**“No Offence Meant”**

**Cultural Awareness Development**

**Introduction and rationale**

How often have you heard someone - including yourself - say 'I didn't mean to cause any offence'?

**Aim**

We know from interviewing employers and teaching staff and in feedback from graduates and students that ‘cultural awareness’ is very important both in terms of making the most of study opportunities and in the work place.

**Objective**

This learning object is intended to support individual research and learning and classroom / VLE facilitated learning

The Gillian Gibbons 'Name the Teddy Bear Mohammed' incident that captured the attention of the world in 2007 has proved a very useful learning moment for many of us. Differences between cultures and between people are often subtle and this incident raised awareness of those differences.

Because this incident had gained so much attention it is a useful lead in asking you how cultural awareness or cultural sensitivity might apply to you.

* Are there cultural differences between yourself and your colleagues?
* If you have worked for more than one employer did you notice a difference in management / leadership style?
* Are your career ideas likely to lead to a need to be culturally sensitive e.g. working with international businesses / colleagues?

This resource begins with an overview of cultural awareness which has three major sections:

**National** **Culture**

This is usually thought of as a product of heritage and may include religion, history, language, climate, population density, availability of resources, politics. This may affect how we react to others not of our culture.  This section stems from our original research and as a result contains more features as these can be easily transferred to other cultural awareness experiences.  These 'worked examples' will enable you to reflect on what you would do differently and also provide encouragement to broaden your thinking to your own situation and career ideas.

**Professional Culture**

Here people have a sense of community and common identity. This may be manifested through:

* specific expertise and a shared professional jargon
* specific norms for behaviour
* common ethical values
* prestige and status with badges or defining uniform
* status differentials
* Institutional and individual resistance to imposed change

**Organisational Culture**

This results from the organisation's structure, its employees and their behaviour, and the type of power and control present. This may manifest through:

* formal methods such as visible structures e.g. members' uniforms, symbols, routines, documents,
* or informal e.g. values, beliefs, subconscious assumptions

**Approach**

We have taken two approaches to this resource:

1. One approach is based solely in the classroom with resources to be used by students in table groups alongside reflective opportunities.

Copies of all the classroom activities as well as teaching notes are available for download from our website at: <http://www.bcu.ac.uk/futureproof/resources/no-offence-meant>

1. The second approach is all of the above but also incorporates web based resources with more detail about the Gillian Gibbons incident in 2007. As part of this we have included links to the different press coverage as well as links to other learning materials and resources relating to broader cultural awareness. There are also materials provided for students to complete unsupported and unassessed reflection if they wish. These resources are available from the project website at: <http://www.bcu.ac.uk/futureproof/resources/no-offence-meant>

We hope that as more people use these resources in different contexts, subject areas and at different levels of education and business, we will be able to add new exercises and examples of how they have been used to the website above.

**Cultural Awareness**

**The big picture**

**Contents**

The web-based resources contain links to other sites and resources relevant to the areas under discussion. In each section there are opportunities for self-reflection through journal entries, discussions through a variety of forums and quiz based activities. There are also lesson plan suggestions and work sheets to supplement the class room activities.

On this disc you will find:

* Outline lesson plan with teacher notes and alternative delivery suggestions
* PowerPoint introduction for teaching and view of different aspects of cult awareness
* Classroom activities:

1 Body language: In a lot of situations, the way you behave is more important than what you say. However, in different cultures the same behaviour can mean different things. This simple board game is designed to consider different aspects of body language.

2. True or false: This activity is a starting point for further discussions about the conceptions, or indeed misconceptions, we may have regarding other cultures. A card sort activity leading the way to further discussion.

3. What do you know? More and more, we have to do business with people from different cultures, whether overseas or in our own country how do you know if you’ve inadvertently given offence?

4. Office cultures. Moving from one job to another, or working for another boss may bring with it subtle changes in ‘culture’. In this activity you are asked to help a friend who has emailed you to make sense of her confusion-what would/should you recommend

5. Layers of culture a classroom based activity with supporting PowerPoint to promote discussion of either personal or professional ‘culture’. What are the symbols, values, heroes and rituals associated with your background, religion or organisation?

* + - Personal reflection handout.