

Lesson plan 11 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

In this lesson plan students become aware of the differences in non-verbal communication around the world.

EXPERIENCES

Students

- become aware of non-verbal communication in their own and other cultures
- reflect on the importance of non-verbal communication
- learn to avoid stereotyping

TARGETED COMPETENCES

Students

- know some examples of non-linguistic communication (e.g. gestures, facial expression...) (FREPA, knowledge, K-3.1.2)
- know that there are differences in the non-verbal ways in which feelings are expressed in different languages (FREPA, knowledge, K-6.10.1)

PROCEDURE

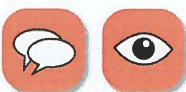
BEFORE



The teacher introduces the idea of non-verbal communication (see Example 1 and the suggestions of online materials in the „Tools and resources” section). The students need to know vocabulary connected to body language, such as bowing, shaking hands, hugging, kissing, touching palms together, etc.



Then the students are encouraged to think of different consciously used gestures that are used in their own country/region or the ones they have come across while travelling or when communication with their family of origin (in case of migration background).



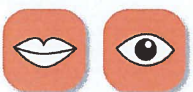
The teacher distributes the pictures in Example 2 and asks students to discuss what messages the persons in the pictures communicate through their body language. The students try to think what it might mean in their culture and also in other cultures they know. Then the whole group compares if the gestures were interpreted in the same way, or whether some pictures were understood differently.

If the students are interested in learning more about the meaning of gestures, the teacher may wish to proceed to the exercise presented in Example 3a: the students try to match specific, consciously used gestures with their meaning in different countries/regions (the answer key can be found in Example 3b).

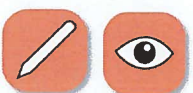


During their mobility project, students will be asked to interview their mobility partners about non-verbal communication in their culture and/or to observe their new environment. They design an observation sheet/interview about non-verbal communication they are going to use later (sample questions can be found in Example 4). Students should be made aware that people adapt their nonverbal communication to situations and partners of communication (e.g. gestures of greeting, distance between persons) and that nonverbal communication habits change over time.

DURING



Learners conduct interviews with representatives of other cultures abroad or by means of ICT in the case of a virtual mobility project. Since it might be difficult to document information about non-verbal communication on a piece of paper, learners could be encouraged to record the interviews on a camera or a mobile phone.



Alternatively or as a complement, students are asked to observe the new environment (in a street, in a shop, at school, in a TV series, etc.) for non-verbal clues. They document their findings.

AFTER



After the mobility project, learners discuss their experiences with their colleagues and prepare a presentation of their findings concerning non-verbal communication. They should use the recorded interviews, if possible. Alternatively, learners can prepare a short film, picture exhibition or a collage presenting differences in non-verbal communication in their own and the host country/region (see an example of a film produced by students: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mi6h8zktO1s>).

FINAL PRODUCT FOR THE PORTFOLIO

The outcomes of the interviews and the learners' presentation on non-verbal communication

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Mirrors and Windows: An intercultural communication textbook. ECML, 2003.

ICOPROMO

<http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/Icopromo/results/index.html>

http://westsidetoastmasters.com/resources/book_of_body_language/chap5.html

Pictures:

<https://www.google.at/search?q=non-verbal+communication&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=H6joUvyvIsXmywPZ9Ylg&ved=oCD4QsAQ&biw=1600&bih=770>

Video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzdAALiS84>

<http://video.about.com/psychology/8-Types-of-Nonverbal-Communication.htm>

EXAMPLE 1

Examples from real life

Most Flemish students doing a mobility activity in Wallonia (Belgium) are astonished by the fact that students (both boys and girls) kiss each other every morning.

Visiting a German family I (coming from the French-speaking part of Belgium) was astonished when in the evening the little children (under 6) shook my hand before going to bed. I expected them to kiss me!

I'm a French student. Kissing friends and relatives is very common where I live, but I don't like it and try to avoid it as much as possible.

I'm a Swiss German mother. When greeting my daughter, I hug her; when greeting my mother I give her a kiss on one cheek. When greeting my friends I give them three kisses on the cheeks. My mother usually shakes her friend's hands, but my 14 year old daughter prefers hugging her friends to greet them.

Introduction to non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication

Of course, another feature of conversation which is largely absent from other text-types is the simple fact that you can see, and even touch, each other. So body language, facial expression, eye contact, proximity and movement all come into play and add to your verbal message. Cultural differences abound here, too. Just standing too close to someone can make them feel uncomfortable. As can standing too far away.

Personal space

People from different cultures are often seen “chasing” each other around the room during a friendly conversation. One of them keeps stepping forward to get closer to the other person, and the other keeps stepping back to allow for a little more space between them. This happens because the two people involved need different sized protective bubbles around themselves. In other words, the space around them that they consider “their own” differs in size.

The concepts of “personal” and “public space” are also largely culturally determined. They not only refer to the “personal space” a person sees as the area they need around themselves for comfortable social interaction, but also extend to questions of housing and urban development.

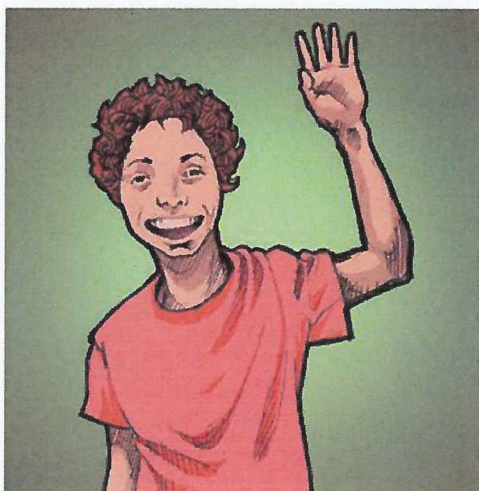
Compare which rooms of an apartment/house would be considered “public”(open to visitors at all times) and which are considered “private” (bedrooms, but also rooms like pantries, attics, basements, etc.) in your culture or any other cultures you are interested in.

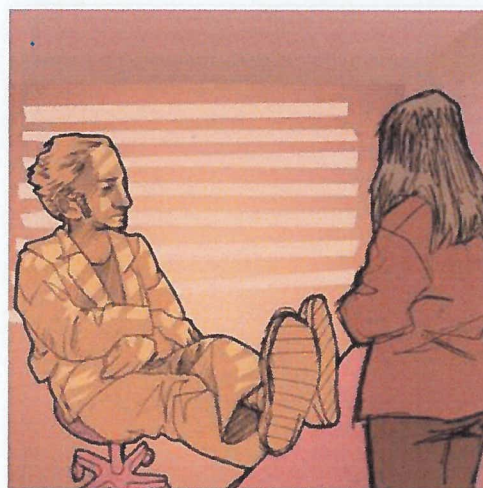
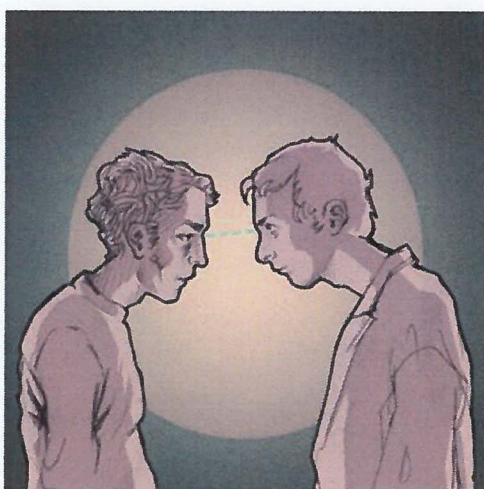
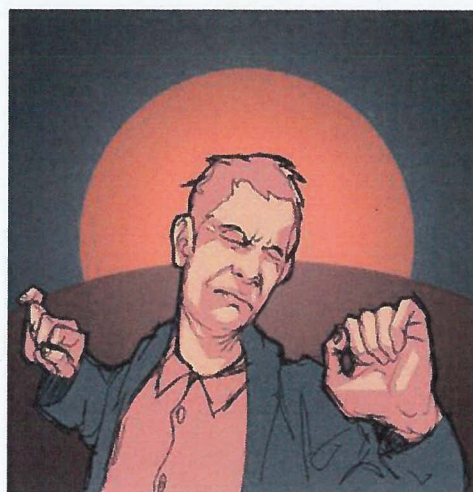
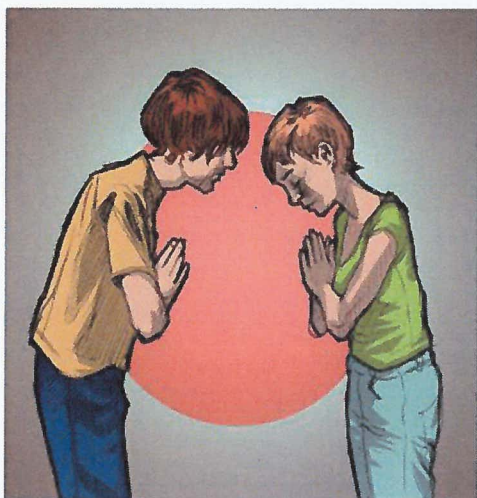
Source: *Mirrors and Windows: An intercultural communication textbook*, p. 32-34.

EXAMPLE 2

Non-verbal communication and body language

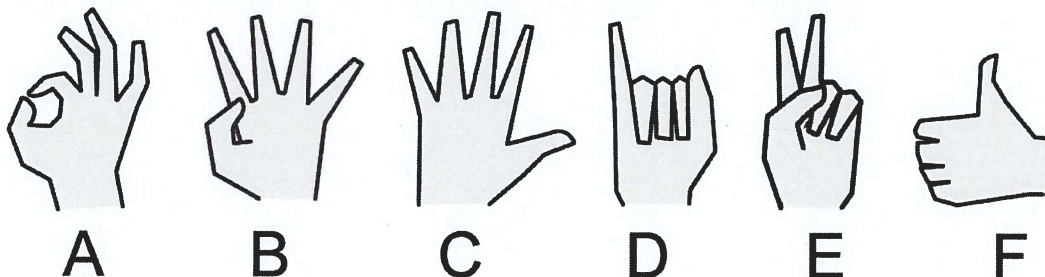
Source: ICOPROMO





EXAMPLE 3A Gestures of the world

Please, interpret the following gestures (match the meaning with the country/region)
Based on: http://westsidetoastmasters.com/resources/book_of_body_language/chap5.html



- ✓ A: money, coins; sexual insult; zero, worthless; OK

Europe and North America:

Mediterranean region, Russia, Brazil, Turkey:

Tunisia, France, Belgium:

Japan:

- ✓ B: four; an insult

Western countries:

Japan:

- ✓ C. stop!; Go to hell! number 5

Western countries:

Everywhere:

Greece and Turkey:

- ✓ D. woman; thin; bad; you can't fool me!

Bali:

Japan:

South America:

France:

- ✓ E. two; Go to Hell!

Greece:

The West:

- ✓ F. hitchhike; OK!; good; a man; five; up yours!

Widespread:

Middle East: (thrust forward)

Japan: