

# Cultural Practice Cards for Teachers

## Insight

When agreement doesn't mean agreement

Agreement can signal politeness, not commitment.

In some contexts, saying "yes" maintains harmony rather than expressing intention. Misunderstanding often appears later — when one person treats the "yes" as a decision.

*In practice:*

When does agreement not mean commitment?

## Dialogue

A polite invitation

A: "You should come by sometime."

B: "Yes, I'd love to."

(They never meet.)

*Cultural lens:*

The exchange signals friendliness, not a concrete plan.

*In class / practice:*

What does each person mean?

Rewrite the dialogue as a real invitation

## Prompt

Politeness and distance

Write a short dialogue where both people are trying to be polite — and this creates distance instead of connection.

*Extension:*

Act it out twice:

as polite distance

as direct engagement

## Breakdown

When silence is misread

*Situation*

A question is asked. The other person stays quiet.

*What's happening?*

Silence may signal:

respect

uncertainty

time needed to think

Not necessarily agreement or disengagement.

*In class / practice:*

Discuss: What does silence mean in different contexts?

### **Insight**

Understanding without shared meaning

People may use the same words but not share the same meaning.

Communication can appear successful — while misunderstanding continues underneath.

*In practice:*

Where have you experienced “false understanding”?

### **Dialogue**

Indirect disagreement

A: “This might be a bit difficult.”

B: “Yes, it’s fine.”

(The problem remains unresolved.)

*Cultural lens:*

Indirect language softens disagreement but can also obscure it.

*In class / practice:*

What is each person trying to do?

Rewrite the dialogue with clearer intentions

### **Prompt**

A moment of uncertainty

Think of a situation when you were in another country and you didn’t know how to act.

*Write:*

what you noticed

what you felt

what you decided to do

*Extension:*

Share and compare different responses.

### **Assumption → What’s happening**

Common assumption

Migrants need to adapt quickly to a new culture.

What’s happening

Cultural adaptation is a long-term process that often unfolds over years — and across generations.

Expectations of “quick integration” can create pressure and misunderstanding.

*Reflection:*

What do we expect when we say “integration”?

## **Further Reading**

Milton Bennett — Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication

John W. Berry — Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures.

Michael Byram — Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence

Darla K. Deardorff, Kate Berardo (Eds) Building Cultural Competence

Claire Kramersch — Language and Culture