



ICOPROMO

Intercultural competence for professional mobility
*Compétence interculturelle pour le développement
de la mobilité professionnelle*



Non-verbal communication and body language

Communicating across cultures

Rationale

A lot or maybe even most of our communication is non-verbal. Simple gestures and poses often say more than we are aware of.

Learning Outcome

- ✧ Ability to recognise, differentiate and put into practice different types of non-verbal communication patterns.

Competences:

- ✧ Awareness of different standards and patterns of non-verbal communication
- ✧ Awareness of the process of non-verbal communication

Time

50 min

Participants

Up to 30

Materials required

- ✧ Photocopies of handout or OHP and transparencies

Procedure

1. The participants start by thinking about body language in their own culture that is frequently used. Then they discuss whether all of this non-verbal communication would be easily understood in different cultures. In a second step, they are encouraged to think about forms of non-verbal communication they have encountered when travelling and which were different from their home culture.
2. The worksheet is handed out. Trainees observe the images for a while and write down their interpretations.
3. It is probably helpful if they are allowed time to take notes for every question (except 3) before beginning the discussion
4. The results are discussed and compared.
5. Trainees deal with question number 3 and discuss their conclusions afterwards.

Facilitator's Notes:

- (1) Participants discuss which types of body language or gestures travel well across cultures and which are very culture-specific. Mind that multiple interpretations are possible. Participants should not be discouraged in their guesses. Instead, they should become aware of the richness of body language across cultures.
- (2) Participants who have not widely travelled may find it more difficult to make guesses about some gestures and may need some help from the facilitator.
- (3) The activity becomes even richer if the facilitator can provide some examples from her/his own experience of misinterpretations of body language.



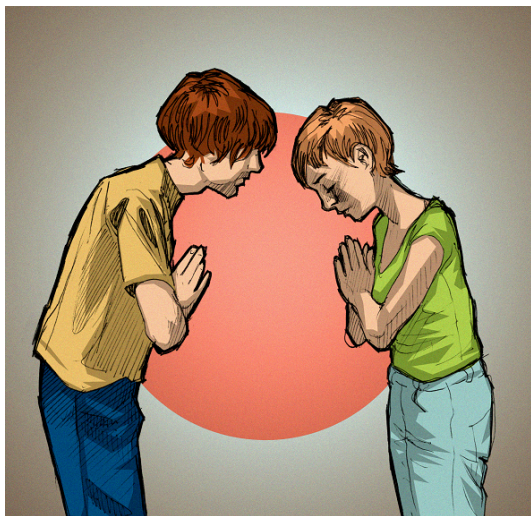
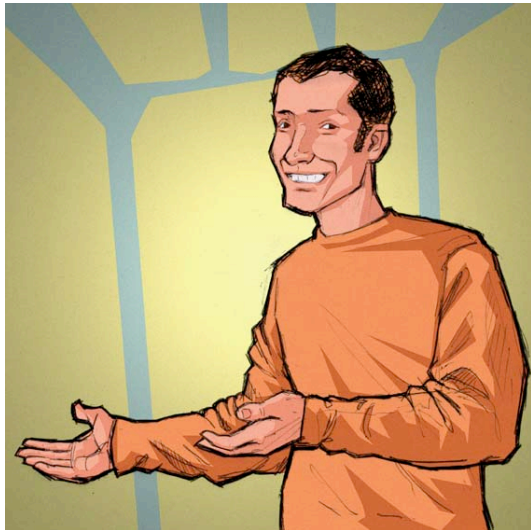
Non-verbal communication and body language

Much or maybe even most of our communication is non-verbal. Simple gestures and poses often say more than we are aware of.

Observe the following images. Each represents a certain gesture. How would you interpret each one of them in a professional context, for instance in a meeting, at the workplace etc.?

1. Compare your interpretations with your colleagues. Are they very different? Did you as an individual have more than one interpretation for any of the figures?
2. Discuss whether you think these gestures are commonly used in your work environment.
3. What do you think about the gestures that are not used? Are they unacceptable for some reason? Or are they simply not common? Try to explain.
4. In pairs/small groups, try to find other gestures which are / are not common in your work environment and comment on their acceptability.

Non-verbal Communication and Body Language 1/2



Non-verbal Communication and Body Language 2/2

