

Cultural Awareness in the Business English Classroom



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In this session we will:

- Find out about different cultural types
- Complete a short cultural profile
- Consider difficulties students may have when doing business with other cultures
- Share ideas to help students communicate effectively across cultures

The world is a much smaller place than it was fifty years ago. English has become an international language, and many brands are known worldwide. Cultural differences have become smaller and people have become more similar to each other.

The fact that the world has become smaller means that it is more important to know about other cultures, not less. People are still greatly influenced by culture. That hasn't changed just because we now have international brands and an international language.

Cultural awareness and L2 I

- Learning a language involves knowing your own culture as well as the target culture
- Cultural awareness can help you understand the target language more easily
- Business relationships are more likely to succeed when two parties understand each other

Culture in textbooks

- Cultural awareness not dealt with in depth

- Used to introduce grammar:

You shouldn't make direct eye contact for too long in the Middle East

You don't have to be on time when meeting the Italians

- Formal, indirect language:

Would you care to elaborate on that?

I'm afraid I don't have enough information at my disposal.

Cultural awareness and L2 II

“...*intercultural communicative competence* should be included within a communicative approach for L2 teaching. This is the ability of a person to behave in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures”

monochronic

style-orientated

high-context

h a r m o n i s i n g

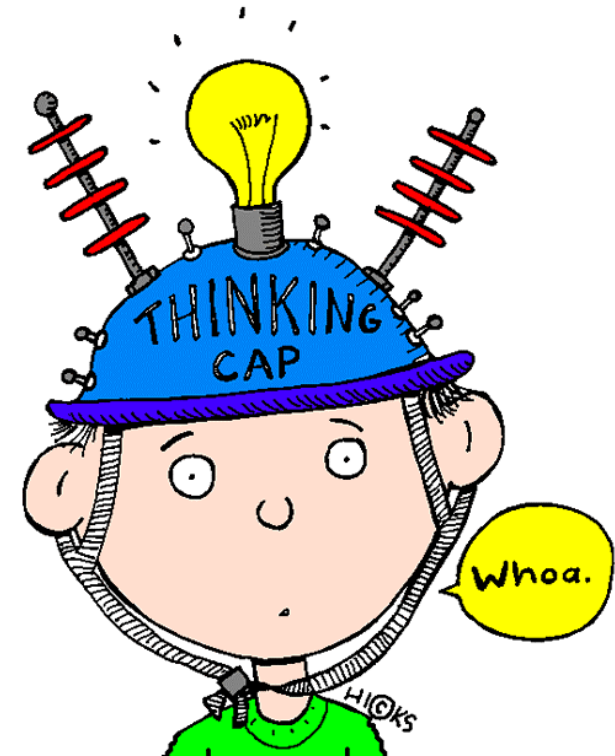
indirect

results-orientated

Cultural profiling I

Consider...

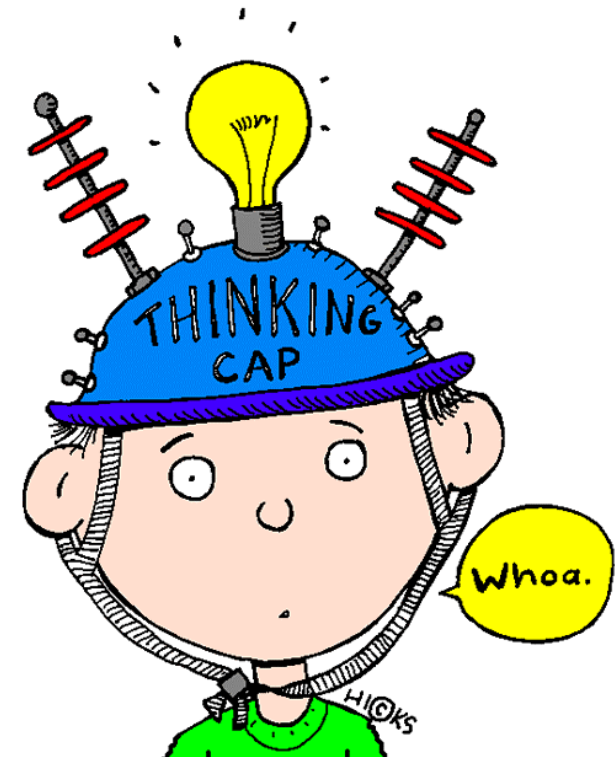
- How does the rest of the world see your students' culture?
- How typical are these attitudes in their culture?



Cultural profiling II

Now...

- Identify any major deviations between your students' culture and the target culture (Britain)



Task

Choose a business skill that might cause problems to your students when dealing with a Brit

Think of a classroom activity to help them communicate more effectively with a British business partner



Sources

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