

МІНІСТЕРСТВО ОСВІТИ І НАУКИ УКРАЇНИ  
ВІННИЦЬКИЙ ДЕРЖАВНИЙ ПЕДАГОГІЧНИЙ УНІВЕРСИТЕТ  
імені Михайла Коцюбинського  
Факультет іноземних мов

НАВЧАЛЬНО-МЕТОДИЧНИЙ ПОСІБНИК  
**Формування умінь 21 ст. (“soft skills”)  
засобами іноземної мови**

для студентів 3 курсу  
денної форми навчання



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Навчально-методичний посібник **«Формування умінь 21 ст. (“soft skills”) засобами іноземної мови»** для студентів 3 курсу денної форми навчання / Укладачі: Глазунова Т.В., Мельницька О.В. Вінниця: ВДПУ ім. М. Коцюбинського, 2024. 126 с.

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Рекомендовано до друку навчально-методичною комісією факультету іноземних мов Вінницького державного педагогічного університету імені Михайла Коцюбинського (Протокол № 6\_ від 31 грудня 2024 р.)

Навчальний посібник призначений для роботи над курсом вибіркової дисципліни **«Формування умінь 21 ст. (“soft skills”) засобами іноземної мови»**.

У посібнику пропонуються навчальні матеріали у формі текстів для читання, відео- та аудіоматеріалів у рамках тем **«Уміння 21-го століття»**, **«Емоційний інтелект»**, **«Стилі спілкування»**, **«Уміння діяти в конфліктних ситуаціях»**, **«Вербальні та невербальні засоби спілкування»**, **«Активне слухання»**, **«Співпраця у команді»**, **«Критичне мислення»**, **«Цифрові «сліди»**. Квізи, практичні завдання у формі дискусій та рольових ігор покликані формувати уміння 21-го століття (колаборації, спілкування, критичного мислення, цифрової компетентності), а також мовленнєвих умінь (аудіювання, читання, говоріння, письма).

## CONTENTS

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>Session 1. What are the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills?</b> .....                           | 4   |
| <b>Session 2. Emotional Intelligence</b> .....   | 9   |
| <b>Session 3. Forms of Expressions of Emotions</b> .....                                       | 13  |
| <b>Sessions 4-5. Understanding Non-Verbal Clues</b> .....                                      | 18  |
| <b>Session 6. Public speaking: gestures and other techniques</b> .....                         | 24  |
| <b>Session 7. Body Language: Personal Space</b> .....  | 27  |
| <b>Session 8. How to Make a Positive Impression</b> .....                                      | 30  |
| <b>Session 9. Non-Verbal Communication. Clothes. Colours</b> .....                             | 34  |
| <b>Session 10. Speak so that People Want to Listen to You</b> .....                            | 40  |
| <b>Sessions 11-12. Polite Language</b> .....   | 44  |
| <b>Sessions 13-14. Active Listening</b> .....  | 53  |
| <b>Session 15. Management of Emotions and the Body</b> .....                                   | 58  |
| <b>Session 16. Using Body Language to Reduce Conflict and Build Better Relationships</b> ..... | 65  |
| <b>Session 17. Using appropriate language to reduce potential conflict</b> .....               | 70  |
| <b>Sessions 18-19. Collaboration and Communication</b> .....                                   | 74  |
| <b>Sessions 20-21. Critical Thinking</b> .....   | 83  |
| <b>Session 22-23. Digital Footprints</b> .....   | 113 |
| <b>Session 24. Practising English using digital technology</b> .....                           | 116 |

## Session 1. What are the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills?

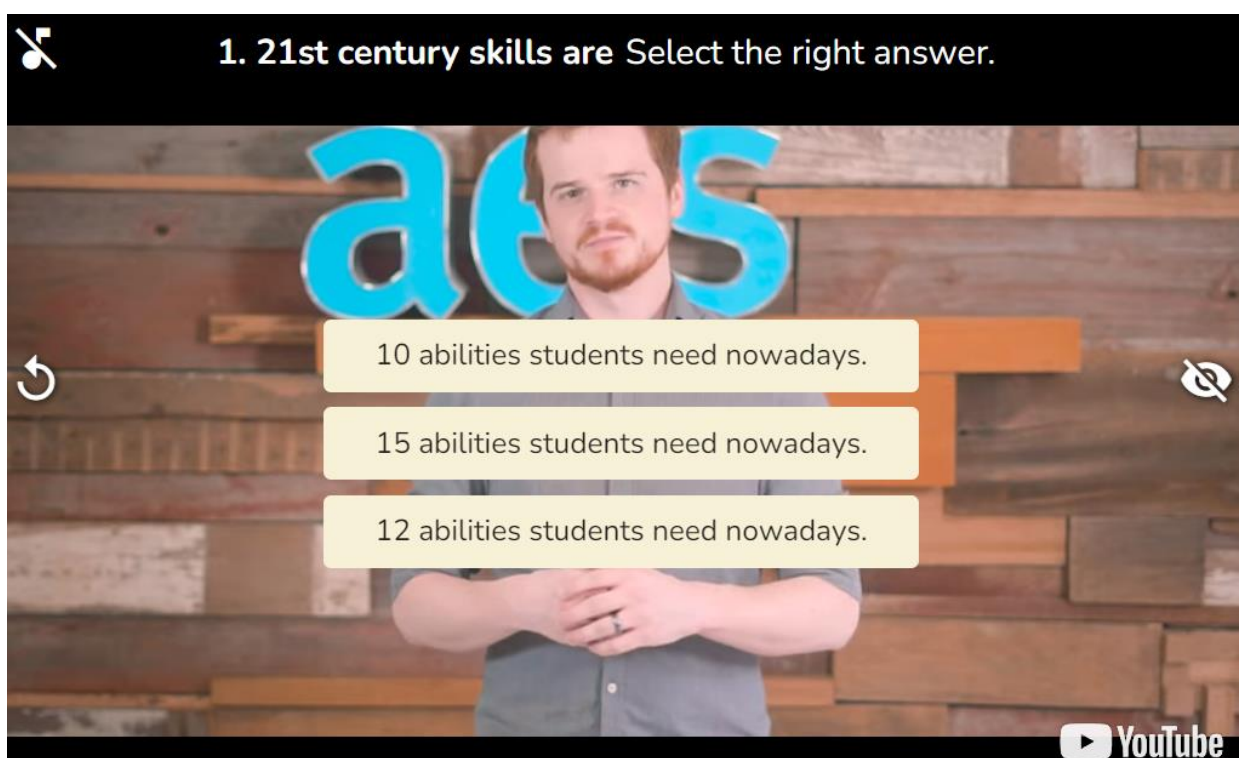
### VIDEO

**Task 1.** Watch the video *21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills* and find out the answer to the following question:

What are the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills?

Why do you think they are important?

<https://en.islcollective.com/english-esl-video-lessons/listening-comprehension/deep-listening-focus-on-meaning/21st-century-skills/397739>



### READING

**Task 2.** Have you got the skills you need for the 21st-century workplace? Read about what employers are looking for and test yourself to see if you are prepared! Do the tasks in “Skills for the 21st-century workplace”:

The preparation exercise

Checking understanding – True / False

Checking vocabulary – Gap fill

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/reading/b1-reading/skills-21st-century-workplace>

What skills do you think are the most important for modern workplaces?

### DISCUSSION

**Task 3.**

a) *Look at the following top 10 soft skills which were considered the most important in the workplace in 2020 and arrange them in the order from the Most important to the Least important as you can see them. Explain your choice.*

- Emotional intelligence
- Critical thinking
- People management
- Coordinating with others
- Negotiation
- Creativity
- Judgement and decision making
- Service orientation
- Cognitive flexibility
- Complex problem-solving

b). *Look through the article below and check your answers*

c). *Look through the same article and compare the lists of skills important for the work place in 2015 and 2020. In what way do they differ?*

d) *What skills do you think will be important in 10 years' time?*

### **Home Assignment:**

*Look through the article below, think of ONE activity to develop one of the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and be prepared to present it at the next session.*

URL: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/21st-century-skills/magazine/rachael-roberts-21st-century-skills>

**Rachael Roberts: 21st century skills**



21st century skills is a term that everyone seems to be talking about, yet no-one seems entirely sure what exactly it means. Or rather, everyone interprets it slightly differently.

However, most people would agree that 21st Century skills are those skills which are or will be needed to succeed at work and in life over the coming century.

Traditionally, career progress has been seen as quite a linear thing. One job or role leads to another further up the ladder. However, the workplace is changing. Organisational structures are becoming much flatter. Roles are becoming much less defined, and teams are often dispersed across different countries. I have experienced all of this first hand, working with different publishers through rounds of restructuring.

The professionals of today and of the next generation are less able to progress up a traditional career ladder. This is partly because in a flatter organisation it is harder to develop people by moving them upwards, and partly because the goal posts keep moving.

People need to be much more versatile and flexible, and most of all, they need to be willing to keep learning something new.

The World Economic Forum recently published a report specifying the skills which will be considered important in the workplace of 2020 (not so far off).

### **Top 10 skills in 2020**

1. Complex problem-solving
2. Critical thinking
3. Creativity
4. People management
5. Coordinating with others
6. Emotional intelligence
7. Judgement and decision making
8. Service orientation
9. Negotiation
10. Cognitive flexibility

#### **Top 10 skills in 2015**

1. Complex problem-solving
2. Coordinating with others
3. People management
4. Critical thinking
5. Negotiation
6. Quality control
7. Service orientation
8. Judgement and decision making
9. Active listening
10. Creativity

*Source: Future of jobs report, World Economic Forum*

Creativity jumps up in importance, largely, the theory goes, because while robots and machines may be able to crunch data more effectively than we can, they aren't yet able to produce creative ideas. (So my job as a materials writer is safe for the moment.)

Workplace teams are becoming more and more diverse, both in terms of geography and backgrounds, which means that we need to be increasingly sensitive to how we communicate and to how our communications are received. So emotional intelligence and people skills such as people management and co-ordinating with others are key.

And, of course, the top two skills are complex problem solving and critical thinking.

So, as well as teaching our students English, we also need to be helping them to develop their creativity, communication skills, emotional intelligence and critical thinking skills.

This might seem a little daunting for teachers, but, in fact, I think that many of the tasks that we are already familiar with in the language classroom can lend themselves very well to developing these skills.

We often ask our students to work together in groups on a task. But how often do we ask them to analyse how well they have worked together or what they could do to improve their collaboration? Asking one member of the group to observe and take notes on, for example, how many contributions each group member made or who took a leadership role, and then discussing the notes as a group, can help to make this 21st Century skill more visible.

Or looking at emotional intelligence, we often ask students to identify the attitude of the author or speaker, which is, in fact, a key skill in empathy. We could develop this a little further, by asking students not just to look for linguistic clues, but, using video, to look at what we can read from the speaker's facial expressions, tone of voice and body language, as well as what they say.

Critical thinking, of course, includes a great many sub-skills, but just to give one example, we endlessly ask students to give their opinions on different topics. Just by asking them to justify their opinions with a reason or example, we are taking the activity up a notch and developing a critical thinking skill. Or, when giving students a task where they have to, for example, decide which holiday would best suit which couple or family, we can be explicit about the problem solving skills required in making a decision (defining the problem, listening pros and cons, weighting options according to importance and so on).

Rather than completely changing the way we teach or the content of our lessons, we mostly simply have to re-evaluate what we are already doing in the light of thinking more consciously about 21st century skills. We need to make these underlying skills more explicit and noticeable so that our students can both become aware of and start to develop the skills that they need to succeed in the modern world.

*Disclaimer: All content written for our magazine is produced independently by teachers working in the English language teaching profession around the world. The views and opinions expressed in the content*

*produced by these writers does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the British Council.*

### **Learn 21st century skills in English**

<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/learning-english/parents-and-children/how-to-support-your-child/learn-21st-century-skills-in-english/>

## **Session 2. Emotional Intelligence**

### **Task 1. READING**

*What is Social Emotional Learning?*

Social Emotional Learning or SEL as it is commonly known, refers to the process through which students:

- develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage their emotions
- set and achieve positive goals
- feel and show empathy for others
- establish and maintain positive relationships
- make responsible decisions.

The purpose of SEL is to help students become well-rounded, healthy, and successful individuals who are able to effectively navigate their social and emotional lives.

SEL helps to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to understand and regulate their emotions.

SEL can help students become more resilient, confident, and successful in all areas of their lives, including school, work, and personal relationships.

In the educational context, SEL can be seen as an important complement to academic learning, as it helps students develop the social and emotional skills they need to succeed in school and beyond.

By fostering students' emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills, SEL can also have a positive impact on the classroom climate, promoting a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment for all students.

### **Task 2.**

- How useful do you think SEL would be for your students?

- Which aspects of SEL do you think they particularly need help with?
- Feel free to share your views in the discussion with other students.

### *How Can Students Benefit from SEL?*

SEL has been shown to have a significant impact on student academic life and personal success.

According to ChatGPT, these are some of the ways SEL can positively impact students' lives:

- **Improved academic performance:** Studies have shown that students who participate in SEL programs tend to have higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates than those who do not. SEL can also improve students' attitudes and behaviours related to learning, such as motivation, engagement, and perseverance.
- **Increased well-being:** SEL can help students develop a positive sense of self, increase their resilience, and improve their mental and emotional health. This can lead to improved well-being, including lower levels of anxiety, depression, and stress.
- **Better relationships:** SEL can help students develop strong relationship skills, including empathy, effective communication, and conflict resolution. This can lead to improved relationships with family, friends, and peers, and a more supportive and inclusive school environment.
- **Better decision-making:** SEL can help students develop responsible decision-making skills, including goal-setting, problem-solving, and ethical behaviour. This can help students make better decisions in school, work, and life, and lead to a more fulfilling and successful future.
- **Improved school climate:** SEL can help create a positive and supportive school climate, promoting safety, inclusiveness, and respect for all students. This can lead to improved academic and social outcomes, and a more positive experience for all students.

So, you can see that the potential impact of SEL on student academic performance and everyday life is significant.

### **Task 3. GROUP DISCUSSION**

- ChatGPT paints a very attractive picture of the benefits of SEL

- What complications or obstructions can you see to developing your students' social and emotional skills?
- Share your views in the group discussion

### **The 5 Core Competencies of SEL**

Most sources agree that there are five core competencies of Social Emotional Learning that we need to help our students to develop.

These are:

1. Self-Awareness
2. Self-Management
3. Social Awareness
4. Relationship Skills
5. Responsible Decision-Making

Together, these five competencies form the foundation of SEL and are essential for students to develop the social and emotional skills they need.

These competencies aren't easy to develop though and as you probably know many adults struggle with the development of these skills.

Before we start to look at how we develop these skills, let's check to see that we have a common understanding of those 5 core competencies and what they mean.

**Task 4. QUIZ.** Choose only *ONE* best answer.

- 1. This includes the student's ability to understand and appreciate the perspectives, emotions, and needs of others, and to demonstrate empathy and compassion.**

**A**

**Self-awareness**

**B**

**Self-management**

**C**

**Social awareness**

**D**

**Relationship skills**

**E**

**Responsible decision-making**

- 2. This includes the student's ability to make informed and ethical decisions, and to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions.**

**A**

**Self-awareness**

**B**

**Self-management**

**C**

**Social awareness**

**D**

**Relationship skills**

**E**

**Responsible decision-making**

3. This refers to the student's ability to regulate their emotions, thoughts, and behaviours in order to achieve their personal and academic goals.

**A**

**Self-awareness**

**B**

**Self-management**

**C**

**Social awareness**

**D**

**Relationship skills**

**E**

**Responsible decision-making**

4. This includes the student's the student's ability to effectively communicate, collaborate, and resolve conflicts with others.

**A**

**Self-awareness**

**B**

**Self-management**

**C**

**Social awareness**

**D**

**Relationship skills**

**E**

**Responsible decision-making**

5. This competency refers to the student's ability to accurately recognise their own emotions, thoughts, and values, and understand how they influence their behaviour and decision-making.

**A**

**Self-awareness**

**B**

**Self-management**

**C**

**Social awareness**

**D**

**Relationship skills**

**E**

**Responsible decision-making**

**Task 5. Practical Tasks From Nik Peachy**

### **Session 3. Forms of Expressions of Emotions.**

This unit is concerned with forms of expression and of emotions. The focus is on how we use our bodies to express our meanings. Some of it you will already know, but there are sure to be some surprises. Go through the unit with an open mind and be ready to learn what you can from it, always with a view to improving your own communication style.

#### **Task 1. GESTURES**

A gesture is a movement of the body to indicate a meaning or an idea. It is a form of body language and may involve, in particular, the movement of the fingers, hand, arm, shoulders or face.

Gestures are used widely by people of all cultures. Most of us are familiar with waving, high fives, or the thumbs up gesture, to indicate success.

Although some gestures are universal, others may be specific to certain cultures, and we have to be mindful of the appropriateness of our gestures.

Be particularly careful about pointing. It is often considered impolite to point directly at people, although it is normally fine to point at objects.

To see a wide range of gestures used in Poland and in Japan, for example, follow the link below. Scroll down to Body Language – Gestures and watch the short clip. You will see that one actress has a Polish flag painted on her face to indicate Polish gestures, and one has a Japanese flag on her face to indicate Japanese gestures.

<http://termcoord.eu/2014/08/polish-vs-japanese-gestures>

## DISCUSSION

*What gestures do you do you see the Ukrainians use? Do you notice any difference in the number or types of gestures made by men and women? Are there any gestures which you personally dislike? Share your ideas on the discussion board.*

### Task 2. READING

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL MESSAGES

*To understand the importance of body language, read the following passage summarising the findings of the famous psychologist, Albert Mehrabian. It has been slightly adapted for this unit*

*(From: Institute of Judicial Studies).*

#### **Albert Mehrabian. Communication Studies**

1. Albert Mehrabian is currently Professor Emeritus of Psychology, UCLA. He is best known for his publications on the relative importance of verbal and non-verbal messages. Mehrabian comes to two main conclusions in his studies:

1). There are basically three elements in any face-to-face communication: words, tone of voice, non-verbal behaviour 2). The non-verbal elements are particularly important for communicating feelings and attitude, especially when they are inconsistent i.e. if words disagree with the tone of voice and non-verbal behaviour, people tend to believe the tonality and non-verbal behaviour.

2. According to Mehrabian, the three elements in point 1 above account differently for our liking for the person who puts forward a message concerning their feelings: words account for 7%, tone of voice accounts for 38%, and body language accounts for 55% of the liking. They are often abbreviated as the “3 Vs” for Verbal, Vocal & Visual. For effective and meaningful communication about emotions, these three parts of the message need to support each other - they have to be “congruent”.

For example, consider the following communication:

Verbal: “I do not have a problem with you!”

Non-verbal: person avoids eye-contact, looks anxious, has a closed body language, etc.

In this communication, it is more likely that the receiver will trust the predominant form of communication, which, according to Mehrabian’s findings is non-verbal (38% + 55%) rather 57 than the literal meaning of the words (7%). This is known as “the 7%-38%-55% rule”.

3. So in summary Mehrabian found: 7% of message pertaining to feelings and attitudes is in the words that are spoken. 38% of message pertaining to feelings and attitudes is the way the words are said. 55% of message pertaining to feelings and attitudes is in facial expression.

4. Mehrabian did not intend the statistic to be used or applied freely to all communications and meaning as they frequently have been. They derived from experiments dealing with communications of feelings and attitudes (i.e., like-dislike) so unless a communicator is talking about their feelings or attitudes, these equations are not applicable.

The article above was taken from

<http://www.iojt-dc2013.org/~media/Microsites/Files/IOJT/11042013-Albert-Mehrabian-Communication-Studies.ashx>

### Task 3.

*After reading the text, match the percentages with the letters below, to show the relative importance of verbal and non-verbal messages. The percentages refer to the importance of the message (in relation to feelings and attitudes) which is received. Answer according to the information in the text above. For your answers, just write the letters a, b or c.*

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. 7% relates to ____.</p> <p>2. 38% refers to ____.</p> <p>3. 55% refers to ____</p> | <p>A. Body language / facial expression</p> <p>B. Words</p> <p>C. The place where the communication takes place</p> <p>A. Tone of voice</p> |
|--|---|

### Task 4. DISCUSSION

Consider the quotation in the box below. It is taken from the passage about Mehrabian's findings.

Why do you think a person's tone and body language might not 'agree' with the words spoken?

Think of a situation when this has happened and talk about it on the discussion board.

|  |
|--|
| <p>'If words disagree with the tone of voice and nonverbal behaviour, people tend to believe the tonality and non-verbal behaviour.'</p> |
|--|

#### Task 4. The language of EQ

The most difficult task for the teacher in teaching the language of emotions is persuading learners to state their feelings directly, since we all have a tendency to over-complicate how we feel and / or blame another person. A frightened passenger in a car is more likely to say *'You're driving a bit too fast, aren't you?'* (meaning please slow down) or *'You're driving like a maniac'* (blaming the driver) rather than *'I'm scared'*. The language teacher, however, has the advantage of being able to encourage learners to use the simple language of emotions before they have the range of language to complicate matters. The language itself consists mainly of a few main verbs, a variety of adjectives, and the use of modals, but is best seen in terms of functions:

| Function                           | Language  |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Labelling feelings                 | I feel / I am angry / impatient / bitter / frightened |
| Taking responsibility for feelings | I feel jealous / hurt / left out                      |
| Empathising                        | I understand / accept / realise                       |
| Suggesting                         | I / you could / might                                 |
| Stating wants and needs            | I / you need / would like / want to                   |
| Being positive                     | I'd feel better if                                    |

There is also language to be avoided, mainly to do with the functions of giving commands and strong advice (I / you should), obligation (I / you must) and blaming (you're insensitive, you're making me jealous).

Classroom activities  
Language practice materials designed for the global market are often criticised for being too general, not relevant to individual learning groups and unnatural.

Teachers are encouraged to adapt materials to suit local needs. EQ development requires that teachers also adapt materials to enable learners to find out about each other's interests, habits, preferences and characters, both to stimulate discussion and to strengthen intra-group relationships. Some standard activities already encourage learners to reveal something about themselves (If I found a wallet in the street

I'd.....), but many are impersonal, 'closed', in that follow-up questions are not required, or tend to produce unnatural responses. A good example is the kind of questions often used to practise frequency adverbs. Questions such as 'How often do you watch television / play football with your friends / play computer games / go shopping?' are unlikely to produce responses which are revealing, unpredictable or interesting to follow up.

| <b>How often do you....</b> | <b>very often</b> | <b>often</b> | <b>sometimes</b> | <b>rarely</b> | <b>never</b> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|
| laugh                       |                   |              |                  |               |              |
| get angry                   |                   |              |                  |               |              |
| argue with your parents     |                   |              |                  |               |              |
| make mistakes               |                   |              |                  |               |              |
| forget things               |                   |              |                  |               |              |
| change your mind            |                   |              |                  |               |              |
| really enjoy yourself       |                   |              |                  |               |              |

The questions in the above table require responses which say something about the speaker and provide opportunities for further questions and for the teacher to feed in some extra useful language. In this case, students fill in the table before asking and answering questions, allowing time to think of 'real' responses and recall actual incidents from their own lives. 'Personalised grammar' promotes meaningful interaction.

#### **Task 5. EQ transformations (Chat GPT)**

*Work in pairs and rephrase the following accusatory statements using emotionally intelligent language that focuses on personal feelings, needs, and a constructive approach to communication. It promotes empathy, understanding, and conflict resolution skills.*

*Model:* Accusatory Statement: "You always criticize my work."

*EQ Transformation:* "I feel disheartened when I receive feedback that focuses more on criticism. I value constructive feedback that helps me grow."

1. "You always interrupt me when I'm speaking."
2. "You never take my opinions into consideration."
3. "You make decisions without consulting the team."
4. "You're constantly late for our meetings."

5. "You never help with household chores."
6. "You're the reason for the project's failure."
7. "You're so selfish; you never think about others."
8. "You're always criticizing my choices."
9. "You're never there when I need your support."
10. "You always ignore my feelings."

### *Conclusion*

Developing EQ and good communicative language teaching go hand in hand, however the group dynamics necessary for meaningful interaction in the classroom do not occur automatically, but need to be fostered through techniques which build confidence, create a positive classroom atmosphere and encourage co-operation. Personalised language practice is affective in that it encourages learners to talk about themselves and their feelings while making the use of the language relevant, interesting and therefore memorable.

## **Sessions 4-5. Understanding Non-Verbal Clues**

### **Task 1. READING.**

#### **FACIAL EXPRESSIONS**

As humans, we experience a wide range of emotions. We can show these, either voluntarily or involuntarily, through our facial expressions. Look at the eight pictures below and consider which part of the face is contributing to the overall expression. Then read the paragraphs below, which are intended as a brief introduction to the basics of understanding and using facial expressions.



## Eyes

Perhaps the most communicative part of our faces is our eyes. In the Western world, making eye contact creates a connection with the other person. It may indicate either a friendly relationship or a hostile relationship, but it certainly indicates involvement. In the West, making eye contact may indicate self-confidence, and if we avoid it, this could suggest that we are shy or even being dishonest. In some cultures, it is considered respectful not to make eye contact. In some Muslim cultures, men and women may avoid making eye contact, depending on the nature of their relationship.

Whatever we do, we should not look into the other person's eyes for too long, unless we want to indicate, for example, hostility or that we feel attracted to them. The frequency of our blinking may suggest that we are ill at ease, or even lying. (If you wear contact lenses, think about how often you may be blinking!) All of us may involuntarily dilate our pupils, and this can indicate excitement, attraction, and even readiness to fight.

We can make deliberate gestures with our eyes, and these may be interpreted differently according to different cultures. For example, in some cultures, rolling the eyes may mean that we think someone is stupid or a bit crazy, but in other cultures, it could simply mean 'no'.

In addition, our eyes may water when we are sad and tearful, and also when we are shocked, or simply feeling cold.

Notice the all-important eye contact in the picture below



## **Eyebrows**

We move our eyebrows possibly more than we realise. Raised eyebrows may indicate surprise, whilst a frown can indicate disapproval or deep concentration

## **Mouths and Lips**

Smiling is the most widely recognised expression we make with our mouths, and it normally conveys happiness or humour. Be aware, however, that in some cultures, smiling can be a sign of sadness or embarrassment. If our mouths are wide open, this can show great surprise. When our lips are tightly closed, this may show that we do not want to talk about something. A hand placed in front of one's mouth will convey this meaning even more strongly. Often, we place our hands in front of our mouths when we are concentrating. When we bite our lips, this suggests anxiety.

## **Noses**

Although the tops of our noses don't move so much, our nostrils can flare, especially if we are angry. If we hold our noses upwards, this can suggest rejection, scorn or arrogance.

## **Hair**

When we are terrified, sometimes we can feel our hair standing up. This is an involuntary movement. Apart from this, hair can indicate a lack of confidence when it is shielding the face. On the other hand, a dramatic hairstyle can capture people's attention and exude self-confidence.

## **Cheeks**

When we do not fight with someone, we can ‘turn the other cheek’. This means we turn our faces away from them, in a gesture of submission. If our tongue is visible sticking out of our cheeks, this may mean we are joking and not being serious. Pink or red cheeks are often considered to be a sign of health or of passion.

## **Task 2. DISCUSSION**

1. Which facial expressions do you tend to make the most?
2. Have you ever looked at someone’s facial expression and misread it? Write your experiences on the discussion board.
3. Then, if you would like to, post a picture of yourself, either alone or with friends.
4. Which types of pictures and expressions are you generally happy to post on social media, and why?

## **Task 3. QUIZ**

*Check your ability to read people’s faces –do the quiz in “Captivating”, chapter 1, by Vanessa van Edwards. Pp.5-11.*

## **Task 4. ROLE PLAY.**

Borrowed from Nik Peachy. “Trust”

*Look at some images of people and some imaginary scenarios on slide 3 and discuss who you would trust.*

## **Task 5. REFLECTION**

Borrowed from Nik Peachy. “Trust”

- a) Work in pairs and think about how you can increase trust in your relationships and then read some tips for increasing trust on slide 5.*
- b) Think about how body language impacts on trust and how you can use more positive body language (slide 6).*

## **Task 6. CULTURAL SENSITIVITY**

People from different cultures have different ideas regarding body language. If we do not know the appropriate body language to use, we could easily cause offence.

To see the wide range of gestures used across the world, ask someone to count using their fingers, and watch the different ways in which people do this.

When you move into a new culture, you will almost certainly see some differences in body language and behaviour. One example of different behaviour regards blowing one’s nose in public. Whereas some people may do this without a second thought, in other cultures this may be seen as rude.

Similarly, spitting, pointing and speaking loudly may also be disapproved of. It is good to find out about the habits in different cultures, especially if one travels to a foreign country. Read what you can before you go, watch other people’s body language and above all, ask a trusted friend to advise you frankly about anything you may be doing inappropriately.

### PROBLEM-SOLVING

As you have recently arrived in a new culture, you are keenly observing how people interact with each other. One of the most puzzling behaviours is how people greet each other. You try to determine what the protocols are for how women greet women, and how women and men greet each other.

Your spouse’s organization is hosting a gathering for the families, and you watch how people interact. Some only nod their heads in the direction of the other person and some shake right hands. Some shake right hands but then draw close for a hug as well. Some will kiss each other, just touching cheeks and not kissing on the lips, but some touch right cheeks and some touch left cheeks. This is all so confusing! You want to be friendly and appropriate, but you also don’t want to offend anyone.

How do you attempt to greet people? There are pros and cons to each option.

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>B. Just offer your right hand as this seems the safest for greeting both men and women</p> | <p>B. Find a “cultural informant”, a local person who can explain the local customs to you</p> | <p>C. Wait and see how people greet you and then reciprocate in the same way</p> | <p>D. Use your observations at the party to start a conversation with someone, and ask for their explanation</p> |
|---|--|--|--|

**Answers:**

A. This will likely work in many cultures for greetings between two people of the same gender, but perhaps not when men and women greet each other. If you see men and women shaking hands, then you can also do this if it is comfortable for you.

**Pro:** This will likely feel familiar, as it's the most common form of greeting in the United States and in many locations it will be received relatively well.

**Con:** There's a possibility that this could cause you some trouble if greeting someone of the opposite gender. Also, in cultures where people are more accustomed to physical contact, this might come off as a bit cool.

C. When being informed by someone who knows the culture, you acquire a general list of rules. Some cultures are exact about habits ("everyone gives two kisses, right cheek then left cheek"). Other cultures might say, "It depends on the relationship. I shake hands with acquaintances and superiors but I always hug my friends."

**Pro:** You will be able to get all kinds of good information from a cultural informant, including ways to greet and the meanings behind greeting practices.

**Con:** You might well be stuck if there's no one there who can serve in this role.

D. It is a viable option for a newcomer, although if you extend your hand but the other person draws close for a hug, you can have an awkward encounter.

**Pro:** You'll likely be able to figure things out if you follow someone else's lead.

**Con:** If you're in a hierarchical culture, the other person may be waiting for you to take the lead, so this could get awkward.

Review each other option to see the pros and cons to making that decision.

E. It is a wonderful way to start a conversation with someone you don't know at a party, and learn something about the local culture in the process.

**Pro:** This is like drafting a cultural informant on the spot, which could be very useful and can get you into a conversation with a new person.

**Con:** If you're uncomfortable already, it might be difficult to strike up a conversation with a stranger.

Borrowed from: So you are an American. A guide to answering difficult questions abroad. URL:

[https://www.state.gov/courses/answeringdifficultquestions/html/app.htm?p=module3\\_p3.htm](https://www.state.gov/courses/answeringdifficultquestions/html/app.htm?p=module3_p3.htm)

## Session 6. Public speaking: gestures and other techniques

When we make speeches and presentations, we need to employ a range of techniques to reinforce our message. President Obama is a master of these techniques and we can learn something from these.

**Task 1.** Watch the clip describing the techniques that President Obama uses when he delivers his speeches. Click the following link. After listening, do the exercises

### VIDEO

Follow the link and watch the video.

Barack Obama's 3 Best Public Speaking Tips, 4:57 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKv9wYO5a9s>

### Task 2.

Fill in the gaps in the sentences based on the video clip with the words from the box. Not all the words in the box will be needed.

|            |            |          |               |
|------------|------------|----------|---------------|
| adjectives | pause      | concrete | transcendence |
| vocal      | impact     | up       | volume        |
| gestures   | repeatedly | words    | matter        |

1. The first technique is what I call \_\_\_\_\_.
2. He can paint a picture in your mind's eye by using very \_\_\_\_\_ and vivid language.
3. Repetition is a way of structuring sentences to give them more \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Obama used repetition \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Use gestures and your \_\_\_\_\_ delivery to add impact.
6. He's constantly using his \_\_\_\_\_ to emphasize different sentences or different words.
7. Sometimes when he talks about being inclusive, he will spread his arms apart with his palms \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Nothing is as dramatic as a well-placed \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Listen to how his faster paced vocal delivery, as well as raising his \_\_\_\_\_, actually adds impact to the words.
10. Make people believe in you, using your \_\_\_\_\_, gestures and vocal delivery to drive your message home

### Task 3. YOUR VOICE

Your voice is distinctive to you. It is unique. This is why people recognise that is you when you ring them up, and they cannot even see you.

We all know people who have voices that convey messages effectively are pleasant to listen to, but at the same time, we know that some other people's voices are less effective. Your voice is a vital communication tool. With some knowledge and some practice, you can improve your vocal communication.

Here is some advice about how to get the best from your voice.

1. Breathe properly. This means you should breathe from your diaphragm. This may feel as if you are breathing from your stomach. When you breathe, your shoulders should not go up and down.

Breathe deeply, calmly and evenly. If you are very fit, you are likely to have strong lungs and this may be an advantage. If you are not so fit, it may be good for you to practise some deep breathing exercises to get your lungs working to a greater capacity. You don't ideally want to run out of breath mid-sentence. If you are breathing correctly, people should not be aware of your breathing movements.

2. Adopt a suitable posture. If you stand, you are giving yourself the best chance to breathe easily. If you are sitting, do not slouch or hunch your shoulders. Stand or sit with your shoulders well back.

Keep your head up and do not talk down into your chest. Probably the most important thing is to pay great attention to the speed at which you speak. When we are feeling nervous, we tend to speak more quickly. This can show people we are feeling nervous, and it can distract them from hearing our message. Although you may find it difficult to slow down, do try to, if you think you may be speaking too fast. Ask a friend whether you speak too fast, and act on that information.

If you have to make a speech or a presentation, you could perhaps write a reminder for yourself on your notes to slow down. Remember that sometimes LESS is MORE. If you say a little at a slow speed, your listeners may well remember more than if you say a lot at top speed.

3. Articulate as clearly as you can. If you mumble, people will not understand you easily, and you will not seem confident. If you find it hard to articulate clearly, you could practise saying some tongue twisters in advance, to get your speech muscles into training.

4. Vary the pitch of your voice. If your voice is always the same pitch, this could sound monotonous and even boring. Make your voice go up and down, especially to stress the important words in your sentence. When we feel tense, our vocal cords may tighten, making our voices go higher. This tells the listener we are not feeling confident and may send a negative message. Try to make your voice sound reasonably low, and notice how you sound more confident.

5. The volume you use will vary according to a number of factors. If you are making a speech, speak loudly enough so that the people at the very back of the room, and even beyond, can hear you.

People further away may not be able to watch your lips or facial expressions, and so they could be relying solely on your voice. As a general rule, if you are having to project your voice quite far, slow the speed down to make it easier for your audience to process what you are saying.

6. If you have a non-standard accent, this should not normally be a problem. Start off a little more slowly than usual, perhaps, to give your listeners a moment to adjust to your accent, and after that, just try to enunciate as clearly as you can.

7. Use pauses. These can be VERY effective. Do not feel that you have to speak all the time. Have the courage to slow down and even stop speaking. If you find this hard, try counting quietly to yourself during your pause. Stop speaking for two seconds from time to time. You may be surprised at the authority this gives you!

8. In order to make a positive and cheerful impression, make a point of smiling at appropriate moments. People can hear when someone is smiling, and generally respond well to this.

9. If you feel nervous about having a conversation with someone at work, or giving a presentation or a speech, the solution is likely to be good preparation. Think carefully about what you want to say. Then practise saying it, remembering all the techniques mentioned above.

10. Finally, it may be beneficial to record your voice and see how it sounds. If you have never done this before, your voice may surprise you. Try to be objective and if you think that your voice sounds too high, or you are mumbling, or speaking too slowly, make an effort to change. Then record yourself again in a few days, to see if your voice sounds better

#### **Task 4.**

*As a review of the points on the use of voice and body language, watch a short clip of US President Obama attacking his political opponent, Donald Trump. Then, answer the questions below.*

#### **President Obama Destroys Donald Trump, Republicans 2:32 minutes**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3q8tkoqdAIU>

How many of the following can you notice in the clip? Put a tick next to each one.

- A range of facial expressions
- Open palms
- Gestures with his hands to reinforce
- word meanings
- Pauses
- Variation in the volume of his voice
- Smiling whilst speaking
- Slow speed of delivery

- Arm gestures
- Variation in the pitch of his voice
- Good posture, with shoulders back
- Looking relaxed

### **Task 5. VIDEO. DISCUSSION**

Now, watch a short clip of Michelle Obama in 2012, giving a speech in support of her husband. Observe her body language, her voice and her words.

Michelle Obama's speech moves many to tears in Charlotte 3:21 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tYto5PrSOI>

Which techniques does Michelle Obama use which are similar to those of her husband, and which are different? How effective are her techniques? Is there a difference in the techniques that a man or a woman might use when public speaking? Share your ideas on the discussion board

Borrowed from: Jan Meakin. BODY LANGUAGE AND DICTION. 2017. 92p.

## **Session 7. Body Language: Personal Space**

### **Task 1. READING**

We have all heard the term “Personal Space” used in one context or another, but what does this really mean? Animals for centuries have been known to have their personal space and territories.

Snakes will attack you if you walk around their nest of eggs, and dogs will bite you if you come too close into the territory they're protecting. Lions will stay away from the other lion prides and their marked land (marked with urine and poo), and so on. In the 1960's Dr Edward Hall was one of the leading pioneers in the study of human personal space or what he called “proxemics”. Humans also have marked territories: we have marked the borders of our countries, the borders of our states, the borders of our cities, the borders of the suburbs we live in - we have even fenced off our houses to establish the outline of our land, just like lions.

What is interesting however, is that apart from the obvious borders we have created, we also have invisible air borders around us, certain distances reserved for certain people.

## **Invisible Zoning**

We all carry an invisible air bubble around us that we feel comfortable in, and as soon as someone comes too far inside our bubble, we will immediately feel discomfort and start becoming anxious. This bubble is created in our childhood and varies depending on the location we grew up in. For example, someone who grew up in the countryside or on a farm is used to having lots of space to themselves, therefore, their bubble would be significantly bigger than someone who grew up in New York or New Delhi where the population is denser and everywhere is more crowded. A few years ago in Spain, they decided to add extra seats in classrooms as the population was growing. This was instead of expanding the schools. The result was catastrophic as the students not only could retain less information, but also, they became significantly more violent as a result of the invasion of personal space, and started fighting each other.

There are general zoning distances you can keep in mind if you live in the city area of a Western country.

» Intimate Zone: This is about 15 to 45 cm. The Intimate Zone is the most important zone of all as it is only reserved for a select few people, including parents, love partners, children, family and very close friends. The proximity chosen by people is also dependent on who the other person is. Only love partners or our children for instance, would be allowed to enter into close physical proximity (15 cm or less). Anyone who is not meant to be in the Intimate Zone and enters it will cause physiological changes (such as increased heart rate) in our body as we will feel threatened.

» Friend Zone: This is about 45 cm to 1.2 m. This is the distance that we reserve for social gatherings such as parties, friendly interactions, etc.

» Social Zone: About 1.2 to 3.5 m. This zoning is reserved for strangers we have just met, acquaintances, and anyone we interact with that we haven't established a relationship with.

» Audience Zone: This is anything over 3.5 m and is used to address an audience or large group of people.

### **Crowded Places**

To put the zoning example to the test, go to any place and watch. In crowded public places, such as trains or elevators, when people do not know each other and

are forced to be uncomfortably close together, you are likely to see people using the following rules of behavior.

» Eye contact must be avoided at all costs.

» Show no emotion and maintain an expressionless face.

» If standing in a large compact crowd; remain rigidly stiff and avoid any physical movement.

» Act busy, pretend to read a book or a newspaper, take out your phone and text or watch the floor numbers change in the elevator.

The information is taken from the website: <http://lonerwolf.com/body-language-personal-space>

## **Task 2.**

*Mark each sentence True (T), False (F) or Not Stated (NS) according to the text.*

1. Proxemics means the study of human personal space. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The idea of how close people should be is formed in our childhood. \_\_\_\_\_
3. A city dweller is likely to prefer more space around them than a country dweller. \_\_\_\_\_
4. In the Spanish school, students learnt more when there was less free space in the classroom. \_\_\_\_\_
5. In a Western country, the zone for friends is between 45 cm and 1.2 m. \_\_\_\_\_
6. In the Far East, people tend to stay closer together than they do in the West. \_\_\_\_\_
7. When people feel uncomfortably close, they tend to avoid eye contact. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Task 3. DISCUSSION**

*Now that you have read the text, consider how this might apply to your situation. Answer these questions and share the information on the discussion board.*

1. How aware are you of the issue of personal space at the University and in your life? What has made you aware of it?

2. Explain how communication might be improved if people pay more attention to personal space.

Borrowed from : Meakin Jean. Body Language and diction. 2017. 95p.

## **Session 8. How to Make a Positive Impression**

### **Task 1. READING**

#### **THE DIRECTION of YOU FACE**

In addition to how close to someone you are, the direction that you are facing also gives an indication of how you are feeling. You may send subconscious signals through the positioning of your head, shoulders, and even your feet. When people are interested in each other, their bodies are likely to be facing each other and their feet may point towards each other. If they do not want to talk to each other, their bodies may subconsciously point away from each other. The more closely our body language mirrors the body language of the other person, the more likely it is that we are interested in them and want to be with them. If you are at a meeting and notice that someone chooses to sit near the door, and their feet are pointing towards the door, you can be fairly sure that, subconsciously at least, they do not want to be at the meeting.

Therefore, if you want to make a positive impression, make sure that your body makes it look as if you want to be there.

Look at the pictures below and see how the body language is positive.

The male student leans forward, makes eye contact and smiles. All of these gestures show interest and engagement.



In this picture, you can see that the girls' feet are pointing towards each other. This indicates that they are interested in each other and want to be there

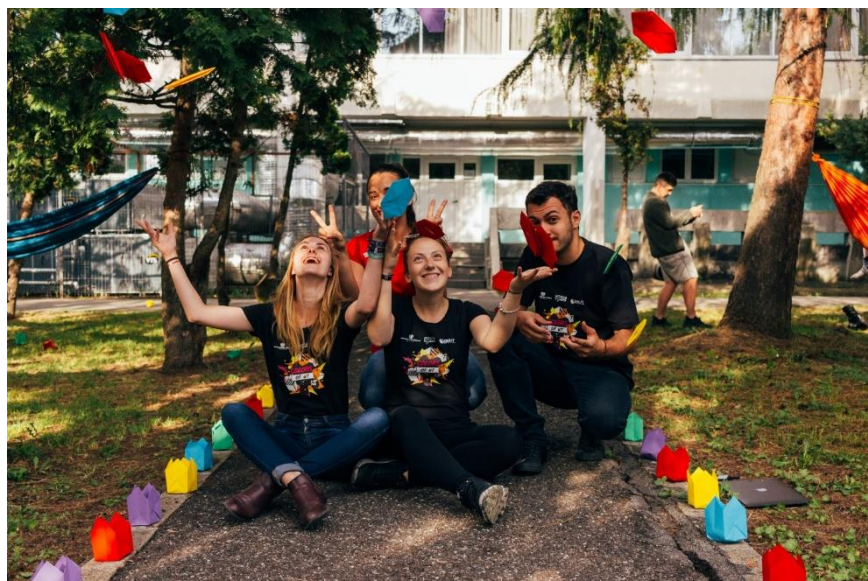


### *OPEN AND CLOSED BODY LANGUAGE*

When we feel interested and receptive to another person, our body language will be open. We may show the palms of our hands and we may open our arms, moving them away from our bodies. On the other hand, if we do not like the other person or their message, we will tend to show closed body language.

This might mean crossing our arms or our legs. These are strong and easily read signals and if we want to develop a good working relationship with people, we should try to avoid giving closed body signals.

Look at the picture of the students below and see the open body language.



Notice the closed body language. The students seem to be bored and are showing this by holding their hands over their bodies. They may also be feeling uncomfortably close to each other. Even their clothes give the impression of a closed attitude, of distancing and covering up.



Be aware that closed body language can involve protecting your body, not only by crossing your arms and legs in front of your body.

Sometimes, people subconsciously use a bag or a briefcase to shield themselves.

Sometimes, people may cross their legs in the direction of a person that they like. If we cross our legs *AWAY* from someone, this may send a powerful signal that we do not want to be with them.

Finally, be aware that closed body language does not always mean that the other person is unreceptive or unfriendly. In the first picture below, the crossed legs suggests that the two students are balancing and being careful not to fall off the wall! You will see that their faces appear genuinely friendly and they are smiling

### *HANDS*

A lot of meaning can be expressed through our hands. We all know that shaking hands is used as a sign of friendship. We also wave our hands to say hello or goodbye, and there is much more to what our hands can show.

Watch a small part of a TED talk given by the body language expert, Professor Allan Pease, in which he gives a practical demonstration of body language using his hands. He makes a request to the audience three times. He uses the same words each time for the request but with different hand signals. Then he analyses the audience's reaction.

Then, he describes an experiment in which a speaker had twenty minutes to present a proposal. The speaker made the proposal using the same words, but different body language with his hands. Follow the link below and fast forward it to watch from 6:09 minutes to 10:08 minutes. (Of course, you can watch all of it if you have time. It's an excellent talk.) After listening, do the exercise below, to check your understanding of his message.

## **Task 2.**

### **VIDEO**

Click the link below to access the talk.

Body language, the power is in the palm of your hands by Allan Pease 14:29 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZZ7k8cMA-4>

After you have watched, complete the sentences according to the information given in the short section of the talk. Underline the correct answer in each sentence.

1. When the speaker gave the instructions with the palms of his hands in the upward position, the audience felt positive / negative about the instructions.
2. When the speaker gave the instructions with his palms facing downwards, the audience felt positive / negative about the instructions.
3. When the speaker gave the instructions using pointing gestures, the audience felt positive / negative about the instructions.
4. The audience retained 40% more / less of the information in the proposal when the speaker talked with his palms facing upwards.
5. When the speaker made the proposal with his palms down, he was seen as friendly and engaging / pushy and authoritative.
6. When the speaker made the proposal using pointing gestures, this was the most / least popular.

Borrowed from : Meakin Jean. Body Language and diction. 2017. 95p.

## Session 9. Non-Verbal Communication. Clothes. Colours

### Task 1. READING

Before you say a single word in a new job, your appearance will be noticed, and in particular, your clothes will be noticed. It is worth taking some time to get your outfit right.

Body Language is the movement of our bodies to communicate our attitudes and feelings. The movement may be made consciously or unconsciously. It may include, for example, facial expressions and eye movements.

Non-Verbal Communication (NVC) means the exchange of information without using words.

In this Module, it is taken to include body language, body movements, gestures, posture, use of space and the way you dress.

Diction is the choice of words of words you use and the way you say them, and includes voice pitch, tone, volume, speed and intonation

Verbal language is important for successful communication. However, as we will see, there is far more to communication than just words. For example, there is the language we express with our bodies, our voices and even our clothes. All of these things can be vitally important in the world of work and they can mean the difference between success and failure. Most of us can learn a lot to improve our non-verbal communication. It represents an aspect of our human communication that is fun to study and can be of great professional benefit to us.

You will learn a lot about ways of being polite in this Module. This is important whatever one's culture or background. Here is a definition of politeness.

Politeness is behaviour that is respectful and considerate of other people. The rules of politeness depend to some extent of the cultures of the people involved in the social interaction.

This unit covers the first impression you make at work. It covers your clothes and general appearance, the greetings you make, your facial expressions and some points about cultural sensitivity.

Before you start, find out about the place where you are going to work. Look at the sort of clothes the employees wear, and imitate them, at least at the beginning of your employment. You can find out by looking at their website, by asking people who work there, or by other ways. For an interview, it is wise to wear something similar, but perhaps just a little smarter than the people wear there. If you look too smart, you will stand out too much. If you look less smart than the other employees, you could put yourself at a disadvantage. As a general rule, look clean, smart and tidy.

Avoid wearing very bright colours and do not wear too many lines or patterns. Remember that you are wearing the clothes to make yourself look good. It is not the other way round! Make sure YOU are noticed, and not just your clothes. Unless you have a job in a highly creative career, aim to dress conservatively.

Wear jewellery if you like, but do not let it be obtrusive. For example, large dangling earrings may not be appropriate.

As a general rule, it is good for men to wear suits or a pair of tailored trousers and a jacket. Whether men wear a tie depends on the formality of the organisation, but it is good to take one, just in case. If you have the sort of job where you are occasionally required dress more formally, having a spare tie can be useful.

It can always be removed if it seems too formal.

There tends to be more flexibility in the dress code for women. Trouser suits or skirt suits, or dresses with jackets can be excellent. Some Muslim women may prefer to wear long dresses or long skirts with jackets or blouses, together with a matching scarf.

Generally, if you wear just one colour, this can look very formal; two colours are smart, and three colours can be rather informal. However, if your colours include neutral colours such as black, white, grey, navy blue or brown, you may be able to wear more colours without seeming too informal.

Wear smart shoes and if appropriate, polish them regularly. Make sure the shoes are comfortable and you can walk easily in them. You might need to walk long distances around the organisation, so be sure to wear practical shoes. Women should

normally avoid very high heels, although a slight heel can look and feel good. Open toed sandals are best avoided unless the weather is very hot, and men should never wear these. Generally, men can make a businesslike impression by wearing dark well-polished leather shoes in black or brown.

Try not to wear new clothes for the first time at work. Practise wearing them once or twice beforehand.

It would be a pity if you left the price tag on the clothes because you had not yet seen it! You can learn to wear your new clothes better after a little practice.

Avoid wearing sports clothes at work. These are not appropriate, unless you are working in the field of sports. Make sure your clothes are warm, comfortable and practical as well as smart. Wear clothes that are suitable for doing your work, and never dress as if you are going for an evening out. In some organisations, it may be best for women to avoid low cut necklines, sleeveless blouses and dresses, flimsy clothes and very short skirts at work if they want to be taken seriously.

Be aware of the effect of colours. These may affect people's impressions of you more than you think.

Generally, men can safely wear dark suits, in navy blue, charcoal or black. Women in some professions, notably law, may choose black. However, black does not suit everybody. Strong colours, rather than pastel colours may look more professional. If you think you will be nervous and your face may go red, avoid wearing red clothes. Green may be a good colour to wear to counteract the red appearance of your face.

Remember also that your brief case or handbag says something about you. Whatever you do, don't turn up on your first day at work carrying an old rucksack. All the accessories you take, including jewellery, bags, belts, scarves, ties, watches, umbrellas and even phones, tablets and notebooks will be noticed by your employers and also your colleagues. They should all look professional and fit the image you wish to portray.

Make sure your hair is looking neat and tidy. Keep it off your face because people will want to read your facial expressions. If your hair is in front of your face, it may look as if you are hiding something or are very shy. Men should have neat facial hair or be clean shaven.

Make sure your hands are clean. If you wear nail varnish, keep it looking fresh and new.

Legally, in the UK, an employer can ask employees to dress in a certain way. This could be for Health and Safety reasons, or because employees are representing the company.

If you want to know more about dress codes and the law, and indeed about many aspects of working practice, you may find the following link to ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) helpful.

<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1342>

## COLOURS

Read the following article, adapted from Business Insider Australia. It gives advice about which colours are good to wear at work.

### **The best and worst colours to wear at work**

by Vanessa Van Edwards

Having trouble picking out what to wear to work? Focusing on colours might not only help you narrow down your choices, but may also benefit your career. Research has shown that colours can greatly affect our moods and the way other people respond to us. Amazingly, colours can even change our heart rate, blood pressure and respiration, as researchers Keith Jacobs and Frank Hustmyer discovered in 1974.

With that in mind, here's the ultimate colour guide for what hues you should (and shouldn't) wear to work.

#### ***Best colours to wear to the office***

1. **Black.** This power colour can convey feelings of mystery and seriousness. It is also considered elegant and has a thinning effect. If you want to be treated seriously, the typical black suit with a splash of green or blue works wonders.

2. **Blue.** This is the colour of truth and wisdom. It also has a calming effect and is linked to intellect. It's also the most stable colour. So if you have

a volatile or drama-filled workplace, blue is a great colour to wear to counteract the tension.

3. **Brown.** The colour of stability, brown is also seen as masculine. If you're a woman in a predominantly male workplace, wearing a chocolate brown suit can give you credibility.

4. **Green.** This colour denotes freshness, safety and harmony. It's also associated with money and the "go" signal for a traffic light - both great characteristics in the workplace. The colour green is restful on the eyes and produces the least amount of eyestrain, making this a good choice for people who sit in front of a screen for many hours.

#### *Worst colours to wear to the office*

1. **Yellow.** This is the happiest of all the colours and usually stimulates joy. However, yellow is considered an unstable colour, so it can be over-energizing for the office and make the wearer look weak.

2. **Grey.** Grey implies that people are passive, uninvolved and have a lack of energy. If you like wearing grey, pairing it with a brighter colour such as blue can help offset the negative effect.

3. **Red.** This is the colour of aggression and passion-great for a first date, not so great for the office. It also increases metabolism and raises blood pressure, which is why it's used for stop signs and fire engines. Red can be seen as a bit hostile in the work environment, so think twice before wearing it often.

#### *Colours to wear in moderation or as accents*

1. **Orange.** This is a colour of stimulation and enthusiasm. It's not as aggressive as red, but can catch attention, so it's good to wear in moderation.

2. **Purple.** Purple reminds people of royalty and luxury. It's also the colour of magic. However, since purple rarely occurs in nature, it's also seen to be artificial. A purple scarf, tie or purse can be a nice, subtle addition to any outfit.

3. **White.** This colour is associated with cleanliness and perfection. It is always a safe choice for a shirt or scarf, but too much white denotes timidity and sterility-not good for workplace relations.

Colours affect our moods and how others perceive us. But, of course, colours aren't the only thing that affects how people see us - you can still be liked at work even if you're wearing a yellow suit. Still, when given the choice, pick a colour that will work for you and not against you.

Adapted from: <http://www.businessinsider.com.au/the-best-and-worst-colors-to-wear-to-work-2012-1>

## **Task 2.**

### **PROBLEM SOLVING**

*Imagine you are going to work as a junior business analyst in a large city-based company. Read the wardrobe suggestions below and tick the ones you think are appropriate, and put a cross by the ones you think are inappropriate.*

#### **For men**

Navy blue track suit and trainers \_\_\_\_\_

A plain, dark grey suit, a plain white shirt, a striped navy blue and white tie and black leather shoes \_\_\_\_\_

A brown striped suit, a checked red and brown shirt and a striped brown and red tie and brown leather shoes. \_\_\_\_\_ -

#### **For women**

An orange sleeveless dress and high heeled black shoes. No jacket.  
\_\_\_\_\_

A plain black skirt suit, a green blouse with small white spots, and black shoes with a low heel \_\_\_\_\_

## **Task 3. DISCUSSION**

You've been networking diligently and landed an interview at a prestigious marketing firm known for its creative and innovative approach. You're excited about the opportunity, but there's a sense of nervousness as you plan what to wear for the big day.

In your enthusiasm to stand out and showcase your creativity, you decide to opt for a wildly patterned, brightly colored suit that you recently purchased. It's a bold choice—bright red with intricate patterns of various shades. You pair it with a

vibrant, patterned shirt that, on its own, would make a statement at a social event or a more casual setting.

The morning of the interview, you feel confident in your fashion-forward outfit. You believe it reflects your personality and your flair for creativity, which you think aligns well with the company's ethos.

Arriving at the marketing firm's office, you notice the majority of candidates and employees are dressed in a mix of smart business casual attire. However, your outfit stands out conspicuously among the sea of muted colors and traditional business attire.

As you wait for your interview, you begin to notice subtle glances from other candidates and staff members. Some seem intrigued by your outfit, but you also sense a few raised eyebrows and surprised looks.

When it's your turn for the interview, you enter the room with confidence, ready to showcase not only your skills but also your unique style. However, you sense a slight shift in the interviewer's demeanor upon seeing your outfit. While they remain professional, there's a hint of distraction or surprise.

During the interview, you give your best, discussing your experiences and ideas passionately. However, you can't shake off the feeling that the boldness of your attire might be slightly overshadowing your qualifications and potential contributions to the company.

Exiting the interview, you start to reflect on your choice of attire. You wonder if perhaps the bold colors and patterns might have been too distracting or unconventional for the professional setting. While you still believe in expressing your personality through fashion, you question if, in this specific scenario, a more conservative and traditional attire might have been a better choice to align with the company's culture.

**Do you think you will get the job?**

**Task 4. Complementing. Nick Peachy**

## **Session 10. Speak so that People Want to Listen to You**

When we speak, people may or may not want to listen to us. However, we can probably all think of people that everyone wants to listen to. We may wonder why

this is. There could be a number of reasons but there are almost certainly some things you can do to make people want to listen to you more.

### Task 1. VIDEO

Follow the link and watch the TED talk given by Julian Treasure, a business sound expert. There will be three exercises to do as or after you watch.

How to speak so that people want to listen, produced by Julian Treasure 9:58 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eIho2S0ZahI>

### CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

Identify the things that people do not want to hear when you speak. Put a tick next to the seven 'deadly sins' that are mentioned in the talk.

- Gossiping about people
- Judging people
- Speaking too much
- Being negative
- Complaining
- Boasting and being too proud
- Making excuses, blaming people
- Lying
- Dogmatism
- Overconfidence

### Task 2.

Consider the items in your 'voice tool box'. Match the tools in the box with the relevant phrases or definitions on the left. Write the name of the tool next to the phrases.

|          |         |        |
|----------|---------|--------|
| Register | Volume  | Timbre |
| Pitch    | Prosody | Pace   |

1. The speed of your delivery, the use of silence. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The music of your voice, the tone. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Whether your voice is high or low. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The depth of your voice, which changes according to where in your body you produce your voice. \_\_\_\_\_
5. The loudness or quietness of your voice. \_\_\_\_\_
6. The way your voice feels e.g. rich, smooth, warm. \_\_\_\_\_

## *DISCUSSION*

*What did you learn from the TED talk that was particularly relevant to you?  
What will you do to make your voice more effective at work?*

### **Task 3. QUIZ: HOW ASSERTIVE ARE YOU?**

*Try this quiz to see how assertive you are. Imagine you are at a job interview. Answer the questions accordingly. Choose one answer each time. Check your answers at the end.*

1. You don't understand one of the interviewer's questions. What is your reaction?
  - A. Say something and hope it answers their question.
  - B. Ask them to rephrase the question.
  - C. Say the question was too complicated so you didn't understand it.
  
2. The chief interviewer introduces you to the three other members of the interview panel. They are sitting close to you. How do you react?
  - A. Shake each person's hand and say hello.
  - B. Just say hello once to the whole team.
  - C. Continue to look at the interviewer, smiling.
  
3. One interviewer says she likes your scarf or tie. What do you say?
  - A. Oh, my sister chose it for me for this interview because I'm not very good at choosing nice clothes.
  - B. Thank you. If you want to buy one, my sister sells them at her shop.
  - C. Thank you.
  
4. The chief interviewer gets your name wrong. How do you react?
  - A. Say nothing about it.
  - B. Correct the name.
  - C. Say they could have prepared better for the interview.
  
5. One of the interviewers says to you, 'I see this is the subject you have majored in. Wasn't that subject rather a waste of time?' What do you say?
  - A. I don't think that is a very nice question to ask me.
  - B. I agree, but I chose it because it was less work than the course I was really interested in.
  - C. Not at all, in fact I know it will be very useful for me in my career.

6. The window is open and you're feeling cold and starting to shiver. What is your reaction?

- A. Ask if you can shut the window.
- B. Say 'It's like the Arctic in here, isn't it?'
- C. Say nothing and hope you don't catch a cold.

7. At the beginning of the interview, they asked to see your passport. They seem to have forgotten to return it to you. What do you do?

- A. Say nothing and hope they will remember.
- B. Try to steer the conversation to poor memories, hoping they will remember.
- C. Wait till near the end of the interview and ask for it back.

8. After a couple of minutes, one of the interviewers asks you to speak more loudly. What do you say?

- A. I thought you could hear me OK because this is a small room.
- B. Certainly. Can you hear me all right now?
- C. OK.

9. One of the interview team seems to be interesting and you would like to have their contact details so you can contact them again after the interview. What do you do?

- A. Say nothing but look for their details online after the interview.
- B. Say, 'It's been so interesting meeting you. Would you mind giving me your email address so I can be in touch?'
- C. Say, 'It's a pity you don't all have name cards. I'd like to be in touch with you.'

10. One of the interviewers seems to spend rather a long time explaining something which doesn't seem relevant. You are worried that they might be wasting your precious interview time. How do you react?

- A. Decide it is more polite if you say nothing.
- B. Say, 'That's very interesting. Perhaps we should discuss it further after this interview.'
- C. Say, 'I think we'd better stop talking about this now as this is my interview and the time is important.'

11. When you arrive in the interview room, you are led to your chair and a rather small table. There is a jug of water and a glass on the table. You are concerned that you might knock something off the table during the interview. What is your reaction?

- A. Tell the panel that the items are in an unsafe place.
- B. Sit further back from the table so you won't knock them off.
- C. Move the items to another place, explaining that you don't want to knock them over.

12. Unfortunately, the interview room door has been left open. The noise in the corridor is disturbing you, and you are worried that the interviewers may not be able to hear all you say. What is your reaction?

- A. Ask if they would mind if you shut the door, and then shut it.
- B. Ask an interviewer to shut the door.
- C. Speak louder.

#### **Task 4. DISCUSSION**

##### ***Nik Peachy. Assertiveness***

*Look at Slide 3 - there are tips on how to be more assertive.*

- *Get into small groups.*
- *Discuss the tips and try to decide which are the three easiest/most difficult to do.*

*Do the activities on Slides 4-7.*

## **Sessions 11-12. Polite Language**

### **POLITE LANGUAGE AT WORK**

When we are with our family and friends, we can usually relax and use fairly direct language. However, when we are at work, we may have to tread more carefully. We need at all times to create a good impression, and politeness is a large part of this.

#### **Assertiveness**

Assertiveness is self-confidence without aggression. It is normally considered to be a positive characteristic. For example, someone may have the confidence to say what they believe is true, AND THEY ALSO have the skill to express this in a way that does not cause offence. Generally, as long as what they say is reasonably coherent, people who are assertive are highly respected in the work place.

#### **Task 1**

To get an idea of the direct and indirect ways of speaking, match the direct phrases on the left with the corresponding indirect phrases on the right. Write your answers below the table. An example has been given to help you. Notice that none of the expressions are rude or offensive in themselves. However, in the wrong contexts, they could be considered impolite.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I think you're wrong, there.</li> <li>2. Coffee?</li> <li>3. Can you turn off that light, please?</li> <li>4. Please get in touch soon.</li> <li>5. I'm very busy right now.</li> <li>6. I can't deliver the goods immediately</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. I wonder if you'd mind turning off that light, please.</li> <li>B. I'm just a little bit busy right at the moment.</li> <li>C. Are you absolutely sure that's right?</li> <li>D. I'm afraid the goods may not be able to be delivered just yet.</li> <li>E. Can I get you a coffee?</li> <li>F. I'd appreciate it if you would get in touch soon, please.</li> </ol> |
|---|--|

## Task 2. READING

### HOW TO MAKE LANGUAGE MORE POLITE

At first, some people might feel that the indirect language above seems a little disingenuous, and could be more honest. However, to people who are accustomed to this way of speaking, the messages are entirely clear. The point about using this sort of language is that it softens the impact on the listener, and it shows great respect for the listener.

Some of the indirect expressions are longer and more complex, but there are some simple tips which can help you. Read the 7 tips below. After that, practise using this type of language and enjoy watching the positive effect it can have!

#### *Giving Unwelcome News*

» Prepare the listener first. Start by saying: unfortunately / I'm afraid / regrettably

» Use little words to soften the impact, for example a little / slightly / a bit / rather / somewhat / a few / quite.

» Apologise, if you think that will help. Say, I'm sorry / I'm very sorry / I'm really sorry / I apologise / I do apologise.

» The modal verbs might, may, can and could are often used to soften messages. Also, the verbs to seem and to appear can have this effect.

» As an example of the techniques above, consider the following two sentences. Henry has rung. He's sorry, but unfortunately, it seems he might be a few minutes late. In direct language, this would correspond to Henry has rung and he will be late.

### ***Asking For Permission***

» Use Can I or the more polite form, May I, to ask for permission.

» To sound even more polite, say Would you mind if I (+ past tense of verb).

» OR Would it be all right if I (+ past tense of verb).

This can be even more persuasive if you add a valid reason to your request.

For example, Would it be all right if I left 20 minutes earlier this afternoon, as I have to collect my car from the garage before it closes?

### ***Asking for action***

» It is good to avoid direct imperatives, such as Please do this.

» The words would and could are useful here.

For example, you can say, Please would you help me?

OR Please could you help me?

» You can use the phrase Would you mind... . (Remember that if the listener wants to be helpful, the response to this is No.

For example, Would you mind correcting this work for me? The helpful answer is No, not at all. This means the person WILL correct the work.)

» The phrase if + would is widely used in asking for small favours. For those who love grammar, this is the beginning of what is known as a 'Second Conditional' sentence. The second half of the sentence is left unsaid, for us to imagine.

For example, you might hear, If you would just sign here, please. This is a polite way of asking someone to sign. (We can imagine the second half of the sentence to be, I would be very grateful.)

### ***Disagreeing with or correcting the other person***

» When you want to correct someone else, do not cause them to lose face. Demonstrate the utmost tact and sensitivity. Try not to say, No, you're wrong, or No, that's not right, or I disagree with that.

» Instead, begin by reassuring the person that you agree with at least some of what they have said. Then you can question the part you disagree with. Notice how effective the following negative question is.

For example, I agree entirely with your point about the importance of the safety measures, but are you certain that we need to complete the changes so soon?

### ***Avoid accusing people***

» Do not use the word You if it might sound like an accusation.

» Try not to say, But you said your report would be ready by today.

» Instead, you could say, But I thought the report would be ready today.

» You could say this even better, like this. Forgive me if I am mistaken, but I was hoping that we might be able to receive the report by today.

» Using the passive form of a verb can help you to avoid accusing someone. If you want to report a broken window, but don't want to mention who did it, you can say, Unfortunately, the window was broken. This may have a better effect than saying, Somebody broke the window.

### ***Use positive words***

» Wherever possible, use positive words.

» Don't say, His work was of a poor standard unless you want to be very emphatic.

» Say instead, His work was of an insufficiently high standard.

» Similarly, if you don't feel well, you can of course say, I feel awful today.

» However, the news might be better received if you say, I'm afraid I really don't feel my best today

### ***Imply that there is a compelling reason that someone has not succeeded***

There are many reasons why things go wrong. We may have no idea what those reasons were. To show respect, it is sometimes good to acknowledge that failures may not be entirely a person's fault.

Therefore, instead of saying, Sue has not completed the work, it may be better to say, Unfortunately, Sue has been unable to complete all the work so far.

This sentence suggests:

» There could be a good reason for the problem

» Sue has done some of the work

» She may complete the work soon.

### Task 3.

*Give an example of a conversation you have had when you thought you did not sound polite enough. What went wrong? How exactly could you have improved the conversation, using the polite language referred to in this unit?*

### Task 4. READING

#### IMPORTANCE OF SAYING PLEASE AND THANK YOU

Read the article below, which has been slightly adapted for this module.

**More than words:** saying ‘thank you’ does make a difference, by Lisa A Williams. After you have read it, do the exercise which follows.

Most of us were taught that saying “thank you” is simply the polite thing to do. But recent research in social psychology suggests that saying “thank you” goes beyond good manners – it also serves to build and maintain social relationships.

This premise has its base in the find-remind-and-bind theory of gratitude, proposed by US psychologist Sara Algoe, from the University of North Carolina. According to this theory, gratitude prompts:

- » the initiation of new social relationships (a find function)
- » orients people to existing social relationships (a remind function)
- » promotes maintenance of and investment in these relationships (a bind function)

As with all emotions, gratitude can be both felt and expressed. The evidence on how feeling gratitude functions to find, remind, and bind in social relationships is robust. From promoting helping and trust to lowering aggression, feeling grateful gives rise to a wide range of outcomes that benefit both parties in a social relationship.

When we say ‘thank you’

When a stranger holds a door, when a barista hands over the morning espresso or when we step off the bus, we typically (or should!) say “thank you”. The question becomes: how do these expressions of gratitude among

strangers shape social relations? Might hearing “thank you” help us “find” or start new social relationships?

So my colleague Monica Y Bartlett, from Gonzaga University in Washington, US, and I carried out the first empirical test of the “find” function of expressing gratitude among strangers, with the results published this month in the journal *Emotion*.

In the study, we sought to create a situation in the lab where we could manipulate the expression of gratitude in a realistic way. So we asked our 70 undergraduate participants to help pilot a new mentoring program supposedly run by the university. As part of the pilot, all of our participants were to act as mentors by giving advice on a writing sample from a high-school student mentee. The writing sample was one that the mentee planned to use in their university admissions package. This setup ensured that we satisfied one of the core starting points of gratitude – the granting of help, resources or a favour.

A week later, we brought the participants back to the lab. All participants received a note purportedly written by the high school mentee. For half of the participants – those in the control condition - this note simply acknowledged the advice, with the following message. ‘I received your feedback through the editing program. I hope to use the paper for my college applications.’

Here comes the manipulation of gratitude expression. Critically, for the other half of the participants, the note also included an expression of gratitude. Their message added the following words. ‘Thank you SO much for all the time and effort you put into doing that for me!’ This design meant that all participants received a note – just the content of the note differed across conditions.

Participants next completed a series of questionnaires assessing their impressions of the mentee, and then were informed that the study was complete.

Except, that wasn’t quite true. The researcher casually mentioned that the pilot program organisers had left a set of notecards for mentors to complete if they chose to. The program organisers would ensure that the mentee received the note if the mentee were accepted to the university.

The researcher made it clear that leaving a note was completely optional and then left the room. Participants were thus left alone to decide whether to write a note, and, if so, what to say. This note-writing opportunity served as our dependent measure of actual social affiliation. Would participants take the opportunity to establish a social relationship with their mentee? Would this depend on whether the mentee had expressed gratitude?

How far does gratitude go?

Perhaps not surprisingly, all but three participants wrote a welcome note. Promisingly for the “find” hypothesis, all three participants who didn’t leave a note were in the control condition.

To test the “find” hypothesis more directly, we coded what participants wrote in those notes and a pattern quickly became clear.

Of the participants who had received a note expressing gratitude from their mentee, 68% left their contact details in their note. Only 42% of those who had received the control note left any contact details. The difference was statistically significant.

Next we tested what might explain this difference. For this, we looked to how participants rated their mentees. Specifically, we considered two dimensions – interpersonal warmth (kindness and friendliness) and competence (skill and intelligence).

Sure enough, mentees were perceived as more interpersonally warm when they had expressed gratitude. Further, this increase in perceived interpersonal warmth explained the increase in likelihood of leaving contact information for the gratitude-expressing mentees.

### **The takeaway message**

Saying “thank you” goes beyond good manners. Initiating a social bond can be risky. We need to be selective and choose to invest in those bonds with the highest likelihood of being a good investment. In this context, an expression of gratitude serves as a signal that the expresser is a good candidate for a future social relationship

### Task 5.

Look at the summary of the research in the boxes below. Match the sentence halves on the left with the sentence halves on the right. Answer according to the information in the text. Use each sentence once only. Write your answers below the boxes

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Only one group of participants received a message from the mentees which      | A. write to the mentees voluntarily.                         |
| 2. After receiving a note from the mentees, all the participants had a chance to | B. thanked them.   |
| 3. 68% of the participants who had been thanked                                  | C. did not give the mentees their contact details.           |
| 4. However, 58% of the participants who had not been thanked                     | D. left their contact details in their notes to the mentees. |
| 5. The experiment suggests that gratitude can                                    | E. prompt the beginning of new social relationships.         |

### EXPRESSIONS MEANING PLEASE AND THANK YOU

You will see there are many different ways of saying please and thank you. Generally speaking, phrases in the following green speech bubbles are less formal than the ones in the light blue bubbles. However, all the expressions could be fine at work, in an appropriate context. Generally, you will use the blue bubbles for conversations at work. The words in the light green bubbles should only be used with friends,



and they not be used with people in authority over you.

### WHEN TO SAY PLEASE, THANK YOU OR EXCUSE ME

#### **Task 6.**

*Now, let us consider when it is appropriate to say please, thank you and excuse me. Write in the spaces whether you think you should say Please, Thank you, Excuse me or nothing in the following circumstances.*

Note that the usage of some of these expressions may vary slightly in the USA.

1. You ask your colleague if you can borrow her phone to make a call. \_\_\_\_\_
2. You yawn. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The cleaner is just leaving, having cleaned your office. \_\_\_\_\_
4. In the staff canteen, the server gives you a plate of food. \_\_\_\_\_
5. You sneeze. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Your colleague returns the book he has been borrowing from you. \_\_\_\_\_
7. You have said Excuse me to someone so that they will move and you can get past. They move. \_\_\_\_\_
8. The lecturer gives you and each of the other students a handout.  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. You ask someone the time. You say, Could you tell me the time \_\_\_\_?
10. The clerk brings your mail to your table. \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Task 7. Apologizing. Nik Peachy.**

## Sessions 13-14. Active Listening

*A lot has been said and written about the importance of listening. Read the quotations in the box and think about what they might mean for you.*

### **Task 1. DISCUSSION**

*'An appreciative listener is always stimulating.'*

Agatha Christie, Author

*'Nothing I say this day will teach me anything. So if I'm going to learn, I must do it by listening.'*

Larry King, Chat Show Host

*'When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen.'*

Ernest Hemingway, Author

*'Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.'*

Stephen R. Covey, Author

*'Most of the successful people I've known are the ones who do more listening than talking.'*

Bernard M. Baruch, Economist

*'We have two ears and one mouth, so we should listen more than we say.'*

Zeno of Citium, Philosopher

*'The word listen contains the same letters as the word silent.'*

Alfred Brendel, Essayist

At work, you need to speak well and also to listen well. If you talk all the time and do not appear to be listening to your colleagues, this will create a poor impression. They will wonder whether you are paying any attention to them. Although one may tend to talk too much when feeling nervous, aim to exercise self-control, and be sure to listen. You need to listen and be seen to be listening. Pay attention and respond to the other person appropriately. Aim not only to speak but also to understand.

Here are some ways to help you.

### **Task 2. READING**

#### **Using your body to show you are listening**

Look at person speaking in the eyes. Do not make eye contact for too long, but keep looking at the speaker frequently.

Smile to show you are friendly, and smile when you are happy or something is funny. Do not smile too much, however, or it could look false and even slightly crazy. Try to match your colleague with regard to how much you smile.

Do not fidget, or tap your hands or feet.

When people are really listening to each other, their bodies, and even their feet will be turned towards each other.

Nod appropriately. Make facial gestures to mirror the feelings the speaker is causing. If his/her words are interesting, look interested, possibly by leaning forward a little, raising your eyebrows, and so on. If your colleague says something and thinks it is bad, reflect that emotion with a slight frown. Without exaggerating, make sure your body language mirrors the feelings of the other speaker.

### **Task 3. DISCUSSION**

*Are you good at listening?*

*Work in groups of 3-4 students, answer the discussion questions on slide 3  
(Nik Peachy Presentation)*

### **Open Questions.**

Slide 6.

One of the tips for being a good listener is to ask 'open' questions.

Look at the questions on slide 6.

Are the questions on the screen 'open' ones?

Can you see why they are 'closed' questions?

Can you change these closed questions to open ones?

E.g.: 'Are you stressed?' = 'How are you feeling?'

Work in small groups and go through the rest of the questions.

### **Practicing open questions**

Work in pairs. Look at Slide 7.

- You are going to practice changing closed questions to open ones.
- The diagram shows how the activity works. First student A asks a closed question, then student B has to change the question to an open one and then student A has to answer the question.
- Then they exchange roles and student B asks a closed question.

### **Task 4. ROLE PLAY**

#### **Practicing listening with attention**

Get into pairs with a student A and B.

- You are going to practice asking open questions and paying

attention.

- Look at Slide 8 and the role cards.
- Student A will ask student B open questions for 1 minute. Student B should just listen and then at the end of the minute student B should try to answer all the questions they remember. Student A can ask about anything.
- Change roles and repeat the activity.

### **Task 5. Summarizing**

- One of the other things good listeners do is to listen and summarize to check your understanding.
- Look at Slide 9.
- Read through the tips.
- Practice saying the four phrases and completing the phrases

### **Task 6. ROLE PLAY**

Get into pairs with a student A and B.

- You are going to practice summarising.
- Look at Slide 10 and the role cards.
- Student A will talk about things they like and things they like doing for one minute. B will listen and at the end of the minute they will summarise what they learned about students A.
- While they summarise, student A should listen and check they are correct.
- Next they can exchange roles.

### **Task 7.**

*To continue practicing more freely, share your views about:*

1. People spend too much time on their phones and not enough having good conversations.
2. Artificial intelligence is a threat to humanity.
3. Climate change is the responsibility of governments.
4. People are too obsessed with their own image.
5. Cars are destroying the planet.

### **Task 8. VIDEO**

*Witness the above advice being put into practice. Follow the link below and watch the clip.*

Body Language - Listening and Rapport presented by Robyn Hatcher 3:27 minutes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sO84bGgra8>

Borrowed from : Meakin Jean. Body Language and diction. 2017. 95p.

## **Task 9. READING**

### ***Using your words to show you are listening***

1. Make short, encouraging responses. These include the following phrases, and some variations of these.

» How surprising / amazing / useful / wonderful / awful / brilliant!

» That's interesting /encouraging / helpful / good news / disappointing / unusual / incredible.

» Yes, that will be important / a good idea / challenging / productive.

» Yes, of course.

» I see what you mean.

» That's right.

In addition, you can use the expressions below. Although they are short and do not seem to carry a lot of weight on paper, they can convey a lot of meaning. Try saying them with different expressions in your voice. If you vary your intonation and volume, you can express agreement or disagreement, astonishment, joy, anger, disgust and other emotions, just depending on the way you say them.

» Oh.

» Yes.

» Oh, really?

» I see.

2. Provide verbal feedback. For example, you can repeat or paraphrase what your colleague has said.

If you use your own words and try to repeat what they have just said, this will help you to understand, and it will be a good way to show them you have understood the message. You could begin by saying: 'So what you're saying is .....' or 'So what you mean is .....'

3. Ask questions for clarification, or to get further information. You can say, 'So do you mean .....' or

'And what about ....?'

Paying attention

Above all, try to give the other person your undivided attention while they are speaking. It is a compliment and shows respect if you can make the other person feel as if there is nothing more important to you at that moment, other than listening to their message. Do not be distracted, for example by your phone, another conversation, your finger nails or a fly buzzing in the room. Similarly, do not

interrupt the other speaker, even if you think you know what they are going to say next, and do not hurry them.

If you can master the art of active listening, you will find massive benefits at interviews and at work, and also with your friends and family.

### **Task 10. VIDEO**

Watch a YouTube clip showing a conversation which takes place at work. The woman tells the man (her boss) why she is unhappy. The man demonstrates the techniques of active listening and after a short time, an agreeable outcome is achieved and both sides are happy. You will notice how he addresses all the issues she raises, and he deals with each one in turn. When he is uncertain about what she means, he asks her to clarify her point. Notice the appropriate body language and listen to their words words. The clip is an example of how effective active listening can be for developing good relations and overcoming annoyances.

Watch the clip twice and do the following exercises.

The clip is called Active Listening – Example, produced by Ohlmer Consulting 2:52 minutes

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLvZkUP5\\_KU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLvZkUP5_KU)

### **Task 11.**

*The first time you listen, look at the first table below. Tick the sentences which explain why the woman felt unhappy. Put a cross x in the table next to the sentences which do NOT apply.*

The woman is frustrated because: \_\_\_\_\_

She finds the work too difficult. \_\_\_\_\_

The man did not thank her for her work. \_\_\_\_\_

She dislikes working for the company. \_\_\_\_\_

She did not receive enough recognition for her work. \_\_\_\_\_

She needs more feedback for her work. \_\_\_\_\_

Next, watch again and tick the sentences which apply to the man. Put a cross next to the sentences which do NOT apply.

He says he is sorry about the situation. \_\_\_\_\_

He checks the exact reason why she is frustrated. \_\_\_\_\_

He says he understands her need for recognition. \_\_\_\_\_

He agrees that what she says is right. \_\_\_\_\_

He thanks her for her hard work. \_\_\_\_\_

He offers her a small bonus. \_\_\_\_\_

He explains the reason for the delay. \_\_\_\_\_

He says he wants her to enjoy working for the company. \_\_\_\_\_

He offers to go through the research with her. \_\_\_\_\_

He offers her a promotion \_\_\_\_\_

Now you have completed the exercise, you will have seen that the active listening techniques help the man to be a good businessman. He does enough to solve the problem, but he does not promise to do or give anything more than is needed. If he had not listened so carefully, he might have unnecessarily promised a great deal more. The woman's point of view has been listened to, and she feels valued and happier. The outcome is a positive one.

### **Task 12. DISCUSSION**

Give an example of when you needed to listen very carefully to someone. Which of the active listening techniques (if any) did you use then and what was the outcome? If you had a chance to turn back the clock and have the conversation again, how would you handle the conversation better this time, using more active listening skills?

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## **Session 15. Management of Emotions and the Body**

### *STRESS AND ANGER MANAGEMENT*

Everybody has experienced or will experience feelings of stress and anger at work. Sometimes we can see it coming and we can prepare for it, and sometimes it may take us by surprise. We have to deal with it as best we can. This section considers verbal language and body language in relation to stress, and some suitable responses are suggested.

**Task 1.** *Before you read the article below, you will need to know the meaning of 'I' statement. Read the definition in the box.*

An 'I' statement is a way of saying how the speaker feels about something. This is in contrast to a 'You' statement, which focuses on the addressee. 'I' statements can be more effective for resolving issues than 'You' statements.

#### Examples

'I' Statement: 'I feel afraid when you drive fast.'

'You' statement: 'You drive too fast.'

## **Task 2.**

### READING

*Read the following article called **Effective Communication Skills: Resolving Conflicts**, slightly adapted for this Module, from Utah State University Cooperative Extension.*

#### **Effective Communication Skills: Resolving Conflicts**

By Naomi Brower, MFHD, CFLE, Extension Assistant Professor, Jana Darrington, MS, Extension Assistant Professor

Even the happiest of relationships experience conflicts and problems (Markman, Stanley, Blumberg, Jenkins & Whiteley, 2004). If handled well, issues provide opportunities for personal and relationship growth. There are many skills that can help individuals seeking to resolve conflicts in a healthy way.

One of the greatest skills that aids in conflict resolution is effective communication.

#### **Common Conflicts**

Issues, or conflicts, in relationships consist of any situation, event or experience that is of concern or importance to those involved. A variety of factors leads to conflict, some of which include topics such as money, children, in-laws, personal issues such as self-esteem, values, expectations, or goals, or relational issues such as the amount of together time versus alone time, support versus control, affection, and communication (Miller & Miller, 1997). While there are seemingly endless reasons for conflicts, they generally surround the underlying needs of all humans including physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual (Miller & Miller, 1997; Townsend, 2010). Most importantly, how we approach and communicate about these issues often determines the outcome.

#### **Conflicts in Communication**

Most people know that in order to resolve conflicts, we need to communicate about the issue; but negative patterns of communication can often lead to greater frustration and escalation of conflict.

Consider the following communication challenges:

### Body Language/Tone of Voice

Communication is more than the words we choose to use. In fact, our body language and tone of voice often speak louder than our words. For example, shouting “I’m not angry” is not a very convincing message! When we give an incongruent message where our tone of voice and body language do not match our message, confusion and frustration often follow (Gottman & DeClaire, 2001).

In order to overcome this communication challenge, we need to be aware of what messages our body language and tone of voice may be sending others. Speak calmly, give eye contact, smile when appropriate, and maintain an open and relaxed posture (Paterson, 2000).

### Differences in Style

Each of us has a unique way of communicating, often based on our family experiences, culture, gender and many other factors (Markman et al., 2004; Miller & Miller, 1997). For example, we may tend to be more loud, outgoing, or emotional when compared to our partner. While there is no right or wrong style, our past experiences often lead to expectations that are not usually verbally communicated with others, which can cause tension and misunderstandings in relationships. For example, if we came from a large family that tended to shout in order to be heard, we may think that speaking loudly is normal.

But if our partner came from a calmer family environment, he/she may be uncomfortable or even frightened by a raised voice (Markman et al., 2004).

Discussing our backgrounds and perceptions can help to clarify expectations to ourselves and others and can also help our partner to understand our point of view. Knowing this information can often help in the problem solving process.

## Communication Roadblocks

Communication roadblocks occur when two people talk in such a way that neither one feels understood. Research has found four particularly negative styles of communication, often referred to as the “four horsemen of the apocalypse,” (Gottman, 1999, p.27) because if left unchecked, these styles of interaction can eventually become lethal to relationships. These styles are criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling (Gottman, 1999).

» Criticism attacks the character or personality of another. While it is normal to have complaints about another’s specific actions, it is very different to put them down as a person because of those actions. For example, a complaint might be, “I felt worried when you did not call to tell me that you were going to be home late.” A criticism in the same situation would be expressed as “You are so inconsiderate, you never call me when you are going to be late.” Critiques focus on certain behaviours; criticism negatively focuses on the person’s intentions and character.

» Contempt portrays disgust and a lack of respect for the other person through body language, such as eye rolling or sneering, or by name calling, sarcasm and cutting remarks.

» Defensiveness is a seemingly understandable reaction that individuals take to criticism and contempt; however, it often escalates the conflict. When we are defensive, we tend to stop listening to the other’s viewpoint and communication is shut down.

» Stonewalling is withdrawing from communication and refusing to engage in discussion. In other words, it is the adult version of the “silent treatment” that young children utilize when they are upset. Conflict resolution is impossible without communication!

Some additional examples of communication roadblocks include (Miller & Miller, 1997):

» Ordering (“Stop complaining!”)

» Warning (“If you do that, you’ll be sorry.”)

- » Preaching (“You shouldn’t act like that.”)
- » Advising (“Just wait a couple of years before deciding.”)
- » Lecturing (“If you do this now, you won’t grow up to be a responsible adult.”)
- » Agreeing, just to keep the peace (“I think you’re right.”)
- » Ridiculing (“OK, little baby.”)
- » Interpreting (“You don’t really believe that.”)
- » Sympathizing (“Don’t worry, it’ll all work out.”)
- » Questioning (“Who put that idea into your head?”)
- » Diverting (“Let’s talk about something more pleasant.”)

Communication roadblocks are very common; however, they do not promote healthy conflict resolution and often lead to escalation of the conflict. Recognizing these roadblocks and making efforts to effectively communicate can help individuals overcome roadblocks.

### **Tips to Resolve Conflict**

**Soften the Start-up.** One of the skills to overcome communication roadblocks includes a soft start-up to the conversation by starting with something positive, expressing appreciation, focusing on problems one at a time and taking responsibility for thoughts and feelings (Gottman, 1999; Gottman & DeClaire, 2001; Patterson, 2000). In addition, when expressing the problem, starting the message with “I” instead of “You” can decrease defensiveness and promote positive interactions with others (Darrington & Brower, 2012). For example, “I want to stay more involved in making decisions about money” rather than “You never include me in financial decisions.”

**Make and Receive Repair Attempts.** Another important skill in overcoming communication roadblocks is learning to make and receive repair attempts (Gottman, 1999). Repair attempts are efforts to keep an increasingly negative interaction from going any further by taking a break or making efforts to calm the situation. This is important because when

conflicts arise, we often experience intense emotional and physical stress that can impact our ability to think and reason, which can lead to communication roadblocks (Gottman & DeClaire, 2001). Taking time away from the conflict (at least 20 minutes) to calm down can help us be more prepared to discuss the issue (Gottman, 1999; Gottman & DeClaire, 2001; Markman et al, 2004).

**Effective Speaking and Listening Skills.** Overcoming communication roadblocks requires effective speaking and listening skills. Markman, Stanley and Blumberg (2010) share what they call the “speaker-listener” technique to help individuals more effectively communicate. Each partner takes turns being the speaker and the listener.

The rules for the speaker include (Markman et al., 2004; Markman, Stanley & Blumberg, 2010):

1. The speaker should share his/her own thoughts, feelings and concerns—not what he/she thinks the listener’s concerns are.
2. Use “I” statements when speaking to accurately express thoughts and feelings.
3. Keep statements short, to ensure the listener does not get overwhelmed with information.
4. Stop after each short statement so that the listener can paraphrase, or repeat back in his/her own words, what was said to ensure he/she understands. If the paraphrase is not quite right, gently rephrase the statement again to help the listener understand.

**The rules for the listener include:**

1. Paraphrase what the speaker is saying. If unclear, ask for clarification. Continue until the speaker indicates the message was received correctly.
2. Don’t argue or give an opinion about what the speaker says—wait to do this until you are the speaker, and then do so in a respectful manner.
3. While the speaker is talking, the listener should not talk or interrupt except to paraphrase after the speaker.

The speaker and listener should take turns in each role so that each has a chance to express his/her thoughts and feelings. Either can call for a time out at any time. The goal of this activity is not to solve a particular problem, but rather to have a safe and meaningful discussion and to understand each

other's point of view. While we may not always agree with the other's point of view, understanding and validating other's thoughts and feelings can improve relationships and help us build on common ground, which may lead to more effective negotiation and problem resolution (Gottman, 1999).

### **Conclusion**

Dealing with conflict can take varying amounts of mental, emotional, and physical energy (Miller & Miller, 1997). It can be work! However, learning and implementing a few simple communication skills can increase positive interactions with others. The opportunities for personal and relationship growth are well worth the effort.

*Borrowed*

from: [http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/FC\\_Relationships\\_2012-02pr.pdf](http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/FC_Relationships_2012-02pr.pdf)

### **Task 3**

*Say whether the following are True (T), False (F) or Not Stated (NS) according to the text above.*

1. Our body language often carries a stronger meaning than our verbal language. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Problems can arise when our body language fails to match our words. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Criticism, contempt and defensiveness can be poisonous to relationships. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Stonewalling means making strong objections to personal criticism. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Saying that things will work out is a helpful reaction to a potential conflict. \_\_\_\_\_
6. It is good to begin a difficult conversation by saying something positive. \_\_\_\_\_
7. It is good to take time away from a conflict in order to calm down. \_\_\_\_\_
8. In the 'speaker-listener' technique, the speaker should keep the statements short. \_\_\_\_\_
9. If there is a suitable opportunity, it is good to add some humour to a disagreement. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Dealing with conflicts can use mental, emotional and physical energy. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Task 4**

*VIDEO*

*Click on the link below and watch a clip entitled Conflict in the Workplace (2:57 minutes).*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpW519lfgbs>

You will see disagreements in two different work settings, together with a commentary. Notice the advice given about how to resolve the conflicts. Then, go to the discussion board for a related activity

### **DISCUSSION**

How could you respond to the following negative remarks at work, to avoid a conflict? Base your answers on what you have learnt from earlier readings in this Module, as well as on the advice given in the clip. Imagine the remarks are made to you in an office context. Write your responses on the discussion board.

1. Who's rearranged all these folders? That's my job. Was it you? Are you trying to do my job?

2. Why should I make the tea for everyone here? That's not part of my job description and yet you all seem to just expect it!

3. Have you heard? The boss wants me to work through my lunch break today!  
Not a chance

Borrowed from : Meakin Jean. Body Language and diction. 2017. 95p.

## **Session 16. Using Body Language to Reduce Conflict and Build Better Relationships**

### **Task 1.**

#### **READING**

Here are some of the simple body language techniques you can use to reduce conflict at work and build better relationships.

Read the following article by Larry Barkan, which has been slightly adapted for this Module. It is about using body language to build rapport. After you have read it, do Task 2.

#### **Conflict resolution training: use body language to build rapport with difficult people**

Conflict resolution is easy: find out what people need and if you can and/or are willing to, give them what they need. How do you find out what people need? You listen, paraphrase and ask the question, "Why is that important to you?"

As you're listening, there are three non-verbal behaviors that will help you to build rapport and reduce the emotional intensity of any conflict:

1. Mirror the other person's body posture and position.

To build rapport with another person, it's important to let her (him) know that you understand her position from her perspective. You can do this by verbally paraphrasing what she is saying and non-verbally assuming her physical position.

For example, if the other person is standing, stand. If the other person is sitting, sit. If he (she) is resting his hands on top of the table, do so as well. If he is crossing his right leg over his left leg, cross yours in the same way. When he shifts to a different position, gradually shift to assume that same position.

The key is to move gradually and subtly. Don't shift to mirror another's body posture and position immediately after she (he) moves. Wait a few seconds and then gradually adjust your body posture and position to mirror hers.

Your intent is not to manipulate but to build rapport so that the conversation flows smoothly. Mirroring sends an unconscious message that you are not a threat to the other person.

If you doubt the validity of mirroring, watch a drama or comedy on television with the sound off. You will be able to tell when the characters are in rapport and when they are not, just by observing their body language. When they are in rapport, you will notice that their body postures and positions mirror one another.

2. Be physically close to the other person

Physical closeness encourages psychological closeness. If you want to non-verbally communicate, "I'm on your side," sit or stand beside that person. If you're in your office, come out from behind your desk and sit or stand near the other person. If you're in a restaurant, sit at right angles to the other person, not across the table.

The way to determine how close you should get to the other person is to notice what she (he) does when she shakes your hand. Some people extend their entire arm stiffly as though they want you to keep your distance. Others bend their elbow, as they shake as though to draw you closer. Never get closer than the length of a handshake.

3. If the disagreement gets heated, don't mirror, but align your body with the other person. Sit or stand facing in the same direction without making eye contact. During heated discussions, direct eye contact can be perceived as a threat (watch two dogs that are about to fight. They are glowering at each other.).

You'll be surprised to find the disagreement cooling down. This is because at a non-verbal level, you're indicating your desire to remain in contact even though the other person's verbal behavior suggests a desire to break away.

Alignment can be uncomfortable for you because, if the other person is angry, the tendency is to want to back away. But try alignment and watch the intensity of the confrontation diminish.

Be subtle as you use these techniques. If you are obvious, the other person is likely to feel manipulated. The intention of these three techniques is not to manipulate the other person but to create a relationship in which a win-win resolution to the conflict is possible.

The article above was slightly adapted and the original can be found by following the link below.

[http://www.conflictresolutiontraining.net/conflict\\_resolution\\_training/rapport.html](http://www.conflictresolutiontraining.net/conflict_resolution_training/rapport.html)

<http://www.conflictresolutiontraining.net>

Borrowed from : Meakin Jean. *Body Language and diction*. 2017. 95p.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION TRAINING: USE BODY LANGUAGE TO BUILD RAPPORT WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

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As you're listening, there are three non-verbal behaviors that will help you to build rapport and reduce the emotional intensity of any conflict:

1. Mirror the other person's body posture and position.

To build rapport with another person, it's important to let her (him) know that you understand her position from her perspective. You can do this by verbally paraphrasing what she is saying and non-verbally assuming her physical position.

For example, if the other person is standing, stand. If the other person is sitting, sit. If he (she) is resting his hands on top of the table, do so as well. If he is crossing his right leg over his left leg, cross yours in the same way. When he shifts to a different position, gradually shift to assume that same position.

The key is to move gradually and subtly. Don't shift to mirror another's body posture and position immediately after she (he) moves. Wait a few seconds and then gradually adjust your body posture and position to mirror hers.

Your intent is not to manipulate but to build rapport so that the conversation flows smoothly. Mirroring sends an unconscious message that you are not a threat to the other person.

If you doubt the validity of mirroring, watch a drama or comedy on television with the sound off. You will be able to tell when the characters are in rapport and when they are not, just by observing their body language. When they are in rapport, you will notice that their body postures and positions mirror one another.

## 2. Be physically close to the other person

Physical closeness encourages psychological closeness. If you want to non-verbally communicate, “I’m on your side,” sit or stand beside that person. If you’re in your office, come out from behind your desk and sit or stand near the other person. If you’re in a restaurant, sit at right angles to the other person, not across the table.

The way to determine how close you should get to the other person is to notice what she (he) does when she shakes your hand. Some people extend their entire arm stiffly as though they want you to keep your distance. Others bend their elbow, as they shake as though to draw you closer. Never get closer than the length of a handshake.

3. If the disagreement gets heated, don’t mirror, but align your body with the other person. Sit or stand facing in the same direction without making eye contact. During heated discussions, direct eye contact can be perceived as a threat (watch two dogs that are about to fight. They are glowering at each other.).

You’ll be surprised to find the disagreement cooling down. This is because at a non-verbal level, you’re indicating your desire to remain in contact even though the other person’s verbal behavior suggests a desire to break away.

Alignment can be uncomfortable for you because, if the other person is angry, the tendency is to want to back away. But try alignment and watch the intensity of the confrontation diminish.

Be subtle as you use these techniques. If you are obvious, the other person is likely to feel manipulated. The intention of these three techniques is not to manipulate the other person but to create a relationship in which a win-win resolution to the conflict is possible.

The article above was slightly adapted and the original can be found by following the link below.

[http://www.conflictresolutiontraining.net/conflict\\_resolution\\_training/rapport.html](http://www.conflictresolutiontraining.net/conflict_resolution_training/rapport.html)

<http://www.conflictresolutiontraining.net>

## **Task 2.**

Match the body language listed in the left hand box with its likely interpretation, described in the right hand box. Write your answers below. Answer according to the information in the text above. Each interpretation might be used once, more than once or not at all.

| Body Language                                      | Likely Interpretation                               |
|--|---|
| 1. You stand or sit close to someone.              | a. You do not want to be close to the other person. |
| 2. When shaking hands, you extend your arm stiffly | b. You are on their side.                           |
| 3. In a conflict, you make direct eye contact.     | c. You threaten them.                               |

### MIRRORING BODY LANGUAGE

As we have read, mirroring another person's body language can help build a good relationship with them. Below, there are some pictures to show how mirroring can be done. It can be conscious or unconscious. The mirroring in all these pictures suggests harmony, closeness and interest.

All four people are clasping their hands as if in agreement with each other.

All the ten students are crowding together in similar poses as they try to be in the photo.



All three are sitting on the ground, smiling and looking at each other.



## ATTENTION

We have to be careful not to overdo the mirroring as we do not want it to feel artificial. However, it is well worth watching and mirroring people's body language.

Borrowed from: Meakin Jean. *Body Language and diction*. 2017. 95p.

## **Session 17. Using appropriate language to reduce potential conflict**

### **Task 1.**

## READING

The language we use can reduce or escalate conflict. The NHS website has some useful tips about language. These form the basis of the advice that follows. This information is adapted from the section called 'Let go of Angry Thoughts'.

### ***Rule 1***

Avoid the words 'always' and 'never'.

For example avoid saying, 'You always arrive late'.

Don't say, 'You never contact me'.

These are likely to be unhelpful generalisations. Words such as all the time, everytime, everyone, everybody and so on can be exaggerations of the truth. Words such as again or yet again can remind people of their faults and can cause a negative reaction. Deal with each incident as it happens. Don't allow a backlog to build up of all the things which have annoyed you.

### ***Rule 2***

Try not to use the words should / shouldn't must / mustn't / ought to / ought not to.

For example, don't say, 'You must keep me informed'.

Similarly, don't say, 'You should not use this phone.'

These sound aggressive and highly prescriptive, giving the other person no room to manoeuvre or negotiate.

### ***Rule 3***

Don't say, 'It's not fair.'

This is not relevant and may not even be true. Saying it does not get you anywhere or achieve the results you want.

In general, if you choose your words so that they do not sound as if you are attacking the other person, they are more likely to react more favourably, so you will achieve what you want. Try to sound as if you want to work with them to solve the issue. Above all, make it clear that you are upset about the issue.

Show that it is NOT that you do not like the other person. Try to show that you value and appreciate them.

In order to avoid the type of negative language above, it may be good to use 'I' statements. For example, instead of saying, 'You never contact me', it will seem friendlier if you say, 'I prefer to be contacted'.

For more information about controlling anger, visit the NHS website by clicking the following link.

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/controlling-anger.aspx#let>

### **Task 2.**

Read the conversation below, between two colleagues, Pat and Chris. They are of equal standing in the workplace. For this exercise, highlight expressions which should be avoided in a conflict. The first has been given as an example. There are six, in addition to the example.

Pat: Morning, I'm sorry to see you're late again.

Chris: Hi, yes, my train was cancelled so I had to catch a bus. I'm sorry.

Pat: You should have rung me. Everyone has been asking me where you were.

Chris: Oh dear, yes, I tried to, but there was no reply from the office.

Pat: Well anyway, you should get up earlier in the morning and then you wouldn't be late all the time.

Chris: I understand your point, but I do get up early, and I thought it was enough to arrive 40 minutes early every day, which is what I do. Today was an exception, albeit a regrettable one. It's the first incident in the past six months.

Pat: I suppose so. But you must be on time. Making me cover for you is just not fair on me.

Chris: It was not at all my intention that you should have to work extra because I could not be here, and I'm sorry that that happened. It was an unfortunate sequence of events and I'm sorry about it. Shall we carry on with our work now?

Now read a different and improved version of the conversation and see how much better it can be. The statements which sounded aggressive and accusatory have been removed, and so have the obvious exaggerations. In their place, Pat makes some positive remarks about Chris's timekeeping, and uses some 'I' statements when making the negative points. Notice that as Pat's words are less aggressive, Chris's responses become less defensive and the conversation improves.

Pat: Morning, I'm sorry to see you're late.

Chris: Hi, yes, my train was cancelled so I had to catch a bus. I'm sorry.

Pat: Did you try to ring me earlier? Fred and Joanne have been asking me where you were.

Chris: Oh dear, yes, I tried to, but there was no reply from the office.

Pat: Well anyway, I know you normally get here very early, and it's quite unusual for you to arrive late.

Chris: Yes, I do get up early, and I thought it was enough to arrive 40 minutes early every day, which is what I do. Today was an exception, albeit a regrettable one. It's the first incident in the past six months. Anyway, I'm sorry I was late this morning.

Pat: Well, you're here now, which is good. I managed to cover for you this morning, somehow.

But I hope you'll be on time next time.

Chris: I really hope so, too, and I'll do my best to make sure it doesn't happen again. It was not at all my intention that you should have to work extra because I could not be here, and I'm sorry that it happened. It was an unfortunate sequence of events and I'm sorry about it. Shall we carry on with our work now?

### **Task 3.**

#### DISCUSSION

1. Reread the improved conversation above. List the improvements you notice.

2. How can you change some of your conversations at work to help you communicate better?

Give some concrete examples and share these on the discussion board.

**Borrowed from : Meakin Jean. Body Language and diction. 2017. 95p.**

### **Task 4.**

#### READING

#### MANAGING STRESS, CONFLICT AND ANGER AT WORK

Here are ten suggestions for managing stress, conflict and anger at work.

1. Take exercise. Do something you enjoy, whether it be jogging, kite flying, dancing, swimming or whatever.

2. Get all the rest you need. Try to work out how much sleep is best for you and make sure you sleep enough.

3. Take the nutrition your body needs. Eat healthily, neither too much nor too little, and enjoy what you eat. Be aware that alcohol can be a false friend.

4. Allow yourself some 'me time' every day to do the things you like doing. This will give you something to look forward to and ensure a better work-life balance.

5. Pay attention to your feelings and notice when you are feeling stressed or angry. Deal with the feelings, and don't ignore them.

6. Try not to say things in anger. If you feel too angry or stressed to have a civilised conversation with someone, it may be better to wait until you feel calmer and more rational.

7. Try deep breathing for an instant release of tension.

8. If it's appropriate, talk to someone about how you are feeling. You might also find that keeping a journal or writing them a letter (which you do NOT send to them) can be an effective way to 'talk' to someone.

9. Use humour when you can. This has got to be better than anger!

10. Learn from things that don't go so well. Nobody gets it right every time. Be ready to forgive others, and also to forgive yourself, and to move on.

### **Task 5.**

#### **EXERCISES TO CONTROL STRESS**

Sometimes, exercises and stretches can help people to relax and de-stress. Follow the links and watch the following clips. Try the exercises yourself if you think they might help you.

##### *VIDEO*

Exercises to help relieve stress and pain 3 - Perfect Posture Pt1 5:21 minutes  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQSyWsIG4u4>

Tension Headache Relief with Simple Stretches - Ask Doctor Jo 4:40 minutes  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWNf6Khc9go>

How to Relieve Stress in 60 Seconds: Deep Breathing Exercises 2:25 minutes  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mH7EmmgSZQE>

Borrowed from : Meakin Jean. Body Language and diction. 2017. 95p.

## **Sessions 18-19. Collaboration and Communication**

### **Task 1. READING**

#### **4 Types of Team Building Techniques for Modern Organizations**

Last Updated October 13, 2021

Many organizations today hire diverse teams and rely on the team members' collaboration to reach business objectives. It's critical that managers reduce conflict among team members and ensure their teams are working to their full potential. Team building activities are a great way to bring team members together and educate them on the different personalities, strengths and weaknesses of their coworkers. Effective team building strategies can help employees work cohesively and play toward each individual member's strengths. There are four types of team building techniques leaders can choose from that help their teams achieve various goals.

## **Personality-Based Team Building Techniques**

One way to learn more about coworkers is to start with a personality test. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a respected psychometric exam that classifies people into one of sixteen different personalities, each with its own strengths and weaknesses.

Learning that some employees are more introverted than others may lead managers to assign them specific creative tasks, while extroverted employees may benefit more from tasks that involve engaging with people and presenting new ideas. Each personality type has a role to play in an organization. Team building strategies that incorporate each team member's personality type, with an understanding of how each individual interacts with others, can help businesses better appreciate what everyone has to offer.

## **Activity-Based Team Building Techniques**

In an activity-based approach to team building, team members participate in a series of challenging tasks designed to take them out of their comfort zones. In many cases, these tasks are completed outdoors and can include ropes courses, boot camps, rafting or survival events.

While it may seem irrelevant to take teams out of the office, in truth, it can be highly rewarding for teams that need to learn to work together and trust each other. Activity-based approaches can work particularly well with younger employees who may be eager to try their hand at something different.

## **Skills-Based Team Building Techniques**

For managers concerned that activity-based team building may not be developing specific job skills, a skills-based approach may be beneficial. Here, team members participate in workshops to develop important job skills, such as how to negotiate effectively and give helpful feedback. The types of skills honed in a skills-based workshop can immediately be relevant to the job and can be highly useful for boosting team performance.

## **Problem-Solving-Based Team Building Techniques**

Sometimes, it is best for teams to look specifically at their internal dynamics and discover problems within the workplace, such as process strategy, poor morale or a lack of communication.

The problem-solving-based team building technique is designed to do exactly that. This approach often takes place in a retreat setting and involves an external consultant. The team leader navigates teams through a series of exercises that help them narrow in on issues and work to resolve them. By directly addressing problems the group is having, this approach can be an excellent way to help teams relax and improve interpersonal bonding.

### **The Importance of Team Building**

These four types of team building techniques are only a taste of the different approaches organizational leaders can take to encourage workplace cohesion. Some managers may also choose to experiment with group-building activities for virtual teams. Here, social networking tools can help fill the gap and help bring distant employees together.

Whatever the approach that works most effectively for your organization, team building exercises are good ways to ensure that teams are working to their full potential. When team members understand the differences in communication styles, thinking approaches and other strengths and weaknesses of their coworkers, they are more likely to respect the value each team member brings to the business. It is only when all team members are included and working to their strengths that the whole team can truly grow and excel

Borrowed from <https://www.villanovau.com/resources/leadership/team-building-techniques/>

### **Task 2. HOME ASSIGNMENT.**

1. Look through the chapter ‘Cooperative Learning Techniques’ and choose 4 activities to match the four team building techniques mentioned in the previous reading (Pp. 13-48). Lim, S., Reidak, J., Chau, M. H., Zhu, C., Guo, Q., Brooks, T. A., Roe, J. and Jacobs, G. M. COOPERATIVE LEARNING AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS. PeacheyPublications Ltd, UK. 2023. 185 p.

2. Be prepared to conduct one of the activities in class.

### **Task 3. READING**

#### **COOPERATIVE LEARNING TEACHING TIPS**

## **Brainstorming**

What is brainstorming? Brainstorming is when people share ideas on the same topic to express things they already know, get fresh ideas, or look at an issue from new perspectives. However, brainstorming sessions can sometimes be challenging if not set up carefully. Here are some tips about how to have successful brainstorming sessions.

### **Have clear goals.**

People tend to succeed when they have a clear idea of what they need to do. Although brainstorming is about generating many ideas, to have clear goals can help give everyone increased focus. If the topic is “How can we save the Earth?” it might be difficult to get ideas because the question is too general. If the topic is “How can we reduce our electricity use at home?” it might be easier to generate ideas, because it is more relatable to the class. The brainstorming session can expand to include other scenarios such as how the school could reduce its use of electricity, or even the city or the country.

### **Create a relaxed environment.**

In brainstorming sessions, many ideas will be given, and some might seem a little unusual to a few people. Other ideas might not be grammatically correct, which is fine. Everyone should be comfortable giving their ideas without worrying if everyone agrees with them, or if they are making a mistake. A relaxed environment full of kindness, acceptance, and maybe even laughter can be useful in generating many original ideas during a brainstorming session.

### **Use group discussions**

Some people may find it hard to think of their own ideas quickly. Some people might have a great idea but are not confident about explaining it in front of the class. In a group, students might be more willing to contribute in many ways such as: A) sharing their ideas B) adding to someone else’s idea C) looking up the words using resource materials D) explaining the idea to the rest of the class. Students who have a few minutes to brainstorm in their groups may produce better ideas to share with the class.

### **Use active listening.**

Brainstorming is about thinking and speaking but also about active listening, thinking, and speaking. Whenever someone is providing their ideas, it is essential for everyone else to listen carefully. After all, someone else's ideas might turn out to be an idea or suggestion that can be shared with the class. Ideas usually do not come out complete and perfect; they need to be worked on and improved. The more people that help to work on ideas, the better.

### **Connect to the next activity.**

Brainstorming is great for getting us thinking, but it is even more valuable when it is a starting point for further and deeper thinking. Taking the ideas from the brainstorming session and using them in the rest of the lesson will mean the class is more invested in the topic. Because they are the class's ideas, they will feel rewarded when they connect those ideas to the next activity and move seamlessly toward deeper learning. (Borrowed from Lim, S., Reidak, J., Chau, M. H., Zhu, C., Guo, Q., Brooks, T. A., Roe, J. and Jacobs, G. M. COOPERATIVE LEARNING AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS. Pp.49-50)

### **Friendly Spy**

The cooperative learning (CL) principle of Maximum Peer Interactions focuses on enhancing peer interactions in two ways. First, we want more peer interactions. Second, we hope for interactions involving thinking skills instead of rote repetition (e.g., drills). Friendly Spy enhances peer interactions in both these ways and can be used in many classroom activities that involve group work.

In Friendly Spy, one student per group is chosen randomly to visit another group to 'spy' on them, that is, to obtain ideas from the group they visit to improve their own group's work. The spies are friendly because they are not only taking ideas but also providing suggestions to the groups they are visiting. All the groups in the class want each other to do well, which corresponds with the CL principle of Positive Interdependence. Thus, the groups being 'spied on' are glad other groups can learn from them. After all, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) benefits everyone. The steps below exemplify how Friendly Spy could be used with the CL technique Gallery Tour. The four steps are described below.

**Step 1:** The class is divided into groups. The groups work on the same task or a related task. In this case, all the groups are preparing a poster.

**Step 2:** After the groups have had some time to work on their task, but before they have finished, one student per group is chosen randomly to be the Friendly Spy. Such random selection of the spies fits the CL principles of Individual Accountability (i.e., everyone does their fair share of work) and Equal Opportunity to Participate (i.e., everyone has a chance to be active in what the group is doing). **Step 3:** The spies each visit a neighboring group. Only one spy at a time is permitted to enter a group. The groups tell the spy what they are doing, and the spy asks questions and provides suggestions.

**Step 4:** The spies return to their home group. Before the spies leave, they are thanked by the group whom they visited. Spies report to their original group. The group discusses whether they want to make changes based on what their spy has learned.

The class may wish to do multiple rounds of Friendly Spy, each time with a different spy. For online lessons, spying can be done in different ways. Spies can go to another group's breakout room. Also, groups can use email or direct messages to share what they are planning with other groups.

(Borrowed from Lim, S., Reidak, J., Chau, M. H., Zhu, C., Guo, Q., Brooks, T. A., Roe, J. and Jacobs, G. M. COOPERATIVE LEARNING AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS. Pp.51-52)

### **Helping Group Function well**

Many teachers and students are reluctant to do cooperative learning (CL), because they have had negative experiences with group activities. Here are 10 tips for helping groups function well. Some of the tips come from the best-selling book *When: The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing* (Pink, 2018).

1. Give people a chance to stand and otherwise move their bodies in a variety of ways. Chair yoga, deep breathing, and stretch breaks can also be useful.
2. Spending time socializing is fine. Group activities do not need to be all business. Also, if schools allow it, food and drink can be part of meetings.
3. Express gratitude to fellow group members and others, including people being grateful to themselves as well. Gratitude messages should include reasons, such as "I appreciated that Carlos took the time to organize all our files, because that helps us think more clearly," or "I'm proud of this group for trying to do our part to address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)."

4. Stop regularly to discuss how well the group is functioning. This can be an opportunity to express gratitude, and it can also be an opportunity to highlight problems. For example, maybe group members need to communicate more often and clearly, and groups also need to ensure that all members feel fully included.

5. Figure out how the group will communicate outside of class. Nowadays, many possibilities exist, including phone calls, emails, and social media-based groups. However, not everyone has access, and different people have different preferences.

6. Feel free to express sadness. When talking about the SDGs, sadness comes easily. People and nonhuman animals are suffering every minute of every day because we have not made enough progress on the 17 SDGs. Furthermore, the efforts of classroom groups can only do so much.

7. Books on CL talk about Identity Positive Interdependence. This means that sharing a common identity can motivate the group. Ideas for promoting this common identity include making a group name, motto, logo, handshake, cheer, clap, proverb, or mascot.

8. For the SDGs, groups can have a hero. This hero might be someone who has already done impressive work toward one or more SDGs. Similarly, groups can have a person to help. For example, in the case of SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), the group could use a photo of a starving child. This provides a visual reminder of the importance of the group's work. Some charities matchmake donors with children in need of basics such as food, clothing, and school supplies. A modest monthly amount is usually sufficient.

9. Groups also want their activities to enhance the personal development of each group member. For example, perhaps one member wants to use the activity to improve their writing skill. In this case, the other members would give this person more opportunities to write, with the others acting as coaches.

10. Rotating roles get everyone involved and help everyone to feel valuable. Roles can be as simple as Timekeeper. Another role could be that of Facilitator who promotes group functioning, by asking questions and encouraging everyone to speak. Rotating roles allow everyone to equally develop their classroom skills.

(Borrowed from Lim, S., Reidak, J., Chau, M. H., Zhu, C., Guo, Q., Brooks, T. A., Roe, J. and Jacobs, G. M. COOPERATIVE LEARNING AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS. Pp.53-54)

### **Sponge Activities**

This chapter aims to provide an easily applicable tip to address a common issue involving group work in cooperative learning (CL) lessons. In a group, one or more members sometimes finish a task before others; as a class, some groups finish before others. The most widely known solution written about in CL books and spoken about in CL workshops is to use ‘sponge activities.’ In kitchens, sponges soak up extra water on counters and tables. During CL classes, sponge activities soak up extra time when individual group members or groups finish ahead of others.

Sponge activities can be divided into two types: generic and activity-specific. A generic sponge activity can be used with almost any CL activity. However, before we move on, we should point out that just because students say they have finished does not mean they have fully completed their task. Sometimes, the individuals and groups that finish last complete the task the best. Please remember the CL principle of Maximum Peer Interactions. Much of CL's magic happens in group members' discussions, when they brainstorm, teach each other, debate, add perspectives, and provide feedback.

When students have thoroughly finished a task, perhaps the best *generic sponge* activity guides them to help peers still working on the task, whether the peers they help are groupmates or members of other groups. Such peer-based assistance flows from the CL principle of Positive Interdependence and its extension of Cooperation as a Value. In other words, groupmates and classmates feel as though they sink or swim together. No one is finished until everyone in the group has achieved the learning objectives and can independently do the task the group has been attempting. Other generic sponge activities include working on homework, reading books (e.g., extensive reading programs), and doing puzzles (e.g., crossword or logic puzzles).

In addition to generic sponge activities, the other type of sponge activity is *activity-specific*. These can also be called enrichment activities because they encourage students to go beyond the learning that they have just completed. Students can design their own sponges, or teachers can make suggestions. For lessons concerning the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a great form of activity-specific sponge involves students considering how they can use their learning to

have a real-world impact related to the SDGs the class is studying. For example, students could consider how to raise money for an NGO that is working on the SDG they are studying.

(Borrowed from Lim, S., Reidak, J., Chau, M. H., Zhu, C., Guo, Q., Brooks, T. A., Roe, J. and Jacobs, G. M. COOPERATIVE LEARNING AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS. Pp.55-56)

### **Talking Chips**

In cooperative learning (CL), everyone needs to take an active role in group discussions. Talking Chips can be used in any group discussion during a lesson. Talking Chips promotes the CL principles of Individual Accountability (i.e., everyone does their fair share) and Equal Opportunity to Participate (i.e., everyone has several chances to participate in the group work). In this way, everyone learns, and everyone helps everyone else learn. With increased output from all group members, discussions are livelier and deeper.

**Step 1:** All group members begin with three chips. Chips can be made of small pieces of cardboard or anything readily accessible.

**Step 2:** As the group performs a talk-based task or discusses a topic, group members surrender a chip each time they talk. The group can ask a member to volunteer for the role of Chip Master, who will monitor the chips.

**Step 3:** Once a member has surrendered all of their chips, they cannot speak until the next round except to ask questions to those who have chips remaining.

**Step 4:** When no one has any chips remaining, everyone once again receives three chips, and the process restarts.

**Step 5:** After the group has finished their task or discussion, they can discuss what they learned using Talking Chips. Usually, some group members quickly surrender all of their chips, while others require many questions to use theirs. The number of chips given at the beginning of each round can vary. The fewer the chips, the sooner some students surrender all their chips and have to stop talking—except to question group members.

(Borrowed from Lim, S., Reidak, J., Chau, M. H., Zhu, C., Guo, Q., Brooks, T. A., Roe, J. and Jacobs, G. M. COOPERATIVE LEARNING AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS. Pp.57-58)

## Sessions 20-21. Critical Thinking

### Task 1. READING

#### Teaching Critical Thinking Skills in the ESL Classroom

BY LINDA D'ARGENIO  
DECEMBER 22, 2022



Critical thinking has become a central concept in today's educational landscape, regardless of the subject taught. Critical thinking is not a new idea. It has been present since the time of Greek philosophers like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Socrates' famous quote, "Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel," underscores the nature of learning (students are not blank slates to be filled with content by their teachers) and the significance of inquisitiveness in a true learning process, both in the ESL classroom and in the wider world of education. [Teaching critical thinking skills in the ESL classroom](#) will benefit your students throughout their language-learning journey.

In more recent times, philosopher John Dewey made critical thinking one of the cornerstones of his educational philosophy. Nowadays, educators often quote critical thinking as the most important tool to sort out the barrage of information students are exposed to in our [media-dominated world](#), to analyze situations and elaborate solutions. Teaching critical thinking skills is an integral part of [teaching 21st-century skills](#).



Applying

*critical thinking skills to media is a lifelong skill.*

## **What is critical thinking?**

There are many definitions of critical thinking. They are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary. Some of the main ones are outlined below.

### **Dewey's definition**

In John Dewey's educational theory, critical thinking examines the beliefs and preexisting knowledge that individuals use to assess situations and make decisions. If such beliefs and knowledge are faulty or unsupported, they will lead to faulty assessments and decision-making. In essence, Dewey advocated for a scientific mindset in approaching problem-solving.

### **Goal-directed thinking**

Critical thinking is goal-directed. We question the underlying premises of our reflection process to ensure we arrive at the proper conclusions and decisions.

### **Critical thinking as a metacognitive process**

According to Matthew Lipman, in *Thinking in Education*, "Reflective thinking is thinking that is aware of its own assumptions and implications as well as being conscious of the reasons and evidence that support this or that conclusion. (...) Reflective thinking is prepared to recognize the factors that make for bias, prejudice,

and self-deception. It involves thinking about its procedures at the same time as it involves thinking about its subject matter” (Lipman, 2003).

### **Awareness of context**

This is an important aspect of critical thinking. As stated by Diane Halpern in *Thought and Knowledge: An Introduction to Critical Thinking*, “[The critical] thinker is using skills that are thoughtful and effective for the particular context and type of thinking task” (Halpern, 1996)

### **What are the elements of critical thinking?**

Several elements go into the process of critical thinking.

- **Identifying the problem.** If critical thinking is viewed mainly as a goal-oriented activity, the first element is to identify the issue or problem one wants to solve. However, the critical thinking process can be triggered simply by observation of a phenomenon that attracts our attention and warrants an explanation.
- **Researching and gathering of information that is relevant to the object of inquiry.** One should gather diverse information and examine contrasting points of view to achieve comprehensive knowledge on the given topic.
- **Evaluation of biases.** What biases can we identify in the information that has been gathered in the research phase? But also, what biases do we, as learners, bring to the information-gathering process?
- **Inference.** What conclusions can be derived by an examination of the information? Can we use our preexisting knowledge to help us draw conclusions?
- **Assessment of contrasting arguments on an issue.** One looks at a wide range of opinions and evaluates their merits.
- **Decision-making.** Decisions should be based on the above.



*There are many ways to approach critical thinking depending on the theory to which you ascribe.*

### **Why is critical thinking important in ESL teaching?**

The teaching of critical thinking skills plays a pivotal role in language instruction. Consider the following:

Language is the primary vehicle for the expression of thought, and how we organize our thoughts is closely connected with the structure of our native language. Thus, critical thinking begins with reflecting on language. To help students understand how to effectively structure and express their thinking processes in English, ESL teachers need to incorporate critical thinking in English Language Teaching (ELT) in an inclusive and interesting way.

For ESL students to reach their personal, academic, or career goals, they need to become proficient in English and be able to think critically about issues that are important to them. Acquiring literacy in English goes hand in hand with developing the thinking skills necessary for students to progress in their personal and professional lives. Thus, teachers need to prioritize the teaching of critical thinking skills.

### **How do ESL students develop critical thinking skills?**



*Engaging with students and [building rapport](#) will help them overcome fear and anxiety in the classroom.*

### **Establishing an effective environment**

The first step in assisting the development of critical thinking in language learning is to provide an environment in which students feel supported and willing to take risks. To express one's thoughts in another language can be a considerable source of anxiety. Students often feel exposed and judged if they are not yet able to communicate effectively in English. Thus, the teacher should strive to minimize the "affective filter." This concept, first introduced by Stephen Krashen, posits that students' learning outcomes are strongly influenced by their state of mind. Students who feel nervous or anxious will be less open to learning. They will also be less willing to take the risks involved in actively participating in class activities for fear that this may expose their weaknesses.

One way to create such an environment and facilitate students' expression is to scaffold language so students can concentrate more on the message/content and less on grammar/accuracy.

### **Applying context**

As mentioned above, an important aspect of critical thinking is context. The information doesn't exist in a vacuum but is always received and interpreted in a specific situational and cultural environment. Because English learners (ELs) come from diverse cultural and language backgrounds and don't necessarily share the same background as their classmates and teacher, it is crucial for the teacher to

provide a context for the information transmitted. Contextualization helps students to understand the message properly.

### **Asking questions**

One of the best ways to stimulate critical thinking is to ask questions. According to Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy (*Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, 1956), thinking skills are divided into lower-order and higher-order skills. Lower-order skills include knowledge, comprehension, and application; higher-order skills include analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. To stimulate critical thinking in ELT, teachers need to ask questions that address both levels of thinking processes. For additional information, [read this article by the TESL Association of Ontario on developing critical thinking skills in the ESL classroom.](#)

### **How can we implement critical thinking skills in the ESL classroom?**

Several activities can be used in the ESL classroom to foster critical thinking skills. Teaching critical thinking examples include:

#### **Activities that scaffold language and facilitate students' expression**

These can be as basic as posting lists of important English function words like conjunctions, personal and demonstrative pronouns, question words, etc., in the classroom. Students can refer to these tables when they need help to express their thoughts in a less simplistic way or make explicit the logical relation between sentences (because... therefore; if... then; although... however, etc.). There are a variety of methods to introduce new vocabulary based on student age, proficiency level, and classroom experience.

#### **Activities that encourage students to make connections between their preexisting knowledge of an issue and the new information presented**

One such exercise consists of asking students to make predictions about what will happen in a story, a video, or any other context. Predictions activate the students' preexisting knowledge and encourage them to link it with the new data, make inferences, and build hypotheses.

## **Change of perspective and contextualization activities**

Asking students to put themselves in someone else's shoes is a challenging but fruitful practice that encourages them to understand and empathize with other perspectives. It creates a different cultural and emotional context or vantage point from which to consider an issue. It helps assess the merit of contrasting arguments and reach a more balanced conclusion.

One way of accomplishing this is to use a written text and ask students to rewrite it from another person's perspective. This automatically leads students to adopt a different point of view and reflect on the context of the communication. Another is to use roleplay. This is possibly an even more effective activity. In role-play, actors tend to identify more intimately with their characters than in a written piece. There are other elements that go into acting, like body language, voice inflection, etc., and they all need to reflect the perspective of the other.

## **Collaborative activities**

Activities that require students to collaborate also allow them to share and contrast their opinions with their peers and cooperate in problem-solving (which, after all, is one of the goals of critical thinking). Think/write-pair-share is one such activity. Students are asked to work out a problem by themselves and then share their conclusions with their peers. A collaborative approach to learning engages a variety of language skill sets, including conversational skills, problem-solving, and conflict resolution, as well as critical thinking.

*A major component of critical thinking is understanding the perspective of the person you are communicating with. Teachers should have a firm grasp of cultural differences and nuances within their students' lives. [Watch the full BridgeUniverse Expert Series webinar here.](#)*

In today's educational and societal context, critical thinking has become an important tool for sorting out information, making decisions, and solving problems. Critical thinking in language learning and the ESL classroom helps students to structure and express their thoughts effectively. It is an essential skill to ensure students' personal and professional success.

<https://bridge.edu/tefl/blog/teaching-critical-thinking-skills-esl-classroom/#What is critical thinking>

## PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

### **for integrating Critical Thinking into language classrooms**

This final section contains a collection of twenty classroom activities that share the following aims:

- To develop a sub-skill or aspect of Critical Thinking.
- To teach and practise a particular language point.

Each activity requires little preparation. These activities can be used as presented with the suggested materials or, in most cases, they can be adapted to match the materials you are using in your language course, such as those in the course book or texts taken from other sources.

The early activities focus on developing your students' critical mindsets. In other words, they encourage students to consider ways in which they can approach texts more critically and to question assumptions. Then many of the activities in the middle part of this section focus on using reading and/or listening texts and ways of developing receptive critical thinking skills. The final activities encourage students to apply the arguments and opinions into their own views in either written or spoken forms.

#### **Activity 1. Developing a critical mindset**

Critical thinking aim: To introduce basic awareness of critical thinking.

Language aim: To introduce the language for expressing opinion, agreeing and disagreeing.

Level: A2+

Rationale: This activity is a useful way to introduce students to the idea of becoming critical thinkers.

It also introduces some of the language they might use to express their opinions in class discussions later in the course.

#### **Procedure**

1 Write a statement on the board which is likely to provoke a reaction and an opinion either for or against the statement. For example, you could use this statement:

‘The internet is reducing young people’s attention span and making them less intelligent.’

2 Ask students to work on their own and consider their own personal response to this statement.

Do they agree or disagree with it? What’s their opinion?

3 Now show them this list of possible responses to the statement. They must choose the response in the list which most matches their own:

*1 I’m not interested in this topic.*

*2 I agree. It’s true.*

*3 I disagree. It’s false.*

*4 I’m not sure.*

*5 I agree up to a point but I also disagree.*

*6 I agree / disagree because...*

*7 I agree / disagree for a number of reasons but I’d also like more evidence*

After they have chosen their corresponding response, show them this key to the meaning of their response in terms of their own critical thinking. For example, if their response corresponded to 3 in this list, then they have a strong opinion but need to support it with reasons and evidence in order to think critically:

1 You don’t need to be interested but have an opinion.

2 and 3 You have a strong opinion but can you give reasons for your opinion?

4 and 5 This is a safe response but critical thinkers need to be active in the discussion.

6 Good. You have a reason for your opinion.

7 Great! You have reasons for your opinion and you want more information.

Variation

To add an element of speaking to the procedure, after stage 2, allow students a few minutes to work in pairs and discuss their responses with their partner.

(Note: This activity was based on a similar activity in Critical Thinking by Debra Hills. See Further Reading.)

## **Activity 2. Opinion and reason generator**

Critical thinking aim: To develop the skill of supporting a viewpoint with reasons.

Language aim: To practise expressing opinion with opinion expressions and giving reasons with the conjunction ‘because’.

Level: A2+

Rationale: Activity 1 introduced students to the importance of supporting an opinion with evidence or reasons. This simple activity continues this idea by introducing students to the need for supporting an opinion with reasons and providing the language they need to achieve this.

1 Write this table on the board.

|                    |   |            |
|--------------------|---|------------|
| I think that       | exercise is good for you                      | because... |
| I agree that       | social media sites waste our time             |            |
| I don't agree that | politicians are under-paid                    |            |
| I'm not sure that  | travel broadens the mind                      |            |
|                    | our grandparents' lives were easier           |            |
|                    | living in the country is better than the city |            |
|                    | the internet has improved communication       |            |

2 Students work in pairs and have to generate opinions followed by a reason. They can create their sentences by combining any of the opinion expressions in column 1 with the topic in column 2 and then, using ‘because’, they have to provide a supporting reason.

For example:

I think that politicians are under-paid because people like bankers and rock stars earn more money but they have less responsibility.

I'm not sure that travel broadens the mind because I've met some people who come back from other countries and they criticise everything about it.

### Activity 3. Critical questioning

Critical thinking aim: To develop students' critical questioning skills.

Language aim: To practise the language of asking closed and open questions.

Level: A2+

Rationale: Students need to develop the skill of asking searching questions if they are to become effective critical thinkers. This activity shows them how closed questions which only require yes/no answers do not help us to question critically and that open questions are much more effective. At the same time, students review the structures they need to ask questions.

### Procedure

1 Write the following question words on the board:

What...? Why...? Who...? How...? When....? Where....?

2 Put students in pairs. Give Student A a copy of these eight closed questions:

- 1 Do you think meat is bad for you?
- 2 Do you believe that exercise is good for you?
- 3 Would you say that young children watch too much TV?
- 4 Are celebrities important in our lives?
- 5 Is the world a more dangerous place than fifty years ago?
- 6 Should most people recycle more than they do?
- 7 Can politicians make a difference to the world?
- 8 Is traditional family life disappearing?

3 Explain that Student A asks the first question and Student A answers Yes or No. Then Student A changes the closed question into an open question using a question word on the board. Student B answers with a much longer and more reasoned answer. So their conversation might start like this:

*A Do you think meat is bad for you?*

*B Yes, I do.*

*A Why do you think meat is bad for you?*

*B Because I've read about the way meat is produced nowadays and I'm not happy about...*

4 The students work through all eight questions in the same way until they reach the end. So that everyone has an equal opportunity to ask and answer the questions, Student B can also ask all eight questions in the same way. Or, if time is short, Student A can ask questions 1, 3, 5 and 7 and Student B asks questions 2, 4, 6 and 8.

### Variation

For higher level learners you can make the open questions on the board more focussed to the types of question that might be asked when thinking critically. These are:

- *What evidence is there that...?*
- *Why do you think that...?*
- *Who says that...?*
- *How do you know that...?*
- *When did people start believing that...?*
- *Where did you read that...?*

So a dialogue using these types of question phrases might sound like this:

*A Do you think meat is bad for you?*

*B Yes, I do.*

*A What evidence is there that meat is bad for you?*

*B Well, there are lots of cases in the newspapers these days about eating processed meat. There was even the case of horse meat in hamburgers...*

#### **Activity 4. Recognising context**

Critical thinking aim: To develop the skill of seeing things from another point of view.

Language aim: To speculate about a photograph in different contexts.

Level: A2+

Rationale: As part of developing a critical mindset, students need to develop the skill of seeing an argument from all sides. This simple activity will raise students' awareness of how the setting of an image or text can alter our perception or interpretation of something.

#### **Procedure**

1 Choose an interesting image. It can be a photograph, cartoon or any kind of graphic. Show it to the students and ask them:

- *What does it show?*
- *Where do you think you might see it? For example, in a magazine with a text about something.*

- *Did the person who made or took the image have a particular message?*

2 Students work in group. Ask them to discuss using the image in these different ways:

- a) If it was an image on a film poster, what is the name of the film and what is it about?

b) If it was the front cover of a book, what is the name of the book and what is it about?

c) If it was an advertisement for a product or service, what would it be and what advertising slogan would be on the advert?

Afterwards, as an extra option, ask each group to think of one more new way to use the image.

Where would we see it? How would it be used?

3 At the end, each group presents their ideas for the ways in which the image can be used. End the task by explaining that this exercise shows us how the meaning of an image or text can change according to the context. So when we read or hear an argument or opinion, it's important to understand its context.

### **Activity 5** Making connections between topics

**Critical thinking aim:** To make connections between the topic of a new subject and your prior knowledge.

**Language aim:** To talk about a topic and use topic vocabulary.

**Level:** A2+

**Rationale:** Sometimes students are required to talk about a topic with which they feel unfamiliar.

For example, in an exam situation they may have to talk about a topic and express an opinion about it. For some students, especially younger teens, this is difficult because the topic they are discussing may seem distant from their own (sometimes limited) life experience. Use this activity to demonstrate how to relate a new topic to their life experience and as a mental warmer for students who may have to take a speaking or writing exam which requires them to comment on a topic.

#### **Procedure**

1 Before the lesson, think of a topic which you think students will be unfamiliar with or feel that they have little to say about. You can also use this activity as a lead-in to a reading or listening activity, in which case, use the topic in the text.

2 At the beginning of the lesson, ask students to list five or six topics from your course that they are familiar with and feel they could talk or write about in, for example, an exam. As they make suggestions, write the topic words on the board in a circle. Then write the topic you chose in 1 in the middle, like this:

3 Explain to students that you want them to think of one connection between the middle topic and the topics on the outside. They work in pairs or groups and can either say or write down a sentence about the connection. Explain that the sentence can be simple or imaginative. (There should be no limits to their ideas in this exercise.) Do an example as a class to get them started. For example:

Sports like tennis and football are ok for the environment but motor sports use lots of fuel and so they are not so good for the environment.

4 Afterwards, ask students to read out or say their ideas for connections between the topics. If you have students who are going to take speaking or writing exams which require their opinions on topics, explain that the approach of making connections is very useful if they need ideas. Similarly, it's a useful way into reading or listening to a text where you want students to make connections between different ideas. (See the next activity.)

### **Activity 6. Evaluating the reliability of sources**

Critical thinking aim: To evaluate the reliability of sources of information.

Language aim: To discuss the topic of news and media.

Level: B1+

Rationale: Before we accept information that is presented as fact in a reading or listening text, it's important to consider whether we trust the source of the information. The following activity is a short warmer into the topic of how much we can trust certain sources.

#### Procedure

1 Ask the class to imagine they are gathering information for an essay they want to write. The topic of the essay is about whether families spend more or less time together than they did in the past.

In order to research and write the essay, they will need to use and refer to different sources of information.

Write the following sources of information on the board or give them a copy of the list. You can also elicit more suggestions from the class of sources which might be useful:

- A journalist writing an article in a newspaper

- Members of your own family
- An infographic on Facebook
- A video by someone about the topic on YouTube
- A published book by a qualified specialist on the subject
- An entry on Wikipedia
  
- A survey about family life in a weekly magazine
  
- A documentary about family life on TV with interviews with real families

2 Put students in pairs and ask them to evaluate each source using the following scoring between 1-3.

1 = Not a reliable source

2 = It might be credible but I'd have to check the information in another source as well

3 = A very credible source of information

3 At the end, the pairs report back their views on the different sources. Opinions may vary and there is not always a right/wrong answer. However, the task draws attention to the fact that students need to check sources and think about where they take information from.

Follow on

When you use a reading or listening text that contains information quoting different sources, ask students to list the sources and use the 1-3 scoring system. You could also use a 0 score when facts and figures are given but with no apparent source.

### **Activity 7. Stance**

Critical thinking aim: To raise awareness of the importance of stance.

Language aim: Expressing opinion with reasons.

Rationale: In critical thinking, students need to be aware that a person's stance or position on a topic can greatly change the way they write or speak about it. For example, the way a person from a very hot climate close to the equator talks about the topic of weather will vary greatly from someone in a Scandinavian country. So this activity provides a simple role-play activity to introduce the idea of stance before students are then asked to read or listen to a text on a topic and identify the writer or speaker's stance.

Procedure

1 Show students a photograph of Venice, such as this one:

Ask students what they already know about Venice and if they know about the city's problems. Make sure that all students are aware that Venice has problems of overtourism, costs in maintaining all its ancient buildings and because it is slowly sinking.

2 Put students into groups of four and give them each one of these roles. Students should not let each other know their roles. (If you have a group of three, do not use Student D.)

Student A: You work on the Venice council which relies on local taxes and then gives money to projects to save Venice.

Student B: You are a local hotel owner with a five-star hotel in the city centre. Your family has owned it for three generations. You cannot imagine Venice without tourism!

Student C: You are a local historian who wants to preserve the ancient buildings. You think the city needs to limit the number of tourists entering the city.

Student D: You are a local tour guide who organises tours to the city.

You run tours for over 100 customers every day.

3. Explain to the students that Student A has organised the meeting or local people from Venice to discuss the problems of Venice and how to solve them. Allow five minutes for the role-play discussion.

4 At the end of the meeting, ask the students to guess what was written on each other's role card and summarise each other's stance. How was it different from their own?

Variation

Instead of Venice as a context for the discussion, you could choose other locations around the world with problems related to over-crowding and tourism, such as Machu Picchu or Mount Everest. Follow up this activity by giving students different texts and asking them to identify the author's stance. (See the next activity.)

### **Activity 8. Identifying main arguments and supporting evidence**

Critical thinking aim: To develop the skill of identifying the main argument in a paragraph and the supporting evidence.

Language aim: To identify discourse markers used to structure a paragraph.

Rationale: When students read a text with an opinion or viewpoint, they need to be able to read for the main argument in the text and decide if the writer has provided supporting evidence. This activity introduces this in the context of a single paragraph before asking students to approach much longer texts containing more than one argument.

#### Procedure

1 Take a paragraph from a text with a clear main argument and sentences with supporting evidence. Cut up the different parts or rewrite the sentences so they are jumbled. For example, here are sentences taken from a paragraph in a text about immigration in the United Kingdom. However, they are in the wrong order and students need to reorder them:

a) Latest figures for the last twelve months show that 153,000 people migrated to the UK.

b) In fact the reverse is true according to figures from the Office of National Statistics.

c) The commonly-held belief that immigration into the United Kingdom is on the increase is not supported by the facts.

d) The current government aims to continue this downward trend and reduce the number to 100,000 in the next two years.

e) That figure is down by one third compared to this time last year when net migration stood at 242,000 people

2 Students reorder the sentences and underline any words or phrases which helped them to decide what the main argument was and what was the correct order for the supporting sentences.

The answer for this example, sentences a-e above, is as follows: 1c, 2b, 3a, 4e, 5d

3 Give students a longer text and ask them to study the paragraphs. They should underline the main arguments in the text and circle any sentences with supporting evidence.

### **Activity 9. Fact or opinion**

Critical thinking aim: To contrast fact with the writer's opinion.

Language aim: Expressing opinion with reasons.

Rationale

Sometimes we read texts or listen to people claiming to present some kind of factually true content.

However, when this is the case, it's important to approach the text critically for information that pretends to be factual when it is in fact the author or speaker's opinion. By analysing texts in this way, students can learn to identify opinion through the language used and in turn they will learn the language they need to express opinion in their own writing.

### Procedure

1 Take between six and eight sentences from a text which contains fact and author's opinion. Ideally, they will be from a text you have already been reading in class and so the activity can form part of a longer reading lesson. So, for example, the following six sentences come from a longer listening text in which an expert in a radio programme is talking about language extinction.

1) About eighty percent of the world's population speaks one percent of its languages.

2) Every two weeks another language disappears from the planet because the last remaining speaker dies.

3). The good news is that some minority communities are trying to save their language by setting up special schools to teach their children.

4) The official language in India is Hindi but speakers of a minority language called Aka are going to preserve the language through the public performance of wonderful songs and storytelling, hopefully.

5) With an estimated 830 different languages, the islands of Papua New Guinea have the largest concentration of linguistic diversity in the world.

6) Local indigenous languages often have words for local plants with medicinal qualities which don't exist in other languages so I don't think we can afford to let them die out.

2 Students read the sentences and decide which sentences are factual (F) and which contain elements of the speaker's opinion (O). Ask them to underline the key

words which indicate an opinion. These will be useful for students to learn and use in their own writing.

Here are the answers for the sentences above with the opinion words and phrases from the sentences written in brackets.

1 F, 2 F, 3 O (The good news is that...) 4 O (wonderful / hopefully) 5 F, 6 O (I don't think)

Notice in particular how expressions like 'the good news is...' and adjectives and adverbs can quickly make something that is factual into something that also shows the writer's personal viewpoint.

### **Activity 10.**

Critical thinking aim: To identify vague or accurate language.

Language aim: Using vague and accurate language.

Rationale

This exercise has some similarities to the previous activity looking at fact and the writer's opinion. It asks the student to assess sentences in terms of whether a statement is too vague or imprecise and to raise awareness that language, especially in academic writing, should be accurate and detailed.

Procedure

1 Write these pairs of sentences from different kinds of text on the board or give students a copy.

Ask them to identify which sentence is vague and which sentence presents more accurate information

1

a This film is extraordinarily long.

b This film is 210 minutes long.

2

a Two out of every three people in the survey said they can't speak a second language.

b The vast majority of people in the survey said they can't speak a second language.

3

a All our customers love our latest model.

b Customers that we have spoken to say that they love our latest model.

4

a It's well-known that elephants communicate with each other through infrasounds which are inaudible to humans.

b Scientists have measured elephants' infrasounds (under 16 Hz and inaudible to humans) which can signal to other elephants up to 20 km away.

5

a The Harry Potter books by JK Rowling are loved by millions of readers all over the world.

b The Harry Potter books by JK Rowling have been translated into over 70 different languages

Answers 1 a vague b accurate, 2 a accurate b vague, 3 a vague b accurate, 4 a vague b accurate, 5 a vague b accurate.

2. In each case, discuss what type of language makes a sentence vague or accurate.

Vague language tends to:

- use generalised adverbs and adjectives ('extraordinarily long')
- make generalisations without supporting evidence ('All our customers...')
- makes assumptions (It is well-known that..)

Accurate language tends to provide:

- exact detail ('210 minutes long')
- evidence based on research ('two out of every three')
- defining clauses ('customers that we have spoken to')

3. Point out that there is nothing wrong with vague language in certain contexts. Ask students what type of text types the vague sentences probably came from. The answer is sources such as a daily newspaper, magazines or informal conversation with people. However, when reading or writing academic or work-based texts, the information should have the features of accurate language.

Follow up

Students could look at other texts and underline examples of vague or accurate language to establish where the text provides a useful source of accurate information.

**Activity11.** Where's it from?

Critical thinking aim: Identifying features of different text types on the same topic, selecting relevant information and synthesising it.

Language aim: To recognise features of written discourse.

Level: B1+

Rationale

Students need to develop the skill of researching a topic. They will draw their information from different sources and have to decide whether certain text types are credible sources. In order to do this, they need to be able to recognise the text type from the writing style.

#### Procedure

1 Give students three texts on the same subject but written in entirely different ways. Ask them to identify what kind of text each one is. Here are three example texts which you could use for this activity. They are all on the same subject of online shopping. Ask students to identify the text type and say what it was about the language in the text that told them this. For example: Was it formal or informal? Who was it written to (one person or many)?

#### Text A

Online shopping is a form of electronic commerce which allows consumers to directly buy goods or services using a web browser. An online shop creates the same experience of buying products or services from a shopping centre or retailer in the high street but the buyer doesn't have to leave his or her house. The two largest online retailing companies in the world are eBay and Amazon.

#### Text B

Dear Susie

I'm writing to thank you for my birthday present. I have to admit that I was worried about buying things on the internet but after only two days I have already downloaded three books!

Buying them online like this is so much easier than having to leave the house! It's so convenient.

All my love

Grandmother

#### Text C

Tips for safe shopping online

- Make sure your computer's security software is up-to-date.
- Reputable websites include information on how your personal information will be used.
- Find out what other shoppers say about a company.
- When paying by credit card, look for the letter s after http on the web address.

Answers for Text A-C: Text A comes from Wikipedia so the language is purely informational. Text B is a short correspondence between two people so it's informal and chatty. Text C is from a text giving advice and warnings about shopping online.

2 Ask students to imagine they are going to write the following for and against essay: Some people prefer online shopping to face-to-face shopping. Give reasons for and against this view.

Which of the texts do they think provides them with useful information and ideas for their essay?

Possible answer: In fact all three texts provide ideas to help students with their writing. Text A might help them with a basic introduction to the topic. Text B suggests possible advantages of online shopping, especially for older people. Text C draws attention to some of disadvantages of online shopping.

#### Variation

Students could go in search of other texts and sources on this topic and select relevant information and ideas before they finally write the essay in 2 above.

### **Activity 12. Reading between the lines**

Critical thinking aim: To develop the skill of identifying hidden assumptions or implicit meaning.

Language aim: To identify connotation and denotation.

Level: B1+

#### Rationale

When students start to read higher level or more authentic texts they will need to develop the ability to read between the lines. In other words, to understand the implicit meaning of the writer's words as well as the explicit meaning. In some cases, a writer will choose a word with connotations or certain associations. So instead of choosing the word for its denotation, or literal meaning, the writer uses it to evoke a different kind of meaning. Students need to develop the skill of identifying this language use in order to understand the writer's position or stance. Language with connotation can also be more persuasive to the reader because it appeals to our emotions. This exercise introduces students to the idea of connotation and denotation in texts.

#### Procedure

These eight sentences all have a negative meaning because the word in bold has negative connotations. Make the sentences positive by replacing the word in bold with a word in the box which has a similar denotation but a positive connotation.

|   |
|---|
| thrifty passion challenging slim classic confident unique responsible |
|---|

1 'My brother's so cheap with his money!'

2 'The climb up the mountain is difficult.'

3 'My older sister is very bossy!'

- 4 'This type of design is ancient.'
- 5 'His sense of style is unfashionable.'
- 6 'Fashion models in magazines always look so thin.'
- 7 Stamp collecting is his obsession
- 8 'There's a student in my class who's so big-headed.'

(Answer: 1 thrifty 2 challenging 3 responsible 4 classic 5 unique 6 slim 7 passion 8 confident)

### **Activity 13. False conclusions**

Critical thinking aim: To evaluate the supporting evidence for a conclusion.

Language aim: To practise the language of concluding and summarising.

Level: B1+

Rationale

When a text ends with the writer's conclusion or final opinion, it should be as a result of a considered assessment of all the arguments and evidence in the rest of the article. Students will also need to arrive at conclusions in a similar way. The following activity draws attention to conclusions which are not based on correct reasoning and acts as a useful lead-in to looking at conclusions in longer texts.

Procedure

1 Write one or all of the following sets of three sentences on the board. Ask students what is wrong with the conclusion in each case. What mistake is the speaker making?

Dogs have four legs. Cats have four legs. All cats are dogs.

Oranges are the colour orange. Your shirt is orange. Your shirt is an orange.

Cars have an engine. Motorbikes have an engine. Motorbikes are cars.

2 Put students in pairs or groups and ask them to write a similar set of three sentences with an incorrect conclusion. This should be a fun activity which allows students to use their imagination. Afterwards, they read out their false conclusions.

Follow on

Give students a longer text with a conclusion at the end. Ask students to read the conclusion and say what it is. Then ask students to study the text and underline supporting reasons or evidence for the conclusion. As a class, discuss if the conclusion is logical, based on the arguments given.

### **Activity 14. Writing headlines**

Critical thinking aim: To analyse a text for its essential meaning.

Language aim: To practise summary writing.

Level: B1+

Rationale

After students have read or listened to a text, they need to analyse it for its main meaning. One way to do this is to encourage them to summarise the text in a few words. It's also a useful way to develop their note-taking skills. A fun way to do this is to have students read or listen to short texts

from a newspaper or radio or TV news and write a headline.

#### Procedure

1 Show students some headlines from different newspapers or news websites. For each one, ask them to say what they think the news story was about. Afterwards ask them to say what the purpose of a headline is. (Possible answer: To summarise the story and attract the reader's interest)

2 Give out some short news stories or play three or four short recordings of different news items on the radio. For each one, students try to write a news headline which summarises the main meaning of the text. If you are playing recordings, then play them at least twice.

3 Put students in groups and let them compare their headlines to see if they summarised similar information or used similar words from the text.

### **Activity 15. Find the expression**

Critical thinking aim: To analyse the structure of a text.

Language aim: To introduce useful expressions for structuring a text.

Level: B1+

#### Rationale

Understanding how a written text is structured will help students to understand and evaluate a writer's argument and will also help them to write their own essays.

#### Procedure

1 Give students copies of the following and ask them to match the functional heading (1-8) to the expression (a-h).

- 1 Introducing an argument
- 2 Sequencing information
- 3 Giving supporting evidence
- 4 Adding information or evidence
- 5 Comparing information or evidence
- 6 Showing cause and effect
- 7 Summing up
- 8 Concluding

- a) As a result of this...
- b) Firstly..., Secondly...

- c) Taking everything in consideration, I think that...
- d) To sum up...
- e) This is proved by the fact that...
- f) In addition to this...
- g) One the one hand...on the other...
- h) One argument for this is...

(Answers: 1h, 2b, 3e, 4f, 5g, 6a, 7d, 8c)

2 Now give students a text with arguments and supporting evidence in it. Ask them to find more examples of words and expressions for each of the functional headings in 1-8. They should make a note of any new ones and try to use them in their own writing.

### **Activity 16.** Predicting the content of the text

Critical thinking aim: To compare your prior knowledge and expectations of the content of a text and to evaluate the relevance of arguments.

Language aim: To prepare students' schema before listening or reading.

Level: A1+

#### Rationale

In order to help understand a reading or listening text, we often ask students to predict what information or arguments the text might include. This is also a useful exercise to help students who are researching ideas for a presentation or essay. They can predict the content and then consider why some information was not included in the text.

#### Procedure

1 With a reading text you can show students the title of the text, or ask them to look at a photograph or image that accompanies it. If you are going to play a recording, then write a title for it on the board. Ask students to work in groups and list six or seven items of information they

expect to read or hear. For example, if the text is an opinion piece then they can predict the kinds of argument they expect to read or hear.

2 Students read or listen to the text and tick the items they predicted correctly and put a cross next to those that were not in the text.

3 In their groups, students discuss the ideas which were not included. Was it because they weren't relevant or didn't support the main argument? Or are they still relevant and could be used in another text on this topic? For example, if students are going to give a presentation on the topic they should discuss if they can still include these other ideas.

**Activity 17.** Practising the language for expressing critical thinking

Critical thinking aim: To express your view of a topic based on your reading.

Language aim: To practise functional language for discussions.

Level: B1+

Rationale

Sometimes teachers think their students have no opinions because they are unable to express their opinions. In fact, students often do have strong and thoughtful opinions but they are not confident with the language they need to express themselves. This activity provides input and practice with the language they will need.

Procedure

1 Before the lesson, you need to make copies of expressions below and cut them into slips of paper.

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| The main point is....  | On the one hand...                  |
| One argument for it is that...   | I agree because...                  |
| One argument against it is that...   | I disagree because...               |
| It's because...  | In my opinion...                    |
| As a result of this...   | Evidence shows that...              |
| ...is similar because...   | What do you mean by that?           |
| ...is different because...   | Why do you think that?              |
| There are a number of reasons. Firstly... How did you come to that conclusion? |                                     |
| Another reason is...   | In conclusion...                    |
| Also...  | What evidence do you have for that? |
| Because...   | I know because                      |

2 Make groups of three or four students and sit them in a circle around a table. Give each group one set of the cut-up expressions. They deal out the slips of paper so each player has the same amount. Put any extra slips to one side.

3 Write a topic for debate on the board. It could be something you have been discussing recently or a topic which doesn't need too much specialised knowledge. For example: 'It's important to spend 30 minutes a day doing physical exercise'.

4 Explain that the groups must discuss the topic but that they can only speak by using the words on one of their slips of paper and placing it in the middle of the table. One player begins and then the player on the left must continue with a logical comment. Then the next player on the left speaks so that the discussion moves anti-

clockwise around the circle. The aim is for a player to use all his/her expressions and to get rid of all the slips of paper. If the group thinks that a player uses an expression incorrectly, they can challenge the player and make him/her miss a turn.

5 When the groups finish, repeat the activity by writing a new discussion topic on the board and dealing the slips of paper again.

Follow up

Once the students become more confident with the game, you can change the rules so that any player can speak in order to use up the expressions first. This version is more chaotic but it's a lot of fun.

### **Activity 18. A for-and-against essay**

Critical thinking aim: To analyse the arguments for and against and to draw a conclusion.

Language aim: To write a four or five paragraph for-and-against essay.

Rationale

After students have read or listened to texts on a topic and analysed the relevant points, they can synthesize their findings into an essay. Writing a for-and-against essay is the obvious choice and it reflects the kind of writing task that is found nowadays in examinations such Cambridge English and IELTS.

Procedure

1 Think of a topic you have been studying in class recently and write a statement that will generate arguments both for and against. Here are some possible suggestions:

Sport: Sport in schools should be more competitive so that children learn about real life.

Do you agree?

Jobs and money: Parents should only pay pocket money if their children do jobs. Do you agree?

Technology: The Internet is having a negative effect on people's social lives. Do you agree?

Education: Living in another country is the best education you can receive. Do you agree?

Places: The countryside is a better place for young children to grow up in than a city. Do you agree?

Animals: We should close down zoos and let animals go free. Do you agree?

2 Put students in groups and ask them to brainstorm lists of reasons or evidence supporting the arguments for or against the statement. On the board write this table and ask them to list their arguments below the + (for) and – (against):

|   |   |
|---|---|
| + | - |
|   |   |

Groups should find a minimum of three arguments for both sides. You can also collect ideas from each group at the end and write them on the board.

3 Next, students need to write their essays using the ideas in stage 2. They could write this alone or in groups. In order to ensure students follow a logical structure in their essay and that they learn to use phrases for structuring it, you could give them a copy of the page below with the essay structure laid out. In paragraph one, students restate the statement. In paragraph two, they list their three arguments for and their three arguments against in paragraph three. Then in the final paragraph, they write their concluding opinion.

There are various arguments for and against the view that \_\_\_\_\_

One argument for is that \_\_\_\_\_

Another reason is that \_\_\_\_\_

Thirdly \_\_\_\_\_

On the other hand, there are arguments against. Firstly \_\_\_\_\_

In addition to that, \_\_\_\_\_

Finally, \_\_\_\_\_

So, on balance, I think that \_\_\_\_\_

### **Activity 19. Preparing a group presentation**

Critical thinking aim: To bring together all the stages in critical thinking and apply relevant ideas into a presentation.

Language aim: To input the language of presenting.

Level: A2+

Rationale

After students have read or listened to texts on a topic and analysed the relevant points, they can apply their new knowledge and understanding by preparing a presentation. For example, perhaps they have been reading arguments for and against an opinion. Next, you can ask students to present the main arguments either for or against or you can ask one group to present the arguments for a point of view and another group to present the arguments against.

Procedure

Students can present on their own, but working in groups is also a valuable learning process, so it is highly recommended. If students use slides to support their presentation, then make sure they summarise their main points in bullet form but without using too many words. As a general rule, have three bullet points per slide with no more than five words per line.

Students need time to prepare their presentations and to ensure that their presentations have a clear structure, you need to introduce some language for giving presentations. You could photocopy this checklist of useful phrases for students to follow. By using many of the expressions from each section, students will ensure that their presentation is planned and organised with a clear structure.

#### Introductions

Good morning/afternoon everyone and thank you for coming.

Today we're going to present.... / We're going to talk about the topic of...

My name's.... / Let me introduce everyone in our group. My name's... and this is....

We're each going to talk about different parts of the topic.

The structure of the presentation

First we'll talk about...

Then, we're going to present...

Next, we'll look at...

And finally,...

The presentation will last about ... minutes.

There'll be time for questions and comments at the end.

Moving from one point to the next

Point one is about...

So let's start by looking at...

That brings us to the end of this first point.

Now I'm going to hand over to my colleague who will talk about the second point.

Moving on to the next point...

That's everything I want to say about...

And now for the final part of our presentation...

Balancing arguments for and against

First of all, here are some of the arguments for...

Next we'd like to present some of the arguments against...

One argument for... is that...

However, the argument against is that...

### Summing up and concluding

To sum up, we've looked at three main points.

We've considered the arguments for and against...

In conclusion... / On balance, we think...

### Ending the presentation and inviting questions

That's the end of our presentation.

Thank you for listening. / Are there any questions?

We'd be happy to take your questions.

## **Activity 20. Assessing a presentation**

Critical thinking aim: To assess the arguments and opinions presented.

Language aim: To assess the language used in the presentation.

Level: A2+

### Rationale

When students give their presentations, you want other students in the class to participate actively as an audience and to consider the effectiveness of the arguments. One way to do this is to give students who are listening a feedback form to fill in as they do so.

### Procedure

Give students in the audience a copy of this feedback form (or adapt it according to your needs and context) or you could use such a form to give your own feedback.

### ***Feedback form***

The structure of presentation

The group used language to:

introduce themselves

introduce the structure of presentation

move from one point to the next

give arguments for and against

sum up and conclude

end the presentation and invite questions

The content of the presentation

(Answer Yes or No and give examples from the presentation of how each was/wasn't achieved)

Did the group include all the main arguments for and against?

Did they include evidence to support their arguments?

Was their conclusion logical and clear?

Overall

One thing I really liked about your presentation was...

One thing you could improve next time is

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/business-english/business-magazine/influencing-across-cultures>

## Session 22-23. Digital Footprints

### Task 1

Explore the infographics to understand the idea of digital footprint and its role in the age of the Internet of things.

[https://www.safespace.qa/sites/default/files/2020-05/GDINF0023\\_Preview\\_A\\_Comprehensive\\_Guide\\_To\\_Your\\_Digital\\_Footprint\\_In\\_The\\_Age\\_Of\\_Internet\\_Of\\_Things\\_EN.jpg](https://www.safespace.qa/sites/default/files/2020-05/GDINF0023_Preview_A_Comprehensive_Guide_To_Your_Digital_Footprint_In_The_Age_Of_Internet_Of_Things_EN.jpg)

### Task 2

How far do you agree with each statement and why?

- I'm not really concerned about digital privacy. I have nothing to hide and I'm not doing anything illegal.
- If a pop-up notice on a website asks me to accept cookies, I always choose "accept all".
- I always use a VPN when I'm connected to a public wi-fi network.
- I always save card details on shopping websites.
- I use a password manager to keep track of my passwords without having to memorize them.
- Touch ID and Face ID on my phone are much more reliable than a password or PIN.
- It's a good idea to cover the laptop webcam with tape.
- I always allow phone apps to track my location.
- I'm always mindful of which posts I like, react, and comment.

### Task 3

Think of you and people you know. Talk about a situation when something you posted on the Internet had a positive or a negative impact on your life. Use these questions to help you:

- What did you post? Where?
- What impact did the post have on your life?
- Have you made any similar posts since that time?

#### Task 4

Look at the following situations. What consequences might these posts have in the future? What can be done in each case to improve the situation?

- A student posts a picture of him smoking marijuana in Colorado (where it's legal).
- A university professor "likes" and "comments" his female student's photos on social media.
- A friend of yours tags you in a photo where you are holding a pint of beer.
- You write a long post on Facebook criticizing the government.
- A politician writes a post with poor grammar and spelling.
- A primary school teacher posts a bikini picture of her on Instagram.
- A person rants about their previous employers and co-workers on LinkedIn.

#### Revision worksheet

**And for good reason** = because it has already been proven to be true

Some people tape their webcams — and for good reason.

**make a comeback** = becoming popular again.

Phones with physical keyboards are making a comeback.

**All the rage** = extremely popular.

In the early days of my teaching career VK was all the rage.

**Take down** = remove, delete.

You may well ask your friend to take down the photo.

**fallback scenario** = plan B.

Project an image of = to represent yourself in a particular way through your speech, behavior, and appearance.

You don't want to project a negative image of yourself.

**Part and parcel** = an integral part.

The Internet is part and parcel of modern life.

***There's a fine line between ...*** = If you say that there is a fine line between one thing and another, you mean that they are very similar. You often say this when one thing is acceptable and the other is not.

There's a fine line between a compliment and sexual harassment.

***Cross the line*** = to go beyond what is proper or acceptable.

Luckily, she didn't cross the line this time.

***Crucial for me*** = something that is crucial is extremely important because it has a major effect on the result of something.

***It's a slippery slope*** = a problem or situation that is getting worse and will become extremely bad unless it is stopped.

The country is on the slippery slope to revolution.

***Good old*** = used before a noun to describe a familiar person or thing with affection or approval.

I don't need fancy shoes. I prefer good old sneakers.

***Undermine*** = to make something or someone become less effective, confident, or successful

I was afraid that social media could undermine my relationships with students.

***Fruitful*** = producing good results

We have had a friendly and very fruitful discussion.

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Answer the questions:

1. What things are making a comeback right now? Do you think it's good?
2. What things were all the rage when you were a teenager?
3. Have you ever asked a person to take down the photo or a post? Why?
4. In what situations is it a good idea to have a fallback?
5. What things are crucial for you at the moment?
6. What things can undermine professional relationships? Personal relationships?
7. When was the last time you had a really fruitful discussion?
8. How do you normally react when people tag you in a photo?
9. Do you often rant about something online? What about?

### **Further reading**

Can You Delete Yourself From The Internet?

<https://digital.com/online-privacy/delete-yourself-from-internet/>

Owning Your Digital Footprint | What, Why, and How

<https://medium.com/swlh/owning-your-digital-footprint-what-why-and-how-f130f9c61344>

A presentation on digital footprint

<https://www.sutori.com/en/story/digital-footprints--AWYsJL5Y12mJGQYJBRLZaVGE>

## **Class work**

**Nik Peachy. Distracted**

## **Session 24. Practising English using digital technology**

### READING

Digital technology provides children with a great number of opportunities to practise their English.

Children growing up in a supportive digital environment are learning the skills that they will need for their future studies and careers. Here are some fantastic ways you and your child can use technology together to practise English.

Parents often feel unsure about their child using mobile phones and computers. You may like to read our [Frequently Asked Questions: How to use technology for learning](#).

### **English learning videos**

Videos are a great way to see different cultures and hear real-life English. We have lots of great learning tips in our article: [Learn English through videos and TV](#).

But the really fantastic thing about video technology is that learners can make their own. Get creative and have fun!

#### *Learning*

*tip*

Ask each family member to shoot a silent video (your child is not allowed to talk!). Keep the videos short – 1 minute at the most. You might like to have a theme. For example, my favourite place, my favourite things. Ask each person to write 10–20 English words to describe their video.

You could ask each person to record a voiceover to their video, using as many of the words as possible from their list. Ask the kids to analyze their non-verbal behavior.

### **Using the internet to learn English**

Children have access to so much information. It can be hard to know which sources of information are reliable and high quality. Encourage your child to think carefully about what they read online. For example, do I trust this website? Why/why not?

### *Learning*

*tip*

Give each family member a trivia quiz. Family members who don't speak English can do the quiz in their native language. Ask everyone to search for answers on the web. Do you all get the same answers?

Example quiz questions:

- Who was the first person in space?
- What is the time in Tokyo? How many hours ahead/behind?
- What is the weather tomorrow afternoon in Cape Town?
- How do you say 'hello' in Swahili?
- What is the biggest city in the world (by population)?
- How long does it take to drive from Sydney to Melbourne? Which road should you take?

To make it harder you could ask your child to prepare their own quiz.

### **Online translation tools**

Language students are using online translation tools more and more (often as a homework shortcut!). Translation tools are getting better, but they are not always accurate.

We know learners will continue to use these tools. So it's important to teach children how to use online translation tools – in the right way – and how they need to check their work.

### *Learning*

*tip*

Take a short English text that your child is familiar with. This could be something they've studied in class, a passage from their favourite English storybook, or lyrics from a favourite English song.

Translate it into your own language, using two different online translation tools. Ask your child to compare the original text with the translations. Are there any differences? Are there any errors? Can they suggest a better translation?

### **Learning English with digital storytelling**

Digital tools can be a great way for learners to use their language in fun and creative ways. It gives them some control over their own learning, by giving them a chance to be in the director's chair!

### *Learning*

*tip*

Help your child bring their stories to life. There are loads of great storytelling tools where children can create their own fairy tales, comic strips, puppet shows, 3D popup books or cartoons.

Here are some apps you could try:

- **Make your own e-book:** Create your own drawings, record your voice, add photos, music, video and text ([Book Creator](#) for iOS, Android and Windows).
- **Make your own cartoon:** Choose your characters and your setting, then move the characters around and voice your own cartoon ([Toontastic](#) for iOS and Android).

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### **Games and apps**

There are free games and apps are designed to help learners improve their English in a fun way. There are provided lots of great learning tips in the article: [Learn English through games](#).

The games industry is huge – it's bigger now than the music industry or the movie box office! There are all sorts of different types of games and apps, from puzzles and quizzes, to action games, to solitaire and Sudoku. We've even run some very successful pilots using apps like [dubsmash](#) where children record themselves singing in English over a pop song. Try exploring and learning together!

### *Learning*

*tip*

Encourage the whole family to take part in an app challenge. Ask each family member to download one free language-learning app onto their tablet or phone.

You may want to provide a few key search words. For example: '*Learn English kids*', '*English speaking practice*'. Alternatively, check out some of these [top-rated apps that promote language and reading](#).

Ask each family member to talk about their app. They could show how it works and say what they like about it. Then have a vote to decide which app is the family favourite.

### **Learning English with social media**

Social media provides lots of opportunities to interact in English. Find out more in our article: [Learn English through social media](#).

*Learning tip for 13–18 year olds*  
The [Cambridge English Facebook page](#) has daily tips, quizzes, activities and advice for learning English. It supports students from all over the world to discuss things in English.

### **Still feeling a bit unsure?**

Technology is messy. Our main piece of advice is to embrace the uncertainty, and remember we are ALL learners. The exciting part of digital technology is that children, parents and teachers are all learning about digital technologies together, at the same time.

Technology is constantly changing and improving. It's OK to try, try and try again. Children will learn that using technology is about exploring, discovering, experimenting, creating and being open-minded to new opportunities.

Borrowed from: <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/learning-english/parents-and-children/your-childs-interests/practising-english-using-digital-technology/>