

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

Jeremy Day

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Introduction

Welcome to the **Communicating Across Cultures Trainer's Notes**. In these notes you will find advice on the following:

- **Timing:** how long each unit should take, to help you plan your schedule.
- **Homework:** some ideas for personalising the course.
- **Group dynamics:** what to do if you have an odd number of students or a one-to-one student.
- **Resources:** how to make the most of the support resources available in the book and online.
- **Authentic interviews:** background information on this key feature of the course, with advice on how to use the interviews.
- **Fluency activities:** how to use the discussions, role plays and simulations from the course.
- **Feedback:** how to support trainees in the development of their cross-cultural communication skills.
- **Final thoughts:** my own advice on cross-cultural communication.

Timing

Communicating Across Cultures has been designed to allow plenty of flexibility in terms of teaching times. Most units contain two sections (e.g. 1A and 1B), but unit 12 contains only one. There is also a short introductory unit, *Preparing to communicate across cultures*.

It would be possible to cover each section in a 45-minute session, giving a minimum course length of around 18–20 hours of input. However, it is vital that this input time should be balanced with plenty of opportunity for trainees to discuss the topics thoroughly, bringing in their own experiences, and to give and receive feedback on their performance in the role plays and simulations (see below), so an ideal course length would be at least 36 hours.

The suggestions for additional activities throughout the **Trainer's Notes** enable teachers to expand each module to 60 or even 90 minutes. These activities also provide additional flexibility, to help teachers shorten or lengthen input in order to keep to a timetable, if necessary. You can add your own role plays and homework tasks (see below for ideas) to expand and personalise the course for your trainees.

One possible way of organising the course is as follows:

Session 1 (90 minutes)	Preparing to communicate across cultures (45 minutes)	Unit 1A (45 minutes)
Homework	Trainees prepare for the final activity from Unit 1A	
Session 2 (90 minutes)	Role play or simulation from Unit 1A; Feedback and analysis (45 minutes)	Unit 1B (45 minutes)
Homework	Trainees prepare for the final activity from Unit 1B	
Session 3 (90 minutes)	Role play or simulation from Unit 1B; Feedback and analysis (45 minutes)	Unit 2A (45 minutes)
...
Session 23 (90 minutes)	Role play or simulation from Unit 11B; Feedback and analysis (45 minutes)	Unit 12 (45 minutes)

Of course, this schedule will depend on the size of your group and the amount of time you have available.

It is not essential that you work through the modules in numerical order, but however you organise the course, you should begin with *Preparing to communicate across cultures* and end with Unit 12.

Homework

The course has been designed so that every exercise, including writing exercises, will work well in the classroom. As suggested above, you could tell trainees to prepare for the role plays and simulations between lessons. You could also use the opportunity of homework to personalise the course to your trainees' needs, for example:

- Make error-correction worksheets of your trainees' mistakes during fluency activities and the useful vocabulary and language that comes up during the course, which trainees then complete at home.
- Ask them to research the different cultures that they may encounter in their work, using a website such as Kwintessential's International Etiquette Guide (www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/country-profiles.html) – see page 93 of the Student's Book for a list of useful websites. They can then prepare presentations on their findings for the rest of the class.
- If you have access to any of the books listed in *Further reading* on page 93 of the Student's Book, or similar ones connected to the topic of communicating across cultures, you could plan how to share them with trainees. For example, they could each borrow a book for two weeks and be ready to talk about what they have learned from it in a later lesson. Of course, many trainees will find it difficult to read whole books in English, but they may also be pleasantly surprised by how much they understand and learn.

Group dynamics

If you have an odd number of students, most pair work activities will work just as well in groups of three. Where activities are designed for pairs (e.g. information-exchange exercises and games), the *Trainer's Notes* provide specific guidance for adapting the activity to groups of three.

In one-to-one situations, you will occasionally have to play one of the roles in role plays or information exchange activities. Where a role play has two different roles, your trainees should always play the role that is closest to the aims of that unit.

Resources

A key part of this course is the extensive **Key and commentary**, which is fuller than in traditional coursebooks. Some suggestions have been made in the *Trainer's Notes* for exploiting the *Key and commentary*, but it is a good idea to make sure both you and your trainees read and discuss the *Key and commentary* for every exercise. For convenience, page references to the *Key and commentary* are included in these *Trainer's Notes*.

Note also the audio CD included with the course. Encourage trainees to listen to the recordings again at home and to practise the techniques they demonstrate. However, make sure they realise that by listening to recordings before they are covered in class, they may undermine the effectiveness of the lessons. For example, some sections may start with a brainstorm activity and then trainees listen to compare with their own ideas. If they have already listened at home, it may make them less creative in the brainstorm – they will produce the 'correct' answers, but not necessarily the most creative answers that they could otherwise come up with.

The same is true of the audio scripts, which should be analysed in class and re-read at home (perhaps while listening to the CD), but which should not be read ahead of lessons.

The *Communicating Across Cultures* DVD contains six dramatised sequences, which can be used either separately or as a linked narrative and which explore the cultural issues and cultural competencies discussed in the Student's Book. The episodes include issues such as first meetings, working in an international team, decision making, negotiating and influencing, giving feedback, managing conflict and cross-cultural communication. The author acts as narrator, and throughout the DVD viewers are invited to discuss and analyse behaviour and techniques at key points within each sequence. The DVD can be used in class to supplement the Student's Book or as a stand-alone video. It is supported by free photocopiable worksheets on the Cambridge website (www.cambridge.org/elt/communicatingacrosscultures) which further exploit the DVD's content.

Authentic interviews

Almost every unit in the course includes an interview with a real person with considerable experience of working across cultures. Because these interviews come from a wide range of backgrounds, their advice and experiences are always interesting and useful. These interviews were all recorded by Bob Dignen as part of his research for this course. The interviews were then re-recorded by actors to improve the sound quality and to ensure that the language is always grammatically correct and therefore reliable as a model. However, they are as close as possible to the original interviews, in order that they sound natural and authentic.

It is important to realise that the opinions expressed by the interviewees in this course are based on their experience and research. Your trainees are likely to bring plenty of original ideas and experiences to the course, which you should encourage and exploit as much as possible. Treat these interviews as the starting point for discussions, rather than 'the perfect advice' in each case.

Fluency activities

There are many discussion activities in every unit, with more suggested in these *Trainer's Notes*. Discussions are not just an excellent way of improving fluency and practising new language; they are also a good way of internalising the advice and information from the book. In other words, by expressing their own opinions and bringing in their own experiences, and by listening to their colleagues, trainees are much more likely to remember the advice and learn something new. Furthermore, as listening to other people is so central to the topic of cross-cultural communication, these discussions provide plenty of practice of this technique.

One of the most important parts of this course is the role plays and simulations, which are usually at the end of each unit. (Simulations are like role plays, but the trainees play themselves, rather than an invented character.) Allow plenty of time for these, and perhaps teach trainees some techniques for making the most of them. One such technique is not to agree too quickly with your partner or be too helpful, in order to help your partner manage 'difficult people'. At the same time, it has to be possible to reach an agreement, so trainees should not be so difficult that the activity fails!

In most of the role plays in the book, the roles are as non-specific as possible in order that trainees can play themselves or invent any details they wish (which will depend on cultural factors, their own personality, etc.). In some role plays, however, trainees are told who they are, what they think or what they wish to achieve from the role play, in order to give their partners the opportunity to practise dealing with these situations.

As the trainer, you should avoid correcting trainees during the role plays and simulations, as it is important to build their confidence and fluency, and to encourage them to take risks with language. You should keep notes of interesting or important mistakes, as well as good language, in order to discuss these with the class at the end (or on an error-correction worksheet). But avoid focusing too much on grammatical accuracy. It is much more important during this course for trainees to master the communication skills and techniques from the book.

You can also create your own role plays very easily, using a technique I call 'instant role plays', where all the information is elicited from the class. For example, you could elicit from the class:

- a country, e.g. Spain
- an invented company and its products or services, e.g. a manufacturer of ice cream
- a company in another country that it has contact with, e.g. a Japanese supplier of refrigerated trucks
- and a reason for their contact, e.g. there have been problems with the delivery trucks, causing the ice cream to melt.

You could elicit the roles of the people from the two companies who have to deal with this situation, and perhaps some more details about their relationship and their previous contact. Trainees then use the situation they have generated to practise the techniques from the current unit.

Feedback

It's important to recognise that for intercultural training, the objective and style of feedback should be different to that in other kinds of training. For example, when giving feedback in an English language class or even in presentation skills training, it's relatively easy to give students feedback on which mistakes they made: a tense was used incorrectly or, during a presentation, the speaker failed to look at the audience enough. However, feedback for intercultural training cannot be so prescriptive about what is right and what is wrong. People see behaviour differently. The same behaviour can have very different consequences in different cultural contexts. People may simply prefer to do things in different ways. The ultimate objective of feedback for intercultural training is to make people become more aware of themselves, the kinds of behaviours they use, and to discuss and reflect on the consequences of these behaviours in different situations. Feedback may also stimulate individuals to think about how they can become more flexible, changing some behaviours to be more effective.

A simple but effective way of giving feedback to participants on their communication and behaviour is to describe the communication / behaviour which you observed *without* judgement. You can then ask participants to think about what impact such behaviour might have on others, and then ask what the participant could do things differently to have a more positive impact on others.

Peer feedback is also very useful: trainees comment on each other's performance. Again, this can be difficult to do sensitively, and you will need to manage such sessions carefully to avoid awkward situations, but it can be extremely useful for both people.

If you have video or audio recording facilities, feedback can be more detailed. This may be rather time-consuming, especially if you have a large class, but is well worth doing from time to time. With larger classes, you could show and analyse only selected highlights from recordings in class.

Final thoughts

I've learned a lot by working on this book, and I hope you will too. For me, the most important lesson has been the difference between cultural differences and stereotypes. Stereotypes are generally unhelpful or even dangerous when dealing with people from other cultures, as they assume that all people from that culture are in some way 'the same'. This idea can easily be disproved if we think about how much variety there is in our own national cultures. On the other hand, cultural differences are very real, but they should be seen as trends (i.e. people from culture X tend to behave in this way more than people from culture Y) rather than rules (i.e. this person comes from culture X, so I expect him / her to behave in this way).

Secondly, I've learned that culture is about much more than nationalities. Many aspects of our background and our lives (including things like our work, our age and our sex) can be thought of as our cultures. So, for example, a sales representative from Japan may have more in common with a sales representative from India than either of them would with, say, a computer programmer from their own country.

From my own experience of communicating across cultures (having spent half of my life away from my home country, working and living with a very wide range of nationalities), I can only repeat the key messages from this book. Firstly, you learn much more by listening with an open mind than by expressing your opinions. Secondly, treat each person as an individual, not just as a member of a culture. And finally, cultural diversity is not just a challenge to be overcome, but also a wonderful opportunity to take advantage of.

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Preparing to communicate across cultures

Use your first session to get to know your trainees and to focus on their experiences of communicating across cultures, their needs and their expectations from the course. Ideally, you should also do this with each trainee individually before the course, but it is still worth using this first session to help your trainees get to know each other, and to identify shared needs.

Extension activity

Write the words *Communicating Across Cultures* on the board. Discuss with the class exactly what each word means.

Suggested answers



- Communicating: not just speaking but also listening, reading and writing. Expressing yourself, building relationships, etc.
- Across: from one to another, like a bridge across a river.
- Cultures: nationalities, regional cultures, organisational cultures, etc. (See unit 1A).

Quote

Elicit from the class a list of things that we need to do in order to communicate with people from other countries and cultures and write them on the board. Trainees then read the quote from the author Bob Dignen to compare it with their ideas. Discuss with the class the meaning, in practical terms, of the things on Bob's list, e.g. *How good does your English need to be? Is fluency more important than accuracy?*

Suggested answers



- Speak 'good English'.
- Understand and engage with the challenges of working across cultures.
- Become more aware of the differences between ourselves and people from other cultures.
- Adapt, and communicate and use English in a way that is sensitive to these differences.

Show the class the different elements of the course, as described in the paragraph *Welcome to Communicating Across Cultures*. If you have Internet access in your training room, use this opportunity to demonstrate some of the online resources. Point out that for the course to be as effective as possible there needs to be a balance between input (advice from the book, etc.) and output (role plays and simulations) with analysis and feedback.

The secret of communicating successfully across cultures

Elicit from the class a range of situations where you might need to communicate across cultures. Trainees read the text to see what situations it mentions, and what happens at the start and end of each unit. Then discuss the answers with the class.

Answers

- Situations: receiving clients from abroad, visiting potential overseas suppliers, working in international teams, presenting, negotiating, socialising after work.
- At the start of every unit: clearly stated aims to develop relevant skills which can improve your performance at work.
- At the end of every unit: A short 'can do' statement to confirm which new skills you have learned and to help you track your progress.

Extension activity

Discuss the following questions with the class.

- 1 What different types of culture are mentioned in point 1? Why do you think it is important to understand these?
- 2 What do you think *adapting your style of communication* means in practical terms?
- 3 What do you think *an international style of communication* might mean?

Suggested answers



- 1 Your own culture; the target culture you are dealing with; national, regional and corporate cultures.
- 2 For example, speaking more slowly, listening more, being more patient, etc.
- 3 A style that works well in all countries and with a mixture of nationalities.

Communicating Across Cultures and you

Tell the trainees to cover the right-hand column. They work in pairs to discuss the ten statements – which statements are true for them, and ways of overcoming the problems. When they have finished, discuss the questions as a class, using the advice in the right-hand column to guide your discussion.

Extension activity

Keep a record of trainees' answers to the questionnaire, in order to measure progress when you reach the end of the course. It can be very motivating for trainees to realise that they can do something at the end of the course that they were unable to do at the beginning.

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Trainer's Notes

1A Developing intercultural skills

Before you begin

Use the two unit aims to generate a short discussion. You could use these questions to prompt the discussion, but avoid providing answers at this stage.

- 1 What does *culture* mean? Can you come up with a definition?
- 2 What is the difference between descriptions of cultures and stereotypes?
- 3 Why is important to be able to describe culture?

Suggested answers



- 1 Culture is about much more than just national cultures. As will be clear from this unit, there are also company cultures, departmental cultures within a company, gender cultures (i.e. male and female cultures), individual cultures, and many other types. A good definition of culture comes from listening  2: culture is what makes us different.
- 2 Cultural descriptions are generalisations – the behaviour or character of each individual will be influenced, but not determined, by the many different cultures they belong to or associate themselves with. Stereotypes assume that all individual members of a culture are the same.
- 3 Before you can communicate across cultures, you need to be able to understand and describe cultures. Of course it is not strictly necessary to know the English terms for describing cultures, although of course this language will be especially useful throughout the rest of this course.

- 1 Elicit from the class what the three pictures show. Then tell trainees to work in pairs to discuss the questions. Make sure they focus their discussions on the cultural aspects of each organisation. After a few minutes, open up the discussion to include the whole class. Use the following prompts to guide the discussion:

- the speed of working life
- whether the environment is individualistic or team-oriented
- whether it is very hierarchical or people have the freedom to make their own decisions
- whether it is driven by financial values or more people-oriented.

Language notes

- Some people use the word *orientated* instead of *oriented* to describe the general direction or focus of a company. However, many people consider this to be a mistake, so it is safer always to use *oriented*. See also **Background note** after exercise 7.
- If an organisation is very *hierarchical*, there are many levels in its hierarchy, from the most junior position to the most senior, and a person's position in the hierarchy in relation to other people is considered very important.

Suggested answers

- The first picture shows a female sailor on a large ship, possibly an aircraft carrier, where the culture may be very male-dominated. Sailors have to be very well-disciplined, so their culture is very rule-focused and hierarchical. Teamwork is vital. There are long periods of fairly slow work, but sailors must remain on guard and ready for action, e.g. changing weather conditions, an attack from an enemy or terrorists.
- The second picture shows a nurse in a hospital. This environment is also rather hierarchical, but nurses have to make many decisions which may have serious consequences. This makes the work very stressful, especially during emergencies. Procedures and rules are vital in healthcare. Nurses have to balance the people-focused nature of their jobs with the financial pressures that their managers are under.
- The third picture shows a group of traders, who regularly make financial decisions involving huge sums of money. They are under extreme time pressure all the time, and must be completely confident in their decisions. Risk is central to their work. They work alone or in small teams, but their work leaves little time for relationship building.

- 2 2 Tell trainees to read the introduction and the five questions in pairs to predict what he will say before they listen. Discuss briefly with the class what the culture might be like in a multinational retailer of electronic goods, and what the challenges of working across both national and corporate cultures might include. Then play the recording for trainees to check their predictions (SB page 64). They discuss the questions again in pairs before feeding back to the class. Use question 5 to generate discussion of Bo's opinions.

Extension activity

Use these questions to check how much trainees understood and remember from the interview and to generate some more discussion. Then play the recording a second time for trainees to check their ideas.

- 1 What is Bo's definition of culture?
- 2 What does Bo think when he's calling someone in Russia or Spain? What doesn't he think?
- 3 What three possible reasons does Bo give for a person not replying to you?
- 4 What different cultures within an organisation does Bo mention?

Answers

- 1 Culture is what makes us different.
- 2 He thinks about the person, who may be communicating in a different way. He does not think about the countries themselves.
- 3 They don't understand; they're being polite; they disagree.
- 4 Gender culture, departmental culture, the culture of every individual.

- 3 Tell trainees to discuss the questions in pairs. Make sure they realise to focus on the cultures themselves, not just the different departments. After a few minutes, ask some volunteers to report back to the class.
- 4 3 Elicit from the class what Bo's organisation is (a retailer of electronic goods), why it might have a construction department (mentioned in question 1) and what store design might involve (mentioned in question 3). Tell them to work in pairs to read through the questions to predict what the answers might be in each case. Point out that the first four questions relate to Bo's first example, and the other four to Bo's second example. Then play the recording for trainees to answer the questions. They discuss their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 64).

Extension activity

Tell trainees to look at the audio script on page 52 and to read and listen again to underline phrases that Bo uses which tell us something about the cultures in the different departments. When you discuss the answers with the class, discuss whether the same phrases could be used to describe trainees' own departments. Make a note on the board of useful phrases for describing a department's culture.

Suggested answers (useful phrases in brackets)

- *They see themselves as the kings of the company ... (We see ourselves as ...)*
- *'We make the money.'*
- *... they like to be creative ... (We like to be ...)*
- *... their approach is all about the customer. (Our approach is all about ...)*
- *... for them it's a finished store design ... (For us, it's ...)*
- *... their focus is all on planning ... (Our focus is on ...)*
- *... the sales team take it more as a kind of suggestion ... (We take it more as ...)*
- *They love ideas! (We love ...)*
- *... they have no problem ... in saying 'We want to move the entrance'. (We have no problem in ...)*
- *... the construction department goes nuts ... (We (sometimes / never) go nuts when ...)*
- *... they go into way too much technical detail ...*
- *... there's a real lack of understanding of how things work, how things are connected.*
- *They just make a decision and they don't know what that means in terms of putting it into life ...*
- *... this is all about focus on systems and making things work ... (This is all about focus on ...)*
- *... focus on ... making money*
- *These two parts of the business just don't connect.*

- 5 Tell trainees to discuss the questions in pairs and then share their ideas with the class.

Suggested answers

The answer to the second question (other things that are important for working effectively across cultures) is deliberately open-ended, and is answered throughout this book. Some general techniques might include keeping an open mind; not interpreting other people's actions based on your own cultural background; listening and learning; keeping a positive attitude, etc.

- 6 Trainees work alone to complete the description and then check in pairs (SB page 64).

Extension activity

Trainees underline the useful phrases for describing cultures. They then work in small groups to use the phrases to discuss how their own company culture is similar to, or different from, the one in the description.

Suggested answers

- ... the leadership style is XXX in general.
- We see ourselves as XXX, not too XXX.
- The focus is on XXX so we tend to XXX.
- We value XXX so people XXX.
- XXX is / are really important here and so a lot of time is given to XXX.
- Generally, we try to XXX ...
- We have XXX where people can XXX.
- We're quite a XXX organisation but there's a XXX attitude to XXX.
- For us, XXX come(s) first.
- It's seldom that people XXX.
- XXX is better than XXX.
- We definitely don't have a/an XXX culture.
- We communicate by XXX.

- 7 Trainees work alone to match the opposites and then discuss the questions in pairs. After a few minutes, discuss the answers with the class (SB page 64).

Background notes

- *Top-down* and *bottom-up* describe decision-making processes. In top-down organisations, decisions are made by senior managers, who tell their subordinates what to do. In bottom-up organisations, even junior levels have the power to make decisions, and their managers are seen as facilitators rather than leaders.
- In general, there is no important difference between *-oriented*, *-focused* and *-driven*: the same organisation might describe itself as quality-oriented, quality-focused or quality-driven. *-oriented* suggests a direction: where is the company going? *-focused* suggests prioritisation: the company pays attention to some things (e.g. quality) more than others (e.g. price). A company may be focused on positive things (e.g. customer service) or potentially dangerous things (e.g. risk). *-driven* suggests motivation, or the driving force behind the company: why does the company exist?
- The situation is different with negative things like risk: an organisation might be *risk-focused*, but would be unlikely to describe itself as *risk-oriented* or *risk-driven*. A *risk-focused organisation* tries hard to measure and minimise risks, while an *action-oriented organisation* may be more prepared to take risks in order to get a job done.

- 8 Trainees discuss the concepts in pairs. Encourage them to use the language they have studied in this unit. Make sure they notice the two discussion points after the list of concepts. Afterwards, ask some volunteers to report back to the class.

Extension activity

Print off some mission statements (www.missionstatements.com) to provide some more examples, especially if your trainees have limited business experience.

Cultural tip

Ask students why the topics and language from this unit are important for communicating across culture. They then read the cultural tip on page 7 to compare it with their ideas.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. Check that all trainees feel comfortable describing their own organisational cultures, and discuss with the class how they can continue to improve in this skill.

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1B Developing intercultural skills

Before you begin

Use the two unit aims to generate a short discussion. You could use these questions to prompt the discussion, but avoid providing answers at this stage.

- What is the connection between flexible thinking and communicating across cultures?
- Why is it important to support flexible thinking in others?

Suggested answers



- Flexible thinking allows you to understand a situation in different ways, and to realise that a problem may be the result of cultural factors. Behaviour that would be considered rude in one culture may be a sign of respect in a different culture.
- For example, my colleague may take offence at some behaviour by someone from a different culture. I can avoid conflict between the two people by persuading my colleague to think more flexibly.

- 1 Tell trainees to read the introduction and the email individually, in order to identify the problem. Trainees then discuss the three questions in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 64).

Language notes

- *How goes it?* is an informal and idiomatic greeting, similar to *How's it going?* A more formal greeting would be *How are you?*
- Note that Jack says that he needs his report *in the next week*, which is very different from saying he needs it *next week*. If today is Monday, *in the next week* means 'by this time next Monday'. *Next week* means 'by the end of next Friday'. This may be an additional reason for Akash's behaviour.
- If you *escalate* a problem, you decide that you are not making progress with a person who is causing the problem, so instead you go to that person's boss to request action. Escalating a problem can be an effective way of solving it, but it may also have unpleasant consequences for the person causing the problem, as they will have to explain themselves to their boss.

Extension activity

- 1 Elicit from the class some possible reasons for Akash's behaviour and some steps that Jack could take to deal with the problem. Note that these questions come up again throughout the case study, so avoid confirming or rejecting trainees' ideas at this stage.
- 2 Elicit from the class as much as they can guess about Jack's individual culture, based on his email, especially anything that may lead to intercultural problems.

Suggested answers

Evidence of Jack's culture:

- He uses informal / idiomatic language (*How goes it?*) to show he has a close, friendly relationship with his colleagues, but this may seem too friendly in some contexts.
- He uses irony (*Hope you're busy*), which may be taken as aggressive or rude, or may simply mean that his is a culture where being busy is a sign that business is going well.
- He apologises (*sorry to trouble you*) and thanks (*Any advice would be much appreciated*), but does both things using short, simple phrases. In some cultures, he would be expected to show more respect for these functions.
- He describes the problem as a challenge, which suggests an optimistic approach, associated with some management gurus.
- He expresses his frustration in rather direct language (*I'm getting annoyed; it's just unprofessional; a very direct email*), which might be inappropriate in other cultures.
- He sees the problem in terms of how it affects him (*I'm also worried; miss one of my key targets*) rather than simply complaining about unprofessionalism.
- His solution, involving both his own boss and Akash's boss, may be taken as very aggressive. A less aggressive approach would be to discuss the situation with his own boss, rather than simply copying him / her in to the email.

- 2 Make sure each trainee knows which email to read, A or B. They read the emails quickly and then report back on the advice to their partners. They then discuss the best advice and share their ideas with the class (SB page 64). Finally, elicit any similar situations your trainees have experienced or heard about, what caused them and how they were resolved.

If you have an odd number of trainees, you will need to have a group of three, where the third trainee also reads email 1.

Language notes

- Note that the writer of email 1 uses an informal, abbreviated style of writing, with the first words of sentences omitted (*I'm sorry to hear ...; I'm not sure ...; It seems like ...*). This kind of elision is common in spoken English, and many email writers write as they would speak.
- If you don't *deliver*, you don't do what you promise to do (see email 2).

- 3 Tell trainees to read the quote and the explanation of the model to answer the questions. They discuss their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 64).

Language notes

- If you *interpret* a situation, you analyse it and draw conclusions.
- If you *give somebody the benefit of the doubt*, you decide not to argue / fight, even though you are not sure whether that person is really right or wrong.

Extension activity

Use these questions to analyse the quote and explanation with the class.

- 1 What does Storti mean by *multiple perspectives*?
- 2 Can you think of an example of something that makes no sense to you but which makes perfect sense to others?
- 3 What are the advantages and disadvantages of giving someone the benefit of the doubt?
- 4 What is meant by *mutual learning*?
- 5 Why is the model shown as a cycle?

Suggested answers

- 1 Many different ways of looking at the same situation.
- 2 A foreign language that you don't speak; a custom or tradition in a country you don't know; some jokes; technical jargon.
- 3 Advantages: It is more positive, and helps to build strong relationships based on trust and support.
Disadvantages: You may appear weak, if you always give the other person the benefit of the doubt, and they never do the same for you; sometimes the person may actually be wrong, or may be trying to trick you.
- 4 *Mutual learning* means that the learning is in both directions, so that everyone learns from each other.
- 5 Because when you have taken action (step 3) you still need to observe to see the results of your action (step 1), and the process is continuous.

- 4 Tell trainees to work alone to complete the matching exercise and to add their own phrases. After a few minutes, check the answers (SB page 64) and elicit the additional phrases for each heading onto the board.

Suggested answers: additional phrases

- Giving an opinion: *I think ...; I firmly believe ...; If you ask me, I'd say ...*
- Asking for the opinions of others: *What do you think he means?; Does that make sense to you?; What would you do if you were him?*
- Generating multiple interpretations: *I wonder if it might be something to do with ...; Maybe we should think about this from her point of view.*
- Evaluating different perspectives: *That would explain why ...; If so, that might be the reason for ...*
- Deciding what to do: *I think we'd better ...; We need to be careful not to ...*

Extension activity

Refer trainees back to the second aim of this unit (*To learn strategies for supporting more flexible thinking in others*). Trainees then discuss which of the five techniques (the headings from exercise 4) are related to this aim. After a few minutes, open up the discussion to include the whole class.

Suggested answers

- All five techniques are related to this aim, but they only really achieve the aim when all five are used together.
- Giving an opinion: this encourages the other person to see things from your point of view. It is important to use phrases like *From my perspective ...* to highlight the fact that there may be no single correct answer to a problem, but rather a range of ways of looking at it.
- Asking for the opinion of others: getting people to express their own opinions is the first stage of getting them to think flexibly. Again, phrases like *How do you see it?* highlight the idea that there are different ways of seeing a situation, rather than a single correct answer.
- Creating multiple interpretations: these phrases are of course more about the speaker's flexible thinking, rather than the listener's, but phrases like *Could we ...* involve the listener in these thought experiments.

- Evaluating different perspectives: again, these phrases are more about the speaker's flexible thinking. However, by relating our evaluation to different perspectives (*If we assume that ...*), we also encourage the listener to base his/her own arguments on different perspectives, rather than simply to express personal opinions.
- Deciding what to do: again, by relating decisions to different perspectives (*Given what has happened ...*) rather than personal opinions, we encourage the other person to do the same.

- 5 Divide the class into groups of around four trainees each, and assign a case study to each group. Tell trainees to read their case studies and then to discuss the questions with their groups. Make sure they know to use the phrases from exercise 4 in their discussions. Allow plenty of time for the analysis and discussion (at least five minutes) and then ask volunteers for each group to present their ideas to the class. Again, encourage them to use phrases from exercise 4 in their presentations. After some more discussion, this time with the whole class, tell trainees to read the case summaries on page 64 to compare them with their ideas.

Language notes

- An *explicit agreement* is one which is very clearly stated, unlike an *implicit agreement*, which is only implied by somebody's language or behaviour. In many countries, an explicit agreement (and sometimes also an implicit agreement) forms a legally binding contract. (See Case B)
- Your *counterpart* in a negotiation is the person you negotiate with. More generally, your counterpart is someone that you do business with, who is of around the same level in a hierarchy, but in a different organisation. (See Case B)

Extension activity

Use these questions to make sure trainees read and understand the case summaries fully.

Case A

- 1 Why are 'change' projects often difficult?
- 2 What two possible reasons are given for having four people attend the meetings?
- 3 What two possible reasons are given for the large number of questions?
- 4 What solution is offered to the problem of having too many questions?
- 5 What are the advantages and disadvantages of Joerg's solution (writing an email)?
- 6 What does it mean if *the Swiss organisation is also more used to networking knowledge*?

Case B

- 7 What did the Chinese delegation agree to?
- 8 What two mistakes does Marie make?
- 9 What explanation is given for the refusal to confirm the minutes of the meeting?
- 10 What might be the positive and negative results of Marie's email and telephone call?
- 11 What other factor probably added to the problem?

Suggested answers

- 1 Because the business unit which is transferring the jobs feels like ‘the loser’.
- 2 It’s possible that all four people are affected by the transfer of jobs; it may be typical in Swiss organisational culture to have many people at meetings involving change or complex decisions.
- 3 It could be part of their communication culture, i.e. asking questions could be a sign of engagement; they might need to ask the questions because they need the information themselves or to be well prepared for questions from their own staff.
- 4 Joerg may need to schedule longer meetings.
- 5 Advantages: it may be useful to stimulate clarification of the misunderstanding – at least the issue will be discussed.
Disadvantages: it is based on the assumption that the meetings are currently inefficient, which may not be an opinion shared by the Swiss; may be too directly communicated.
- 6 It means the organisation shares and communicates knowledge.
- 7 They perhaps agreed with what Marie offered, but they were agreeing only to submit to more senior management who will decide in the next three weeks.
- 8 She assumes that her understanding of verbal agreement is shared by the Chinese negotiating team, which it is not; she shows with her emotions of anger and shock that she is unprepared to do business in this environment.
- 9 It may be unacceptable to agree in writing in this way; it may be too much of a commitment.
- 10 Positive: She might get good feedback about how people are feeling and how she could work to move the situation forward.
Negative: It may be problematic if her counterparts prefer a more indirect and harmony-based approach.
- 11 Problems of understanding due to language.

Cultural tip

Tell trainees to read the cultural tip on page 9 and identify key words. When you check with the class, discuss whether trainees agree with the advice.

Suggested answers

open; flexibly; imagine; constructive

Can do

Discuss the ‘can do’ statement with the class. Check that all trainees feel comfortable with the technique of thinking flexibly, and discuss with the class how they can continue to improve in this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

2A Managing first meetings

Before you begin

Tell trainees to look at the aims for the unit. Discuss with the class what 'the right questions' might be in first meetings. Elicit also some examples of communication strategies, e.g. talk openly and freely, wait until you're invited to speak, avoid certain topics. Avoid providing answers at this stage, as this is the focus of the rest of the unit.

- 1 Elicit from the class what they know about the four countries and what they can guess about their cultures. Remind them that, as discussed in Unit 1, stereotypes are of very limited value, and there is likely to be very considerable variation within each country. Students work alone to try to match the descriptions with the countries, and then discuss their answers (SB page 65) with a partner before checking with the class.

Background notes

- People in **Senegal**, West Africa, speak a number of languages, principally Wolof, but the main business language is French. Hospitality is considered an important part of the national culture and identity.
- **Japanese** culture is known as a hierarchical society, where respect for older people and more senior colleagues is very important. However, it is also well known for its innovative approach to technology and business methods.
- **German** business culture is formal and regards planning as very important in the process of creating high quality products. Business and private life tend to be kept separate.
- **Kazakhstan** is the largest of the former Soviet central Asian republics. It is home to a mixture of ethnic groups (including many Kazakhs and Russians) and religions (Islam and Christianity). For much of its history, Kazakhstan has been inhabited by nomadic tribes.

For more information on these countries see <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/country-profiles.html>.

Language notes

- Note that the first text uses *will* to describe a habit: *some men will not shake hands ...* (they tend to refuse to shake hands). This is not a reference to the future.
- In the third text, *deference* is a way of showing your respect for somebody by allowing them to make decisions or take actions, based on their seniority; a *nuance* is a slight difference that may be difficult to notice, but which may still be important.
- In the fourth text, an *honorific title* is a respectful way of addressing somebody. The main honorific titles in English are *Mr*, *Mrs*, *Ms* and *Miss*, as well as words and phrases like *Sir* or *Madam*, *Your Honour* (to a judge) or *Your Majesty* (to a king or queen). Honorific titles are more important and more complicated in some other cultures, such as Japan. See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honorific.

Extension activity

Trainees find words and phrases in the text that are useful for making generalisations. They can then use these phrases in exercise 2, when they make their own generalisations.

Suggested answers



- *The common greeting is ..., often done ...*
- *Some men will not ...*
- *The invitation generally comes ...*
- *... the traditional greeting.*
- *In general, ...*
- *It is important to show ...*
- *It can be seen as ...*
- *... it is customary for ... to ...*

- 2 Trainees discuss the questions in pairs and then share their ideas with the class. Allow time for the discussion to develop.
- 3 Go through the questions with the class, to predict what Nigel Ewington might say about each of them. It is a good idea to elicit the difference between open questions and closed questions at this stage (see **Language note** below).
- 4 Play the recording for trainees to find the answers. Students discuss the answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 65). Discuss whether trainees agree with everything Nigel Ewington says, or if they have had any similar experiences.

Language notes

- *Breaking the ice* refers to techniques for starting a conversation. It comes from the idea of ice blocking a sea route. Once the ice is broken, ships can start using the sea route, which makes it less likely that the ice will re-form. Keeping the sea route open is much easier than breaking the ice in the first place. In the same way, two strangers may have nothing to say to each other when they first meet. However, if they manage to start their first conversation, it will be much easier to continue communicating later.
- Technically, *closed questions* are questions which can be answered with the words *yes* or *no* (e.g. *Is your hotel comfortable?*), while *open questions* typically start with a *wh-* word (*where/why/when/how*) and usually require a longer or more creative answer (e.g. *How is your hotel?*). The terms can also be used more loosely, with open questions including any questions that open up the conversation and encourage the other person to speak freely.

Extension activity

Write the following questions on the board. Make sure trainees understand the underlined terms in the questions. Trainees discuss the questions in pairs to try to remember the answers, and then listen to the recording a second time. Afterwards, they check in pairs before feeding back to the class.

- 1 Why is breaking the ice more difficult in intercultural meetings?
- 2 What four topics of small talk does Nigel use?
- 3 Why does Nigel like to get down to business quite quickly?
- 4 What examples does Nigel give of *opening social moments* and a *slower transition into business*?
- 5 What do you think Nigel means by a person's *roots*?
- 6 How does Nigel create common ground?
- 7 How does Nigel build common ground at an emotional level?
- 8 When does Nigel use closed questions?

Answers

- 1 Because of language difficulties and cultural unfamiliarity.
- 2 The weather; how he travelled to the place; some of the challenges he faced on the way; humour.
- 3 He doesn't want to take up too much of the other person's time.
- 4 Showing respect for the local culture; saying positive things about what you've seen, what you know and why you appreciate where you are; showing and receiving hospitality.
- 5 Where they come from (and where their family originally came from).
- 6 By asking open questions, listening to the response and connecting it to his experience.
- 7 By discussing common challenges (i.e. problems that both people have).
- 8 To show interest.

- 4 Trainees work alone to complete the questions and then check in pairs. When you discuss the answers with the class (SB page 65), elicit some more good open questions for first conversations, e.g. *Where do you come from? What does your work involve?*

Extension activity

Trainees use the questions in exercise 4 to start conversations with each other. Encourage them to use the questions as starting points, and to show interest in the other person's answer and to try to develop each conversation.

- 5 Go through the example with the class. Elicit two ways of pronouncing the question tag (see Language note). Trainees then work in pairs to make question tags. Afterwards, go through the answers carefully with the class (SB page 65).

Language note

- *Question tags* are formed with an auxiliary or modal verb and the subject of the sentence. Where the sentence has no auxiliary or modal verb, use *do | does | did*. A positive statement is typically followed by a negative tag (e.g. *It's cold, isn't it?*) and vice versa, e.g. (*That can't be right, can it?*), but other combinations are also possible (e.g. *You think so, do you?*). This combination of positive statement and positive tag may be taken as a rather aggressive challenge to what the other person has just said).
- A question tag may be spoken with rising intonation if it's a genuine question (e.g. *You were here last year, weren't you?*), or falling intonation if the speaker is just checking something he / she already knows, and is simply trying to generate conversation (e.g. *It's a great conference, isn't it?*). An imperative may be followed by a tag with *will | won't* (e.g. *Be careful, won't you? Don't be late, will you?*).
- Sometimes we break the normal rules of question tags, e.g. *I'm right, aren't I?* (more common than *amn't I?*); *It may still happen, mightn't it?* (more common than *mayn't it?*).

Extension activity

Trainees take turns to add question tags to the statements and imperatives in the texts in exercise 1. Note that this will produce a very unnatural conversation, but the aim is simply to practise the structure of question tags.

Examples:

- Greetings are rather formal, aren't they?
- The handshake is often done with both hands, isn't it?
- Some men will not shake hands with women, will they?

- 6 Students work alone to match the comments with the responses and then feed back to the class (SB page 65).

Extension activity

Trainees work in pairs to come up with similar responses to the comments which are true for them. They then take turns to make comments similar to the ones in exercise 6 (e.g. *I've been to Russia a few times*) in order to elicit spontaneous responses from their partners.

- 7 Divide the class into groups of three and allocate roles. Give each trainee time to read his / her role card, and then allow around five minutes for each role play. Afterwards, tell Student C to discuss the feedback with the other trainees. They swap roles and repeat the activity, which should be better (if they have followed the advice of Student C). Finally, give and elicit feedback on the role plays.

If you don't have a multiple of three trainees, you will need to have at least one group of two. Student A and student B conduct the role play, and then discuss the feedback form together, before swapping roles.

Cultural tip

Tell trainees to close their books. Read the beginnings of the sentences in the cultural tip (e.g. *When you meet people for the first time, ...; Use a mix of ...*) to elicit how they might end. Trainees then read the cultural tip to compare it with their ideas.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. If trainees feel they cannot yet handle first meetings, discuss how they can continue to improve, develop and practise this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

2B Managing first meetings

Before you begin

Use the two aims to generate some discussion with the class. You could also use these prompts to develop the discussion:

- 1 What is your attitude to small talk?
- 2 What other attitudes have you come across?
- 3 What do you think the phrase *personal relationships at work* refers to?
- 4 Do you think it is good to encourage personal relationships at work?
- 5 What is your style of small talk?
- 6 What other styles have you come across?

Background notes

- 2 In some cultures, small talk is an essential part of business; in others, it is seen as something separate from work, and people prefer to get down to business as quickly as possible. There is also, of course, considerable variation within each culture.
- 3 It simply refers to being friendly with your colleagues and business contacts, and showing an interest in their private lives. Again, for some people this is seen as vital to successful business; for others, private and professional lives should be kept separate.
- 6 Differences in style may include how much small talk people prefer, what topics they consider appropriate and inappropriate for small talk, and the extent to which they are prepared to open up and reveal something of themselves during small talk.

- 1  5 Discuss briefly with the class what they can guess about Pavel's and Jon's attitudes to small talk, based on their nationalities. Go through the questions briefly with the class to make sure all trainees understand them. Note that question 3 includes a difficult grammar structure (*could have handled*), which refers to the imaginary past. Play the recording for trainees to find the answers. They discuss their answers in pairs and then feed back to the class (SB page 65).

Extension activity

Trainees look at the audio script and read and listen again to underline useful phrases for first meetings. Afterwards, discuss the phrases with the class. Note that many of Jon's questions seem to break traditional rules of question formation, because he omits the first words. Discuss with the class which words he has omitted. Point out that omitting words in questions is rather informal (see also the email in Unit 1B), and it is usually safer to use full questions.

Suggested answers (omitted words in brackets)

- *So, can I say hello? I'm ... and just over for a couple of days to ...*
- *I think you're going to be at the meeting later?*
- *So, what do you do here?*
- *(Have) you been here long?*
- *So, (are) you from round here? (Do) you live nearby?*
- *(Do you have a) family? (Do you have any) kids?*
- *Look, maybe I can invite you for a coffee? I have so many questions about what you do here ... the business – what you're doing could be very interesting for us back home ...*
- *Hopefully, we can catch up a little later.*

- 2 6 Go through the questions with the class to predict what the answers might be, based on what trainees already know about the two men's attitudes to small talk. Note again that the last question refers to the imaginary past (*could have handled*). Play the recording and then tell trainees to discuss the answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 65).

Extension activity

Write these questions on the board. In pairs, trainees try to remember what was said about them, and then listen a second time to check.

- 1 What two problems with the project does Pavel mention?
- 2 What is Dr Kuehn's role in the project?
- 3 Where has Dr Kuehn worked?
- 4 What, according to Pavel, are Dr Kuehn's strengths?
- 5 What four things does Jon want to know about Dr Kuehn?

Answers

- 1 The budget (= resources) and the deadline.
- 2 Project sponsor.
- 3 In India and eastern Germany.
- 4 He has a lot of experience; he was very successful in Germany; he has an excellent reputation; he has a good vision; he's strong.
- 5 Is he easy going; is he a good team player; is he easy to get along with; is he friendly?

- 3 Trainees discuss the questions in small groups and then feed back to the class. Tell trainees to read the commentary on page 66 to compare it with their ideas.
- 4 Tell trainees to read through the instructions and the questions. Discuss briefly with the class what they can guess about the concept of peaches and coconuts. Make sure they are all familiar with the literal meanings of these words. Trainees then read the text to answer the questions. They discuss their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 66).

Extension activity

Trainees read the text again to underline all the adjectives that refer to the two character types. They then discuss in pairs which of the adjectives they would use to describe themselves, and which ones other people might use to describe them.

Answers

Coconuts: *reserved, serious, distant, polite, cold, difficult (to get to know)*
 Peaches: *sociable, enthusiastic, (too) friendly, superficial, impolite*

- 5 Trainees discuss the question in pairs and then share their ideas with the whole class. This activity needs to be managed carefully: some people may find it awkward to be classified by their classmates, but it can also be useful to find out how we are perceived by other people.
- 6 Trainees work alone to come up with one or two questions for each category, and then discuss their ideas in groups. Make sure they realise they can add more categories; the list of ideas in exercise 6 is intended to get them started. After a few minutes, brainstorm a list of questions from the class and write them on the board. Encourage trainees to take notes of useful questions, as it is always useful to have a memorised list of such questions ready for use in social situations. Finally, discuss with the class whether all the questions are suitable for all cultures or situations, and which questions might be inappropriate in some situations.

Possible answers



Home: *Where exactly do you live? How long have you lived there? Is it a good place to live? How do you find living in the city / the countryside / ...?*

Family: *Do you have a family? Do you have any children? How old are they?*

Hobbies / interests: *What do you do when you're not working? Do you do any sports? How long have been doing that? How did you get into that? Do you prefer to play or watch (e.g. football)? Are you a serious fan / enthusiast, or is it just a bit of fun?*

Work responsibilities: *What exactly does your job involve? Do you work mainly with people or with figures / computers, ...? Is it very stressful? How long have you been doing that?*

Current tasks: *What's new at work? What project are you working on these days?*

Developments in the organisation: *Is Mary still there? Didn't you move to a new office recently? Is it better than before?*

- 7 Divide the class into groups of three and assign roles. Point out that Student A can use the questions from exercise 6, but should also be careful to observe how the visitors react to different types of questions, and to adapt accordingly. Allow up to five minutes for each role play. Afterwards, trainees discuss the questions in their groups and feed back to the class.

Possible answer



The biggest challenges to managing small talk in English include: listening and understanding accurately, especially if the other person speaks very quickly or with a strong accent; being able to express yourself despite a limited vocabulary; being able to respond naturally to what the other person is saying.

If you don't have a multiple of three trainees, you will need to have at least one group of two. In these groups, there is no observer role, and the two trainees take turns to be Student A.

Extension activity

Repeat the role plays in exercise 7 with a different trainee playing the role of the host. The guests may either use the same role cards as in exercise 7, or they could invent their own characters. Encourage them to think about the advice about peaches and coconuts to help them create their characters.

Cultural tip

Tell trainees to close their books. Elicit from the class what the most important advice from unit 2B is, and then check their ideas in the cultural tip.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statements with the class. If trainees feel they cannot yet handle first meetings, discuss how they can continue to improve, develop and practise this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

3A Communicating effectively

Before you begin

Discuss the two aims with the class. Use these prompts to develop the discussion:

- 1 How can communication go wrong?
- 2 Do you have any experience of communication going wrong?
- 3 What examples of good and bad news might a business person have to communicate?
- 4 Why is it important to be sensitive when communicating good and bad news?

Possible answers



- 1 For example, a person may seem aggressive or too direct, which may cause offence. Alternatively, a person may use very delicate, indirect language, so the other person may not realise how important the message is.
- 3 Good news: a new customer, feedback after a successful presentation, promotion. Bad news: a lost customer, feedback after a poor presentation, job losses.
- 4 With bad news, it is important not to make people feel worse than they need to, and especially not to make them angry or resentful. Not only is this bad manners, but it can also be bad for business if that person describes this bad experience to others. Good news is easier, but not all people may see the same news as equally good. For example, if the organisation gains a new customer, this may mean a lot more work for some employees. Feedback after a good presentation may be spoiled if it includes criticism of other presentations.

- 1 Tell trainees to read the background information and discuss the two questions in small groups. After a few minutes, open up the discussion to include the whole class, but avoid confirming or rejecting their ideas at this stage. Finally, tell trainees to read the commentary on page 66 to compare it with their ideas.
- 2 7 Go through the questions quickly and then play the recording. Trainees discuss their answers in small groups before feeding back to the class (SB page 66).

Extension activity

Trainees discuss the following questions in pairs, and then listen again to check. Allow them to discuss their answers again before feeding back to the class.

- 1 Why does José say *this was meant to be a positive step*?
- 2 Why was he confused?

Answers



- 1 Because he was welcoming them to a new international future as part of a bigger and more international operation.
- 2 Because he was offering a great future and no one looked happy.

- 3  8 Discuss the questions first with the class to predict what the answers might be. After you have played the recording, trainees discuss the questions in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 66).

Extension activity

Write the following words and phrases on the board. Trainees work in pairs to discuss what was said about each word or phrase, and then listen again to check. Finally, go through the answers with the class.

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1 Big Brother | 4 hierarchical | 7 sensitive |
| 2 disrespected | 5 impact | 8 respect |
| 3 co-present | 6 experience | 9 subsidiary |

Answers



- 1 The message came across that the Spanish bank was like Big Brother.
- 2 The Russian managers felt disrespected.
- 3 José didn't co-present with the local boss.
- 4 The local bank was very hierarchical.
- 5 José's behaviour had a negative impact on the event.
- 6 The Spanish team could learn from the local team's experience.
- 7 The message was not very sensitive.
- 8 It's important to show respect to people.
- 9 These issues are important in communication between headquarters and a subsidiary.

- 4 Trainees discuss the questions in small groups and then share their ideas with the class.
- 5 Tell trainees to read through the instructions and the strategies first. You could elicit some examples of phrases for each strategy from the class (see **Suggested answers** on SB page 66 to exercise 6 below). Trainees then work alone to match the sentences to the strategies. They compare their answers in pairs before checking with the class.

Extension activity

Discuss each strategy with the class: what might happen if you didn't follow the strategy.

Suggested answers



- If you didn't highlight good news, other people might not notice it, or might not realise how important it is.
- If you didn't give positive feedback, people would focus only on negative messages.
- If you didn't show respect for the other person's time, you might suggest that you don't know or don't care how busy they are.
- If you didn't apologise for problems, you might cause the other people to feel very negative towards you.
- If you didn't state your positive motivation, people might not understand why you are taking action, and why they should cooperate with you.
- If you weren't open and honest with bad news, people might not trust you, and might have to rely on rumours.
- If you didn't show understanding of the other person's point of view, they might feel very negative about having to follow your instructions.

- 6 Trainees work in small groups to come up with alternative words and phrases, and then share their ideas with the class (SB page 66).
- 7 Trainees work in pairs to redraft the email. Make sure they know they will have to invent many of the additional details themselves. Allow plenty of time for the writing, and monitor carefully to provide useful phrases and support during the writing process. When trainees read their emails aloud, give and elicit feedback on the sensitivity and effectiveness of the emails. Finally, tell them to read the commentary and sample answer on page 66 to compare it with their own ideas.

Extension activity

As a follow-up homework task, ask trainees to write another email, or the introduction to a presentation, giving good and bad news. They should write as themselves, and base their writing on real situations from their jobs, as if writing / presenting to their own colleagues.

Cultural tip

Tell trainees to close their books. Elicit from the class some general advice on how to communicate sensitively with others, and how to react if someone else communicates in a way that makes a negative impression. Then tell them to read the cultural tip to compare it with their ideas.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. If trainees feel they cannot yet communicate sensitively, discuss how they can continue to improve, develop and practise this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

3B Communicating effectively

Before you begin

Discuss the aims with the class. Use these prompts to develop your discussion.

- 1 What differences in communication styles have you come across?
- 2 Can you think of any phrases for managing conversations?

Suggested answers



- 1 (This will be the focus of the reading in exercise 1). Differences include attitudes to interrupting and clarification, and the length of turns and amount of detail that people like to include.
- 2 (This will be the focus of exercise 3): Examples include phrases for asking for opinions (e.g. *What do you think?*), interrupting (e.g. *Can I just say something here?*), dealing with interruptions (e.g. *Can I finish the point I was making?*), clarifying (e.g. *So are you saying that ...?*), etc.

- 1 Tell trainees to read the introduction and to look at the diagrams to predict what they show and (if they understand what they diagrams show) which cultures might use each of the communications styles. Make sure trainees know to read the section in grey after the descriptions. Trainees then work alone to read the descriptions and then discuss the answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 66).

Extension activities

- 1 Ask trainees to underline around six key words and phrases in each description which summarise the styles. They discuss their ideas in pairs before feeding back to the class.
- 2 Discuss briefly with the class the problems described in the last paragraph. You could develop the discussion by getting trainees to imagine what would happen if a person with style A tries to have a conversation with a person with style B, and so on.

Suggested answers



- 1 A: *briefly, modest, silence, reflect, harmony, understand the first time*
 B: *emotional, creative, interrupt, little time ... for clarification, give an opinion*
 C: *long, powerful, direct, analytical, all the facts, strong opinion, your turn to speak, disagreement*
- 2 When A meets B, A may be frustrated by B's interruptions and by B's inability to give emotions in a simple, direct way. B may find A too quiet or passive, if A does not interrupt.

 When A meets C, A may be surprised by C's directness, and his / her tendency to speak at length. A may also be shocked when C disagrees strongly. C may find A uncommunicative, and may be frustrated when A fails to clarify.

 When B meets C, B may be surprised by how long C talks and may try to interrupt. C may be frustrated by these interruptions, and the lack of clarity in B's opinions.

- 2 Trainees discuss the questions in pairs, including their experiences of working with people with the different styles, and then share their ideas with the class.
- 3 Tell trainees to close their books. Write the title Interactive communication style on the board, together with the four headings from the table. Elicit from the class some advice for each heading, based on the potential problems they discussed in exercises 1 and 2. Then tell trainees to read the instructions and the guidelines to complete the exercise. Point out that there are sometimes several possible phrases for each gap. After a few minutes, allow them to compare their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 66).

Extension activity

Trainees discuss the guidelines in pairs, saying whether they agree with the advice and which communication style from exercise 1 (A, B or C), would benefit most from each piece of advice. Afterwards, discuss the answers with the class.

Suggested answers



- Give an opinion briefly: B and C
- Don't be too direct: C
- Show modesty and openness: A and C
- Make clear that your opinion is not negative: C
- Finish with a question: A, B and C
- Give feedback: A, B and C
- Don't disagree too quickly: B and C
- Begin with a short summary: A, B and C
- Focus first on areas of agreement: B and C

- 4 Trainees work in pairs to come up with more phrases for each area. After a few minutes, brainstorm a list of phrases onto the board.

Suggested answers



- 1 *In my opinion, and it's just my opinion, we should ...; You could have a point there, but ...*
- 2 *I can see what you're saying, and you're right to make that point, but ...*
- 3 *Does that make sense?; How would you feel about that?*
- 4 *Fair enough; Good point.; Possibly.*
- 5 *No, that's not right; I disagree.*
- 6 *As I understand it ...; So what you seem to be saying is that ...*
- 7 *That's a really good point; I'm glad you mentioned that, because ...*

- 5 Go through the instructions carefully, and point out that Jari is a man, to help students work out who is who. For the two women, Marie and Sue, trainees will have to listen out for their names. Then play the recording for trainees to make brief notes. They compare their notes in pairs, including anything else they remember about the conversation, and then feed back to the class (SB page 67).

Background note

Marie's comment at the end is a joke. She describes Jari as 'Mr Email' because he sends so many emails. Although humour often does not translate well, it is useful for trainees to recognise it.

- 6 Trainees discuss the questions in pairs to try to remember or work out the answers. Make sure they understand the meaning of *arrogant* in question 3. With weaker classes, you could allow them to read the audio script on page 54 while they listen again, and to underline the answers. When you have played the recording, trainees discuss their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 67).

Extension activity

Trainees read the audio script on page 54 to underline more useful phrases for managing conversations, together with the function of each phrase. Discuss the answers with the class.

Suggested answers



- *Ridiculous.* (disagreeing strongly)
- *For me, at least ...* (showing modesty when giving an opinion)
- *I see what you're saying.* (focusing on areas of agreement)
- *But I think ...* (giving an opinion)
- *Absolutely.* (agreeing / giving feedback while listening)
- *I just think ...* (showing modesty when giving an opinion)
- *I mean ...* (clarifying an opinion)
- *Maybe I'm wrong.* (showing modesty when giving an opinion)
- *I'm staying well out of this.* (refusing to give an opinion)
- *And that's no bad thing.* (showing support for an idea)

- 7 Divide the class into small groups (three to five trainees in each group). Point out that the aim of this exercise is to practise the skills and techniques from this unit, including making sure everyone is involved in the conversation. They will therefore be judged on the extent to which their conversation is balanced and positive. Tell each group to read the first sentences of the two topics in order to choose which one they would like to discuss first. Then allow around five minutes for the discussion. Give and elicit feedback on the use of the techniques during these conversations before getting trainees to discuss the other topic, or a similar topic of their choosing. Again, give and elicit feedback on the success of the discussion.

Cultural tip

Tell trainees to close their books. Elicit from the class the most important advice from this unit, and then tell trainees to compare their idea with the cultural tip.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. If trainees feel they cannot yet adapt their way of speaking in order to build effective dialogues, discuss how they can continue to improve, develop and practise this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

4A Managing international meetings

Before you begin

Discuss the aims briefly with the class, using these prompts to develop the discussion.

- 1 What different approaches to decision making can you think of?
- 2 How can the decision-making process in meetings be made more effective?

Suggested answers



- 1 Decisions made during / before / after meetings; decisions made by leaders / by team / by individuals; decisions taken quickly / slowly, after lots of discussion; decisions are firm once taken / decisions can be changed later.
- 2 Examples include using an agenda in meetings, where decision-making is central; involving groups of people in decision making, but not too many people; etc.

- 1 Trainees work in pairs or small groups. They read one of the descriptions and then discuss the three questions together before moving on to the next description, and so on. After they have discussed all the descriptions, discuss the questions with the class.

Suggested answers



	Advantages	Disadvantages
<i>In my department, meetings are very focused ...</i>	<p>Quick and efficient way of making decisions.</p> <p>Allows people to spend more time on other things.</p>	<p>Decisions may be rushed, and therefore not the best decisions.</p> <p>Tendency for some people to dominate the decision-making process.</p>
<i>Most of my meetings are by telephone ...</i>	<p>Quick and efficient way of making decisions.</p> <p>Boss may be able to make more radical decisions than a larger group of people.</p>	<p>Very demotivating for employees who are not involved in decision making.</p> <p>The boss may not be the best person to make decisions.</p>
<i>I work in research and development.</i>	<p>The whole team has input in decision making, which may motivate them to implement it well.</p> <p>The decision is based on the expertise of many people.</p>	<p>Meetings may be very long, which may be seen as a waste of time.</p> <p>Group decisions may be compromises between different people's ideas.</p>
<i>The culture in this organisation is very informal.</i>	<p>Efficient use of time – involves many people but meetings remain short.</p> <p>Good for networking – people feel involved and motivated.</p>	<p>Not everyone is involved. A lot of decisions like this are made in, for example, smoking rooms, but non-smokers feel excluded.</p> <p>If people spend too much time chatting around coffee machines, it may not be the most efficient use of their time.</p>

Extension activity

Trainees work in pairs to find useful collocations connected with decision making in the descriptions. Elicit a list of collocations and write them on the board. Trainees then test each other in pairs by reading the beginning of a collocation to elicit the second half from their partner, who is not allowed to look at the board.

Suggested answers

- to take / have / make / follow a decision
- to schedule a meeting
- discussion between the participants
- one-way communication
- a complex argument
- to take your time
- a one-to-one meeting
- a meeting around the coffee machine
- to get informal agreement

Language note

There is no difference between *making* and *taking* decisions, though *taking decisions* may be regarded as more active, but *making decisions* is more common (as in the phrase *decision making*).

- 2 10 Go through the questions with the class to predict what Kaneko might say about each of them. Then play the recording. Trainees discuss the answers in pairs, including anything else they remember about what Kaneko said, and then feed back to the class (SB page 67).

Language notes

A *competitive advantage* is something that allows you to compete effectively against other people, companies, countries, etc.

Your *mindset* is the way you tend to think, reinforced by habit. It can be difficult, but not impossible, to *change your mindset* and think about familiar things in a new way.

A *bottom-up process* is led by people at or near the bottom of the hierarchy, e.g. the workers in a company. The more senior members of the hierarchy see their role as supporting and helping this process.

A *consensus style* is based on the principle that the best decisions are those that everyone can agree with, not just the decision makers. In order to reach agreements, everyone often has to make compromises and be willing to accept the majority point of view.

Extension activity

Tell trainees to look at the audio script on page 54 and to read and listen again to underline useful phrases for describing approaches to decision making. You could elicit the first example from the class, to clarify that you are looking for phrases to describe all types of decision-making styles, not the specific approach in Kaneko's company. Afterwards, trainees compare their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class. Elicit some other ways of completing the phrases for different types of organisation. Finally, trainees use the phrases to describe their own organisations.

Suggested answers

- *I think our company decision-making style is kind of XXX and relatively XXX but we know we need to XXX in order to XXX.*
- *The XXX industry ... has a XXX decision-making culture than we have now.*
- *This is a big influence on us.*
- *So now it's a competitive advantage to have a XXX decision-making culture.*
- *It matches customers' needs.*
- *We need to change our mindset to XXX our decision-making style.*
- *Well, decision making here is a XXX process with XXX.*
- *Yes, I think this is a XXX decision-making style which XXX.*
- *But there's also a question of XXX.*
- *We need to work with a XXX style.*
- *In fact all XXX industry has a XXX culture.*
- *So we can't XXX.*
- *We have to XXX.*
- *That can be XXX for some people.*
- *I think XXX is very helpful to get to a decision in a meeting XXX.*
- *I don't like XXX so I'm always thinking about how to XXX because XXX.*

- 3 Trainees discuss the questions in small groups and then share their ideas with the class. When you discuss the answers, focus on some practical ways of communicating before meetings.

Suggested answers

- Practical ways of communicating: informal meetings (e.g. in the corridor); social events outside working hours to build relationships; smaller meetings in groups before the main meeting, to clarify the key points.
- Other ways of improving decision making: always write down commitments, including the person responsible for implementing each decision; be clear in advance about which decisions need to be taken, and make sure the meeting stays focused on these key decisions.

- 4 11 Go through the four questions quickly with the class to predict what the answers might be. Then play the recording for trainees to answer the questions. They discuss their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (see page 67).

Language notes

- A *quick fix* is a cheap and simple solution to a problem. Quick fixes often need to be replaced later by a more complicated and permanent solution.
- If you *push back*, you challenge what the other person is saying. This may be a useful way of helping them to think through and clarify their ideas.

- 5 Before telling trainees to look at the audioscript, elicit from the class one possible phrase for each of the five functions. Then tell trainees to read and listen again to underline the phrases. Point out that there may be several phrases for each function, and that most of the phrases are complete sentences. Afterwards, trainees compare their ideas in pairs and feed back to the class (see page 67).

For the second part of the task, they brainstorm other useful phrases in small groups and then share their ideas with the class. Write the best phrases on the board.

Suggested answers

- Say what you want to define: *OK, before we get started, I want to make sure we all know why we're here and what we want to achieve.*
- Say which decision needs to be taken: *We need to decide three things today. Firstly, we've got to work out ...; We also need a decision on ...; And finally, I'd like us to come up with a firm answer on the question of ...*
- Say how the decision should be taken: *I think the best way for us to decide is if we discuss each point briefly first, making any necessary changes to the wording, and then we can simply vote on the proposals.*
- Check with other participants and negotiate if necessary: *Are you happy with that arrangement? Does that make sense to you?*
- Confirm the decision-making process: *Good, so we all agree on the process, which is a good start. Let's move on to the decision making itself.*

Extension activity

With the class, discuss the advantages and disadvantages the particular decision-making process, as well as the way it is presented.

Suggested answers

The process will lead to fast and efficient decision making. Some participants may feel that it is dominated too much by the project leader. The presentation is very clear and well organised, but again, may create the impression that the project leader is very dominant. As always, there needs to be a balance between fairness/equality and efficiency in the decision-making process.

- 6 Divide the class into pairs, and assign roles, A or B, to each trainee. Tell them first to read all the background information. You could use these questions with the class to check they have fully understood the context.
- 1 What type of organisation do Student A and Student B work for?
 - 2 Why does Student A need Student B's services?
 - 3 How long have they spent on this project? Why do you think it has taken so long?
 - 4 What do you think the concept and material refers to?
 - 5 How does Student A feel about the quality of the concept and materials?
 - 6 What is the purpose of the meeting?
 - 7 Who will host the meeting?

Answers

- 1 Student A: Global insurance company; Student B: training organisation.
- 2 To train senior sales executives.
- 3 Nine months. A lot of time researching the client's needs, plus coming up with the concept and writing the materials.
- 4 The concept: the rationale behind the training: how it will work, how its effectiveness will be measured, etc.; the materials: printed materials, computer-based materials, presentations, etc.
- 5 Very impressed.
- 6 To discuss rolling the programme out.
- 7 Student A, who has set it up.

Trainees then read the notes for their own roles. Monitor carefully to make sure they fully understand everything. With weaker groups, they could do this in groups (i.e. all the As work together to read and discuss that role, and all the Bs work in a different group). When they are ready, remind them that the aim here is to use the language and techniques from this unit (and the book, more generally) and that the aim is to reach a consensus and to build on the good relationship they have.

Allow plenty of time for the role plays (10–15 minutes). Monitor carefully, not just for language problems but also for the way they handle the problems caused by the misunderstanding in the email. Afterwards, trainees use the four prompts to discuss the effectiveness of the meeting. Finally, give and elicit feedback on trainees' performance and their solutions to the problem.

If you have an odd number of trainees you will need to have a group of three, where the third trainee is an assistant to either Student A or Student B.

Cultural tip

Tell trainees to close their books. Discuss these questions with the class and then tell trainees to read the cultural tip to compare it with their ideas.

- 1 What is the problem with meetings across cultures?
- 2 What is a / the solution to the problem?

Answers



- 1 The ways in which decisions are taken can vary significantly.
- 2 Clarify and agree in advance what is to be decided and how it will be decided.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. If trainees feel they cannot yet outline a decision-making process in meetings, discuss how they can continue to improve, develop and practise this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

4B Managing international meetings

Before you begin

Discuss the aims briefly with the class, using these prompts to develop the discussion.

- 1 What do you think a difficult communicator might be?
- 2 How could you use your language skills to manage difficult communicators?

Suggested answers



- 1 Someone who talks too much or not enough; someone who is too aggressive or too passive; someone who doesn't listen or respect what others have to say, etc.
- 2 Encouraging people to speak more; telling people to change their behaviour, etc.

- 1 Elicit from the class what they know about Donald Trump. Then tell trainees to read his advice and to discuss it in pairs. Encourage them to bring in their own experiences of similar situations. After a few minutes, open up the discussion to include the whole class.

Background note

Donald Trump is a successful American businessman, who made a fortune in property investment. He is also a TV celebrity (most famously, as host of *The Apprentice*, a business reality show) and has expressed an interest in running for the job of US President. See www.trump.com/Donald_J_Trump/Biography.asp.

Extension activity

Trainees work in pairs turn Trump's advice into a list of 'Dos and Don'ts' (i.e. things that good managers should and shouldn't do).

Suggested answers



- DO find something that you like about them.
- DO find hidden potential.
- DO look for qualities that you like about the people around you.
- DO use what you have in common to build strong relationships.
- DON'T expect anyone to be perfect.
- DO recognise the strengths.
- DON'T become obsessed with the weaknesses.

- 2 Tell trainees to read the information, the instructions and the table to find out what they will have to do. You may need to check the following words from the table: digressing, irrelevant, side discussions. Trainees then work in groups of around four trainees to discuss the questions, including their own experiences of working with difficult people in meetings. Allow 5–10 minutes for the discussion, and then go through the questions with the class.

Suggested answers

- Arguing and being aggressive: *I can see we're not going to convince you, but we have to make a decision, and the majority view is clearly that ...; Let's agree to disagree on that point, shall we?; Could we try to keep things positive?*
- Digressing frequently: *We need to stick to the agenda; Let's come back to that point later – we really need to stay focused at the moment; That's really interesting, but I don't see how it relates to the issue at hand, which is ...*
- Not listening: *Colin, are you with us?; I really need your attention on this point; This isn't going to work unless we all stay focused.*
- Saying nothing: *Paula, you're quiet today. Is everything OK?; We'd really like to hear what you think about this.*

Language notes

If you *digress*, you change the subject of the conversation away from the main topic.

If something is *irrelevant*, it is not connected with the topic of the conversation.

A *side discussion* in a meeting takes place when several participants start talking to each other in a separate discussion from the main discussion.

- 3 12 Make sure trainees know to make notes on the strategies to deal with each type of person. You could go through the four behaviours with the class first to elicit some possible techniques for dealing with them. Then play the recording for them to take notes. Allow them to discuss their ideas in pairs before feeding back to the class.

Background note

Speaker 3 mentions *face-saving*. *Face* is a very important concept in many cultures. It is strongly connected with a person's reputation and other people's respect for them. For example, it may be difficult for some people to admit that they are wrong because this would mean losing face. In a negotiation, a person may be prepared to make many concessions as long as it doesn't involve losing face, e.g. if the other side praise his / her skills as an excellent negotiator. Face-saving techniques are ways of finding a solution without either side losing face.

Extension activity

Tell trainees to listen again to find the following information in the four extracts.

- 1 Find three reasons why somebody may be quiet in a meeting. (extract 1)
- 2 Find two reasons why interrupting can be difficult. (extract 2)
- 3 Find five problems with impatient people. (extract 3)
- 4 What are the advantages and disadvantages of slower, more analytical people? (extract 4)

Suggested answers

- 1 They could have problems with English; they may lack confidence; they may be showing respect.
- 2 It doesn't feel polite; the other person may be a big boss.
- 3 They always (think that they) know best; they have the answer worked out; they won't listen to other ideas; they can be very direct or even rude; they can destroy teamwork.
- 4 Advantages: they pick up on problems that others might miss.
Disadvantages: it's hard to listen to them; they slow down decision making.

- 4 Make sure all trainees have a complete list of communication strategies (from exercise 3) before you play the recording again. Point out that there is a phrase / sentence for most, but not all, of the strategies.

With stronger classes, encourage them to try the activity without looking at the audioscript. They will not have time to write down the whole phrases, but they should still be able to note some key words from each, and then reconstruct the whole phrases when they discuss their answers in pairs. You could play the recording a third time after their discussions for them to check the phrases. Finally, go through the answers with the class (SB page 67).

- 5 Trainees work in small groups to think of at least one more phrase for each strategy. Afterwards, elicit a list of useful phrases and write them on the board.

Possible answers



- Ask open questions: *How does everyone feel about that?*
- Ask a specific person for an opinion: *(Rachel), I think you're the best person to deal with this question.*
- Ask a specific person for an opinion but give them options to make opinion giving easier: *(Tom), would this work, or are there technical issues that we haven't considered?*
- Apologise and interrupt: *(Marian), sorry but could I just stop you for a second?*
- Interrupt with a good reason: *Sorry, (Bob), but we're really short of time and I want to make sure everyone has a chance to give their opinions.*
- Use a positive phrase to begin and end: *You're absolutely right, (Ralph). (Norma), do you have anything to add to Ralph's great idea?*
- Get them to listen to others: *(Linda), I think (Roy)'s point actually answered your question. (Roy), can you explain it again to (Linda).*
- Get them to slow down and think of things they may have forgotten or not considered: *Hang on a second, we mustn't forget ...*
- Focus them: *So in other words, are you saying that ...?*
- Push them to take a decision: *So if you're right that this is a problem, what's the answer?*

- 6 Trainees discuss the question in small groups and then share their ideas with the class. Encourage trainees to suggest solutions to each of the problems, rather than supplying them all yourself.
- 7 Elicit a list of types of communicator and difficult behaviours mentioned in this unit (e.g. aggressive, digressing too much) as well as any types that have been mentioned during your discussions. Trainees then think carefully about how they would describe themselves, and discuss their ideas with a partner. Encourage them to be as honest as possible when describing each other's style, but obviously to avoid being too negative. Make sure the discussions stay focused on positive ways to improve, rather than criticism. Afterwards, discuss any surprises with the class.
- 8 Tell trainees to read through the background information to make sure they understand the context fully. You could use questions (e.g. *What type of company is it? What is the purpose of the meeting?*) to check they have understood.
- Make sure the person leading the meeting knows his / her role card is on a different page. You could allocate roles in any of the following ways.
- Photocopy page 79 and cut up the roles into slips. Trainees choose one of the slips without looking at it.
 - Trainees could be allocated roles at random, for example by rolling a dice.
 - Trainees read through all the roles and choose the one they would like to play.
 - You could allocate the roles yourself, based on your impressions of the most natural roles for each trainee.
- In each case, you can also decide whether trainees should keep their role secret from the others in their groups. This would add an extra twist at the end of the role play, where trainees have to guess what each other's roles were.

Allow a short time for trainees to prepare for their roles, and then about ten minutes for the role plays. Monitor carefully not only for language but also the way the leader manages the different participants. Afterwards, trainees discuss the success of the meeting in their groups and feed back to the class. You could then repeat the activity with a different person playing the role of leader.

Cultural tip

Elicit from the class two things they need to balance when managing different communication styles. Then tell them to read the cultural tip to compare it with their ideas.

Answers

- 1 Respect and tolerance.
- 2 Making sure the meeting is efficient and effective.

**Can do**

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. If trainees feel they cannot yet manage different types of communicators in meetings, discuss how they can continue to improve, develop and practise this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

5A Becoming a better listener

Before you begin

Use the two unit aims to generate a short discussion. You could use these questions to prompt the discussion, but avoid providing answers at this stage.

- 1 Why is listening especially important for effective communication?
- 2 How can you clarify when listening?

Suggested answers



- 1 Listening is not only a question of understanding what the other person is saying, but also an important way of showing respect. One of the most important communication skills is to know when to stop talking about yourself and when to listen to the other person.
- 2 By asking questions; by paraphrasing what the other person has said.

Language note

The verb *to clarify* has two related meanings. The basic meaning is to give clarification, or to explain when there is a misunderstanding. A second meaning is to ask for clarification or to check your own understanding. This second meaning is the one used in this unit.

- 1 Tell trainees to read the introduction and to discuss the questions in small groups. After a few minutes, open up the discussion to include the whole class.

Suggested answers



Effective listening behaviours include:

- using body language and facial expressions to show you are paying attention; responding enthusiastically to what the other person is saying, e.g. *That's really interesting.*
- using 'listening noises' like *Uh-huh* and *I see*; asking questions which show you are paying close attention
- repeating back the other person's words
- resisting the temptation to talk about yourself.

It is important not to think in terms of techniques: pretending to listen may be even worse than not listening at all. Instead, we simply need to learn to take a genuine interest in what the other person is saying.

Extension activity

There are dozens of excellent quotes about the importance of listening available online, e.g. www.leadershipnow.com/listeningquotes.html. You could print off a few quotes for trainees to read and discuss in small groups: do they agree with the speaker in each case?

- 2  **13** Trainees read the five questions in pairs to predict and discuss what Abhijit might say about each of them. Make sure they understand the concept of face-saving (see **Language note** after exercise 3 in Unit 4B). Then play the recording for trainees to check their predictions. They discuss their answers again in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 68).

Language note

If you *assume* something, you believe it is true because it seems obvious to you, and you don't consider the possibility that it is false. But assumptions are dangerous because they are often wrong.

If you *show intent* to do something, you show that you are willing and ready to do it.

Extension activity

Write the following words on the board. Make sure trainees understand them all.

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| 1 interpret | 4 follow-up | 7 pressure | 10 threatened |
| 2 expectations | 5 assume | 8 intent | 11 weakness |
| 3 a learning process | 6 explaining | 9 scenario | 12 open |

Trainees work in pairs to remember what was said about them, and then listen again to check. They discuss their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class.

Answers



- 1 Listening is *the most important factor ... in international communication because of the way people interpret things so differently.*
- 2 Abhijit says that *we come with very different expectations and different experiences to the international community.*
- 3 For Abhijit, listening effectively *is a learning process* (i.e. he's still learning how to do it better).
- 4 He asks for clarification during a meeting or *as a follow-up after a meeting.*
- 5 The key thing for Abhijit is *not to assume* he understands, and *to clarify.*
- 6 Clarification, *if it's done properly ... means explaining what you are trying to clarify.*
- 7 Abhijit tries to avoid putting someone under pressure by *making sure the person sees you are interested in what they are saying.*
- 8 *Showing intent to solve a problem ... is important to build two-way communication.*
- 9 The scenario described by the Interviewer (*when you ask if there are any delivery problems, people say no and in fact, there are problems*) *is a very interesting scenario to handle.*
- 10 Abhijit makes sure *the person does not feel threatened in any way by [his] questions or the clarification he is looking for.*
- 11 Abihijit believes *we are always responsible for communication working, and, if it doesn't, then it's our weakness.*
- 12 If the person understands that your intention is positive, that you want to understand, *then the person will be more open, will share information and we'll be in a better position to exchange ideas.*

- 3 Go through the questions quickly with the class to make sure they understand. For the second question, elicit what Abhijit says about the communication style of modern corporate India (that it is no longer common for people to deny problems in order to save face). Trainees discuss the questions in pairs and then feed back to the class.
- 4 Tell trainees to read through the instructions carefully to find out what they have to do. Point out that most of the questions and statements are on the next page. It is a good idea to do the first question with the class as an example. Trainees then work alone to complete the exercise and compare their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 68).

Extension activity

The twelve questions and statements in exercise 4 are all responses (from Speaker B) to statements (from Speaker A). Trainees work in pairs to think about what Speaker A's original statement was. Elicit the first Speaker A statement and write it on the board as an example.

When you go through trainees' suggestions, write the best ideas, in a mixed-up order, on the board. Alternatively, you could just write the **Suggested answers** from the box below onto the board, again in a mixed up order.

Trainees then work in pairs to make dialogues (Speaker A's statement followed by the appropriate request for clarification), taking turns to be Speaker A. Trainees then repeat the exercise with their books closed, to try to remember the techniques and the phrases.

Possible answers



- 1 I think we're taking a big risk by having just one version of the product.
- 2 We can offer you a short-term contract for now, and then we can review the situation in July.
- 3 I'm afraid she can be quite a difficult person at times.
- 4 This project will only be successful if we have really good teamwork.
- 5 Our previous supplier had serious quality problems – the goods were often of a very poor quality.
- 6 The deal looks good on paper, but I'm still worried that cultural issues could be an issue.
- 7 I see there's no mention in the contract of security guarantees, but I'm afraid we really must have that in the deal.
- 8 I think we have no alternative but to stop all unnecessary spending.
- 9 I'm afraid we may have a small problem with the deadline.
- 10 Apparently they've got quite a big budget for this project, which is good news.
- 11 We need to do a complete overhaul of our distribution network.
- 12 We can guarantee that our work will be of world-class quality.

- 5 Trainees work in small groups to discuss what they would ask about and how they would do it. After you have discussed their ideas with the whole class, tell trainees to read the commentary on page 68 to compare it with their ideas.

Extension activity

Trainees work in pairs to role play the conversations from exercise 5.

- 6 Divide the class into groups of three and allocate roles within each group. Tell trainees to read through the instructions carefully to find out what to do. Point out that they will each have the chance to play all three roles, so they can all spend a minute or two thinking about the conversation topics. Make sure Student A knows to use the techniques from this unit. Then start the first role play. Be very strict with the time limits in order to give everyone a chance to play each role. After all the role plays and feedback, give and elicit feedback from the whole class on the role plays.

If you don't have a multiple of three trainees, you will need to have at least one group of two, where Student B acts as the observer, giving feedback on Student A's performance.

Cultural tip

Elicit from the class the two main advantages of clarifying. Then tell trainees to read the cultural tip to compare it with their ideas.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. Check that all trainees feel comfortable using a range of clarification questions to understand what others are saying, and discuss with the class how they can continue to improve in this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

5B Becoming a better listener

Before you begin

Use the two unit aims to generate a short discussion. You could use these questions to prompt the discussion, but avoid providing answers at this stage.

- What do you think is the connection between spoken phrases and listening more effectively?

Suggested answer



- Short spoken phrases can encourage the other person to speak, show we are paying attention and clarify misunderstandings.

- 1 Trainees spend a few minutes brainstorming reasons for listening. Collect their ideas onto the board. Then tell trainees to read the list on page 68 to check if it mentions the same ideas. Finally, discuss with the class any differences between your list on the board and the list in the book.

Language note

One good reason for listening, mentioned in the **Suggested answers**, is to *build rapport*. *Rapport* /ræ'pɔː/ is a feeling of getting on well with somebody and understanding them. Ways of building rapport include socialising together and taking an interest in the other person's hobbies and interests, for example.

- 2 Trainees discuss the five questions in pairs first, to predict what the text might say about them. You may need to check they understand the meaning of punctuality (being on time). Trainees then read the text to compare it with their ideas. They discuss the answers again in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 68).

Language notes

- If you *articulate* something, you put it into words.
- Your *underlying values* are those that are most important to your character and beliefs. These values *underlie* things like how you behave and what you say.
- In the title to the second paragraph, *profile* is used as a verb (to analyse and create a profile or description of something).
- Your *competence levels* describe the extent to which you are *competent* (able to do things well).
- If you do something *sympathetically*, you show respect and understanding for another person's feelings and needs.

Extension activity

Trainees read the text again to answer these questions.

- 1 What examples of attitudes are given in paragraph 1? Why might these particular attitudes be important?
- 2 What three words from paragraph 2 are connected with the meaning of *expertise*?
- 3 What two types of question are mentioned in paragraph 3?
- 4 What two adjectives in paragraph 3 describe people who need help? Why, from a selfish point of view, is it important to help these people?
- 5 What two types of phrases for supporting people emotionally are mentioned in paragraph 5?

Answers



- 1 *Leadership, teamwork, punctuality, quality and customer service.* It may be useful to assess these values and attitudes during a job interview or when considering which colleague to promote to a higher position, for example.
- 2 *Knowledge, skills and experience.*
- 3 To direct the speaker to confirm things they know; to inform them about things they do not know.
- 4 *Overworked and stressed.* From a selfish point of view, it is good to have a reputation as a helpful person because you may need help yourself in the future.
- 5 Simple phrases to make the speaker feel that he or she is understood sympathetically, e.g. 'I understand'; positive phrases, e.g. 'I think you're doing a great job'.

- 3 14 Go through the instructions with the class to make sure they understand what to do. Point out that there may be some room for discussion over some of the reasons for listening. Point out also that it may be impossible to note down the full questions, so trainees should just note the key words from each question and then try to reconstruct the whole question after they have listened. They could listen a second time to complete their notes if necessary. They discuss their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 68).

Language notes

- If you are *half-thinking* of doing something, you have considered the idea, but it is not yet solid enough to be a plan.
- If something *winds you up*, it makes you feel stressed or angry.

Extension activity

Trainees listen again to identify the problem mentioned in each conversation.

Answers



Conversation 1: Speaker A is feeling a bit insecure due to a lack of understanding of finance.

Conversation 2: Speaker C is feeling wound up because a colleague has copied his manager into an email again, which is interpreted as escalating things to management.

Conversation 3: Speaker E misses the creative side of his / her previous job. Instead, the job now is very much maintenance and dealing with angry customers.

- 4 Trainees work alone to match the questions to the headings. Point out that there are more questions than headings, so most headings have two questions. Trainees check in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 68).

- 5 Photocopy and cut up the role cards. Divide the class into groups and give each group a pack of Speaker cards and Listener cards, with the cards face down. Make sure they know which pack is which. Tell them that each conversation should last up to around two minutes, but you can be flexible about this. The observers should guess which techniques the listener is using in each case, and should give feedback on the effectiveness of the listeners' techniques. Allow plenty of time for the conversations and feedback, so that each trainee has the chance to be the listener more than once. Finally, discuss the effectiveness of the techniques with the class.

Cultural tip

Discuss briefly with the class why it is useful to develop a wide range of listening behaviours. Then tell them to read the cultural tip to compare it with their ideas.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. Check that all trainees feel that they can adapt their listening behaviours to the needs of different speakers and situation, and discuss with the class how they can continue to improve in this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

6A Presenting across cultures

Before you begin

Use the two unit aims to generate a short discussion, including their experiences of presenting across cultures. You could use these questions to prompt the discussion, but avoid providing answers at this stage.

- 1 What are the challenges of presenting to different audiences?
- 2 Why might it be important to customise your message for your audience?

Suggested answers



- 1 They may not react in ways that you expect, and they may have their own expectations of you, because of cultural differences; it may be more stressful to present in a foreign language.
- 2 To help them to understand it better; to make it more persuasive and effective; to avoid creating a bad impression, etc.

- 1 Discuss briefly with the class what they know or can guess about the cultures of the six countries, and how this might influence the ways audiences watch presentations. Trainees then read the notes to try the matching exercise. They discuss their ideas in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 68).

Background notes

In Finnish culture, important principles include egalitarianism (rights and fairness for everybody) and self-sufficiency (the ability to support yourself without help from others). See www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/finland-country-profile.html.

The UAE (United Arab Emirates) has a reputation for being more liberal and cosmopolitan (international) than many of its Arab neighbours. The two largest Emirates, Dubai and Abu Dhabi, are centres of international business. See www.kwintessential.co.uk/etiquette/doing-business-middleeast.html; www.uaeinteract.com/.

Extension activity

Trainees read the notes again to find three words in each extract that best summarise the culture in each country.

Suggested answers



- 1 US: *personality, direct, individualistic*
- 2 Japan: *formal, polite, respect*
- 3 UAE: *animated, entertain, relationship*
- 4 Germany: *serious, solid, experience*
- 5 Finland: *formal, design, quality*
- 6 UK: *ironic, anecdotes, moderate*

- 2 Trainees discuss the questions in pairs, including examples from their own experience. After a few minutes, open up the discussion to include the whole class.

Suggested answers



Things you need to know about your audience include:

- how many people there are
- how well they understand your language
- their nationalities (plus cultural information about those nationalities)
- their work (plus cultural information about those industries)
- their level of experience / knowledge connected with the subject of your presentation
- their expectations of your presentation
- their reasons for coming to your presentation

- 3 15 Tell trainees to read the introduction and the questions to find out which of the six countries from exercise 1 Dom has experience of (UAE (Dubai), Japan and the UK). Play the recording for trainees to answer the three questions. They discuss their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 68).

Language note

If a presentation is *collaborative*, different people work together to create it.

Extension activity

Write the following words and phrases on the board.

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 1 collaborative | 7 engage |
| 2 beforehand | 8 around the presentation |
| 3 perspectives | 9 attitude |
| 4 simplify | 10 too strong |
| 5 tables | 11 context |
| 6 entertainment | |

Trainees discuss in pairs what Dom says about each word or phrase, and then listen again to check. They discuss their answers again in pairs before feeding back to the class.

Suggested answers



- 1 Dom recommends making the presentation *as collaborative as possible, with colleagues and external clients*.
- 2 *It's typical to let people look at the presentation beforehand ... so there are no surprises*.
- 3 *you need to customise your message and style to the different needs and perspectives of different audiences*.
- 4 *internationally you need to simplify everything*.
- 5 Dom recommends using tables in presentations only occasionally.
- 6 In presenting internationally, he recommends *more of a focus on entertainment rather than actual content*.
- 7 *you have to find ways to engage people*.
- 8 *In the Middle East the real business is done around the presentation not in it*.
- 9 *If you have a 'this is how we do it back home' attitude, then you are almost guaranteed to fail*.
- 10 He describes a creative director *who came through too strong*.
- 11 Dom says if we don't *adapt to the local context*, we'll fail.

- 4  16 Go through the instructions carefully to make sure everyone understands what to do. You could elicit some ways of acknowledging the audience's main interest, e.g. *I understand you're especially interested in ...* and explicitly promising to deal with something, e.g. *I can assure you that this will be my top priority*. Trainees then read the extracts to complete the exercise. They check in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 68). Note that sometimes different answers may also be possible.

Background note

If you do something *explicitly*, you do it openly and directly. It contrasts with doing something *implicitly*, where the other person has to work out your meaning. For example, if you would like someone to open the window, you could do this explicitly by asking them to open the window, or implicitly by pointing out that it's very warm in the room.

Extension activity

Trainees underline the whole phrases for the two functions:

- acknowledging the audience's main interest
- explicitly promising to deal with something.

Suggested answers



Acknowledging the audience's main interest:

- *Now I understand that there are significant problems with ..., which you feel are important.*
- *I can appreciate that one of your main concerns is ...*
- *I'm not planning to ... because I know that you are mainly interested in ...*
- *Now I know that ..., and I sense that ...*
- *... just to enable you to understand things a little better.*
- *Then, as I know you'd really need to have some more information about ...*

Explicitly promising to deal with something:

- *So I want to focus exclusively on these concerns today, particularly ...*
- *What I want to do today is to help you to ...*
- *For this reason I'll concentrate on ...*
- *So to help clarify things for you what I want to do is ...*
- *Firstly, I'll run over the main reasons for ...*
- *I want to spend some time looking at ...*

- 5 Trainees work in pairs to discuss the task. Encourage them to use the phrases from exercise 4 in their introductions. Allow around five minutes for them to prepare, and then give them a chance to present their introductions to another pair. Give and elicit feedback on the effectiveness of the introductions.

Extension activity

Tell trainees to read the model introduction on page 69 to compare it with their own versions. They should then read the commentary on page 69 to check the techniques that the speaker used, and to make sure they used the same techniques in their own introductions.

- 6 Trainees work in pairs to plan and prepare their presentations. Point out that they need to make sure they have a very clear profile of the visitor group before they begin. Alternatively, each pair could write profiles for a different pair. This would encourage them to develop more challenging profiles. Allow plenty of time (at least ten minutes) for the preparation of the presentations. Then ask each pair to explain their profiles and give their presentations to the whole class. Allow plenty of time for feedback on each presentation, with particular reference to how well it was adapted to the audience profile.

Cultural tip

Elicit from the class some general rules about presenting internationally, including the advantages of discussing the presentation with the audience in advance. Then tell trainees to read the cultural tip to compare it with their ideas.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. Check that all trainees feel that they can customise their presentations to different international audiences, and discuss with the class how they can continue to improve in this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

6B Presenting across cultures

Before you begin

Use the two unit aims to generate a short discussion, including their experiences of handling questions in presentations. You could use these questions to prompt the discussion, but avoid providing answers at this stage.

- 1 What do you think is meant by *the dynamics of the Q & A phase of a presentation*? Give some examples of different types of dynamics.
- 2 What different types of questions might people ask at a presentation?

Suggested answers



- 1 The Q & A (question and answer) phase is the part of the presentation when members of the audience can ask questions and the speaker responds. The word *dynamics* refers to the way this can work in terms of interaction. For example, the Q & A phase could be very formal and controlled, with one or two audience members asking respectful questions after being invited by the speaker. At the other extreme, it could be much more formal, with many audience members asking questions and making comments during the presentation, some of which could be very direct and even hostile.
- 2 Open or closed questions (see unit 2A); direct or indirect questions; polite or hostile questions; factual or opinion-based questions; easy or difficult questions, etc.

- 1 Trainees briefly discuss the questions first to predict what Rana might say about them, and then read the text to compare it with their ideas. They check their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class, including their own experiences and opinions (SB page 69).

Language notes

If you are *fainthearted* you are not very brave. The phrase *not for the fainthearted* means 'only for really brave people'.

If a group of people is *homogeneous*, they all share important characteristics, e.g. they come from roughly the same culture, or they have the same expectations. The opposite is *heterogeneous*, which means there is a very wide range of different types of people in the group.

If you *greet* something *with silence*, you don't respond to it.

If you are *indifferent* to something, you don't have an opinion or care about it.

The phrase *a fellow human being* emphasises that we are all the same, and that we are members of the same group.

Extension activity

Use these questions to focus on the vocabulary Rana uses and to develop the discussion.

- 1 Why do you think Rana says making a presentation in front of international audiences is *not for the fainthearted*?
- 2 What would be an example of a *homogeneous local audience*?
- 3 What would be an example of a *challenging question*?
- 4 How would you feel if your presentation was *greeted with silence*?
- 5 When might members of an audience show *indifference* to what you are saying?
- 6 Why might it be important to remember that every member in your international audience is *a fellow human being*?
- 7 What might the members of the audience *get for being there*?
- 8 How might they show that they *appreciate your efforts*?

Suggested answers



- 1 Because it can be very stressful. Most people would not be brave enough to do it.
- 2 An audience where everyone comes from the same country, speaks the same language, and perhaps works in the same industry.
- 3 *How can you guarantee that it'll work? Is what you're saying based on hard evidence or just your own opinions?*
- 4 Most people would feel uncomfortable, especially if they included jokes and anecdotes. For many presenters, the audience's response makes a lot of difference to their own performance.
- 5 If they are not interested in the topic.
- 6 Because it may be difficult to relate to people from very different cultures. In fact, we all have a lot in common.
- 7 Useful information or ideas (it could also mean entertainment, free gifts, etc.).
- 8 By clapping at the end, thanking you after the presentation, smiling, asking good questions, etc.

- 2 Elicit from the class why the Q & A part is so important, and then tell trainees to read the introduction to exercise 2 to compare it with their ideas. They then discuss the five guidelines, as well as their own advice, in small groups. After a few minutes, open up the discussion to include the whole class. Note that there are two additional guidelines in the answer key on page 69.
- 3 Trainees work in pairs to come up with useful phrases for each function. When they have finished, write the best suggestions onto the board. You could also draw their attention to the suggestions from the answer key on page 69.

Extension activity

Ask trainees to close their books. Read the beginnings of the phrases from the guidelines and the answer key to elicit suitable ways for them to continue. You could stop at the points marked with a slash (/) below. Trainees do not need to use exactly the same words as below. Afterwards, they can test each other in pairs in the same way.

- *I'd prefer to take questions at the end of my presentation if / that is OK with everyone.*
- *If you don't mind I'll / take questions at the end.*
- *I'll take questions at the end if that's / all right.*
- *Marie, what do you / think of this design?*
- *Marie, could you / tell us what you think?*
- *Could I ask you for / your thoughts, Marie?*
- *That's a very / interesting question, Philippa.*
- *I'm pleased you / asked that.*
- *Good question. Let / me think ...*
- *So what you / are saying is ...*
- *What do you / mean exactly by ...?*
- *Let me just check / I've understood your question.*
- *If that is the last / question, I'll move on to the next part / my summary.*
- *If there are / no more questions? Right, I'll move on ...*

- 4  17 Trainees read through the questions to make sure they understand. They will not have time to write full answers, so they will need to take notes. Then play the recording for them to answer the questions. They discuss their answers in pairs, then feed back to the class (SB page 69).

Language notes

- If you *tackle* a problem, you try to solve it.
- If you *buffer in extra time*, you include the extra time for unexpected problems in your plans. This extra time then serves as a *buffer* (something that helps protect from harm).
- If you *wrap up* a meeting or presentation, you bring it to a close.
- Samira uses the phrase *down the road* to mean 'in the future'.

Extension activity

Trainees look at the audio script on page 57. They read and listen again to underline useful phrases that they could use in their own Q & A sessions, and to identify good techniques that Samira uses.

Suggested answers



Good techniques:

- She ends her answer to Omar's question by asking for his opinion, which is a good way of reducing conflict and confusion.
- She clarifies Derek's rather hostile question, which has the effect of making him focus on facts rather than opinions.
- She disagrees confidently when necessary, and backs her argument up with facts. She also shows that the questioner, Derek, is equally responsible for the problem he identified.
- She ends her answer to Derek by focusing on what needs to happen in the future, not what happened in the past.

- She stays focused by deciding not to answer Jeanne's question, which she feels is not relevant.
- She offers to talk to Jeanne after the meeting, and justifies why she doesn't want to discuss the issue during the meeting.

Useful phrases:

- *So, I think I'll stop there for a second as there may be a few questions. Yes, Omar?*
- *Yes, well, it's a good question.*
- *And secondly, to be honest, ...*
- *What do you think?*
- *OK. Any other questions? Derek, yes?*
- *Sorry, what do you mean by ...?*
- *Oh, I see. Well, I don't agree. We did ..., and it was agreed not to ...*
- *So, I appreciate it may look like ... but ...*
- *I think the main thing is to look forward now and find a solution.*
- *OK, any more questions or I'll wrap up? Jeanne, you have one?*
- *I think it's a little early to raise that, Jeanne.*
- *... so let's come back to that in a few months. OK?*
- *OK, let's talk after the meeting today, we're under a little time pressure now.*
- *I can give you what info I have then. OK?*
- *Right, Luis, can I hand over to you now so that you can ...*

- 5 Trainees discuss the questions in pairs and then share their answers with the class. Samira's handling of the questions is intended to be a model for trainees to use, but they may have different opinions.
- 6 Trainees work in groups to discuss how they would deal with each situation, and then share their ideas with the class. Write up the best phrases for dealing with the situations on the board. Finally, compare the trainees' ideas with the list of possible answers in the key on page 69.
- 7 Go through the instructions carefully with the class. Point out that the aim here is to get on to the Q & A session as quickly as possible, so they should present a topic that they already know well and feel comfortable talking about. It could be something as simple as their typical working day or their plans for the next week at work. Make sure they also know to ask difficult questions, using the ideas in exercise 6. Allow a few minutes for trainees to plan their presentations. Trainees then work in groups of three or four to take turns to give their presentations and run short Q & A sessions. Allow about three minutes for each Q & A session, and encourage trainees to give each other feedback after each session. After all the presentations and Q & A sessions, give and elicit feedback from the class on the effectiveness of the speakers' handling of the questions.

Cultural tip

Elicit from the class the best way they can adapt the style and content of their presentations and answer any questions effectively. Then tell them to read the cultural tip to compare it with their ideas.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. Check that all trainees feel that they can customise presentations to the needs and expectations of different audiences and get their message across successfully. Discuss with the class how they can continue to improve in this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

7A Writing emails

Before you begin

Use the two unit aims to generate a short discussion. You could use these questions to prompt the discussion, but avoid providing answers at this stage.

- 1 What are some of the challenges of writing emails internationally?
- 2 Why is it especially important to communicate clearly in international emails?

Suggested answers



- 1 The other person may have a different level of English from you; the other person may have a different style and expectations regarding, for example, formality and directness in emails; humour, indirectness, irony and idiomatic language may cause misunderstandings, etc.
- 2 Because the other person may have problems with the language and / or culture, so the message must be clear and simple.

- 1 Trainees discuss the three questions in small groups. Make sure they understand the difference between *internal* emails (emails to people in your own organisation) and *external* emails (emails to customers, suppliers, partners, strangers, etc.). Allow plenty of time for the discussion, as these questions are all very important.

- 2 Trainees read the email and discuss questions 1 and 2 in pairs. Discuss question 2 with the class and then tell them to read the commentary on page 69 (but not yet the model answer) to compare it with their ideas.

They then spend around five minutes in pairs trying to improve the email. Ask them to share their ideas and phrases with the class, and finally tell them to look at the model on page 69 to compare it with their ideas.

Extension activity

Trainees read the model answer from page 69 to underline all the useful phrases that they could use in their own emails. Afterwards, discuss the answers with the class.

Answers



- *Many thanks for your last email updating me on XXX.*
- *It sounds as if we need to XXX.*
- *I would suggest a meeting to discuss XXX further.*
- *Could you confirm if this timing is convenient for you or suggest an alternative if XXX?*
- *Additionally, I think it would be useful to talk about XXX before then.*
- *Would you be free for a call at one of these times next week?*
- *Best regards and look forward to hearing from you.*

- 3 Trainees work in pairs to write the reply. It is a good idea to give them a single piece of paper (or computer terminal) to write their reply, as this will make it more collaborative and communicative. Set a tight time limit (around five minutes). You could encourage them to use some of the phrases and techniques from Xavier's improved email. They read their emails aloud, so you can give and elicit general feedback on the clarity of the messages and the effectiveness of the emails. Finally, tell them to compare their answers with the model answer on page 70.

Extension activity

Again, tell trainees to read the model answer from page 70 to underline all the useful phrases that they could use in their own emails. Afterwards, discuss the answers with the class.

Answers



- *Thanks very much for your email.*
- *I think XXX would be a really good idea and then we can discuss XXX in more detail face-to-face when you are in XXX.*
- *Why don't we speak at XXX your time?*
- *I would be available to meet you on XXX at XXX.*
- *Please let me know what works for you and I will give you a call on your office number.*

- 4 Trainees work alone to complete the four emails. Draw their attention to the frameworks beside each email. They compare their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 70).

Extension activity

Trainees work in pairs or groups of three to make email dialogues, using the model emails from exercise 4 as a source of useful phrases, but changing the details. For example, Student A could start with *I am writing to arrange our next meeting to discuss the marketing plan. I would suggest ...* Student B could then respond to this oral email, using phrases from the model for *Confirming a meeting*. These email dialogues could continue over several turns, for example:

- Organising a meeting → Explaining a problem → Suggesting an alternative → Confirming a meeting
- Requesting information → Thanking and supplying information (*Please find attached ...*) → Explaining a problem → Apologising and suggesting a solution → Thanking

They could either write these emails down, or do the exercise orally (i.e. say what they would write, without actually writing anything down).

Afterwards, you could ask some volunteers to present their email dialogues orally for the class.

- 5 Trainees work in pairs to brainstorm a list of emails that they often write at work. After a few minutes, elicit a list of the most common emails and write them on the board. Then ask them to compare their list with the one on page 70.
- 6 Trainees work alone or in pairs to plan their frameworks for the emails that they most commonly write. Ideally, each trainee or pair would work on different frameworks, so that you end up with a framework for all of the most common situations. Afterwards, ask trainees to present their ideas to the class. Give and elicit feedback on each framework. Discuss whether any of the phrases from the model emails in this unit could be used in those emails.

Extension activity

Ask trainees to write up their frameworks on a computer at home, ideally including some useful phrases for each part of the framework, and to email them to you so you can collect them in a single document. Then give each trainee a complete version of the frameworks as a permanent record.

- 7 Tell trainees to read the email and to write the replies. As in exercise 3, it is a good idea to give them a single piece of paper (or computer terminal) to write their replies. Tell them to write neatly, as the other trainees will need to read and understand their writing later. Allow around five minutes for each of the emails, and another five minutes for them to compare their emails with another pair's emails. They read their emails aloud and choose the best as a class.

Alternatively, you could put the emails up on the walls around the classroom, so that everyone can go round and read them all.

Finally, tell them to read the possible emails and commentary on page 70 to compare them with their own ideas. Discuss with the class whether their emails included all of the important points mentioned in the commentary.

Cultural tip

Elicit from the class some tips for writing international emails. You could use the beginnings of the sentences from the cultural tip to generate ideas (*Write short, simple and structured emails with a ...; Begin the email with a ...; Make sure it is clear to the reader what ...*). Then tell trainees to read the cultural tip to compare it with their ideas.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. Check that all trainees feel that they can write clear, polite emails which give information and request actions in a way which is easily understandable for the reader. Discuss with the class how they can continue to improve in this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

7B Writing emails

Before you begin

Use the two unit aims to generate a short discussion. You could use these questions to prompt the discussion, but avoid providing answers at this stage.

- 1 What are your experiences of misunderstandings in emails?
- 2 Why might it be important to communicate sensitively?

Suggested answers



- 1 Examples include humour that is misinterpreted as aggression; direct requests that are misinterpreted as orders; indirect requests that are misinterpreted as suggestions; idioms that are taken literally, etc.
- 2 Because people judge others based on the way they communicate. If your only contact with a person is by email, and that person has a very direct email style, you may decide you don't like that person and may be unwilling to do business with him / her.

- 1 18 Trainees read the questions to predict briefly in pairs what Oleg might say about each of them. Then play the recording for trainees to answer the questions. They discuss their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 70).

Language notes

- If something is *ambiguous*, it has two or more possible meanings. For example, if you write *I'm worried about the deadline*, it could mean that you think you might miss the deadline, or it could mean that you think the deadline itself is a problem.
- Oleg refers to email as a *channel*, by which he means a *channel of communication*. Other channels of communication include face-to-face meetings, telephoning, teleconferences, etc.

Extension activity

Write the following questions on the board. Trainees listen again to answer the questions. They discuss their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class.

- 1 What type of information is often misunderstood in international emails?
- 2 What does Oleg say about the length of emails?
- 3 How does he avoid being ambiguous?
- 4 What does he do if the email channel isn't working?
- 5 What possible reason does he give for being irritated by an email?

Answers

- 1 Sensitive information.
- 2 The shorter the email, the bigger the chance you will be misunderstood.
- 3 He tries to give more background to the problem.
- 4 He phones.
- 5 There may be a misunderstanding from his side (i.e. he may not have understood it properly).

- 2 Trainees read the emails and discuss question 1 briefly in pairs. Go through their answers to question 1 before moving on to question 2. Trainees work in pairs to rewrite the emails, based on the issues they discussed in question 1. Allow 5–10 minutes for the writing task, and then ask trainees to read their emails aloud to the class. Briefly discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each email, focusing especially on how sensitive and positive they are. Finally, trainees read the advice in the answer key on pages 70–1 and the sample emails to compare them with their own versions, and discuss their reactions with the class.

Language note

If you are *unequivocal*, you have a single, clear opinion, which you express confidently.

Extension activity

Trainees look again at the advice and sample emails in the answer key, and match phrases from the model emails to each piece of advice. Note that the advice for email 2 is presented as a single sentence, so they will first have to separate out each point from that sentence. They discuss their answers in pairs and then share their ideas with the class.

Suggested answers

Email 1:

- Integrate a social start to 'soften' the impact of the request: *Hope you are well.*
- Express the request for information as a need for support: *I'm just writing to request XXX.*
- Acknowledge that your email will create extra pressure / work: *I realise this is very short notice and that you'll have a lot of other things to do.*
- Stress that the email is to reach a common objective rather than solve 'my' problem: *If the talk goes well, we should have ... which will be great news for all of us.*
- Be open to a telephone contact to discuss the matter: *If it is a problem to XXX, we should speak XXX.*
- Finish with a clear and unequivocal polite expression of thanks: *Many thanks for your support with this.*

Email 2:

- Express thanks: *Many thanks for your email and XXX.*
- Give balanced minimal feedback: *I've had a look through and have some comments on what I like about it and areas which I think could be improved.*
- Include a proposal for a telephone call: *Would it be a good idea to have a telephone call to discuss things in more detail? If so, could you propose a time for XXX? XXX would suit me best.*

- 3 Trainees work alone to complete the expressions and match them with the strategies, and then compare their ideas with a partner. You may need to check they fully understand the meaning of *misinterpretation* (understanding something in the wrong way). Check answers in full class (SB page 71).

Extension activity

Trainees take turns to test each other in pairs or groups of three by reading one of the strategies aloud to elicit the useful expressions from their partner, whose book is closed. They could prompt their partner with the first words, e.g. *I appreciate that ...* if necessary.

- 4 Trainees work alone to complete the task and then compare their answers with a partner before feeding back to the class (SB page 71).

Language notes

When Chris says that *things are ... a little behind last year*, he means that the company's results are not quite as good as last year's results.

If you *bring a deadline forward*, you change it so that it is earlier than planned. If you make the deadline later than planned, you *put it back*.

Extension activity

Briefly discuss with the class the function of the remaining sections of Chris's email.

Suggested answers

- *I hope the business is going well. Things are fine here although a little behind last year.* (social start to soften the impact of the request)
- *... but I will try to get some extra resources for you.* (offering support to soften the impact of the request)
- *If this doesn't work, can you confirm another time before the end of this week please?* (showing flexibility)
- *Look forward to talking.* (ending on a positive note)

- 5 Trainees read the instructions and the email to find out what they need to do. You could use these questions to check they understand exactly what they have to do.
- What do you know about your own job and location, based on Camilo's email? (**Answer:** You are probably a manager, based in the UK, involved in a project to implement a new customer service database.)
 - Who are Camilo and Elio? (**Answer:** Camilo is your friend and colleague, based in Milan, and is probably in a similar job to you. Elio seems to be a more senior manager, perhaps responsible for all the country managers in this project.)
 - What problems have they been having? (**Answer:** Problems implementing the new customer service database.)
 - What exactly does Camilo want you to do? (**Answer:** Request a postponement of the management circle.)
 - What do you think a management circle might be? (**Answer:** Probably a mini-conference where managers from different countries come together to give presentations, discuss progress and socialise.)
 - Why do you think Camilo has asked you to do this? (**Answer:** Because you know him quite well and have a better relationship with Elio. Perhaps you are also known as someone who is good at managing difficult people.)
 - What is Elio like as a person? (**Answer:** Sensitive to late changes, very structured.)
- You could set the writing as homework, or ask trainees to work in pairs to write their replies. Stress the importance of planning before they write, to make sure they consider all the points they would like to mention and the strategies they will use. Tell them also to use the useful phrases from Units 7A and 7B where appropriate. Allow 5–10 minutes for the writing.

Background note

CET stands for *Central European Time*, i.e. the time zone used across a large part of Europe.

- 6 Trainees compare their emails in groups and read the best emails aloud to the class. Give and elicit feedback on each email, especially in terms of the strategies from this unit. Finally, tell them to read the model email on page 71 to compare it with their ideas and to identify the strategies that it uses.

Cultural tip

Tell trainees to close their books. Read the beginning of the cultural tip aloud (*When you write emails, especially on sensitive topics, make sure that you ...*), to elicit from the class a range of ideas for how it might end. Trainees then read the cultural tip to compare it with their ideas.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. Check that all trainees feel that they can write emails which communicate sensitive information in a way which is unlikely to be misunderstood by the reader. Discuss with the class how they can continue to improve in this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

8A Negotiating across cultures

Before you begin

Use the two unit aims to generate a short discussion. You could use these questions to prompt the discussion, but avoid providing answers at this stage.

- 1 What might be some of the challenges of negotiating across cultures?
- 2 What might be the stages in a negotiation process?

Suggested answers



- 1 Language problems; different expectations, based on different cultures; different styles, e.g. aggressive versus collaborative.
- 2 Relationship-building; pre-negotiation (establishing where, when and how to run the negotiation); stating positions; bargaining; reaching agreement; formal confirmation; follow-up.

- 1 Trainees work alone to complete the first task, and then discuss their answers in small groups. In their discussions they should consider the relative importance of each behaviour. You could open up this discussion to include the whole class before telling trainees to compare their ideas with the advice in the answer key. Discuss any differences between trainees' ideas and the advice in the key (SB page 71), and explore with the class why the most important behaviours are so important, and the less important behaviours are not.

Language notes

- If you *highlight* something, you draw other people's attention to it.
- *Common ground* includes everything that both sides want to achieve. For example, both sides may agree that they want to keep costs as low as possible and to build a good long-term relationship. You can then show how your own negotiating position, e.g. the need for longer lead times, is based on those shared objectives.
- If you *undermine* something, you weaken it by drawing attention to its problems.

- 2 19 Elicit from the class where Chen is from (she works in Shanghai). Trainees discuss the six questions in pairs, to predict what Chen might say about them. Then play the recording for trainees to answer the questions in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 71).

Language notes

- *Outsourcing* involves paying another company to do something that you have previously done inside your own company. For example, you could outsource most of your accounting department to a specialist accounting company.
- A *mismatch* is a situation when two things don't match or fit together. In this case, there was a mismatch of expectations: the two sides expected different things from the negotiation. Later in the recording, Chen describes the same situation as a *clash*.
- If you are *held liable* for something, you are legally responsible for it, and may be forced to pay money or perform some other action if something goes wrong.
- If you are *tolerant of risk*, you accept risk as a normal part of working life.

Extension activity

Tell trainees to look at the audio script on page 58 and underline all the words and phrases that describe the negotiating styles of the Chinese and American companies. They compare their answers in pairs and then feed back to the class. Finally, discuss which of the words and phrases they would use to describe their own negotiating style.

Suggested answers



American company:

- *extremely detailed; much more detailed; too detailed*
- *didn't want to sign up for anything unless they understood every detail*
- *very conservative*
- *didn't want to take any risks*
- *wouldn't agree unless they were 100% sure that they could deliver*
- *did not want to be held liable*
- *slow decision-making process*
- *hard to influence them in any way to change*
- *conservative*

Chinese company:

- *not a big documentation and process company*
- *we wanted to set them a target, a goal*
- *tolerance of risk*
- *pretty relaxed*
- *a lot of flexibility in terms of what they do*
- *more flexible than most companies*

- 3 Trainees discuss the questions in pairs or small groups. Remind them that negotiations are not just something that happen in business: we negotiate all the time in our private lives as well, e.g. between husbands and wives, parents and children, friend, strangers. Allow plenty of time for the discussions, then open up the discussion to include the whole class. Elicit and discuss trainees' most interesting experiences of negotiating across cultures.
- 4 20 Trainees read the instructions to find out what they will be listening to and what they have to do. Play the recording for them to make notes. They compare their notes in pairs and listen a second time if necessary. Then go through the answers with the class (SB page 72).

Background note

If you *kick things off*, you start a process. This idiom comes from football, where the *kick-off* is the start of a match.

- 5 Trainees work in pairs to try to remember the missing words, and then listen again to check. They discuss their answers in pairs, including other ways of expressing the same ideas, and then feed back to the class (SB page 72).

Suggested answers: other ways of expressing the ideas



- a *Is it OK if we start?; I think it would be better if we started.*
- b *That's not a problem.; I don't have a problem with that.*
- c *As far as we're concerned, ...; From our point of view, ...*
- d *Perhaps we should change the agenda.; Why don't we ...; How about if we ...*
- e *Can I just come in there?; Can I just interrupt for a second?*
- f *It's good that you brought that up.; Thanks for reminding me about that.*

Extension activity

Trainees take turns to test each other in pairs or groups of three by reading one of the functions aloud, e.g. disagreeing with the proposed agenda, to elicit the useful expressions from their partner, whose book is closed. They could prompt their partner with the first words, e.g. *Actually, we'd ...* if necessary.

- 6 Divide the class into pairs and allocate roles, A and B. Trainees read the instructions and their role cards to make sure they fully understand what they have to do. If you think they will struggle, you could put them into A and B groups to read their cards, check they understand and plan their strategies. Make sure they all realise that they are only role playing the introduction phase (which should take around five minutes), using the language and techniques from this unit, not the whole negotiation (which would take much longer). When they are ready, they can start their negotiations. Monitor carefully, paying particular attention to the way they use the strategies from this unit. After around five minutes, give and elicit feedback on their performance.

If you have an odd number of trainees, you will need to have a group of three, where the third trainee is either an HR assistant or the employee's line manager.

Language notes

- A *job rotation programme* involves employees working in different departments or locations, typically to gain experience, build relationships and share ideas across a large organisation.
- A *financial incentive* is money that is intended to motivate somebody to do something that they otherwise might not want to do.
- A *compensation package* includes a salary and other benefits such as a company car, pension scheme, private health insurance, etc.
- If you *set aside* time for something, you allocate that part of your schedule and plan nothing else for that time.

Extension activity

If you have time, you could allow the negotiations to continue beyond the initial stages and try to complete the negotiation by reaching an agreement. Again, trainees should try to use all the techniques and strategies from this book. Monitor carefully and be ready to give detailed feedback at the end.

Alternatively, you could tell trainees to swap roles and repeat the role play. They could change some of the details (e.g. change Australia to China) to keep them interested.

Cultural tip

Elicit from the class what you need to do in a negotiation before you start discussing anything else. They read the cultural tip to compare it with their ideas.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. Check that all trainees feel that they can define a clear and common objective and agenda at the beginning of a negotiation, and discuss with the class how they can continue to improve in this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

8B Negotiating across cultures

Before you begin

Use the two unit aims to generate a short discussion. You could use this question to prompt the discussion, but avoid providing answers at this stage.

- What is the difference between *influencing* and *persuading*?

Suggested answer



Persuading is always an active process – the persuader sets out to affect the behaviour of the other person; *influencing* is not necessarily active – someone may be influenced by observing another person at work, for example. In this unit, *influencing* is an active process but not as aggressive as persuading. It involves affecting the other person's behaviour through example and demonstrating that the change is for the good.

- 1 Elicit from the class what they remember about Chen Zhu from Unit 8A. They read the introduction and discuss the questions in pairs. Encourage them to think about their professional and private lives. After a few minutes, open up the discussion to include the whole class.
- 2 Trainees work alone to match the principles to the comments. They discuss their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 72).

Background note

If you explain something *with conviction*, you show that you are convinced that it is right, and have no doubts about it.

Extension activity

Trainees read the principles again to find one word that best summarises each principle. They discuss their ideas in pairs before feeding back to the class.

Suggested answers



- 1 listening
- 2 benefits
- 3 conviction
- 4 logic
- 5 share
- 6 emotional

- 3 Trainees discuss the four questions in pairs. Allow plenty of time for the discussions, as the questions are all very important. Then open up the discussion to include the whole class.

- 4  21 Go through the questions with the class. Make sure they understand the meaning of *reluctant* (unwilling to do something). Then play the recording for them to answer the questions. They discuss the questions in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 72).

Language notes

- An *audit* is a formal inspection within an organisation, carried out by someone from another organisation or department. In finance, external auditors inspect a company's accounts to make sure they are accurate. In some international organisations, a manager from one country carries out an audit in the organisations' offices in a different country, to make sure all procedures are being followed properly.
- If you *wrap something up*, you finish it.
- If you are *back on track*, you are heading in the right direction again after a problem.
- If you are *working flat out*, you are working as hard as possible.
- An *intern* is a student who is working with an organisation on a placement, as part of his / her studies. The word is mainly used in American English. In British English, such a person might be described as a *work experience student*.
- If you *brief* somebody, you provide background information and instructions.
- A *peak* is a high point on a graph. In the conversation, the peak relates to much busier period than usual.
- If you *pool resources*, you share them.
- In *I owe you one* (informal), *one* means 'a favour'. In other words, I'll help you in the future because you have helped me.

Extension activity

Trainees look at the audio script on page 58. They read and listen again to decide which of the six principles from exercise 2 Petra uses. They should underline sections of the audio script to illustrate the six principles. Afterwards, trainees discuss their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class.

Suggested answers



- 1 Pay attention / listen: *So you're saying they would need briefing on what to do?*
- 2 Deliver benefits: *And it actually makes sense to train up a couple of my team on the documentation side. It'll really help you out next time round, when you're really busy.*
- 3 Believe in your own ideas and explain with conviction: *That would really help; I think it really makes sense.*
- 4 Present in an organised way using logic: *We're having a real problem getting things wrapped up on time. I won't bore you with the details but we're really behind schedule at the moment and you know we need a report ready for next Friday. So, I was wondering if I could possibly borrow Paul for a couple more days, just to get us back on track. It would be a massive help to us.*
- 5 Be open and willing to share experience, resources and information: *OK, but what if I got you some support for all the documentation preparation?; Well, I just got a couple of interns ... great with this sort of presentation material. Would that free up Paul?; Then we can share resources on a more regular basis. ... why not pool resources a bit more?*
- 6 Use emotions and humour and be polite and friendly: *Sorry to bother you. Do you have a moment?; Great. Fantastic. Thanks very much, Nelvi. I owe you one!*

- 5  22 Go through the techniques with the class to make sure they understand all the words, including *commonality* (see **Language notes** below). Trainees then listen to the conversation to complete the ordering task. They compare their answers in pairs, including as much as they can remember about what each technique actually involved, and then feed back to the class (SB page 72).

Language notes

- If you *stress commonality*, you emphasise how a situation affects everybody.
- A *hectic period* is an especially busy time.

- 6 Trainees read the audio script on page 59 to underline the phrases. You could play the recording a second time while they are doing this. They then discuss their answers in pairs, including alternative versions of each phrase. Finally, discuss the answers with the class, and collect the best alternative phrases onto the board (SB page 72).

Suggested answers



Alternative expressions:

- 1 *I'm absolutely convinced ...; There's no doubt in my mind that ...*
- 2 *The best thing about this opportunity is ...; The real benefit is that ...*
- 3 *I know how you must be feeling – I've been through exactly the same process myself, and I remember how difficult it was for me to decide.*
- 4 *Because of this, we have no choice but to ...; As a result, we're left with only two options ...; That means you'll need to ...*
- 5 *I'd be happy to spend some time helping you with this; Would you like me to show you ...?*
- 6 *It's good that you said that ... because what I'd like to suggest is that we ...; OK, so based on what you're saying, why don't we ...*

- 7 Before you begin, you could brainstorm a list of small favours, e.g. borrow your car, copy your homework, use your mobile phone, stay for a week in your house, send the report a week late. Trainees then work in pairs or threes to take turns to ask for favours. Make sure the other person does not grant the favour immediately – they will need to be persuaded. Make sure they also know to use the techniques from this unit. After a few minutes, give and elicit feedback on the effectiveness of the techniques.

- 8 Divide the class into As and Bs. Then put the As together in groups of three or four and the Bs in different groups. They read their role cards and plan carefully their strategies for getting what they want, based on the information in the profiles. Use this opportunity to make sure they all fully understand their roles and objectives.

After about five minutes, put them into pairs, with one A and one B, for the negotiation. Remind them to use the techniques from this unit. Allow plenty of time for the actual negotiations (up to 10 minutes), during which you should monitor carefully, paying particular attention to their use of the techniques from this unit. Afterwards, tell them to use the three questions to discuss the effectiveness of their negotiations. Finally, give and elicit feedback from the class.

If you have an odd number of trainees, you will need to have a group of three, where the third trainee is a neutral member of staff, for example the Human Resources manager, whose role it is to offer suggestions without taking sides.

Cultural tip

Elicit from the class what the most important influencing technique might be. They then read the cultural tip to compare it with their ideas.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. Check that all trainees feel that they can use a range of arguments to influence their international contacts effectively, and discuss with the class how they can continue to improve in this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

9A Managing conflict

Before you begin

Use the two unit aims to generate a short discussion. You could use these questions to prompt the discussion, but avoid providing answers at this stage.

- 1 Have you ever experienced conflict at work? What happened?
- 2 Looking back, how could this conflict have been avoided?

Suggested answers



- 2 For example, by being aware of the conflict (or the potential for conflict) as soon as possible; by looking at the situation from the other person's point of view; by listening; by actively trying to resolve the conflict, rather than being obsessed with who is right and who is wrong; by communicating actively with the other person before and during the potential conflict; by avoiding saying things that will make the conflict worse.

Background notes

Note that question 1 could include conflicts that the trainees have witnessed, not just those they have been involved in directly. Note also that the term *conflict* covers a wide range of situations where different people feel strongly but differently about something, including business conflicts (e.g. *They said they'd deliver on time, but they didn't*) and personality clashes (e.g. *She never treats me with any respect*) and not just situations where these differences lead to major problems.

Note that question 2 includes some complex grammar: part of a third conditional structure to talk about the unreal past, in the passive, to avoid mentioning the subject. You could simplify the grammar for weaker classes: *In the future, how could you avoid similar conflict?*

- 1 Trainees read the quote and discuss the questions in pairs. After a few minutes, open up the discussion to include the whole class. Students then compare their lists with the list on page 72.

Possible answers



Is conflict always about emotions? This would be a good definition of the difference between a *disagreement* (which may not involve emotions) and a *conflict* (which does). Of course the emotions may not always be expressed: one person may feel frustrated, disappointed or angry inside, but keep these emotions private. In such a situation, the other person may not even be aware that the conflict exists.

- 2 **23** Check what trainees remember about Dani's job (in Human Resources for a Swedish bank) and his cultural background (originally from Iran). Trainees discuss the questions in pairs to predict what Dani might say about them and to make sure they understand all the words. You may need to check they understand the word *replicate* (do again in the same way). Then play the recording for trainees to answer the questions. They discuss the answers again in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 72).

Extension activity

Elicit from the class what emotions Dani talked about. Trainees then look at the audio script on page 59. They read and listen again to underline all the phrases connected with emotions and people's feelings. Encourage them to include whole phrases, not just single words. They compare their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class. Finally, discuss with the class if they would react to the same situations with these emotions.

Suggested answers



- ... something gets me angry and I don't really know what to do.
- I don't like it.
- Emotionally you go through a lot during this time.
- You're angry.
- You're sad.
- ... you see the change is good and you're happy to do it.
- ... people can get very worried and angry ...
- ... managers get angry with staff.
- ... no job satisfaction.
- ... there was like a big revolution, shouting, a lot of anger ...
- How can you think like this?
- All that the employees wanted ... was leaders to go to them and say 'thank you'.
- They just wanted a close connection with their boss ...
- ... more sensitive and open listening process ...
- ... employee feels that and they feel part of the organisation.

- 3 Write the letters A–I–R on the board, and elicit from the class what the letters might stand for, in the context of resolving conflict. Then tell them to read the background information on page 38 (but not yet the description of the example situation) to find out. (**Answer:** A = anticipate; I = identify; R = recommend). Make sure they fully understand all of these stages, especially anticipate (= predict what might happen).

Tell trainees to read the description of the situation at the bottom of page 38. With the class, elicit one or two suggestions for each of the three stages, *anticipate*, *identify* and *recommend*. Trainees then read the information at the top of page 39 to compare it with their ideas. Note that the information on page 39 contains additional details about the situation, which of course trainees cannot predict. Draw trainees' attention to the useful language for anticipating possible conflicts (*could*, *might* and *may*) and for recommending ways to avoid conflict (*should* and *ought to*).

Language note

There is no important difference between *may*, *might* and *could* for speculating about the future (although different people may treat them differently). There is also no important difference between *should* and *ought to*, although *should* is more common. The word *to* is optional in negative sentences with *ought*, e.g. *You oughtn't (to) send that email*, but both versions are rare: it is easier and more natural to use *shouldn't* for negative recommendations, e.g. *You shouldn't send that email*.

Trainees then work in pairs or small groups to discuss the three situations. You may need to check they understand all the words in the situations (see **Background notes** below). If you are short of time, you could assign a different situation to each group. Alternatively, you could stop after each situation, to discuss ideas with the whole class. Encourage trainees to use modal verbs (*might* | *could* | *may* | *should* | *ought to*) in their discussions.

Allow around 10 minutes for the discussion and monitor carefully while trainees are working. Then discuss the three situations with the class. Encourage a wide range of ideas. Finally, tell trainees to compare their ideas with the commentary on pages 72 and 73. You could go through the commentary quite carefully with the class, discussing each stage of the AIR process from the point of view of both participants.

Background notes

- A *secondment* is a temporary placement in a different department or office within the same organisation, typically as a way of gaining experience and knowledge.
- If you *chase invoices*, you contact customers to remind them that they need to pay.
- If you *start the ball rolling*, you take the first steps in a process.
- *Resentment* is a feeling of anger which is usually not expressed openly. If you *resent* something, you feel negative and frustrated about it.
- If you *sign something off*, you make a final decision to approve something. By signing it, you take responsibility for it being correct.

Extension activities

- 1 Trainees could role play one or more of the meetings recommended in the commentary. If you have an odd number of trainees, you could include an observer in some groups. Trainees swap roles after each role play, so that one trainee does not have to be the observer all the time. Monitor the role plays carefully and give and elicit feedback at the end.
- 2 Trainees work in groups to describe some conflicts or potential conflicts from their own work or private lives. They then go through the AIR process in their groups to try to come up with solutions. Finally, ask them to present their ideas to the class.

Cultural tip

Elicit from the class the most important technique from this unit, and then tell them to read the cultural tip to compare it with their ideas.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. Check that all trainees feel that they can anticipate possible conflicts which could happen in their international working environment and communicate effectively to avoid them happening. Discuss with trainees how they can continue to improve in these skills.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

9B Managing conflict

Before you begin

Use the two unit aims to generate a short discussion. You could use this question to prompt the discussion, but avoid providing answers at this stage.

- What examples of conflict across cultures can you think of?

Suggested answer



Examples include any situation where differences in cultural background can lead to misunderstandings with emotional consequences. Most cross-cultural conflict involves respect: one party does not show enough respect for something that the other considers very important.

- 1 Trainees read the description to answer the questions. They discuss their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 73).

Background note

Tatami mats have played an important role in Japanese culture, and many homes still contain at least one tatami room, used for religious or cultural ceremonies, e.g. the tea ceremony. The mats must be kept as clean as a bed surface or dining table surface. See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tatami.

Extension activity

Trainees read the text again to identify useful techniques and language for describing cultural conflicts. They should break the story first into sections, e.g. background to the situation, and then find useful phrases. They discuss their ideas in pairs before feeding back to the class. They could then use as many of the same phrases as possible to describe a different situation.

Suggested answers (useful phrases underlined)

- Background to the situation: *In a recent Hollywood movie production with the action set in Japan the stage was covered with tatami mats, a grass floor covering typical in Japan. The Japanese members of the production team requested that their American colleagues removed their boots before walking on the tatami.*
- Source of the conflict: *The Americans agreed to do this but increasingly made 'quick changes' to lighting or electrical components without taking boots off.*
- The emotional response: *Symbolically, this behaviour by the Americans communicated disrespect to the Japanese, who became increasingly upset by the Americans' failure to remove their boots. It led to increasingly poor relationships and other conflicts.*
- Understanding the real reasons for the conflict: *Positive change only came when the Japanese realised that the Americans did not understand the symbolic importance that the Japanese attached to respecting tatami.*
- The solution: *In their next meeting, the Japanese compared the place of tatami in their culture to the place of the US flag in American culture, asking the Americans to please act as they would if the US flag were on the floor.*
- The result: *Hearing this, the American perception of the situation changed; they understood the feelings of their Japanese colleagues and changed their behaviour, enthusiastically removing their boots every time they walked on the tatami.*

- 2 Trainees discuss the questions in pairs. After a few minutes, open up the discussion to include the whole class.

Suggested answers

- Lessons learned: look at the situation from the other person's point of view; remove emotion from the situation; use comparisons to help the other side understand why their behaviour causes a problem.
- Other ways of resolving the conflict (note that none of the following solutions would have been as effective as the one the Japanese chose, and they could well have made the conflict worse): getting angry; using power relationships (e.g. complaining to the Americans' bosses); bringing an American flag to the studio and walking on it.
- Strategies for handling conflict: see Unit 9A (Before you begin – **Suggested answers**) above for some suggestions.

- 3 Trainees work alone to think how the extracts will continue, and then discuss their ideas in pairs. You may need to check they understand all the words: see **Background notes** below. Afterwards, discuss their ideas with the class, but avoid confirming or rejecting their ideas, as this would undermine exercise 4.

Language notes

- *Testosterone* is a hormone that is associated with things like risk taking and aggression. Men produce about ten times as much testosterone as women. Culturally, testosterone is often associated with men and negative aspects of maleness. See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Testosterone.
- If you *confront* somebody with a problem, you speak to them directly about the problem, even if that makes the person feel uncomfortable.
- Note that speaker 5 uses *surface* as a verb: *to bring something to the surface*. In this case, the speaker is talking about being open about issues (problems) and not staying quiet about them.

- 4  **24** Play the recording for trainees to check their predictions. They then discuss the three questions in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 73). Note that there are no 'correct' answers here: each strategy may be good in some situations but very bad in others. The aim is rather to explore the different strategies that people use and to make trainees think about their own strategies.

Background notes

- If you *buy into* somebody's idea or proposal, you like it and believe in it strongly.
- If you *sweep a problem under the carpet*, you ignore it and pretend that it doesn't exist.

- 5  **25** Go through the questions quickly with the class. Then play the recording for trainees to answer the questions. They discuss their answers in pairs and then feed back to the class (SB page 73).

Language notes

- Note that the *resource* they discuss at the beginning of the conversation is actually a person – a human resource.
- A *zone meeting* is a meeting of different people from the same zone (region, set of countries) in an organisation. It is more commonly called a *regional meeting*.
- If you're *back to square one*, you have to go back to the beginning of a process. The idiom comes from some board games, where an unlucky player may nearly finish the game but then be sent right back to the beginning.
- Gavin refers to *the board*, i.e. the board of directors or the management board.
- If someone is *freed up*, they are no longer tied by obligations, e.g. working on one project and are available, e.g. to work on a different project.
- At the end of the conversation, Gavin agrees to *run with this* (try this solution to see what happens) and to *touch base* (= speak to each other again).

- 6 Elicit from the class the meaning of the expression *to take the heat out of the situation* (to make the situation less emotional; to move away from the conflict and towards finding a solution). Trainees then work in pairs to plan ways of achieving the seven objectives. Elicit the best examples onto the board. Then play the recording a second time for trainees to check what Alessandro and Gavin actually said. You could allow trainees to read the audio script on page 60 while they listen. Finally, go through the answers with the class. Point out that the answers from the audio script are just examples, and may be no better or worse than trainees' own ideas.

Extension activity

Trainees test each other in pairs. One trainee closes his / her book. The other trainee reads one of the strategies from exercise 6, e.g. *Apologise explicitly*, to elicit from his / her partner a suitable way of achieving this objective. They could respond with the actual phrase from the dialogue or their own ideas. Afterwards, they swap roles.

- 7 Divide the class into two groups, As and Bs. Tell them to read their role cards and the email and to make sure everyone in their group fully understands all the information. Monitor carefully to identify any problems.

Background notes

- A *milestone* is a stage in a process, e.g. a project. Milestones typically have deadlines, and other stages in the process can only begin once certain milestones have been achieved.
- A *workstream* is a body of activity within a project (also called a sub-project). A project is typically organised into several workstreams or sub-projects. Each *workstream lead* (the leader of a sub-project) reports to the project head.
- If a computer system *crashes*, it stops working.
- A *broker event* is an event, e.g. a conference, for brokers (people who buy and sell stocks, insurance, etc.).

Trainees then role play the situation in pairs. Encourage them to use the techniques from exercise 6 to help them resolve the conflict, but not to be too helpful, in order that their partners also get a chance to practise the techniques. Allow plenty of time for the role plays (at least five minutes). Monitor carefully, and be ready to give feedback on the effectiveness of their strategies for resolving conflicts.

If you have an odd number of trainees, you will need to have a group of three trainees, where the third trainee plays the role of Pierre Garnaid and reads role B.

Trainees then go back to their original groups (i.e. all the As in one group; all the Bs in another) to discuss the four questions. Finally, discuss the role plays with the whole class, focusing on the strategies they used, the different solutions they found and any lessons they learned.

Cultural tip

Read the beginnings of the two sentences from the cultural tip aloud to the class (*When dealing with conflict, focus first on ...; Then use a ...*) to elicit how they might continue. Then tell trainees to read the cultural tip to compare it with their ideas.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. Check that all trainees feel that they can use a variety of strategies to manage conflicts arising in an international job. Discuss with the class how they can continue to improve in this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

10A Working in an international team

Before you begin

Use the two unit aims to generate a short discussion. You could use these questions to prompt the discussion, but avoid providing answers at this stage.

- 1 What might be some of the challenges of working in an international team?
- 2 Why do you think your personal introduction at a first team meeting might be so important?

Suggested answers



- 1 Examples might include language barriers, different expectations and styles of working. If the team is in several locations, there may be problems coordinating meetings between them, managing them and building relationships between them.
- 2 Because first impressions make a lasting difference to how other people see us.

- 1 Trainees read the quote to find five things that Gudrun believes are necessary for a successful team. Discuss the answers with the class, including what each of the five things means in practical terms.

Suggested answers



- Be open, e.g. share information with others.
- Be friendly, e.g. be nice; help other people.
- Be interested in the other person, e.g. ask them questions about their work and their lives outside work.
- Build up personal contact, e.g. spend time talking to them and (especially) listening to them.
- Maintain personal contact, e.g. remember them next time you see them and continue to show an interest in them.

Trainees then discuss the first three questions in pairs. After a few minutes, open up the discussion to include the whole class. Try to come up with a list of the five most important reasons why project teams may be unsuccessful. Finally, tell trainees to compare their list with the list of possible reasons why teams fail on page 73 and the list of top five reasons why projects fail on page 85. Discuss the five reasons on page 85 with the class, eliciting an example of each, either from your trainees' experience or an imagined example. Use the **Background notes** below to check they understand all the terms. Note that the list on page 85 includes external factors that are not necessarily caused by the team, while the list on page 73 is of internal factors, i.e. people problems within the team.

Background notes

- A *project sponsor* is usually a senior member of staff (e.g. one of the company directors) who is responsible for that project. The sponsor's role includes obtaining finance for the project and making sure the project is seen as a priority by other senior members of the organisation. This role is different from that of *project manager*, who runs the project on a day-to-day basis, but the same person may share both roles.
- The *bottom line* is a company's financial situation, i.e. whether it is making a profit or a loss.
- The *project scope* defines what exactly the project covers (e.g. whether it affects the whole organisation or only certain departments; whether it is permanent or only for a few months, etc.).
- *Deliverables* are specific, measurable outcomes of a project. For example, the project may aim to cut the number of faulty products by 25% over 3 months.

Extension activity

Read this list of complaints from managers aloud to the class. Trainees match the problems with one of the five possible reasons from the answer key on page 73. They could also come up with their own list of complaints for the problems in order to test their partners.

- 1 He's really aggressive, and he never treats me with respect.
- 2 The other day we had a problem with our project, but nobody did anything about it. It turns out they were all waiting for me to deal with it!
- 3 We all work really hard, but the so-called project champion seems to spend all his time on business trips. Even worse, he takes all the credit for our hard work!
- 4 I thought the whole point of this project team was to reduce the amount of documentation we need, but it seems we're just creating a new layer of bureaucracy on top of the old layer.
- 5 I'm supposed to give 25% of my time to this project, but I'm not sure if that means one day a week or two hours a day ... actually, it feels as if this 25% is on top of my current 100%.

Answers



- 1 Personality conflicts
- 2 Unclear roles
- 3 Poor sponsorship / leadership
- 4 Confused goals
- 5 Badly defined working procedures

- 2 26 Trainees read through the questions and discuss in pairs what Gudrun might say about each question. They then listen to the recording to check their predictions. They discuss their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 73).

Background notes

- Gudrun says *I would never say I'm a doctor because I know in a lot of cultures it's not normal to say it*. She is probably referring to academic qualifications such as *Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)*, rather than the profession of being a medical doctor, for example in a hospital. In some countries, such as the UK or USA, businesspeople may be less impressed by academic qualifications than in practical experience and achievements. In Germany, on the other hand, businesspeople tend to be very interested in someone's academic background. See www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/germany-country-profile.html.
- A *facilitator* is a person who helps other people achieve things. Many managers see their job not as telling people what to do (leading) but rather as providing their people with the opportunity and resources to do things for themselves.
- *Networking* involves building and maintaining a network of friends and contacts. The principle is that the people in your network may be able to introduce you to other people, who can also join your network. Events such as conferences are excellent opportunities for networking. Gudrun uses the term *networking* to mean building and maintaining relationships with people, rather than increasing the size of her network.
- Gudrun says she asks people about their *status*. Here, she simply wants to know about their progress with the project and any problems they have been having.

Extension activity

Trainees look at the audio script on page 60 and read and underline useful verb collocations. Elicit a list of collocations and write them on the board. There may be some disagreement over which phrases are useful collocations. Afterwards, trainees can test each other in pairs by reading the beginning of a collocation (e.g. *go round the ...*) to elicit from their partner how it continues. You could also encourage trainees to use some of these collocations when describing their own experiences in exercise 3.

Suggested answers



- *build up and maintain personal contact*
- *go round the table*
- *get it right from the start*
- *focus on working life*
- *share information*
- *sound impolite*
- *clarify (something) directly*
- *make it short and sweet*
- *give (someone) the impression that ...*
- *share ideas*
- *give feedback*
- *tell people a little bit about ...*
- *have an idea of how to ...*
- *keep (something) alive*
- *get in contact with (someone)*
- *ask people how they feel*
- *make networking calls*
- *be under pressure*
- *make time to have long conversations*
- *focus too much on the task*
- *run things better*
- *have a commitment from (someone)*

- 3 Make sure everyone is comfortable with the term networking (see Background note above). Trainees discuss the questions in small groups. After a few minutes, open up the discussion to include the whole class.
- 4  27 Trainees read the first question and then listen to answer the question. They then discuss their answers to the question, plus the three discussion questions in pairs. Finally, go through the questions with the class (SB page 73).

Suggested answers: final question

- Give Jaume space to be creative, but also make sure he keeps on top of his deadlines.
- Use Angel's skills to focus the team on results, but make sure his single-mindedness does not harm relations with other members of the team.
- Use Peter's experience and try to keep him energetic and enthusiastic by giving him the opportunity to learn new things.

Language notes

- If something gives you a *buzz* or a *kick*, you find it exciting or motivating.
- Jaume recommends that people should *push him* (not be afraid to tell him to do something using quite direct language) *on that front* (with things like *that*, i.e. with deadlines).
- If you are *single-minded*, you are completely focused on one thing.
- The way you *come across* is the way other people see you.

Extension activity

Trainees look at the audio script on page 61 and read and listen again to underline useful phrases that they could use to talk about themselves. When you check with the class, elicit some other ways of completing each phrase.

Suggested answers (other ways of completing the phrases in brackets)

- *I'm XXX from XXX. (My name is ...)*
- *So what can I say? Well, I suppose I should start by saying I like XXX.*
- *I think I'm very easy to get along with (... to work with).*
- *What really gives me a buzz is XXX.*
- *I really like that creative (dynamic / innovative) side of things.*
- *I'm not a great believer in structure and deadlines (... in rules and procedures), by the way, so push me if you need to on that front, OK?*
- *more specifically, I believe in (care about / am passionate about) this project.*
- *I think it will really XXX.*
- *I'm head of XXX there.*
- *For me and my colleagues in XXX, we are very committed to (keen on / enthusiastic about) this project.*
- *It's very important to help us XXX.*
- *why do I like working in international teams?*
- *Well, I'm very results-oriented (people-focused / energetic), which can come across as a bit critical (negative / direct) to some, but I get a real kick out of working in teams because I think that XXX.*
- *I am very happy to represent my country in this part of the project.*
- *It's my third (first / second) international project and I know that they can be XXX*
- *I always XXX when I'm XXX., and that's a big motivator for me*
- *I just love learning new stuff (achieving goals / working with great people).*

- 5 Trainees work alone to plan what they will say about themselves and then discuss their ideas in pairs. Point out that they need not yet have a specific project in mind – this will come in the next exercise. Encourage them to use some of the phrases from the recording (see **Extension activity** above), but not to overuse them. Afterwards, you could ask some volunteers to give their presentations to the class. Note that they will have the chance to give fuller introductions in exercise 6. Give and elicit feedback on the introductions.
- 6 Trainees read the background information and the email. Make sure they know that they can be quite creative in this role play (they could play themselves or they could invent a character; they can also decide what their role in the project will be). Allow a few minutes for everyone to prepare their introductions. They could discuss their ideas in pairs before they have to present to larger groups. If you have a small group (i.e. up to around eight trainees), it may be possible for everyone to present to the whole class. With larger classes, you will need to divide them into groups of around four to six trainees.
- Remind them to take notes during each other's introductions and to be ready to give feedback. Finally, give feedback to the whole class on the effectiveness of the introductions.

Cultural tip

Elicit from the class a list of adjectives to describe the way you should come across when introducing yourself to a new international team. Elicit also two pieces of information that you need to include in your introduction. Then tell trainees to read the cultural tip to compare it with their ideas.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. Check that all trainees feel that they can make an effective personal introduction in team meetings in order to support mutual understanding and team performance. Discuss with the class how they can continue to improve in this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

10B Working in an international team

Before you begin

Use the two unit aims to generate a short discussion. You could use these questions to prompt the discussion, but avoid providing answers at this stage.

- 1 What is feedback?
- 2 Who gives feedback to whom?
- 3 What are some of the problems with feedback?

Suggested answers



- 1 Feedback involves commenting on another person's ideas, their work, their performance, their progress or their attitude.
- 2 Customers give feedback to suppliers and partners; sometimes suppliers give feedback to customers; managers give feedback to their subordinates; sometimes subordinates can give feedback to their managers; sometimes people give feedback to their colleagues or peers.
- 3 For many people, it can be difficult to give feedback without sounding aggressive; most people don't like receiving feedback, especially criticism.

- 1 Trainees work alone to complete the questionnaire. Make sure they understand all the words (see **Language notes** below). They discuss their answers in pairs or small groups, bringing their own experiences of giving and receiving feedback into the discussion, and then share their ideas and experiences with the class.

Language notes

- Your *peers* are people on the same level as you in a hierarchy, or in a similar organisation.
- A *performance appraisal meeting* is also known as a *performance review*. It usually takes place once or twice a year, and is an opportunity for each employee to discuss their work with their manager.

- 2 **28** Quickly check what trainees remember about Gudrun from Unit 10A (she is a German project specialist who works on international projects for a global financial services company). They discuss the four questions in pairs to try to predict what Gudrun might say about them, and then listen to check. They discuss the answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 73).

Extension activity

Write the following words and phrases on the board. Trainees work in pairs to remember what Gudrun said about each of them, and then listen again to check. They discuss their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class.

- 1 too polite
- 2 last warning
- 3 clear and direct
- 4 I wonder if ...
- 5 I expect
- 6 neutral
- 7 aggressively
- 8 direct
- 9 solutions and actions
- 10 native speaker
- 11 strange
- 12 mistake

Answers

- 1 The British project leader was *too polite* when he gave feedback.
- 2 The person was giving a *last warning*.
- 3 Gudrun thinks that a leader has to be more *clear and direct* when giving feedback.
- 4 Gudrun thinks that if you say *I wonder if ...* it isn't effective enough and nothing will change.
- 5 You should say exactly what you *expect*.
- 6 You should use a *neutral* voice.
- 7 You should not speak *aggressively*.
- 8 Americans or Australians are more *direct*.
- 9 You can ask what has to be changed to focus on *solutions and actions*, which is easier to understand.
- 10 You have to tell people that not everyone is a *native speaker* so that they make allowances for language problems.
- 11 If Gudrun says something which sounds *strange* because she isn't a native speaker, she wants other people to give her feedback.
- 12 She may have made a *mistake* in something she said because of the foreign language.

- 3 29 Trainees read through the questions to make sure they understand everything. Then play the recording for them to answer the questions. They discuss their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 73). You could play the recording a second time if necessary, to focus on Lars' questions.

Language note

If you are *on board*, you are a committed member of a team.

- 4 Trainees read the advice carefully and then discuss the questions in pairs. Allow plenty of time for the discussion, and encourage trainees to bring in their own experiences. Finally, go through the five tips with the class, focusing on how useful each tip is.

Extension activity

Trainees read the advice again to find three key words that best sum up each tip. They discuss their ideas in pairs before feeding back to the class. Afterwards, trainees work in pairs to try to remember as much as possible about each tip, using only the three key words to help them.

Suggested answers



- 1 *positives, atmosphere, constructive*
- 2 *neutral, consequences, others*
- 3 *questions, encourage, reflect*
- 4 *commit, positive, impact*
- 5 *open, questions, learn*

- 5 Trainees listen again to see how the conversation relates to the five tips. They then discuss the questions in pairs before feeding back to the class. Finally, tell trainees to read the commentary on page 73 to compare it with their ideas.
- 6 Trainees work in pairs or small groups to rewrite the feedback. Ask some pairs of volunteers to role play their dialogues for the rest of the class, and discuss with the class the strengths and weaknesses of these dialogues, in relation to the five tips.

Background note

An *outburst* is a sudden expression of emotion, typically anger. By describing B's behaviour as an *outburst*, A is being very critical, almost like a parent telling off a child.

- 7 30 Play the recording for trainees to compare it with their dialogues. They could read the audio script on page 61 at the same time. Afterwards, discuss any important or interesting differences with the class.

Extension activity

Trainees read the audio script on page 61 to find examples of the five tips from exercise 4. They discuss their answers in pairs and then feed back to the class.

Suggested answers



- 1 Begin with positives: *What you said had a lot of truth in it ...*
- 2 Describe behaviour in a neutral way: *I could see a few people felt uncomfortable.*
- 3 Use questions to encourage the recipient to reflect: *What do you feel yourself? So what do you think you could do differently next time? Anything else?*
- 4 The recipient should commit to a positive course of action (B doesn't make a commitment, but he does offer suggestions): *Count to ten before saying anything? I think I'm going too fast and not listening to the others.* He accepts A's advice and suggestion about the anger management course positively.
- 5 Be open to feedback: *Mm, yes, you're right. I'm sorry about that? I just lost my temper.*

- 8 Trainees work in pairs to work through the three tasks. You could brainstorm a list of possible performance problems with the class first, in order to generate ideas, e.g. a missed deadline, a negative attitude, an outburst at a meeting, a complaint from a customer. Write the following questions on the board: *What organisation(s) do you work for? What is the relationship between the two people?* Trainees discuss the questions their role plays. Make sure they are as specific as possible before their role plays so they can concentrate on using the right strategies and language and not have to worry about inventing details.

Monitor the role plays carefully, paying particular attention to the way they use the techniques from this unit. After each role play, they discuss their performance in pairs. You could also give and elicit feedback at this stage. They then swap roles and repeat the role play with a different problem. Finally, give and elicit feedback from the class.

If you have an odd number of trainees, you will need to have one group of three, where the third trainee is an observer. The observer should use the techniques from this unit when giving feedback on the role play.

Cultural tip

Elicit from the class a list of reasons for giving feedback often when you work in an international team. Trainees then compare their ideas with the cultural tip.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. Check that all trainees feel that they can give and respond to feedback effectively, and discuss with the class how they can continue to improve in these skills.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

11A Managing diversity and creativity

Before you begin

Use the two unit aims to generate a short discussion. You could use these questions to prompt the discussion, but avoid providing answers at this stage.

- 1 What does the word *diversity* mean, in the context of the workplace?
- 2 What is the connection between diversity and creativity?

Suggested answers



- 1 Literally, *diversity* refers to the situation where there is a range of different (or diverse) people or things. In the workplace, diversity is often connected with *equal opportunities*, i.e. the principle that we should not discriminate against people based on their sex, colour, religion, nationality, sexuality, disability, age, etc. Diversity highlights the positive aspects of not discriminating: we end up with a wider range of employees, which can bring great benefits to an organisation.
- 2 If an organisation is diverse in terms of the types of people who work there, it may lead to a wider range of opinions and ideas within the organisation, including new or different ways of looking at problems. Conversely, an organisation where everyone is more or less the same (in some way) may experience a lack of creativity.

- 1 Trainees read the two extracts to identify the connection between them. They discuss their answers in pairs and then with the class (SB page 74).

Background note

- See the **Extension activity** below for paraphrases of the extracts in simpler language.
- If you *tap into* something, e.g. a resource, you find a way to benefit from it.
- If something is a *big departure from past practice*, it is very different from the way things were done before.

Extension activity

Read the following phrases aloud to the class. Trainees have to find a phrase in the extracts with a similar meaning. Use the paraphrases to check trainees fully understand all the phrases from the extracts. Note that the phrases do not follow the order of the text in the extracts.

- 1 ways to find and make use of the hidden talents of their employees
- 2 coming up with creative ways of solving problems
- 3 When we share our ideas and help each other, the results can be incredible.
- 4 The only the people who are really thinking are those who are thinking differently.
- 5 using the diversity within the organisation as a way of generating money
- 6 The bosses (Chief Executive Officers) of global companies say that innovation is one of the most important things they need to get right.

- 7 making sure every person is involved in and enthusiastic about the process
- 8 to create ideas which are very different from previous ideas
- 9 the best way of making the process of generating new ideas much faster
- 10 to make sure the customer recognises your brand and wants to buy your product or service, and not your competitor's
- 11 doing what the organisation wants to do
- 12 The most important factor, which makes the difference between failing and succeeding, is diversity.

Suggested answers



- 1 *ways to tap into the creative talents of their own people*
- 2 *creating innovative solutions*
- 3 *The magic begins when we come together*
- 4 *if everybody is thinking the same, then nobody is thinking*
- 5 *putting our differences to work*
- 6 *innovation is one of the top ten challenges on the minds of global CEOs*
- 7 *engaging everyone in the process*
- 8 *to come up with new ideas which may be a big departure from past practice*
- 9 *the most powerful accelerator for generating new ideas*
- 10 *to stay on top of the consumers' mind*
- 11 *executing organisational strategies*
- 12 *The breakthrough is the essential ingredient of diversity*

- 2 31 Trainees discuss the questions in pairs to predict what Frédéric might say about each of them. Then play the recording for trainees to answer the questions. They discuss their answers in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 74).

Language notes

- If you are *proactive*, you take decisions to solve a problem before it becomes a problem. The opposite is to be *reactive*, where you react to situations after they appear.
- If you *speak out*, you give your opinion, even if some other people may not want to hear it.
- If you *hold back*, you resist the temptation to speak.
- If you *give the stage to* another person, you allow them to talk.
- If you *coach* somebody, you train them or lead them by encouraging them.
- If you *step in*, you interrupt a process when you consider it to be necessary.
- A *synergy effect*, is when the benefits of combining two or more things are greater than the benefits of each thing separately. For example, if one person is an innovative computer genius with poor business skills, and his friend is a talented businesswoman with limited computer skills, they could work together to create a more successful company than either of them could separately.
- *Tolerance* involves being patient and understanding of differences between people.

Extension activity

Tell trainees to look at the audio script on page 62 and to read and listen again to answer the following questions:

- 1 In the answer to the interviewer's first question, what three adjectives does Frédéric use to describe successful meetings?
- 2 What is the great advantage of having diverse cultures in the meetings?
- 3 In the answer to the interviewer's second question, find two adjectives, two nouns and two phrasal verbs to describe different ways of behaving in meetings.
- 4 How easy was it for Frédéric to learn the skills he describes?
- 5 In the answer to the interviewer's fourth question, what does Frédéric say about very task-driven or task-oriented people?
- 6 What phrase does he use to describe a situation where you get great benefits from bringing together people with different skills?

Answers



- 1 *productive, efficient, creative*
- 2 The number of ideas, the innovation, the productivity.
- 3 Adjectives: *proactive, modest*
Nouns: *a revolutionary, a loser*
Phrasal verbs: *speak out, hold back*
- 4 Difficult: he needed a lot of training. He says *it takes a lot of time before this behaviour and these attitudes develop.*
- 5 They will not change, but he doesn't want to change the people. He wants to have both task-oriented and people-oriented members of the team.
- 6 *a synergy effect*

- 3 Trainees discuss the questions in pairs and then share their ideas with the class. Remind trainees that *diversity* can cover all types of cultural differences, not just nationalities.
- 4 Discuss briefly with the class who is responsible for encouraging people in a meeting to work together to become creative, and then tell them to read the instruction to exercise 4 to compare it with their ideas. (**Answer:** Everyone, not just the chair of the meeting.) Trainees then read the six techniques to think about what they would say in an international meeting for each technique. Write the best ideas for each technique on the board. Then compare students' answers with the suggestions on page 74.

Extension activity

Trainees work in pairs to discuss why each technique might be useful, and what might happen if participants didn't use the technique. Discuss the techniques with the class.

Suggested answers



- 1 The key word here is *freely*, which means without interruptions or comments while the person is speaking. Many creative ideas come out of suggestions that seem crazy at first, so it is important that participants feel they can express crazy ideas without being made to feel stupid. This technique is sometimes called *thinking outside the box* (thinking in a completely different way than usual). If this technique isn't used, people may be afraid of making unusual suggestions.
- 2 It is important that people consider each other's ideas. Otherwise, a *brainstorming* meeting (a meeting to generate ideas) becomes just a question of each person promoting his or her own ideas without really listening to other people's ideas. Also, by commenting, the second person may add a *twist* (something new and original) to the original idea, or may cause the first person to think of a way of improving the idea.

- 3 There is a real danger of *groupthink* (the problem where all members of a group agree with each other, perhaps because of social pressure or perhaps without being aware of what they are doing). Some leaders like to be surrounded by *yes-men* (colleagues who always agree with their boss, and therefore make the boss feel good), but others actively seek out the opinions of people who disagree.
- 4 The danger here is that people see problems with other people's suggestions. Although it is important to identify such problems, this does not necessarily mean that the suggestion is bad, and may still be worth exploring. If participants disagree too quickly, they may miss this opportunity to explore the different possibilities of each suggestion.
- 5 As with point 2, this encourages people to listen to and think about other people's ideas. Combining ideas may also lead to *synergy* (see **Extension activity** after exercise 2 above), where the two ideas combined may be much better than either idea by itself. Of course, it may be impossible to combine the two ideas, but the process of analysing whether or not they can be combined may lead to more creativity. If people don't use this technique, they may not spot synergies between different ideas.
- 6 As with point 5, this technique may create synergy. Again, even if your suggested combination is completely impractical, it will encourage other people to think outside the box and perhaps add a twist to your suggestion that will make it work. The danger if you are the chair of the meeting is that the other participants may accept your suggestion without challenging it, so this point needs to be combined with points 3 and 4. If you don't use this technique, you may be left with a series of good but unrelated ideas.

- 5  **32** Discuss the context briefly with the class, e.g. *Why do you think the beginning of the year might be a bad period for selling?*. Then play the recording for trainees to identify which techniques from exercise 4 are being used in each extract. They discuss their ideas in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 74).

Background notes

- In extract B, one speaker talks about new *channels*, i.e. *distribution channels*. Distribution channels are different ways of getting a product to a customer. Examples include using agents or distributors, selling directly to the public or through retailers (e.g. shops), etc.
- A *joint venture* (extract D) is an agreement between two separate businesses to create a new business which they own jointly. A well-known example of a joint venture is Sony Ericsson, a maker of mobile phones, which is jointly owned by separate companies, Sony and Ericsson.

- 6 Trainees work alone to read the audio script and underline the key phrases. They compare their answers in pairs and then discuss the discussion question. After a few minutes, go through the useful phrases and open up the discussion to include the class (SB page 74).
- 7 Tell trainees to read the instruction and the meeting agenda on page 89. Make sure everyone fully understands the agenda. You could use these questions to check their understanding, but avoid discussing the questions too deeply, as this may have a negative impact on the creativity of the meeting.
- 1 What sort of sites do you think are blocked by the firewall?
 - 2 Why do you think the senior board member is unhappy?
 - 3 Why do you think the company has a strict policy about gifts?
 - 4 Why do you think people in some countries expect bigger incentives?

Suggested answers

- 1 Gambling, games, etc. Possibly some social networking sites, e.g. Facebook, Twitter.
- 2 If people are wasting 6% of their time, they are not working. (Of course there may be room for discussion over whether time spent surfing the Internet is indeed wasted, but this question should be left to the role play itself.)
- 3 This issue relates to the delicate balance between giving gifts and bribery – see **Background note** below. The €100 limit on the value of gifts mentioned in the meeting agenda is deliberately low in order to avoid it being regarded as a bribe.
- 4 If it is seen as normal and acceptable in a country to give and receive gifts, companies which refuse to give gifts will be at a serious disadvantage.

Background note

Gifts have always been an important part of business, and may be perfectly innocent and normal ways of saying thank you (e.g. a souvenir) and building relationships with business partners (e.g. by buying them a meal in a restaurant). The problem arises when these gifts are seen as a crucial part of the deal, in which case they are described as *bribes*. Bribery involves paying people or giving them gifts in order to get favours, such as giving someone money to persuade that person to sign a contract with you on behalf of his / her company). In practice, it is very difficult to define the line between these two activities, and different cultures and legal systems define the line differently. These differences may lead to serious misunderstandings, where behaviour that is expected and normal in one culture or country would be considered unacceptable or even illegal in another country or culture.

Trainees then work in small groups (up to around five trainees) to discuss the two problems. Make sure they know to use the techniques and language from this unit. Make sure they also know that they are all responsible for encouraging creativity, not only the chair of the meeting.

Allow around five minutes for each meeting. You could get them to use the three discussion questions after the first meeting, before moving on to the second meeting. The second meeting could have a different person as the chair.

During the meetings, monitor carefully, paying particular attention to the use of the techniques from this unit. Finally, give and elicit feedback from the class.

Extension activity

You could repeat the activity with a different set of problems to solve creatively, this time real problems that your trainees may be facing in their organisations.

Cultural tip

Read the beginnings of the sentences from the cultural tip aloud to the class, to elicit how they might end (i.e. *Cultural diversity is an opportunity in meetings because ...; Encourage individuals in meetings to ...*). Trainees then read the cultural tip to compare it with their ideas.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. Check that all trainees feel that they can lead a meeting and use the diversity of participants to help to find creative solutions. Discuss with the class how they can continue to improve in this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

11B Managing diversity and creativity

Before you begin

Use the two unit aims to generate a short discussion. You could use these questions to prompt the discussion, but avoid providing answers at this stage.

- 1 What is *brainstorming*?
- 2 Why is it important to evaluate ideas in meetings?

Suggested answers



- 1 Brainstorming involves a group of people suggesting creative ideas freely. The principle is that all ideas are good ideas, i.e. even if an idea is completely impractical, it could still be useful because it gets people thinking about different ways to approach a situation.
- 2 Because generating ideas is just the first stage. Ideas have to be evaluated carefully in order to decide if and how they can be implemented.

- 1 Trainees read the introduction to find out what New Thinking is (**Answer:** one of the dimensions of intercultural competence. See **Background note** below.) They then read the text to discuss the questions in pairs. Afterwards, discuss their answers with the class.

Background notes

- *WorldWork* helps individuals and organisations to build their ability to operate effectively in unfamiliar cultural settings. See www.worldwork.biz/legacy/index.phtml. They have created a set of 10 *competencies* for success when working internationally. See www.worldwork.biz/legacy/www/downloads/Sources.pdf. These competencies include *Openness*, *Flexibility* and *Personal autonomy*. Each of these competencies is divided into several *dimensions*. *New thinking* is one dimension of *Openness*. The other dimensions of *Openness* are *Welcoming strangers* and *Acceptance*. Note that there will be more work on the dimensions of intercultural competence in Unit 12, where a slightly different list of dimensions is used.
- A *competency* is a talent, skill or ability, typically something that allows a person to function successfully and effectively at work. Some people distinguish between *competency* and *competence* (the ability to fulfil the basic requirements of a job). In other words, *competency* suggests a higher level of skill than *competence*. However, many experts do not distinguish between the two terms, and treat them as synonyms.

Extension activity

Go through the description, phrase by phrase, to discuss with the class what it means in simple language, perhaps using real-life examples.

- ... *excited by new ideas* ... (finds new ideas exciting)
- ... *is able to change their perception of issues* ... (for example, to see a problem as an opportunity)
- ... *and see things from different perspectives* (for example, understand how another person feels about a situation)
- *They typically have a strong sense of curiosity* ... (they are interested in finding things out)
- ... *that drives them to look for creative insights into complex problems* (that makes them want to find creative solutions and ways of thinking about difficult problems)
- *They like to work internationally* (in another country, or with people from other countries)
- ... *as they are exposed to ideas and approaches with which they are unfamiliar* (because they see and hear things that they have never seen or heard before)

- 2 Trainees read the introduction and then work alone to put the seven steps in the best order. They compare their ideas in pairs before feeding back to the class (SB page 74).

Background note

Recent research (see knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article.cfm?articleid=2487&specialid=106/) has questioned whether brainstorming is the most effective way of generating creativity, and that it may in fact be better for people to work alone, where they generate more ideas. Brainstorming sessions may be dominated by some participants, which means that shy participants (or those with weaker language skills) do not contribute fully. On the other hand, they are a good way of creating synergy, where different people's ideas combine to make better ideas. A good solution to this problem might be to get people to brainstorm ideas alone first, or in pairs, and to write their ideas down, perhaps anonymously on slips of paper. The brainstorming session could then use these slips of paper to generate more ideas and to find synergies.

- 3 Trainees discuss the questions in small groups and then share their ideas with the class (SB page 74).
- 4  **33** Trainees listen to the meeting to note down the four people's ideas. They discuss their notes in pairs, including anything else they remember about the meeting, and then feed back to the class.

Language notes

- The leader talks about two types of customer. The normal names for these two types are *internal customers* (colleagues, people we serve within our organisation) and *external customers* ('real customers': people who buy or use our products and services).
- If you're *a bit pushed for time*, you don't have much time.
- If you *could do with* doing something, you think it would be useful.
- If you *rejig* something, you make small changes to it.
- If you *spin off* from something, you use the current topic or idea to take the discussion in a new direction.

- 5 Trainees work alone to find the useful phrases in the audio script. You could play the recording a second time while they are reading. Afterwards, they compare their answers in pairs, and think of some alternative expressions with the same meaning. Finally, discuss the answers with the class (SB page 74), elicit a range of alternative phrases and write them on the board.

Suggested answers: alternative phrases

- Proposing a radical idea: *I'm just thinking aloud here, but I'm wondering if we could ...; Just to think outside the box for second, how about ...*
- Making suggestions based on how others might see the problem: *Looking at this from the other side, ...; But they might not see it that way.*
- Building on another person's idea in the meeting: *You've just given me a really good idea; Just to take that suggestion to an extreme, why don't we ...?*
- Recommending ways to improve an existing process / system: *I would argue that we need to focus on improving our ...*
- Introducing an idea by imagining a perfect future: *Just imagine if, ten years from now, this all works out exactly as we'd like it to.*

Extension activity

You could ask trainees to underline other useful phrases for brainstorming, and to think of ways of grouping the phrases.

Suggested answers

- Explaining the purpose: *So, the focus of the brainstorming today is to generate a few ideas on how to ...*
- Establishing the procedure: *I think we all know the rules, and we should probably aim to keep the ideas phase to around ten minutes as we're a bit pushed for time.*
- Inviting someone to speak: *OK? So, anyone want to start? Paul? We can always rely on you to say something.; So, for the moment ... more ideas, people, please! Jennifer?*
- Encouraging people, even if their ideas are unusual: *OK. Fine, not crazy, anything goes, remember.*
- Keeping a written record: *So, first idea, let me write it on the flip chart; OK, I'll note down ...*
- Keeping the ideas phase separate from the evaluation phase: *OK, we'll do the evaluation a bit later.; José Luis, this is ideas only. Evaluation later, OK?; No evaluation. Let's just keep to collecting ideas.; Yes? More? No? So, maybe we can look at the ideas in more detail starting with the first point here ...*
- Clarifying / giving examples: *You know ... That sort of thing.; What I mean is, I think we should look at how we can ...*
- Checking / asking for opinions: *Is that what you mean?; Or is that too much?*
- Suggesting a source of new ideas: *Can we also think in process terms ... making something bigger, stronger, more efficient, more effective and so on?*
- Agreeing: *Yeah, I was thinking along similar lines about ...*

- 6 Go through the phrases with the class to make sure they fully understand all the words, e.g. *limit, restrict*, perhaps using examples, e.g. a speed limit, restrictions on what you can take onto an aeroplane. Trainees then work in pairs to use the phrases to evaluate the four suggestions they noted in exercise 4. Afterwards, elicit some example evaluations from the class.

For task 2, trainees brainstorm their lists of verbs. Make sure they include grammatical information about each verb, e.g. *to allow sb to do sth; to damage sth | to damage sb's ability to do sth*. You may need to check that they understand the abbreviations *sb* (somebody) and *sth* (something), and that abbreviations such as these are commonly used in dictionaries for language learners. You could collect the best ideas on the board before asking trainees to make sentences to evaluate the four suggestions.

Suggested answers

- Positive verbs: *enable sb to do sth, allow sb to do sth, help sb (to) do sth, permit sb to do sth, encourage sb to do sth, make it possible (for sb) to do sth, etc.*
- Negative verbs: *damage sth, limit sth, restrict sth, harm sth, prevent sb from doing sth, destroy sth, endanger sth, risk doing sth, discourage sb from doing sth, stop sb from doing sth, etc.*

- 7 Tell trainees to read the instruction and the meeting agenda. Make sure everyone fully understands the agenda. Divide the class into small groups of up to around five trainees to discuss the two problems, and choose a leader to facilitate the brainstorming session. Make sure they know to use the techniques and language from this unit.

Allow around five minutes for each meeting. You could get them to use the three discussion questions in task 2 after the first meeting, before moving on to the second meeting. The second meeting could have a different person as the facilitator.

During the meetings, monitor carefully, paying particular attention to the use of the techniques from this unit. Finally, give and elicit feedback from the class.

Cultural tip

Elicit from the class why it is important to use creative brainstorming sessions regularly when working internationally, and what should happen to the ideas generated in brainstorming sessions and why. Trainees then read the cultural tip to compare it with their ideas.

Can do

Discuss the 'can do' statement with the class. Check that all trainees feel that they can propose and evaluate ideas during international meetings, and discuss with the class how they can continue to improve in this skill.

Communicating Across Cultures

Trainer's Notes

12 Profiling your intercultural competence

Before you begin

Use the two unit aims and the quote to generate a short discussion. You could use these questions to prompt the discussion.

- 1 What do you think profiling your intercultural competence means?
- 2 Why do you think it might be useful to develop a personal development plan?
- 3 How many separate pieces of advice does the quote from Bob Dignen contain?

Suggested answers



- 1 Measuring and analysing your strengths and weaknesses in your ability to manage intercultural situations.
- 2 To help you continue to improve after the course, and to know exactly what you need to improve.
- 3 Around seven, but there is plenty of room for discussing the exact number of separate points:
 - Be open to those who are different.
 - Interact with others positively.
 - Avoid negative emotions such as irritation and defensiveness when dealing with a person who is different.
 - Stay positive.
 - Experience diversity not as a challenge but as an opportunity.
 - Take the best from the 'two worlds' of self and other.
 - Create a synthesis of something better.

Language notes

- If you are *defensive*, you try to *defend* (protect) yourself from what you see as an attack. Defensive behaviour includes being very careful about what you say, or perhaps saying very little. It can also mean defending your opinions and ideas in a discussion, rather than being open to having your mind changed.
- A *synthesis* comes from the mixing of different ideas, influences or things to make a whole which is different or new.

- 1 Trainees read through the list of dimensions to make sure they fully understand all the words. They discuss any vocabulary problems in pairs and then with the class, focusing especially on the words from the **Language notes** below.

Language notes

- If you *compromise*, you agree to accept less than you would like, in order to keep the other person happy or maintain the relationship. In most arguments or negotiations, both sides have to compromise (or *make compromises*) in order to reach an agreement.
- *Stimulation* is the process of causing your senses (e.g. sight, touch) or emotions to become excited by, for example, watching an exciting film or seeing a beautiful view.
- An *ambiguous* situation is one where you cannot be certain what will happen or how people will react. For example, if you go to somebody's house in a foreign country, you will need to learn about that culture very quickly to avoid making mistakes. This situation can be very stressful, but is also an excellent way to learn.
- If you *link people together* in discussions, you help them communicate and share ideas with each other.

- 2 Go through the instructions carefully with the class. Make sure they know they should be completely honest, and not feel that they should be aiming for a high score with all the questions. Trainees then work alone to answer the questions. Make sure they record their answers. When they have finished, you could allow them to discuss their answers in pairs, using examples from their own experience, but not to change their answers.
- 3 Trainees work alone to read the analysis and to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Again, make sure they have completed this alone before they discuss their reactions to the analysis and their ideas with a partner. Finally, discuss the analysis with the class. If some trainees disagree with the analysis, use this to generate more discussion. They may be able to produce a better analysis of their strengths and weaknesses.

Language notes

- *Harmony* is a state where different things are in balance and working well together.
- If you *can see the bigger picture*, you are aware of the large-scale impact of your actions (e.g. on the organisation as a whole, or in your plan of how you want to spend your life), rather than focusing on the small-scale impact of the actions (e.g. on me or my department, today or this week).
- If you are *naïve* /naɪ'vi:/, you trust people and believe things too easily, or you have a very simple or childish idea of how something works.

- 4 Trainees work alone to read the personal development guide to find advice related to the strengths and weaknesses they identified, and any other advice that they would like to follow. Afterwards, they discuss the advice with a partner and share their ideas with the class. Note that each piece of advice includes the phrase *you may want to ...* It is important for trainees to understand that the advice is intended as guidance and ideas only, and that the real decisions about how to develop must come from themselves.

Language notes

- If you *contradict* somebody, you say that they are wrong.
- A *stakeholder* is a person who is important to an organisation. For example, in a company, stakeholders include customers, suppliers, employees, owners and business partners, as well as perhaps neighbours, local government officials, etc. A *key stakeholder* is one of the most important stakeholders, typically one whom you need to influence.
- A *mentor* is a person with more experience than you in a particular field, who can help you by sharing that experience with you, in a form of training.

- 5 Trainees work alone to complete the table, using the information from this unit, or from the whole book, to guide them.

- 6 Trainees discuss their ideas with a partner. Make sure they understand they should be sensitive in their advice to their partners. They may want to suggest ways of refining their partners' targets and plans, by making them more realistic, more focused, etc., but make sure each trainee still feels that it is his / her own plan, not something that somebody else has imposed. Finally, you could ask some volunteers to share their plans with the class. Encourage them to follow up on their partners' commitments, for example by emailing their partner after a month, three months, etc., to check on their progress. This sense that there is someone else involved, and a deadline to make changes, can be extremely motivating.

Background note

Research suggests that two of the most important factors determining whether people actually do what they plan to do are (a) if they have written their plans down, and (b) if they have talked about them with other people.

Extension activity

To round off the course, go back to the questionnaire on page 5. Discuss with the class what they remember about the advice in each unit, whether they feel they have achieved their aims, and what they should do in order to continue making progress.