



Language & Culture Animateur Training

Module 2: Intercultural Awareness



Welcome!

My learning goals



Take 2 minutes to record what you want to achieve from this session in your learning diary.



Module 2 contents:

We will look at:

- The meaning of intercultural awareness
- Non-verbal communication & body language
- Examples of common cultural norms in different cultures
- Effective intercultural communication

By the end you will you will be able to:

- ✓ Understand the importance of non-verbal communication
- ✓ Have better awareness of how varied body language is across the world
- ✓ Get tips on how to interpret verbal and non-verbal “messages”
- ✓ Get tips on how to deliver your message appropriately

About intercultural awareness



What is “intercultural awareness”?

Intercultural awareness is, quite simply, **having an understanding of both your own and other cultures**, and particularly the similarities and differences between them: they may be large or small, and they matter very much when you are meeting or interacting with people who are from another cultural background.



Why is it needed?

1

Intercultural awareness is **the foundation of communication**. People see, interpret and evaluate things in different ways, what is considered as appropriate in one culture could be inappropriate in another - **misunderstandings, tension & conflict can arise without people knowing WHY**.

2

Cultural differences in social norms, values, beliefs, and behaviors represent the most common tension factors in a multicultural learning settings – **being aware of cultural differences supports teachers and learners to work together better** and achieve good results.

How do people communicate?

1. Verbal communication

- ◆ Words
- ◆ Tone of voice

2. Non-verbal communication

= Body language

- ◆ Gestures
- ◆ Facial expression
- ◆ Eye contact
- ◆ Position



Delivering a message #1

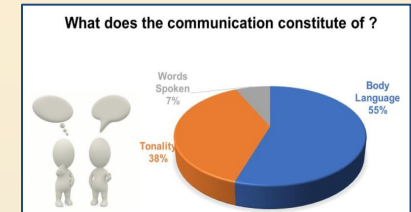
- ✓ Verbal communication is only 45% of the message
- ✓ Non verbal communication is 55% of the message that you deliver when you communicate

What does the communication constitute of ?



Delivering a message #2

Based on the percentages shown in this figure
take 2 minutes to think about the questions below:



- Q1: How aware do you think you are of your own body language?
- Q2: Do you think you can interpret other people's body language correctly?
- Q3: Do you think there are differences in how we interpret body language based on cultural background?

Write your answers on your learning diary and keep them to review them at the end of this Module



Quick Break

Let's take a break.

In the next session we will look at how **body language changes across different parts of the world** and how this influences the way we give and understand a “message”



***‘There’s language
in her eye, her
cheek, her lip’.***

William Shakespeare, Troilus and Cressida



Body Language across the world

#1: HANDSHAKE

WESTERN CULTURE:

A firm handshake is authoritative and confident



FAR EAST: Firm handshake is aggressive

TURKEY: Firm handshake is rude and aggressive

PARTS OF AFRICA: a soft handshake is the standard

ISLAMIC COUNTRIES: Men never shake the hands of women outside the family



Body Language across the world

#2: EYE CONTACT

WESTERN CULTURE:

Making eye contact is a sign of confidence and attentiveness.

Assumption that if someone looks, they're disinterested.



MANY ASIAN, AFRICAN, AND LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES,

Unbroken eye contact is considered aggressive and confrontational. These cultures tend to be quite conscious of hierarchy, and avoiding eye contact is a sign of respect.

MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES: same-gender eye contact tends to be more sustained and intense than the western standard.

N.B.: In some of these countries, eye contact beyond a brief glance between the sexes is deemed inappropriate.

KOREA, THAILAND & MOST OF THE FAR EAST: Used carefully



Body Language across the world

#3: TOUCH

WESTERN CULTURE:

There is not a uniform
“western culture”
perception of touch!



NORTHERN EUROPE AND THE FAR EAST: non-contact cultures. There is very little physical contact beyond a handshake with people we don't know well. Even accidentally brushing someone's arm on the street warrants an apology.

MIDDLE EAST, LATIN AMERICA, AND SOUTHERN EUROPE: High-contact cultures, physical touch is a big part of socialising..

(MUCH OF) THE ARAB WORLD: men hold hands and kiss each other in greeting, but would never do the same with a woman.

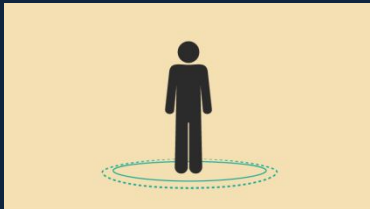


Body Language across the world

#4: PERSONAL SPACE

WESTERN CULTURE:

There is not a uniform
“western culture”
perception of personal
space!



PHYSICAL CONTACT VARIATION BY CULTURE:

High Contact cultures tend to stand close when speaking and make physical contact more often. **Latin America, Southern Europe and most Middle Eastern nations** are examples.

Medium Contact cultures stand quite close when speaking and will touch on occasion. Such cultures include **Northern Europe and North America**.

Low Contact cultures stand at a greater distance and generally avoid physical contact. **The Far East** is an example.



Effective Intercultural Communication

COMMUNICATION IS EFFECTIVE WHEN THE RECIPIENT UNDERSTANDS THE MESSAGE IN THE WAY THE SENDER MEANS IT TO BE RECEIVED.

We have just seen just a few examples of how cultural background can influence:

- the way our “messages” are understood
- how we understand other people’s “messages”

BECOMING AWARE OF THE DIFFERENCES IN HOW PEOPLE GIVE AND UNDERSTAND “MESSAGES” IS THE FIRST STEP TO OVERCOME BARRIERS AND ACHIEVE EFFECTIVE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION



Tips for your Language Club

1 Be curious and open-minded!

Three things are necessary:

- * **When listening:** pay attention to verbal and non-verbal expressions
- * **When talking:** pay attention to your learners' body language and your own
- * **When questioning:** be aware of your tone of voice and body language

Tips for your Language Club

2 Be aware and respectful

Try to be empathic: try to “read the room” and react appropriately

3 Be consequent

Decision making: word and action must agree as much as possible

(Azghari, 2005)

A Tool for your Language Club

For effective communication in your Language Club you need to know who your learners are:

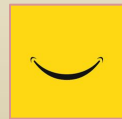
- Where are they from?
- What's their native language?
- What do they understand through body language?

The best way to do this is to **ASK THEM** directly through a simple questionnaire, like the *Handout Tool for Cultural Awareness Analysis* that you can find in the Learning Village [here](#).

A Tool for your Language Club

The **BRIDGE Handout Tool for Cultural Awareness Analysis** can be used as:

- ❑ a **QUESTIONNAIRE** that you give your learners when they start – this will help you understand your group and prevent/manage potential cultural tensions
- ❑ a **GAME** that you can play with the group – this will help group dynamics, facilitate mutual knowledge and be a fun way to start your Language Club



Congratulations!

You've completed Module 2: Intercultural Awareness

Don't forget that in the [Learning Village](#), you will find materials and resources to help and inspire.

Click here:

<https://www.bridgemigrants.eu/en/learning-village>