

English Profession

Cross-Cultural Communication in Education

Week – 14

Lesson Objectives

- Define and differentiate between high-context and low-context cultures.
- Recognize cultural miscommunications and avoid common teaching pitfalls.
- Apply inclusive communication strategies to multilingual or multicultural classrooms.
- Reflect on their own cultural norms and biases in communication.

1. Culture and Communication

Culture affects how we speak, listen, behave, and interpret others. As an educator, you may face students:

- From backgrounds that value silence and hierarchy.
- Who expect active participation and direct critique.
- With different attitudes toward eye contact, personal space, or teacher authority.

Example: An Indonesian student may be silent in class as a sign of respect, while a Western teacher might misinterpret that as disengagement.

2. High- vs. Low-Context Cultures

High-context (e.g., Indonesia, Japan): Indirect communication, shared cultural references, nonverbal clues carry more meaning.

Low-context (e.g., Germany, USA): Direct communication, emphasis on verbal clarity, individuals express personal opinions openly.

3. Culturally Responsive Teaching

- Use visuals or multilingual glossaries.
- Avoid idioms or pop culture references unfamiliar to others.
- Encourage respectful discussion of different perspectives.
- Include global examples (e.g., compare Internet access in Asia and Africa).

Class Activities

1. Video Miscommunication Analysis

Watch a scene of cultural misunderstanding in a classroom (e.g., a Western teacher misinterpreting silence).

- Students work in pairs to answer:
- What happened?
- What values were in conflict?
- How could the teacher have responded better?

2. Students draw their “Cultural Map” answering:

- How do people in your culture express disagreement?
- How is politeness shown?
- What is the teacher’s role in your country?

Gesture	Culture A Meaning	Culture B Meaning	Impact in Class
Eye Contact	Respect (US)	Aggression (Japan)	Student avoids teacher's gaze
Silence in response	Agreement (Indonesia)	Confusion (Germany)	Misinterpreted by teacher

Students complete 3 more rows with gestures they've experienced or learned about.

Homework

Personal Reflection (250 words)

Prompt: “What aspects of your own culture could be misunderstood in a global classroom? How can you adapt your communication to avoid conflict?”

END WEEK - 14