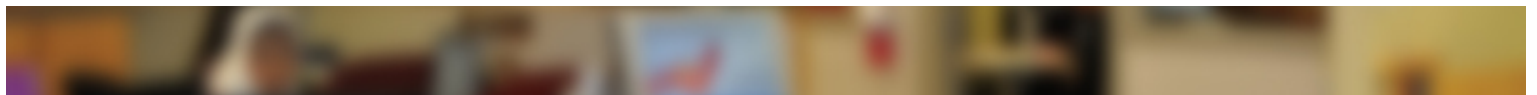
## Population:

### Toronto:

- 49.9% of population is foreign born (2006 census, Statistics Canada)

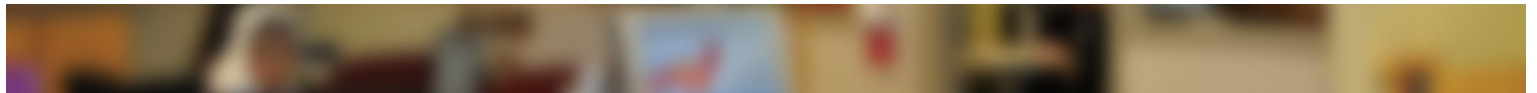
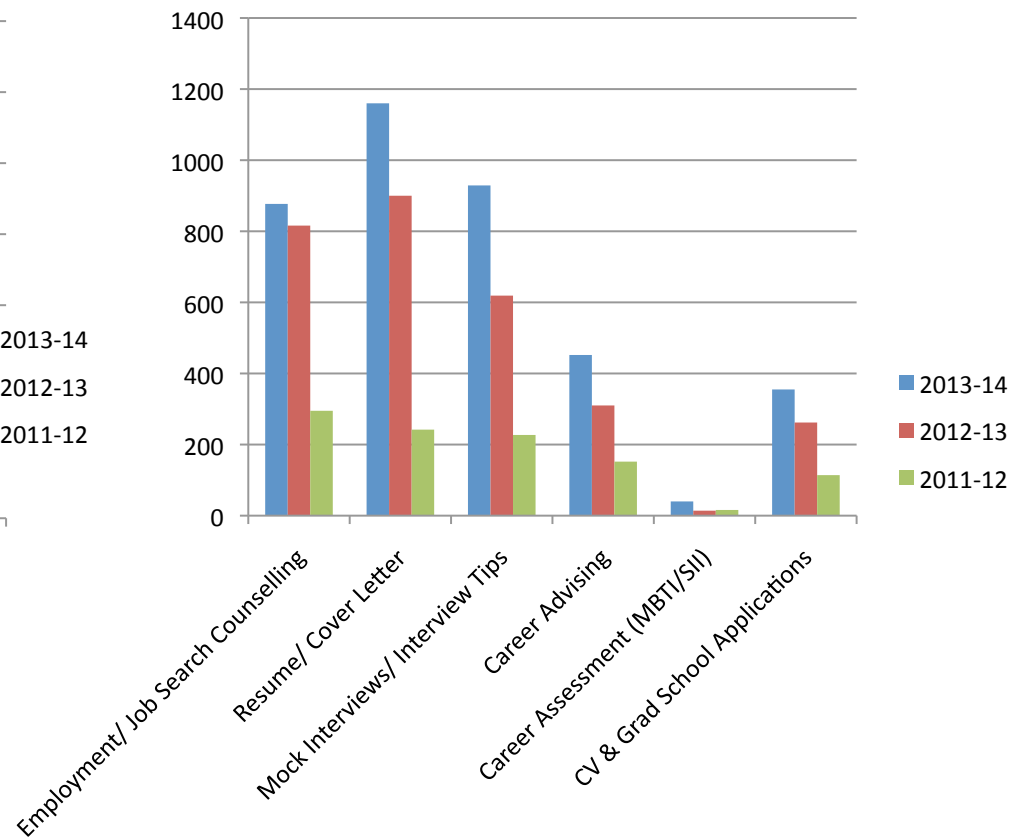
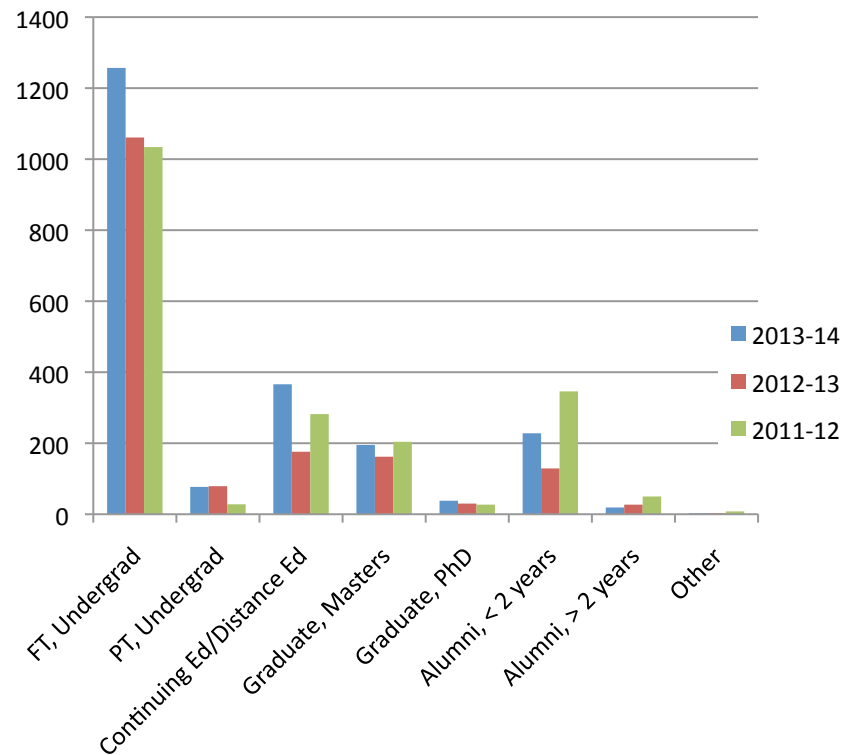
### Ryerson University:

- Student population originates from 146 countries
- Hosts 1,700+ international students/year



# Introduction

## CDEC Numbers: Counsellor Appointments, by Student Status and Type



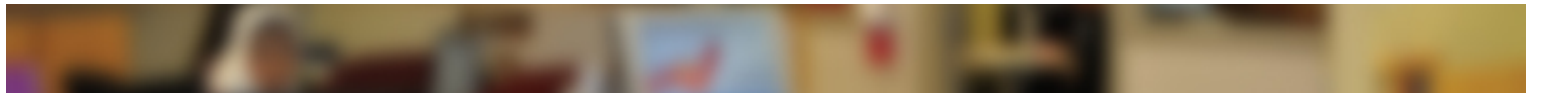
# Summary of Workshop

## Target Audience:

- New to the Canadian workplace/Entering a culturally diverse environment

## Workshop Objectives:

- Understand what culture shock is and how it may impact life and work in Canada
- Understand the Canadian National Cultural Dimensions and be able to compare them to other countries' cultural dimensions
- Understand Canadian workplace expectations and gain strategies to diffuse potential challenges at work





# Workshop Agenda

## 1. Introduction

- Culture shock

## 2. Canadian Culture

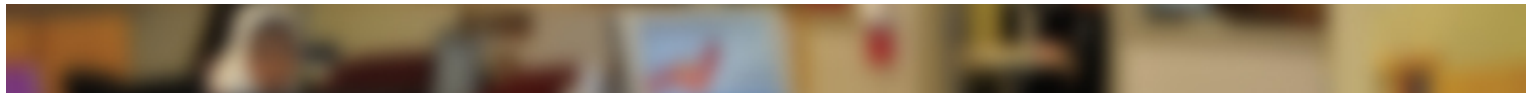
- Canada in relation to other countries

## 3. Culture shock and a New Job

- Workplace expectations

## 4. School-to-work transition

## 5. Summary



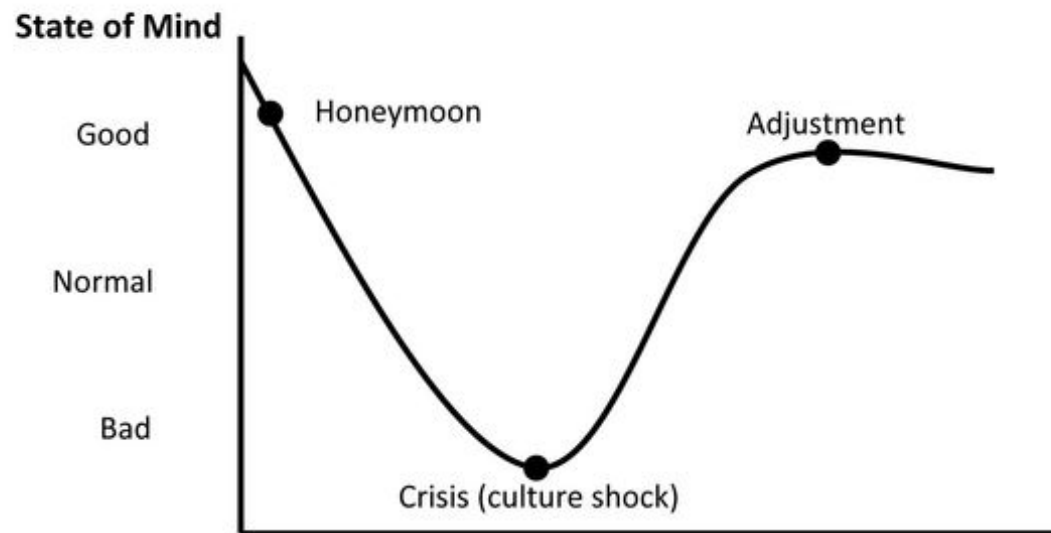
# Adapting to a new environment: Culture Shock

**Stage 1:** Happiness and fascination

**Stage 2:** Disappointment, confusing feelings, frustration and irritation

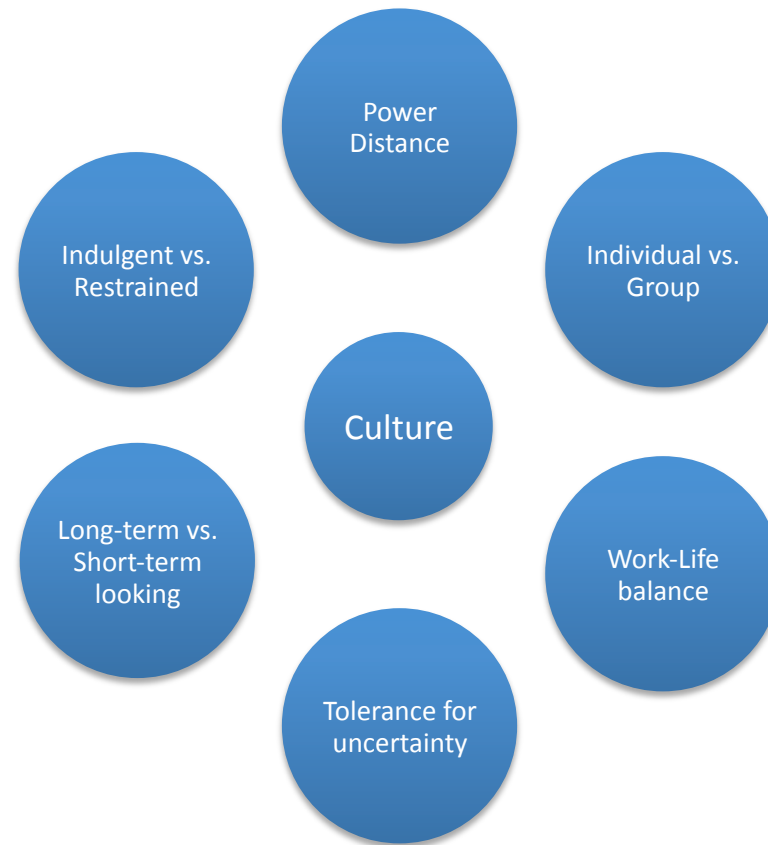
**Stage 3:** Slow adjustment or recovery

**Stage 4:** Acceptance and adjustment

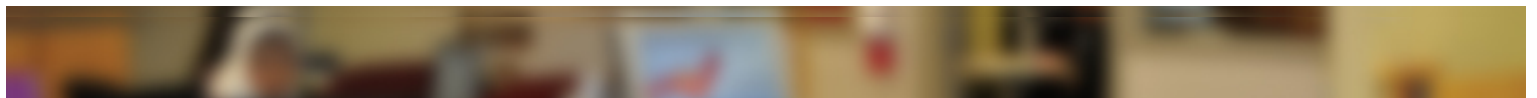


Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2010). Adapting to Culture Shock. CIC. Retrieved from: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/after-life-shock.asp>

# Defining National Culture



Hofstede (2010)



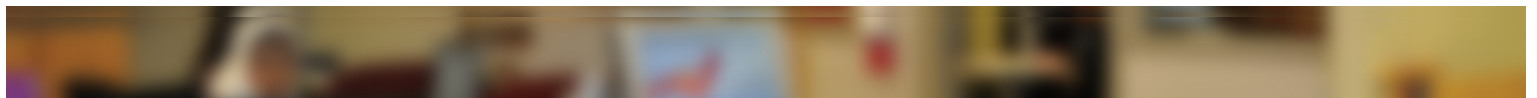


# Power Distance

The extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. It has to do with the fact that a society's inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders.

Low PDI	High PDI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Expect and accept power relations that are more consultative or democratic</li><li>•Equals regardless of formal position</li><li>•Subordinates more comfortable with right to contribute and critique decision makers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Less powerful accept power relations that are more autocratic and paternalistic</li><li>•Subordinates acknowledge power of others based on hierarchy</li></ul>

Hofstede (2010)

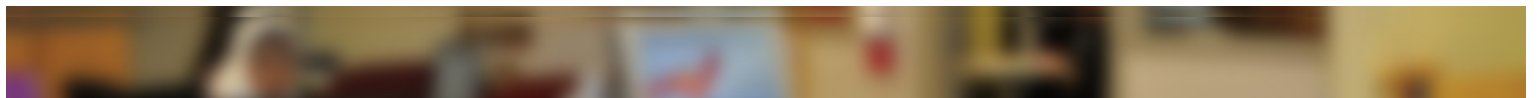


# Individualism vs. Collectivism

The degree to which individuals are integrated into groups.

Individualistic societies	Collectivist societies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Stress is put on personal achievement and individual rights</li><li>•People expected to stand up for themselves and immediate family</li><li>•Choose own affiliations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Individuals are looked at predominantly as members of a lifelong and cohesive group or organization</li><li>•Large extended families used as protection in exchange for unquestioning loyalty</li></ul>

Hofstede (2010)

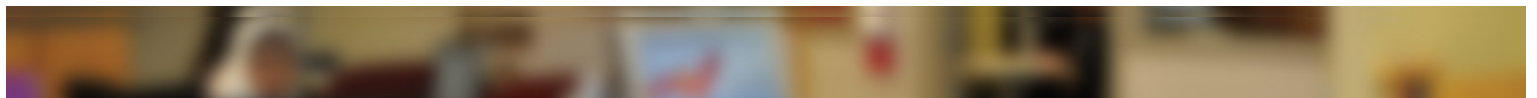


# Masculinity vs. Femininity

The distribution of emotional roles between the genders.

Masculine/Quantity of Life	Feminine/Quality of Life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Cultures' values are competitiveness, assertiveness, materialism, ambition and power</li><li>•More dramatic and less fluid difference between gender roles</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Cultures place more value on relationships and quality of life</li><li>•Men and women have the same values emphasizing modesty and caring</li></ul>

Hofstede (2010)

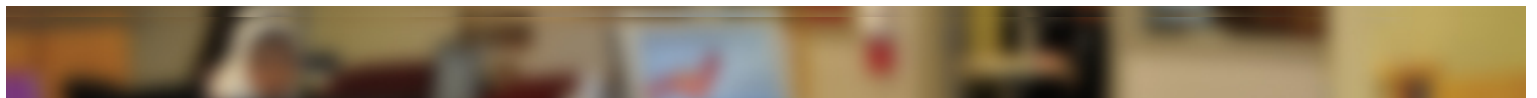


# Uncertainty avoidance

A society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity reflects the extent to which members of a society attempt to cope with anxiety by minimizing uncertainty.

High UAI	Low UAI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•More emotional</li><li>•Try to minimize the unknown and unusual</li><li>•Step-by-step planning</li><li>•Careful changes</li><li>•Rules, laws and regulations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Accept and comfortable with unstructured situations and change</li><li>•As few rules as possible</li><li>•Pragmatic</li><li>•Tolerant of change</li></ul>

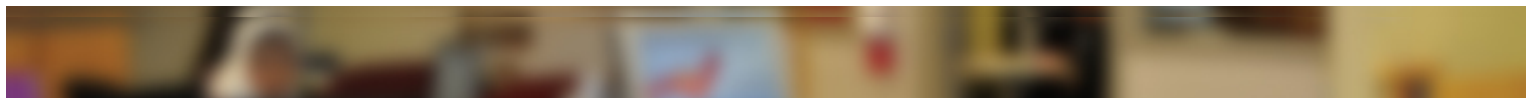
Hofstede (2010)



# Long-term vs. Short-term orientation

Describes society's time horizon: the extent to which society shows a future-oriented perspective rather than a short-term point of view. It also describes how people in the past as well as today relate to the fact that so much that happens cannot be explained.

Long-term oriented/Pragmatic societies	Short-term oriented/Normative societies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Believe that truth depends on situation, context and time</li><li>•More importance is attached to the future</li><li>•Able to adapt traditions to changed conditions</li><li>•Strong propensity to save and invest</li><li>•Persevere in achieving results</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Strong concern with establishing the absolute Truth</li><li>•Steadiness</li><li>•Respect for tradition</li><li>•Relatively small propensity to save for the future</li><li>•Focus on achieving quick results</li></ul> <p>Hofstede (2010)</p>



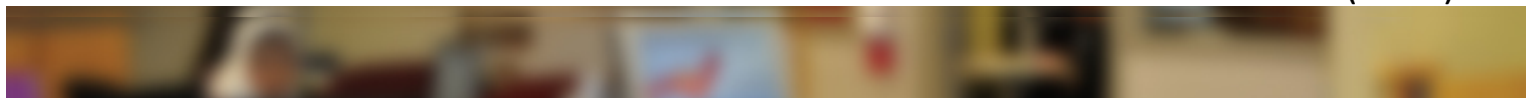


# Indulgence vs. Restraint

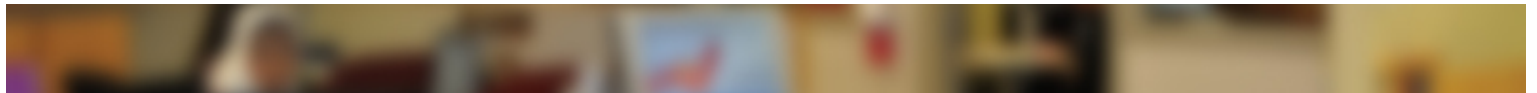
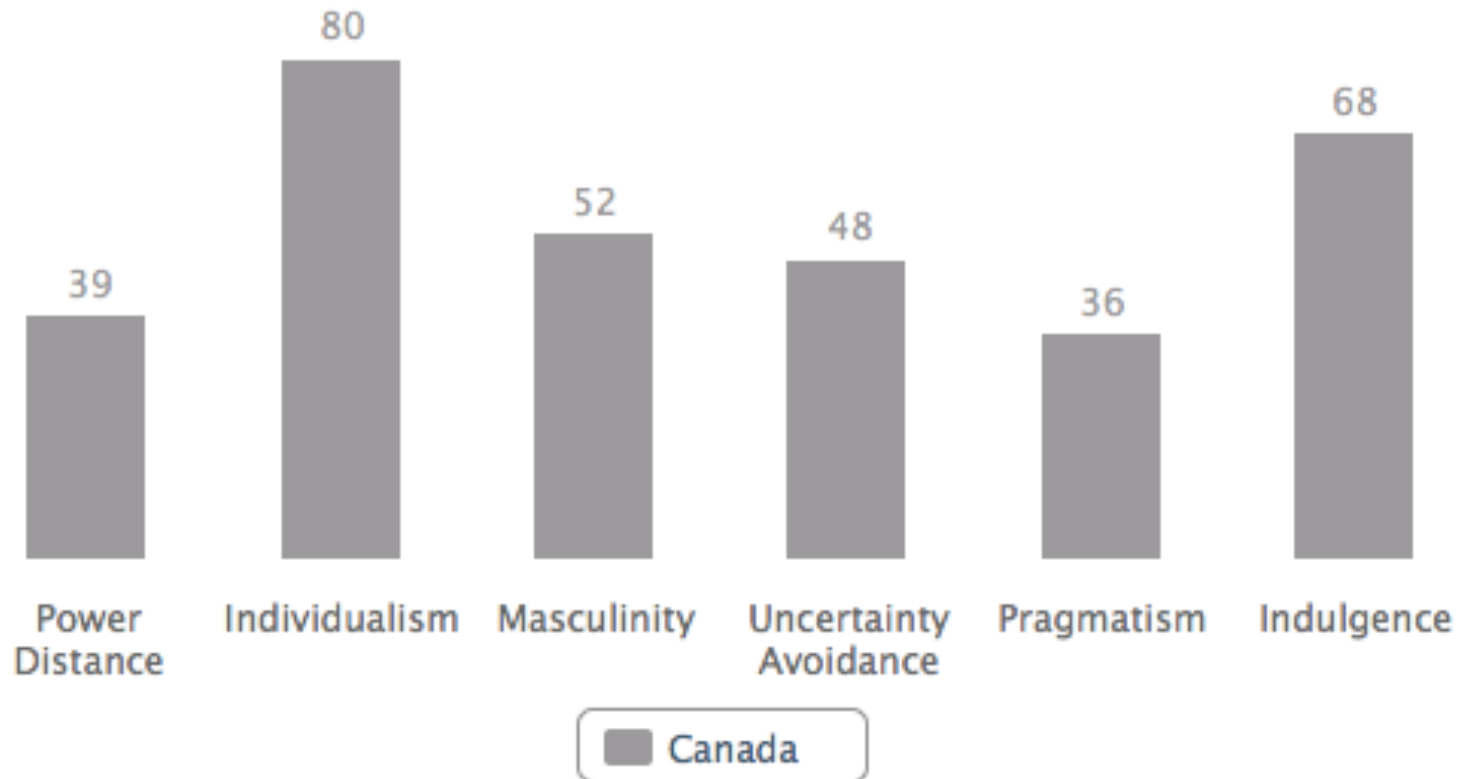
Describes hedonistic behaviors: how freely can people satisfy their basic needs and desires, how strict social norms are followed and gratification suppressed and regulated.

Indulgent society	Restrained society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives</li><li>•Focus on enjoying life and having fun</li><li>•Cannot easily be motivated with material reward</li><li>•Enjoys moment rather than comparing with others</li><li>•Objects need to fulfill a purpose, not status</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Suppresses gratification of needs</li><li>•Regulates needs by means of strict social norms</li><li>•Expects material reward for a job well done</li><li>•Can easily feel unfair treatment</li><li>•Status objects are important (eg. phone, laptop, watch, company)</li></ul>

Hofstede (2010)



# Canadian Culture: What makes it unique?



# Activity: Comparing Cultures

GEERT HOFSTEDE



GEERT HOFSTEDE  
NATIONAL CULTURE

Select a Country

Argentina

<http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html>

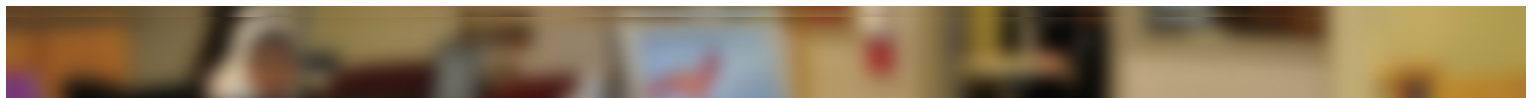
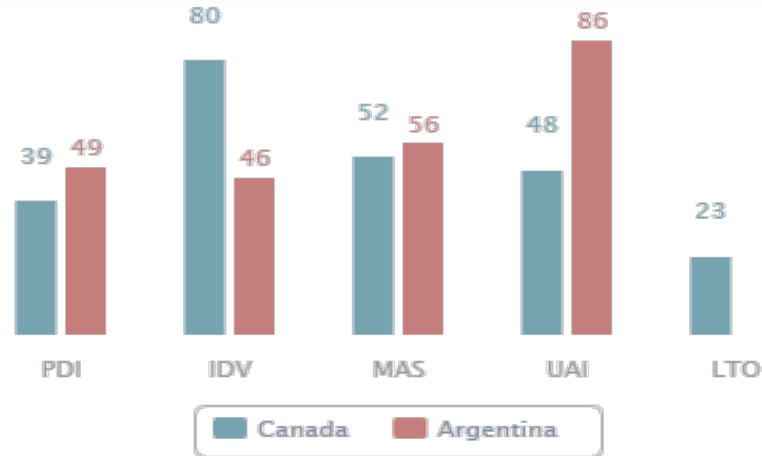
THE HOFSTEDE CENTRE  
CULTURAL INSIGHTS  
BOOK SHOP  
FAQ

Will there be one big world culture in  
50 years from now?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

What is your nationality?

Answer

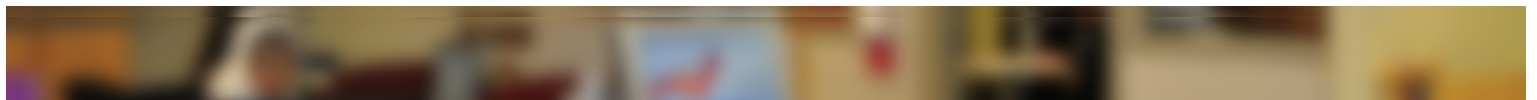


# Culture Shock and a New Job



**“It’s like going to a different country”**

– Michael Kanazawa, Chief Executive, Dissero Partners LLC



# Culture Shock & New Job: The Reality

A blurred background image of an office interior, showing desks, computers, and office partitions.

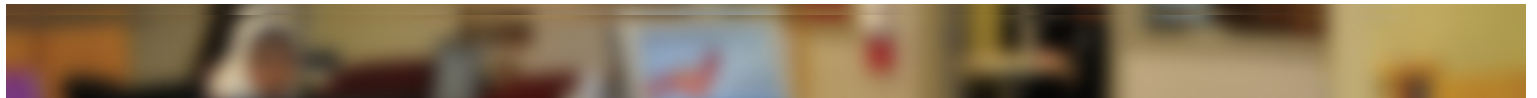
46% of new employees fail in first 18 months of employment

– Leadership IQ

A blurred background image of an office interior, showing desks, computers, and office partitions.

22% of staff turnover occurs in first 45 days of employment

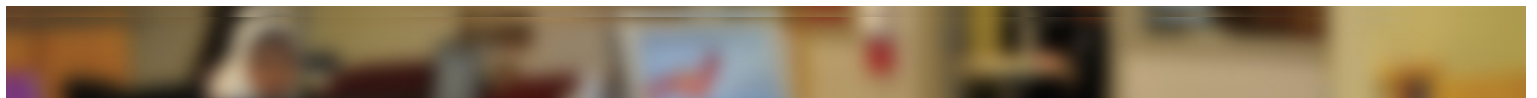
– The Wynhurst Group





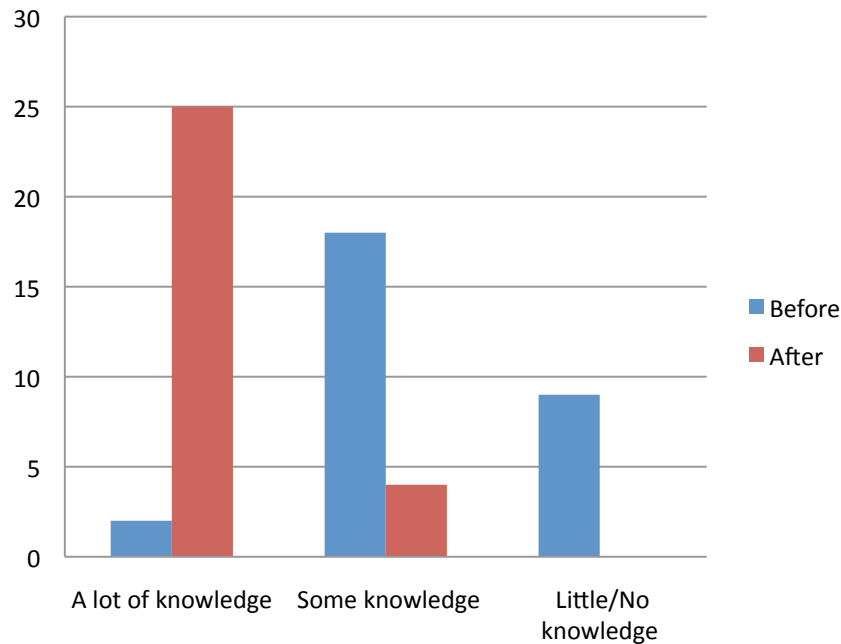
# Canadian Workplace Expectations: Skills and Attitudes

Skills	Attitudes
<p><b>Fundamental skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communication</li><li>• Managing information</li><li>• Using numbers</li><li>• Thinking and solving problems</li></ul> <p><b>Personal Management Skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive attitudes and behaviours</li><li>• Taking responsibility for own work</li><li>• Learning continuously</li><li>• Working safely</li></ul> <p><b>Teamwork Skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ability to work with others</li><li>• Participating in projects and tasks</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Showing respect for others</li><li>• Honesty and ethical behaviour</li><li>• Desire to provide quality service</li><li>• Flexibility</li><li>• Accountability for actions</li><li>• Accepting that there is always more to learn</li></ul>

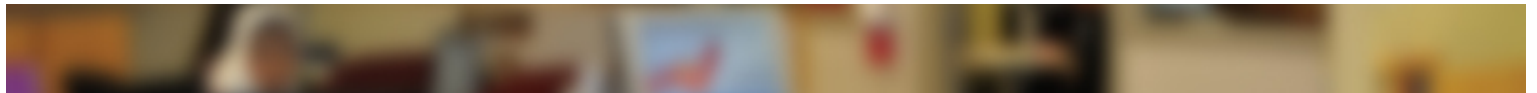
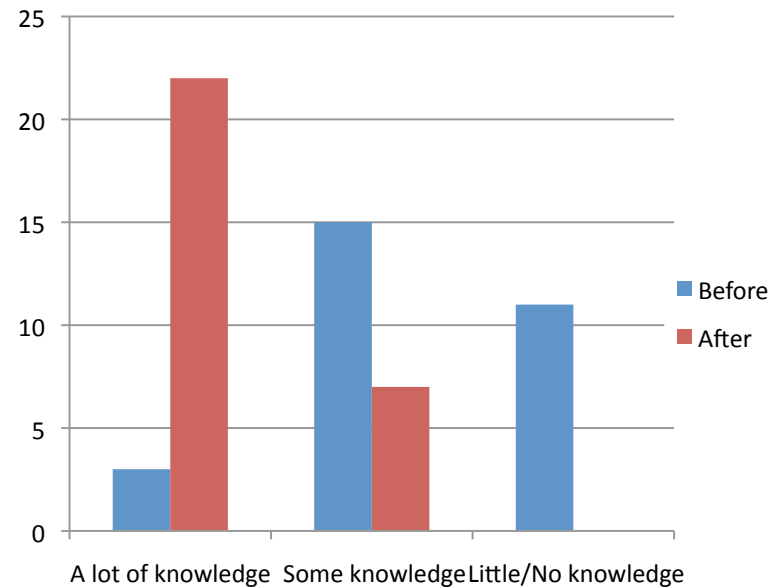


# Workshop Evaluation Results

**I know the ways in which culture shock may impact my work in Canada.**

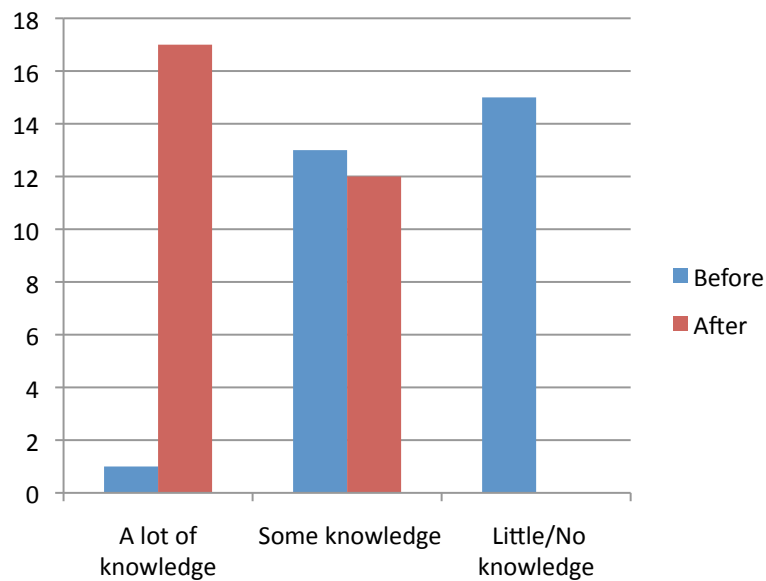


**I understand the various ways in which Canadian culture is similar to and different from other cultures.**

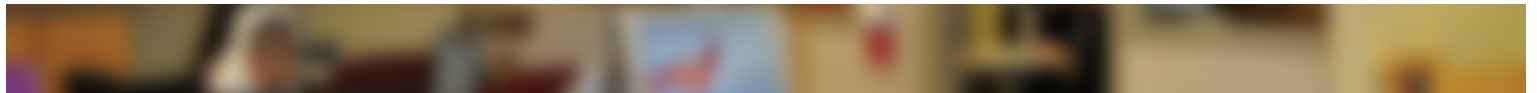


# Workshop Evaluation Results

**I understand Canadian workplace expectations and how to increase my success at work.**



**As a result of attending the workshop...**



# Participants' Comments

**88% learned something surprising about culture...**

*“I learned that this is a general issue for everyone moving to another country and not a personal issue.”*

*“I didn’t realize that there were so many aspects to culture.” “The importance of taking initiative, assessing yourself and asking for feedback.”*

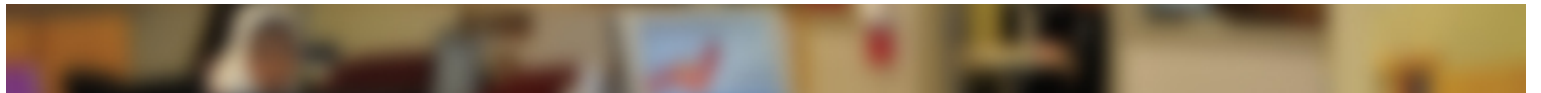
*“The national culture dimensions gave me a better idea/picture of what to expect in the Canadian culture”*



# Summary

## Next Steps/Future Potential:

- Follow up with participants to measure impact
- Expand target audience – ie. Graduate students
- Focus on specific programs
- Target specific industries
- Train-the-trainer sessions for career development professionals working with international clients





# Questions?

**Paulina Nozka**

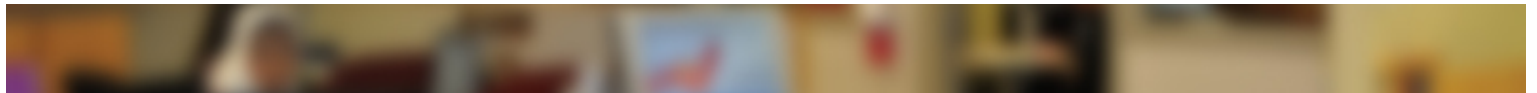
Employability Support Counsellor

Career Development and Employment Centre | Ryerson University

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[pnozka@ryerson.ca](mailto:pnozka@ryerson.ca) | [www.ryerson.ca/career](http://www.ryerson.ca/career)



# Select Resources

## **Culture Shock:**

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2010). Adapting to Culture Shock. *CIC*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/after-life-shock.asp>

Culture Shock - Causes, Consequences and Solutions: The International Experience. Scholarly Research Paper, 2003, <http://www.grin.com/en/e-book/108360/culture-shock-causes-consequences-and-solutions-the-international-experience>

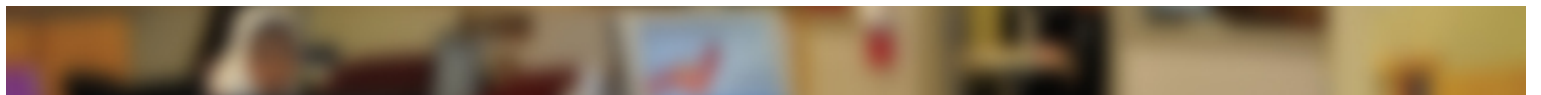
White, Erin. (November 28, 2006). Culture Shock: Learning Customs of a New Office. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB116466660952733780.html>

Fisher, Anne. (June 2, 2006). Fatal mistakes when starting a new job. *CNN Money*. Retrieved from: [http://money.cnn.com/2006/05/31/news/economy/annie/fortune\\_annie0531/](http://money.cnn.com/2006/05/31/news/economy/annie/fortune_annie0531/)

The Wyndhurst Group. (April 2007). SHRM Presentation.

White, Erin. (November 28, 2006). Culture Shock: Learning Customs of a New Office. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB116466660952733780.html>

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Culture Shock. <http://integration-net.ca/coa-oce/english/pdf/03culture.pdf>



# Select Resources

## Cultural Dimensions:

Geert Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations*. Second Edition, Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 2001

Hofstede, Geert, Gert Jan Hofstede and Michael Minkov. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill. 2010.

Kaethe. (February 20, 2012). Cultural Differences: indulgence versus restraint. *Binschedler.com*. Retrieved from: <http://www.binschedler.com/2012/02/indulgence-restraint/>

Emerald. Retrieved from: <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=883443&show=html>

## Canada:

Morley, Hazel (February 22, 2012). How to adapt to a new workplace culture. *Canadian Immigrant.ca*. Retrieved from: <http://canadianimmigrant.ca/work-and-education/how-to-adapt-to-a-new-workplace-culture>

CanadianImmigrant.ca. (May 16, 2011). Extreme Canadian makeover – etiquette and attitude. *Canadian Immigrant.ca*. Retrieved from: <http://canadianimmigrant.ca/community/extreme-canadian-makeover-%E2%80%94-etiquette-and-attitude>

