

### Unit 2 Work and Career: developing cultural awareness

**Objective:** to provide further practice of this soft skill within the area of **Work and Career** (identifying cultural differences between business in the UK and the students' own country).

The three-step strategy for developing this soft skill is:

- Step 1** Identify different characteristics that form the culture of a country. (**Ex. A**)
- Step 2** Recognise cultural stereotypes. Identify areas in which these characteristics are expressed. (**Ex. B**)
- Step 3** Separate real cultural characteristics from stereotypes. Identify expressions of your own culture. (**Ex. B, Ex. C, Ex. D**)

You may decide to highlight this strategy at the beginning of the lesson, at the end, or as you go through the exercises in the section. However, if you prefer to teach this lesson without discussing the underlying soft skill, this is also possible. The lesson is designed to be engaging and successful either way.

For more information about teaching life skills and ideas for highlighting the soft skill, please refer to pp. 20–21 of the *Pre-intermediate Teacher's Book*.

#### MATERIALS:

- board and markers
- A3-sized pieces of paper (one for each group of students)
- copies of the email in Ex. B (one for each pair of students)

#### Lead-in

To set the context for this lesson, ask the students to recall the meaning of *cultural awareness*. Put them into pairs and challenge them to write a definition. Allow about three minutes for this, then put pairs together in groups of four to compare and refine their definitions. Finally elicit definitions from the class and write the best one on the board, e.g. *Cultural awareness is understanding the difference between cultures and the reasons for those differences.*

If you wish, ask the students to recall the lesson from the *Pre-intermediate Student's Book*, pp. 28–29 and to say what they learnt (e.g. *that it's important to separate true cultural characteristics from stereotypes; that cultural characteristics are expressed through different areas etc.*).

#### A

- Erase the board. Put the students into small groups. In the centre of the board, write the following in a circle: *doing business in a different country*, as the starting point for a word web.
- Give the groups a few minutes to brainstorm reasons why it is important to be culturally aware when doing business in a different country.
- Elicit ideas from the class, helping with vocabulary as necessary.

#### Possible answers

to have a good business relationship  
to show respect / not offend people  
to avoid misunderstandings  
to communicate effectively

- Ask the students to stay in the same groups. Invite them to think about the different areas in which there might be cultural differences when doing business. If necessary elicit or give one or two ideas to get them started, e.g. *being on time*. Allow about five minutes for this.
- Elicit ideas from the class and write them around the centre circle in a word web. Make sure the students understand all the vocabulary and ask them to copy the word web into their notebooks.

#### Possible answers

customs	language
traditions	acceptable topics for
being on time	discussion
behaviour	food and drink
clothes	

## B

- Erase the board. Put the students into pairs and hand out copies of the email below, if using. Otherwise write it on the board:

*Here are some useful tips for your trip to London next week. As you know, all British people love tea, so they will offer you tea, not coffee, at the meeting. They also all love football, so I'm sending you some tickets for a football match as a present for them.*

*British people are always on time and this is very important to them, so don't be late. When you meet someone you shake hands with them (don't hug or kiss them) and you should make eye contact (look at their eyes). You can exchange business cards, but don't look at their card or say anything about it.*

*Remember that all British people are sarcastic. This means that when they say something, they probably mean the opposite!*

*They are also polite and very formal, so say please and thank you. Don't raise your voice or get angry in a meeting. Wear a suit or other formal clothes, but you can wear normal clothes for dinner.*

- Invite the students to imagine they are going to the UK on a business trip and their boss has sent them this email about British cultural business customs. Point out that some of the customs mentioned in the email are cultural stereotypes rather than true business customs. Ask the students to recall what a cultural stereotype is (an expectation of what people from another country are like that is not always true).
- Write the following **How to say it** box on the board:

## HOW TO SAY IT

*In my opinion ... is a cultural stereotype.*

*Not all British people ...*

*In my experience, this is a true business custom.*

*I'm not sure about this one. What do you think?*

- Ask the students to work in pairs to read the email again and decide whether the things mentioned are true cultural characteristics or cultural stereotypes. Allow about five minutes for this, then put pairs together to compare their ideas.
- Elicit ideas from the class.

## Possible answers

## Cultural stereotypes

tea – not all British people love tea and they will probably offer both tea and coffee in a business situation

football – again, although many British people like football, not everyone does

sarcastic – not all British people are sarcastic and certainly not all of the time. They aren't likely to be sarcastic in a business situation.

## True cultural business customs

being on time, shaking hands, eye contact, exchanging business cards, wearing a suit, being polite and formal, not showing anger or raising your voice are all important in British business culture

## C

- Now tell the students they are going to think of some important cultural traditions and customs when doing business in their own country. Put them into small groups and tell them they are going to make a poster of Dos and Don'ts when doing business in their country.
- Hand out a piece of A3-sized paper to each group. Invite them to brainstorm different ideas of things to be culturally aware of when doing business in their country. Encourage them to use the list of areas in their word web to help them.
- Give the groups about 10 to 15 minutes to prepare their poster.

## D

- Display the posters on the wall. Ask the students to walk around and read the posters. Invite them to vote for the best one.

## Reflect

- Erase the board and write the following question: *What can you do to be more culturally aware?*
- Give the students time to think of ideas individually, then put them into pairs to discuss. Allow two minutes for this, then elicit ideas as a class (e.g. *read books about other cultures, watch foreign-language television and films, have friends from different countries, visit other countries and learn about the culture*).

## EXTRA: HOMEWORK

Ask the students to go online and find information about cultural business differences in a country of their choice. Tell them to type *Cultural business differences in [country]* into a search engine. Invite them to bring a list of differences to the next class to share with the other students.