

Access English Centre
Immigrant Centre Manitoba
Conversation Skills - How to participate in Conversations
Work-out Activity - Intermediate Level
60 - 70 minutes

Facilitator Note: This activity requires the participants to work together to learn some communication skills such as how to listen to conversations and how to ask for clarification about other people's opinions, how to interrupt and how to refuse interruptions.

Work-Out:

Materials: Participants need enough cut up sets of **Question** and **gambit** cards for each group to have their own set.

10 min.	<p>Procedure: Introduction</p> <p><i>Before you begin:</i></p> <p><i>On the whiteboard write: "Communication Skills – how to clarify yourself and other's opinions, or point of view.</i></p> <p><i>For example for clarifications:</i></p> <p><i>Ask: What are your long term goals for the next three years?</i> <i>Answer: I think my long term goals for the next three years are to finish my university studies, find a good job, and get myself settled down in Winnipeg.</i> <i>Ask: What do you mean by saying you want to settle down in Winnipeg? Do you mean you are not going to Vancouver to join your family?</i> <i>Answer: What I am trying to say is that I am going to get married and buy a house or condo in Winnipeg.</i></p> <p><i>(See commonly used gambits for clarification for others and for oneself.)</i></p>
20 min.	<p>1. Explain and model the activity with a few volunteers learners such as <i>Susan, Halima, and Louise.</i></p> <p>Susan: Halima, How do you like the conversation group at the AEC? Halima: I enjoy my group very much. Louise: Oh, yes? Do you mean you like your volunteer teacher and your classmates? Halima: Let me put it this way. I like small group discussions and mini presentations. How about you, Susan?</p> <p>2. Divide the whole group into smaller groups with 3 members each.</p> <p>3. Model the activity. Give each group of participants a pile of the cut up discussion</p>

20 min	<p>questions, a pile of gambits to use after asking a question, and a pile of gambits to use when answering a question. Demonstrate the speaking activity by taking a question card to read out to a participant. When they answer, model how to take a clarification gambit card to get more information (e.g. "Could you be more specific?" or "Do you mean to say...") and how the participant should also use a gambit card when answering. (e.g. "What I mean is...")</p> <p>4. Hand out the cards. Participants do the activity as demonstrated.</p> <p>5. After the group exercises, ask some participants to <i>share</i> their answers to the whole group and ask participants from other groups to ask for clarification.</p> <p>Additional exercises: "How to interrupt and how to refuse interruptions"</p>
20 min	<p>1. Brainstorm some gambits that can be use to "interrupt" a conversation. Here are some examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Pardon/excuse me, but. . . • "Sorry/Excuse me for interrupting, but" • "Could I just jump in here?" <p>2. Brainstorm some gambits that can be used by the person talking to refuse a person who is trying to interrupt. Here are some examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Please let me finish." • "Just let me finish my point; I'll get back to you." • "I'd like to finish what I was saying." • "Could I just finish my point?" <p>3. Small group activity: Each group gets a set of the cut up question slips for "How to interrupt and how to refuse interruptions". Demonstrate how one person in the group reads and answers a question slip, and how the other group members may try to interrupt. Demonstrate how the person answering can refuse to accept the interruption.</p> <p>4. Whole group activity: Ask a few volunteers to express his/her point of view on the following topic: "What is the proper work etiquette in Canada? Do you think you should speak your first language loud at work while other people are around? Do you think you can sing while you are working on a job?" The rest of the group try to ask for clarifications and try to interrupt the speaker properly.</p>

QUESTION CARDS (use with clarification gambits)

I. Learning how to clarify opinions: Cut up the question cards. Learners take one question card, and then pick up a gambit card (on the next page) to use in getting clarification when listening to an answer, or giving an answer.

<p>What are the top five reasons why you immigrated to Canada?</p>	<p>If you found a bag full of money on the street, what would you do first?</p>	<p>If you won a million dollars from a lottery, what would be the first three things you would like to do for yourself?</p>
<p>What are the most important things that Canadian government needs to do right now?</p>	<p>What are the first three things at work that new immigrants need to know about?</p>	<p>What do you think is the most important thing for new immigrants to know after they arrive in Winnipeg?</p>
<p>What are the top three things that new immigrants need to know on the first day at work?</p>	<p>Do you think smoking should be banned in Canada, and why?</p>	<p>Your own question</p>

GAMBIT CARDS: cut up and place in two piles; one for the person who is asking the question to use, and the other for the person who is answering the question to use.

Clarification Gambits for the person asking the question...

<i>Could you be more specific?</i>	<i>Do you mean . . . ?</i>	<i>If I understand you correctly...</i>
<i>What you're saying is</i>	<i>Could you explain that in more detail?</i>	<i>Sorry, but I don't see what you mean.</i>
<i>Could you explain that in another way?</i>	<i>What you are trying to say is ...?</i>	<i>What do you mean by ...</i>

Clarification Gambits for the person answering the question:

<i>What I mean is ...</i>	<i>What I'm saying is</i>	<i>In other words, . . .</i>
<i>What I meant was ...</i>	<i>What I'm trying to say is</i>	<i>I didn't mean to say that....., I meant.....</i>
<i>Let me say it another way.</i>	<i>Let me put it another way . . .</i>	<i>Your own way</i>

QUESTION CARDS (use with interruption gambits)

Please cut up the following questions and give each participant group a pile of questions. The participants can use these questions, or their own questions, to practice how to interrupt and how to refuse interruptions.

If you learned you only had six months to live, how would you spend your time?	What is a goal you have and how will you achieve it?	If you won a million dollars, what might you change about your life?
If you won a 10 minute shopping spree at Wal-Mart, what would you get?	What always makes you feel good about yourself?	If you are feeling unmotivated, who always helps you get yourself going?
What are your top three strengths?	What are the three things about your life that you would not change?	If you had to name a smart thing that you have done, what would it be?
If you could spend a week with anyone, whom would you choose?	Your own question	Your own question

GAMBIT CARDS: cut up and place in two piles; one for the person who is going to interrupt the speaker, and the other for the speaker who is not accepting the interruption.

Gambits for interrupting the speaker

<i>May I ask a question?</i>	<i>Excuse me for interrupting, but ... ?</i>	<i>I'd like to say something here...</i>
<i>May I add something</i>	<i>Excuse me, but</i>	<i>Sorry for interrupting</i>
<i>Could I jump in here?</i>	<i>What about ... ?</i>	<i>Pardon me, but</i>

Gambits for refusing interruptions

<i>Please let me finish ...</i>	<i>Let me finish my points and I will get back to you later</i>	<i>I'd like to finish what I am saying, ...</i>
<i>Could I just finish my point first?</i>	<i>It will be your turn after I finish this..</i>	<i>I'd like you to add your point, if you would allow me to finish mine first....</i>
<i>We will get back to you after this</i>	<i>That's a good idea, but let me finish my point....</i>	<i>Your own</i>