**Cross Cultural Misunderstandings**

This is one of my favourite lessons to teach. It requires little preparation, but is engaging, educational, and fun! In a quite task-based approach, it introduces the concept of cross-cultural differences and misunderstandings and allows students to reflect on their own personal experiences of such. Next, students conduct a role-play acting out a misunderstanding and resolving it, and finally reflect.

Level: Pre-Intermediate (A2+) – Advanced (C1) (This can be easily adapted for almost all levels)

Time: Approximately 3 hours

Materials: Two YouTube clips, a video camera if you wish to record the role-plays

1. Write on the board “Cross-Cultural Misunderstandings and elicit the meaning. If needed you can easily elicit the meaning by breaking it down (i.e. *“What word do you see in ‘Cultural’?” “Culture.” “Yes, ‘Cultural’ is the adjective for culture. So what does ‘Cross-Cultural’ mean?”* etc.). Tell the students that this is the topic of the lesson.
2. Tell the students that you’re going to show some examples of cross-cultural misunderstandings. These two clips from My Big Fat Greek Wedding and Mr. Baseball are great models and a good laugh.

*My Big Fat Greek Wedding* video clips can be downloaded from the blog *Movie Segments for Warm-Ups and Follow-Ups* (warmupsfollowups.blogspot.com) here: <http://segs4.pbworks.com/w/file/76049342/My%20Big%20Greek%20Fat%20Wedding%20-%20FULL%20WIKI%20LQ.mp4>

*Mr. Baseball*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdeFdFEbuqk> (Clip title: Cross Cultural Ettiqutte – Mr.Baseball.mp4)

After each clip ask a few discussion questions:

* What cross-cultural differences/misunderstandings were in the movie clip?
* How did the actors react to these issues?
* Why did these misunderstandings happen?
* What would you do in this situation?

Then feedback as a class.

If you have extra time and more advanced students, this clip from The Joy Luck Club is also great: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_t82eWkb_tM> (Clip title: The Joy Luck Club – Meet The Parents)

If you don’t have the resources to show YouTube clips, there are also many articles on the Internet that you could use to introduce the topic of cross-cultural misunderstandings.

1. In small groups, have students discuss their own experiences with cross-cultural misunderstandings. It helps to have students working with another student from a different country, if possible.

If students need guidance, use some of these discussion questions:

* How would you describe people from your country?
* If a tourist were coming to your country, what advice would you give them? Think about:
  + What to wear in different places
  + How to eat
  + How to greet people
  + How to talk to people of the opposite sex
* What was the most different culture you’ve been in? Describe it.
* Have you ever had a cross-cultural misunderstanding? What happened?

Feedback as a class.

1. Introduce the role-play task to the students. In their groups, students choose the most interesting and/or frequent cross-cultural misunderstanding that they discussed. Then, the group begins to plan a role-play of this situation. The role-play should include:

* a demonstration of the experience
* an explanation of why the issue exists,
* what to do in the situation
* what not to do

Circulate and help students.

1. Students can present or video record and present their role-plays.
2. Put students in new groups so they are with at least one person from each group. Students discuss these questions:

* Was this task easy or difficult? Why?
* Have you ever experienced any of these issues before?
* Do you think the solutions from the videos were a good way to handle the situation?
* How would you handle the other groups’ situations differently?
* Could these videos help other students in the future?
* What would you do differently if you could redo the task?
* Why is cross-cultural awareness important?

Feedback as a class.