



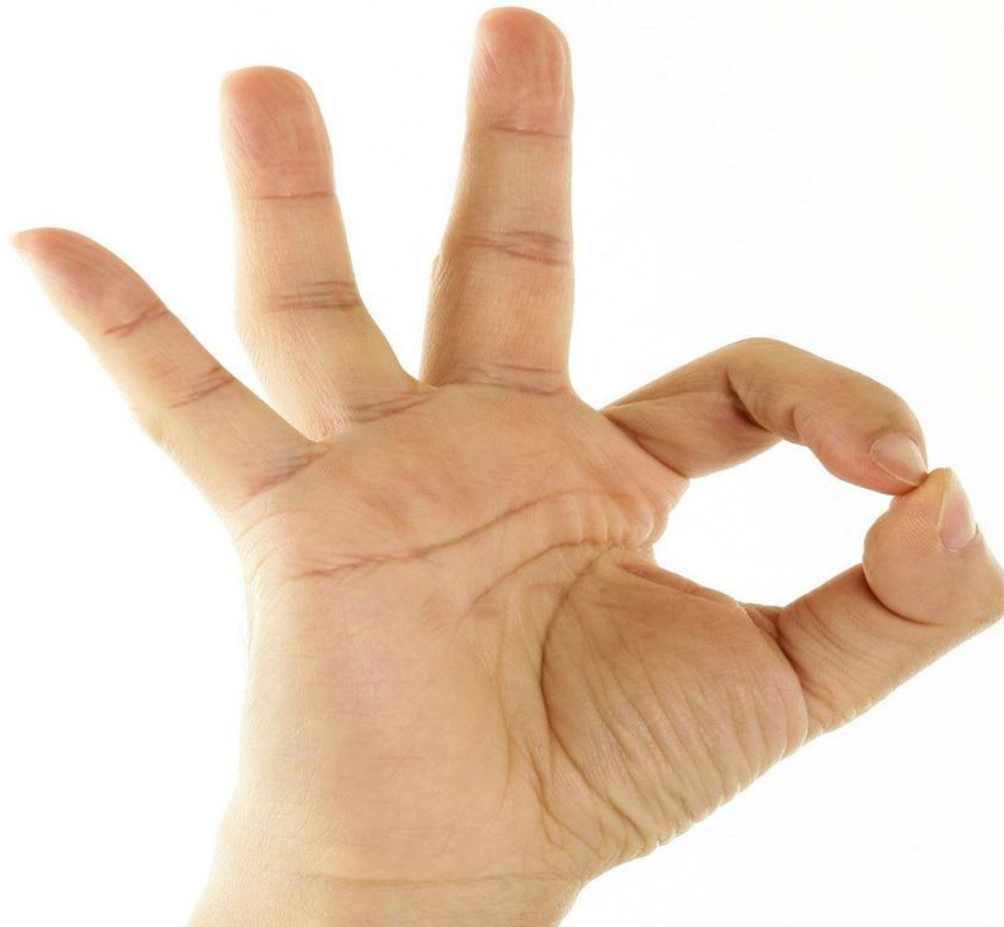
International
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Using culture to engage young learners

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Is it really OK?





In **Japan**...it refers to
MONEY

In **Brazil,
Germany
and
Russia**...it
refers to a
certain part
of the
body...

In **Turkey, Greece,
Tunisia and many
Middle Eastern
countries**...it is a
rude and offensive
hand gesture.



In **France and
Belgium**...it refers to
ZERO or something
that's worthless

In **many parts of
the Arabic
world**...it
symbolises
something evil

What IS 'culture'?

- Talk together in 2/3's for 3 minutes about all the different things we associate with culture.
- *Is there one single definition?*

**What do you
think?**



**LANGUAGE AND
CULTURE ARE THE
FRAMEWORKS THROUGH
WHICH HUMANS
EXPERIENCE,
COMMUNICATE, AND
UNDERSTAND REALITY.
(LEV VYGOTSKY, 1968)**



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What do you think?

What do you think?



**There are many
cultural differences
between us, but I think
we'll find a lot of
similarities, too.**

Sandy Thoma

**What do
you
think?**

If culture was a house,
then language was the
key to the front door,
to all the rooms
inside.

Khaled Housseini

Young learners

- In your work context, do you teach young learner groups?
- How do we already help to accommodate them in classes?
- **AND**, who are 'young learners' anyway?

Young learners

- Could be as wide a range as 11-40!
- **CONTEXT** is essential
- What we are really focusing on are those students between 11-19, still in secondary school education.
- So we are working with **teenagers** and **adolescents**...

- Do you recognize anyone like this? Or were you like this?!
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLuEY6jN6gY>



**Bored,
distracted
demotivated,
uninterested.**



The top 6 reasons why teenagers disengage

1. Sitting at the **same desks** for too long.
2. Activities have gone on for **too long**.
3. Ss have been working beside the **same partner** for too long.
4. Ss have been doing the **same type of activity** for too long.
5. Ss have been doing **different activities but in the same way**.
6. Teachers have been going through the activities in the book, as they're presented and **not adapting them** with learners or the learning context in mind.

How will using culture help?

- **Short term** there is only so much we can teach them in that time with regards to English. We must be **realistic**, but not complacent.
- **First time away from home for many students**
 - Talking about this unfamiliar culture is a great **gate opener** and as teachers from this culture, we are in a unique opportunity to bond with them quickly.

- Talking about cultural similarities, differences, traditions, customs, history etc **encourages students to TALK.**
- **And finally...** let's look 10 years from now. What will that student remember from their visit to Dublin?
 1. Social programme activities
 2. Experiences with their host family
 3. Food
 4. Present perfect
 5. Exchanging stories with people from different cultures

Your turn

- Have a chat in your groups about **how you have used culture in your classes in the past:**

1. What activities did you do?
2. How did the students respond?



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Here are some other ideas...

- You'll see different types of activities you could do related to culture on your handout.

- **My favourites:**

1. Slang
2. Music
3. Accents

Some things to be aware of...

- You could base your lessons around culture OR you can lead with culture to **ATTRACT** interest.
- Sometimes groups will specify that they want to learn in a very particular language context E.g. Scientific English, Business English
= **MIX** the activities in!
- Using culture isn't a miracle fix **BUT** it will be more effective than purely language based learning

Summary

- **Teaching context:** very often closed groups of young learners – culture gives more confidence for students to speak about ***something***.
- Reduces the pressure on weaker learners who can still get involved.
- It's a memorable way of attracting their attention and interest.

Culture can be gateway
to greater
communication.

