

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY MODULE

Learning goals:

- Explore the students' cultural background
- Define culture
- Understand cultural dimensions
- Compare and discuss cultural differences
- Be aware of cultural dimensions in language
- Explore World Englishes
- Explore stereotyping in society
- Examine cultural misunderstandings in the EFL classroom

### Activity 0. Warm-up Activity: Intercultural questionnaire.

Would you like to know how intercultural you are? Complete the table below and you will find out!

	YES	NO
I speak more than 3 languages		
I have cooked or eaten food not originally from my country this past month		
I can say hello in 7 different languages		
I know what time it is in Seoul now		
I know when Ramada is this year		
I have read a book in a foreign language in the past months		
I have read a book in a foreign language in the past months		
I know how to greet a person that comes from Japan		
I have travelled to more than 3 continents		
I have lived in a foreign country for more than 3 months		

#### Score

**From 1 to 4:** Your intercultural competency needs some improvement.

**From 5 to 7:** Your intercultural communication skills are good, but there is still room for improvement. Go over your answers and find what your challenges are.

**From 7 to 9:** Your intercultural skills are very good. You look ready to engage in intercultural situations although you still need to tie up some loose ends.

**10:** Congratulations. Your intercultural communication effectiveness is extremely high. Definitely, the world would be a better place if everybody were like you.

## Activity 1. Warm-up Activity: Getting to know your mates' cultural background.

### Forum activity.

Write down 5 cities/countries/facts/beliefs that shape or have shaped your cultural personality. Ask other students about their traits and make a guess at why they are important to them.

## SUBMODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO CULTURE

### Activity 1: What is Culture? Some definitions.

Look at the following definitions of culture, and complete the quiz below.

1. "Culture consists of the derivatives of experience, more or less organized, learned or created by the individuals of a population, including those images or and their interpretations (meanings) transmitted from past generations, from contemporaries, or formed by individuals themselves". (Schwartz, 1992)

2. "[Culture] is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another". (Hofstede, 1994)

3. "Culture is the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next". (Matsumoto, 1996)

4. "Culture studies the relationship between the *material culture and the non material culture*: the values, beliefs and norms that represent "the patterned ways of thinking and acting within a society". (Scupin, 2000)

5. "Culture is a system of shared values (defining what is important) and norms (defining appropriate attitudes and behaviors)". (Chatman & Cha, 2003)

6. "Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behavior". (Spencer-Oatey, 2008)

Which definition/s mention/s... (click on the right options)

- Values
- Human groups/Society
- Attitudes/Beliefs
- Past generations
- Material artifacts

Personal definition

● **Language Focus: What is culture?**

Match the definitions with the appropriate cultural features

<b>THE ARTS</b>	<b>CLIMATE</b>	<b>CUISINE</b>	<b>CUSTOMS/TRADITIONS</b>
<b>LANGUAGE</b>	<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>	<b>VALUES</b>	<b>RULES OF BEHAVIOUR</b>

..... the study of the physical features of the earth and its atmosphere, and of human activity as it affects and is affected by these.

..... written and spoken means of communication which may include particular dialects, and characteristics of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.

..... is a style of cooking characterized by distinctive ingredients and associated with a specific culture.

..... broad preferences concerning appropriate courses of actions or outcomes that reflect a person's sense of right and wrong or what "ought" to be.

..... characteristic styles of music, painting, opera, literature, etc,

..... unspoken/unwritten ways of doing things regarding how to dress, drive, greet and address each other.

..... particular national/public holidays, feast days, - festivals (eg, carnivals), commemorations, and activities associated with and performed on these occasions

..... is commonly defined as the weather averaged over a long period.

*Definition source: Wikipedia*

Find synonyms for the following terms

Characteristics

Involve

Cuisine

Wide

Weather

Usually

In terms of

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### Reflective Practice: Food for thought

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- To what extent culture should be included in your EFL syllabus? How?
  - What cultural features from the list above could you include in your EFL teaching practice?
  - Could you think of some culture-related activities for your EFL classroom?
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Find out more:

Videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57KW6RO8Rcs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S258bwp0sJY>

Articles:

<https://www.livescience.com/21478-what-is-culture-definition-of-culture.html>

[https://www.kvworkspace.com/files/resources/Defining-Culture-and-Organizationa-Culture\\_5.pdf](https://www.kvworkspace.com/files/resources/Defining-Culture-and-Organizationa-Culture_5.pdf)

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304818111\\_What\\_Is\\_Culture\\_What\\_Does\\_It\\_Do\\_What\\_Should\\_It\\_Do](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304818111_What_Is_Culture_What_Does_It_Do_What_Should_It_Do)

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/023b/0223f2673be190d6978e85f4d7fb606125ad.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240706335\\_The\\_Meaning\\_of\\_Culture](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240706335_The_Meaning_of_Culture)

## SUBMODULE 2: ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

### Activity 3. Dimensions of culture.

Read the text and decide whether you AGREE, PARTIALLY AGREE or DISAGREE with the statements below.

#### ***Characteristics of culture***

Individuals that belong to the same culture may develop similar cognitive styles, patterns of thought, world views, beliefs and value systems which shape our perception of reality. **They learn it** in society through **imitation** (by observing other people's performance), **conditioning** (direct experience by trial and error), but also through **symbolic learning** (abstract ideas that we transmit to one another mostly through language). **They share it** with other people belonging to the same society. Culture exists in society before the birth of the individual and consists of **schemas or cultural models** that are internalized and have influence on decision making and

behaviour. Those schemas constitute a tremendous amount of **cultural capital** which is not equally distributed in society so that different people learn different things, and, thus, culture varies from person to person, from subgroup to subgroup (region, gender, age...) Yet, common cultural understandings allow members to communicate, adapt and interact with one another.

***Non-Material Culture: values, beliefs and norms***

The intangible products of society, **values, beliefs and norms**, are the focus of attention of modern cultural studies, the ones that shape our perception of the world and condition our behaviour.

**Values** are the central aspect of non-material culture because they influence behaviour and assumptions that are widely spread in society. They are the standards by which members of a social group define what is good or bad, right or wrong, beautiful or ugly, holy or unholy.

**Beliefs** are cultural conventions that concern true or false assumptions, they are more specific than values. For example: "Education is important" is a value. "Different education for boys and girls is suitable" is a belief.

A set of beliefs that provide a way of interpreting reality constitute **worldviews**. For example, a set of beliefs will lead some parent to take their boy children to an institution to be educated and to educate girls at home. Sometimes ethnical groups constitute **a cultural hegemony** that impose their cultural patterns, beliefs, language and practice to minority groups. They usually also impose their **norms**.

**Norms** are rules of right and wrong behaviour that a society derives from values, beliefs, world views, and ideology. For example, in some societies the families are supposed to support their children until they finish school, while in others, parents may be supporting their children all their lives. Norms and conventions guiding everyday life are so deeply rooted that we are not aware that they exist.

**References**

SCUPIN, R. (2000). Cultral Antropology, A Global Perspective. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458, Prentice Hall. Pages 37 to 61

LUSTIN, M. W. and J. KOESTER (2003). Intercultural Competence. Interpersonal Communication across Cultures. Boston, Allyn and Bacon.

Bennett, C. I. (1994). Comprehensive Multicultural Theory and Practice, Allyn and Bacon.

Du Gay, P., S. Hall, et al. (1997). Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman London, Sage Publications and The Open University.

	AGREE	PARTIALLY AGREE	DISAGREE
Individuals develop similar beliefs only through imitation and symbolic learning			
Culture is a uniform concept that tends not to vary from person to person			

Values, beliefs and norms shape our perception of the world			
Beliefs are cultural conventions that concern true or false assumptions			
Norms derive from values, beliefs and ideology			

**Find out more**

- **Journal Articles**

<file:///C:/Users/445503/Downloads/809-Article%20Text-6753-4-10-20110826.pdf>

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238762441> **The Many Dimensions of Culture**

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284732557> **Six Approaches to Understanding National Cultures Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions**

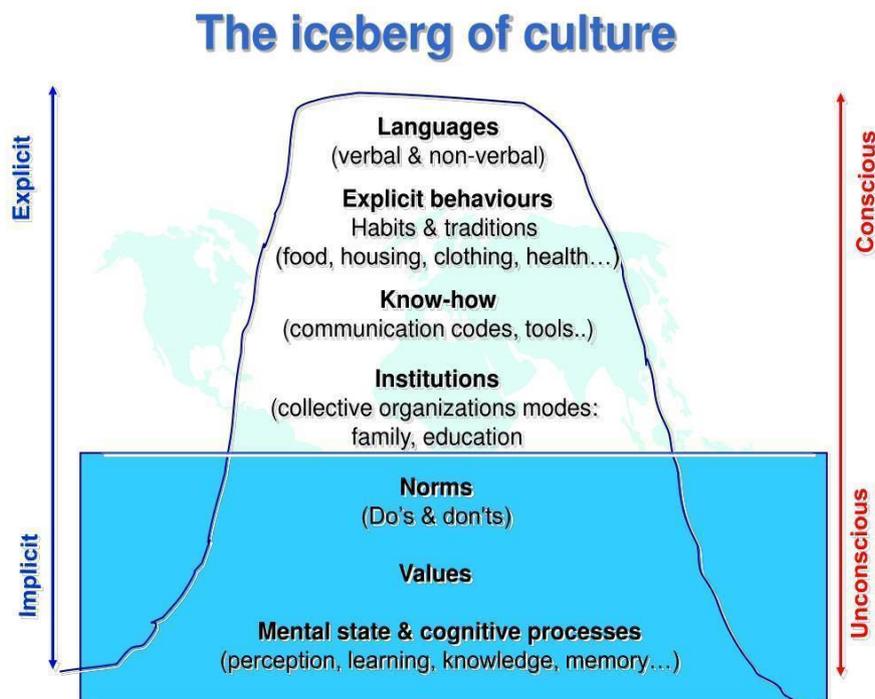
- **Videos**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yvqwsyao8rg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gJzRS0I7tA>

**Activity 4. The Iceberg of Culture.**

Read the following graph and click on the dimensions of culture that are found in the cross-cultural misunderstandings below.



**Anecdote 1**

My wife and I had traveled to that Asian country for the first time. We were picked up at the airport and then he took us to his country house where his family was spending the summer. I was offered the front seat and my wife, who was pregnant at that time, had to sit in the back. When we got to his place, I was offered the best seat. My wife was also fortunate: she had the privilege of sitting at the table with the men since she was a foreigner. After having a pantagruelic lunch that included insects, she was surrounded by the women of the house who started asking her all sort of questions about Spain. She was very upset and found it extremely difficult to understand why we could not be together, but she said nothing because she was not sure how our friend would react. His behavior was very different from the one he had in London.

**Implicit cultural aspects/Explicit cultural aspects. Click on the right dimensions.**

LANGUAGES	VALUES	NORMS	KNOW-HOW
	INSTITUTIONS	HABITS AND TRADITIONS	

**Anecdote 2**

I was appointed as a first-grade teacher at Martha Baldwin Elementary School in Maryland. On my first day I met Debbie Vas, one of the teachers in my first-grade team. We began our conversation by the front door and 5 minutes later we were already in the hallway. I realized there was something wrong: I was simply trying to get close to her and she was stepping away. I interpreted the message as “she does not like me” and she thought I was too forward.

Three months had passed when I had another cultural misunderstanding with Ms. Lee, the second-grade teacher. We used to have lunch together in the teacher’s lounge and we had a lot of common values. I started looking her in the eyes and I even touched her arm every now and then when we talked. Some days later, she had a very serious conversation with me. She was feeling harassed by the way I looked at her and she was ready to report me to the principal. I was puzzled and it took me some months to feel comfortable around her.

**Implicit cultural aspects/Explicit cultural aspects. Click on the right dimensions**

LANGUAGES	VALUES	NORMS	KNOW-HOW
	INSTITUTIONS	HABITS AND TRADITIONS	

**Extension. Forum.** Share an anecdote that illustrates and intercultural misunderstanding that you experienced at some point in your life.

- **Language Focus: Intercultural email writing.**

Read the following email, which was sent by an Erasmus student who was carry out a school placement abroad to a Polish school principal.

Hi Przemek,

I am writing to tell you that I will not go to school today. I tried to reach you this morning but without success. Please talk to my coordinating teacher and tell her that I will be back after the weekend to carry out my lesson. If she has any question, she can contact me.

Waiting for your answer.

Thank you.



Maria Asensi



**Think of why Maria's e-mail might be inappropriate. Try to find clues by reading this short text:**

When you hold a face-to-face meeting with someone from another culture it's not always easy, but faceless emails may be a big challenge for Erasmus students. Indeed, the lack of social context cues may pose a barrier in email communication (Garton & Wellman 1994; Holmes 1994). In face-to-face contact people have immediate feedback, through body language, word choice or voice intonation, via email, however, the writer cannot adjust immediately to the necessary and expected politeness levels in the interaction (Baron 1998). It is often not obvious what forms of social etiquette are appropriate at any given time in intercultural email communication.

Even if there is some evidence to suggest that, politeness indicators are reduced or omitted (Bunz & Cambell 2002; Ma 1996; Simmons 1994; Walther 1992, 1997) in email writing, successful intercultural email communication cannot be assured. Greater knowledge and understanding of email writing can only assist email writers in developing better strategies for intercultural email communication. Some cultures may prefer starting an email by addressing someone with their name and sometimes even their surname. Other cultures may not do this at all and simply head straight into the email content. For example, when writing an email to somebody in the US a sentence of small talk might be needed but when writing to a person in a German speaking country this might be inappropriate since private comments do not belong to academic discourse. On the contrary, getting right to the point might be viewed as rude or harsh by an English or American individual.

If you want to come across as polite and proficient in English, when you are writing to somebody you do not know, the conventional opening is "Dear Ms. Robin Hood," or "Dear Mr. Robin Hood," when you are writing to a man. The titles "Mrs." and "Miss" are considered obsolete. Some cultures tend to pay less attention to hierarchies (Sweden, Denmark...) while others feel that it is important to keep track of academic titles (Poland, Italy, Germany...). Clarity is a fundamental consideration in email writing.

Your lecturer/professor may not know which course you are talking about, which assignment or which book. This is why a careful explanation might be needed beforehand. Not only are they enemies of clarity, emoticons (smileys) are absolute authority killers. They are very subjective (much more so than words) and necessarily vague, so someone who does not know you very well could find them difficult to interpret accurately. Another important factor, which could hinder communication is humour. It does not travel well and it may be very difficult to sound funny in a second language.

Adapted from: <https://www.engelska.uu.se/writing/blog?tarContentId=300739&languageId=1>

How would you rewrite that e-mail? Share your answer in the class forum.

### **Activity 5. Values and Attitudes in Culture**

Read the following list of cultural values/attitudes and pick out the six things you would find most useful before you have a cross-cultural encounter or when you teach about interculturality.

<b>Attitudes to alcohol</b>	
<b>Punctuality</b>	
<b>Demography – population spread</b>	
<b>Formality of dress</b>	
<b>Geography and History</b>	
<b>Meal times</b>	
<b>Physical distance between people when they speak</b>	
<b>Shop opening times</b>	
<b>Attitudes to foreigners</b>	

Family life	
Roles of males and females	
Physical gestures	

**Extension.** Prepare a culture briefing about your country for an international student/colleague of at least 5 statements that derive from the above options. Share it in the class forum.

**Reflective Practice: Food for thought**

- What explicit and implicit elements of culture can be found in your EFL textbook/teaching materials? Is there a balance between these two categories?
- How can you help your students write more culturally appropriate emails?
- How can you promote cultural self-awareness in your language classroom?

**SUBMODULE 3: STEREOTYPING**

**Activity 6. Stereotyping.**

Watch the following video and then tick the elements that may be found in it from the list below. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfwkbuEeTSw>

- Ethnic diversity                      Stereotyping                      Bullying
- Cultural Awareness    Language Awareness                      Gender diversity
- Social diversity                      Intercultural competence                      Sexual orientation discrimination

**Activity 7. Stereotyping. Some key facts**

Click on the following link <https://theconversation.com/the-terrifying-power-of-stereotypes-and-how-to-deal-with-them-101904> and decide on the best answer for each statement.

1. According to the text stereotypes may

- a. Enhance our multiple identities
  - b. Reinforce our self-image
  - c. Foster self-doubt
  - d. Boost creativity
2. What is the “stereotype threat?”
- a. The belief that some actions may confirm negative perceptions
  - b. The belief that doing something unexpected may make us vulnerable
  - c. The belief that all groups may be stigmatized
  - d. The belief that threatening individuals is part of stereotyping
3. Stereotype threats cause
- a. An activation of activity performance regions
  - b. An activation of responsibility and care
  - c. An activation of emotional self-regulation
  - d. An activation of cognitive feedback
4. What methods are suggesting some studies to reduce stereotype threat?
- a. Changing the stereotype
  - b. Shifting self-perceptions or self-affirmation
  - c. Being aware of the damaging effects of stereotypes
  - d. All of the above

### **Activity 8: Stereotypes. Reading. A Briton.**

Click on the following link <https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/magazine/life-around-world/confessions-stereotypical-brit> and read the text. Decide whether the following sentences are TRUE or FALSE

- . The speaker is shocked to see that he conforms to many stereotypes
- . The speaker does not particularly like his own accent
- . British people tend to be very direct when they speak
- . The Royal family is a symbol in the UK and nobody dares to go against it
- . The speaker tends not to talk about the weather
- . The speaker has given up tea
- . Stereotypes cannot always be generalized

**Extension.** Post a comment on the webpage on : “Is there such a thing as a typical Briton?”

### **Activity 9. Stereotyping. Food for thought**

Read the following text and write a short paragraph on THREE of the statements below, bearing in mind what the article states.

<https://www.jyu.fi/viesti/verkkotuotanto/kp/vf/jaakko.shtml>

- ✓ Stereotypes are necessary for perception.
- ✓ Stereotypes are always wrong.
- ✓ Stereotypes are subjective.
- ✓ Stereotypes are based on experience.
- ✓ Stereotypes are based on wrong perceptions.
- ✓ Stereotypes are important to reduce complexity and for the orientation in the world.
- ✓ Stereotypes are social phenomena, not individual.
- ✓ Without stereotypes we would not be able to act in social contexts.

● Language Focus: World Englishes

Warm up. Watch the following video and find out how many world Englishes can you identify? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKk1sVru9vc>

What do you think about world Englishes? Share your answers in the class forum.

- ✓ Write down three words you associate with it  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Which type of English do you prefer to learn? Why?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Which English do you think is the easiest/most difficult to understand?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Do you think there are “best” Englishes to learn? If yes, which are the three “best” to learn?  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_.

Watch this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvbEODnJVTc&t=17s> and find out some pronunciation and spelling differences.

PRONUNCIATION	SPELLING

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Watch the excerpt (from 1'33" to 1'50") Associate the following words with British English, American English or Australian English (*3 flags should be included*)

Servo	Apartment	Gas station	Footpath	Pavement
Petrol station	Flat	Unit	Sidewalk	



Find out more

Videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flrtJClrUiA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1-aSIUP4wM>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r\\_Uer9LglTc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_Uer9LglTc)

Journal articles:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/hypa.12170>

<https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/2090527/file/6769723.pdf>

#### Reflective Practice: Food for thought

- How can you promote stereotype awareness within your classroom context?
- Are there any cultural stereotypes among your students? What activities should be done to challenge stereotypical perceptions?
- Are the different English language varieties explicitly taught in your EFL textbook? What activities could help you include them in your teaching practice?

## SUBMODULE 4: CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

### Activity 10. Cultural diversity in the EFL classroom

Read the following blog <https://everydayesl.com/blog/encouraging-diversity-in-multicultural-classrooms>. Rank the tips that the author gives on how to encourage diversity in the classroom (1 very relevant.... 5 not so relevant)

	1	2	3	4	5
Promoting discussion on cultural issues					
Encouraging students to talk about their cultural background					
Talking about cultural artifacts and cultural norms					
Sharing the teacher's cultural background					

### Activity 11. Cultural diversity in the EFL classroom: misunderstandings analysed through cultural dimensions.

Read the following texts and click on a possible solution to each cultural misunderstanding (more than 1 option is possible)

A. Aaron always stands up and volunteers to answer teacher's questions. He also often volunteers arguments that challenge teacher's opinions. His new teacher, Isabel, does not like his ways. He decides to talk about the problem in class. She announces that students should not try to attract her attention, and should not speak unless invited to. Aaron, stands up and says politely she should show more respect for student's rights. Isabel gets really angry this time and decides to send a note to Aaron parents.

*What should Isabel do?*

1. Tell Aaron again to stop volunteering and monopolizing discussions
2. Talk to Aaron's parents and find out what the problem at home might be
3. Ignore Aaron for some weeks and hope for the best
4. Talk to other colleagues about Aaron and eventually schedule a parent-teacher conference

B. Angel loves kids. On his first days in his kinder multi-ethnic class he shows them his affectionate feelings by patting on their shoulders or head, and touching their arms. A few days later the principal calls him to say several Chinese origin parents have called to show their concern about his way of treating children.

*What did Angel do wrong?*

1. He should not touch any student any more
2. He needs to learn about intercultural differences in touching
3. He should teach parents how important emotional support is
4. He ought to stop showing affection to children

C. The school principal gives all the teachers the school norms and reminds them they are supposed to apply them in their class. One of the norms says that parents whose children did not do their homework should be informed by a short note. Ana Maria throws the norms into her folder and forgets about them. She has excellent relations with students and does not really worry about norms. When a parent complains about not being informed that his son was not doing his homework, Ana Maria has completely forgotten about the norms and claims she knows how to manage her class.

*Why did she react that way?*

- 1. She felt threatened by the parent's comment*
- 2. She believed that she is the educator and her professional attitude should be respected*
- 3. She wanted to manage the classroom without any interference*
- 4. She is a very inexperienced teacher*

● **Language Focus: Lecturing in English.**

Rephrase the following statements to make them sound less blunt or more appropriate to a classroom context.

"Your essay is bad and that's why I failed you"

\_\_\_\_\_

"You have to read the text first and then you have to send me your answers"

\_\_\_\_\_

"Complete the survey before doing the exercise"

\_\_\_\_\_

"Louis is missing today"

\_\_\_\_\_

"Americans are so aggressive. I can't stand them"

\_\_\_\_\_

"Hey guys. I am sick and tired of your talking. Shut up"

\_\_\_\_\_

"You are monopolizing the class discussion today. Be quiet"

\_\_\_\_\_

**Reflective Practice: Food for thought**

- Do you think that cultural diversity is an asset or a hurdle in your EFL classroom?
- What should be done to cope with the needs of cultural minority learners?
- To what extent your classroom language reflects cultural beliefs or preconceptions?

\_\_\_\_\_

## FINAL PROJECT

### Activity 12. Final Project.

In pairs/individually. Choose one of the topics from the table and prepare a presentation (2-3 minutes approx.) that explores the cultural concept and relates it to your country/region/community. You may use audio and videos to enhance the ppt.

#### TOPICS

STEREOTYPES
CULTURAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS
FAMILY LIFE
HOBBIES AND INTERESTS
MIGRANTS
WORLD ENGLISHES
CULTURAL IMPACT ON LANGUAGES
TRADITIONS
CELEBRATIONS

#### Extension: COIL project.

What is COIL?

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) refers to 'virtual mobility' experiences that are embedded into the formal curriculum and provide learners with an opportunity to interact with educators/professionals/peers from other countries, so they can develop intercultural competences and digital skills while co-constructing knowledge together. There are three key elements in a COIL project:

- Cross-border collaboration or interaction with people from different backgrounds and cultures.
- Online interaction (asynchronous or synchronous)
- Learning outcomes that foster global perspectives and/or students' intercultural competences.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR A COIL PROJECT (for Teachers)

- ✓ Share a lesson on culture and compare it with other module participants (teachers)
- ✓ Share a lesson on world Englishes (teachers)
- ✓ Teach another teacher's EFL class via video conferencing

- ✓ Explore some European traditions and find similarities and differences

## MODULE SELF-ASSESSMENT

### Activity 13. Self-Assessment

After having completed the module I am able to...

	<b>YE S</b>	<b>SOMEHO W</b>	<b>N O</b>
<b>Explore my own cultural background</b>			
<b>Understand the concept of culture</b>			
<b>Define culture</b>			
<b>Understand cultural dimensions and its application in interpersonal encounters</b>			
<b>Examine the rationale behind the iceberg of culture</b>			
<b>Learn more about cultural stereotyping</b>			
<b>Apply cultural awareness to the EFL classroom</b>			
<b>Be more aware of the cultural aspects of world Englishes</b>			
<b>Understand the impact of culture on e-mail etiquette</b>			
<b>Explore cultural identities in the community through project work</b>			
<b>Reflect upon self-learning in the area of cultural diversity</b>			