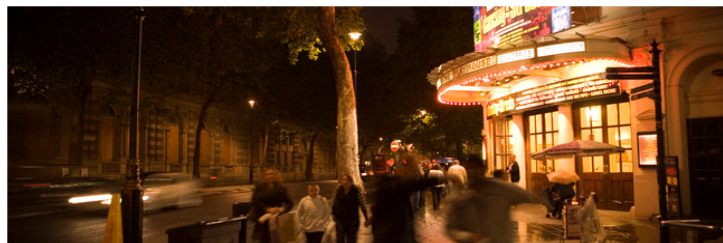


Antonia Paterson, Jackie Hemingway and Sarah Butler

This section highlights some useful learning and teaching websites that can help with planning, teaching and professional development. This time we look at using intercultural resources.

Future Learn <https://www.futurelearn.com/>



Exploring English: Language and Culture

This course for learners of English looks at British culture and examines English in use to help you improve your language skills.

WATCH THE TRAILER





Download video: [standard](#)

ABOUT THE COURSE




Join now - starts 2 Feb

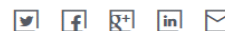
 FREE online course

 Duration: 6 weeks

 2 hours pw

 Certificates available

SHARE



START DATES

Future Learn is a website offering a wide range of free online courses from reputable organisations, including The Open University. The variety of topics, ranging from 'Climate Change' to 'The Secret Power of Brands,' makes it ideal as a self-study resource for students

from all majors. For those hoping to practice their English and get a taste of British culture, the 'Exploring English Language and Culture' course, offered by the British Council, is a good place to start.

This six-week course begins with step-by-step introductory videos to explain how it works, and leads onto topics such as the environment and literature. Each week features a new set of materials, with videos and transcripts, related tasks and quizzes and active discussion forums, all aimed at an Intermediate (B1 CEFR) level of English. While possible to join anytime and work at your own pace, the benefit of following the recommended schedule is that learners can participate actively in online discussions around the week's materials, joining students from around the world to share opinions on the topics. These international forums contribute to a sense of collaborative learning and provide a range of perspectives on key issues such as Global English. A language focus is incorporated each week (for example, examining use of

passive forms) and support is offered by a team of British Council experts who participate in the forums regularly.

Since internet connection problems within China can make access to the site unreliable, it is convenient that videos can be downloaded and saved to watch offline. Combined with a focus on personal reflection, with a weekly writing task based on experience or thoughts on the topic, the course is both user-friendly and engaging. Once registered on the site, *Future Learners* also receive news of upcoming courses, encouraging them to extend their study (for example, 'Study Skills' is one option: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/study-skills-for-international-students-3>). For teachers hoping to inspire interest in self-study, this site provides an impressive collection of potential resources.

Intercultural Film Database

<http://www.uni-hildesheim.de/interculturalfilm/>

Using film in the classroom can be very engaging for students (King, 2002; Ryan & Francais, 1998), and in particular may be a useful way of illustrating intercultural differences (Briam, 2010; Mallinger & Rossy, 2003). Although the films are clearly scripted and acted, which limits their authenticity, they can nevertheless be helpful in highlighting cross-cultural communication issues and provoking critical discussion.

However, it may be time-consuming to search independently for film scenes illustrating specific cultural behaviours. The *Intercultural Film Database*, produced by Hildesheim

University in Germany, aims to make this simple by providing a collection of films which have been analysed according to various cultural features.

The over 100 films analysed in the database come from a wide range of countries and include several foreign language films. Both mainstream and independent films from various genres can be found in the collection. Of these, about ten films feature Chinese and Western cultural differences, including 'The Wedding Banquet' (1993, directed by Ang Lee) and 'Mao's Last Dancer' (2009, directed by Bruce Beresford).

Searching for specific films and cultural features is straightforward; films are organised alphabetically by title and can also be searched by five features: cultures, cultural dimensions, actors, director, and entry author.

Each database entry contains basic details about the chosen film and a plot synopsis, as well as an analysis of selected scenes. This analysis is based on a framework of twenty cultural dimensions, each of which is explained in the glossary pages of the website. These dimensions include widely accepted criteria for cultural comparison such as individualism versus collectivism, high/low context communication styles, and power distance relationships. Although film excerpts are not provided on the website, the relevant film scenes can be easily located since timings are given in the analysis. Many of the clips examined are very short and therefore convenient for classroom viewing.

Although described as an ongoing project, the site does not appear to be regularly updated, so recent films are unlikely to be found. Therefore, as a project task for those studying intercultural issues, the site might provide inspiration for students to produce their own film analyses, which could then be submitted to the site using the email contact, or used to create students' own database.

Absolutely Intercultural

<http://www.absolutely-intercultural.com/>

Absolutely Intercultural is a website containing monthly podcasts exploring cultural diversity and topics such as customs and working and studying abroad. Interviews are authentic and focus on a variety of issues, including sustainable tourism, corporate social responsibility, and charity volunteering. Some podcasts deal with current issues, such as the recent Scottish Referendum. Many topics will be of value to students planning to study or work abroad. Some of the topics may be more suitable for higher level learners, but much of the material can be used by tutors. There is a written summary of the key points, so listeners can read about the podcast content, although there is no transcript.

As recordings are authentic, learners are exposed to a variety of accents and vocabulary in context. The podcasts also provide the opportunity to raise students' awareness of stress, chunking, slips, and false starts. Although the delivery is well paced, this site may be most suitable for intermediate and upper-intermediate learners, as some of the language can be of a rather high level. All the podcasts are in audio format and there are very few videos.

Absolutely Intercultural 177 +++ Intercultural Complexity and Simplicity +++ Vietnam, Finland, and Germany +++ Differences in Everyday Cultural Conventions +++ Culture Shocks +++

Published on April 4, 2014 in podcast. 0 Comments

Tags: absolutely intercultural, complexity, cultural shock, culture, dr. laurent borgmann, english, english podcast, everyday cultural practices, finland, german, germany, intercultural complexity, intercultural simplicity, podcast, rheinahrampus, rheinahrampus remagen, shock, vietnam, younes jaber.



If you like the podcast then please also LIKE US ON [FACEBOOK!](#)



Our current exchange students from Vietnam and Lithuania are here in Germany studying and doing their internships. Within their first days after their arrival, they mentioned some cultural differences concerning the complexity and simplicity in their new lives and in their home countries. Cultural anthropologists have discovered and described differences in the level of cultural complexity in

Some students may prefer the latter and be discouraged from using the site.

There are no specific follow-up exercises on the website, but there is a link to an article from the TESL Electronic Journal which suggests ways *Absolutely Intercultural* can be used in teaching. The written summary with each podcast is useful as this gives the listener more background information on some complex topics. The website is regularly updated and there is a new episode every month. It has won two awards: European Podcast National Winner (2010) and the Edu Blog Awards Winner (2006).

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Sarah Butler is currently Deputy Director of the Pre-session English course at Coventry University. Her areas of interest include teacher development and learner autonomy.

ab6631@coventry.ac.uk



Antonia Paterson currently teaches EAP at XJTLU. She has previously taught General English in Italy, the UK and China. She holds an MA in TESOL.

antonia.paterson@xjtlu.edu.cn



Jackie Hemingway has taught EAP at XJTLU since September 2011. Prior to joining XJTLU she taught General and Business English in several countries including Austria, Spain, Japan and Oman.

jacqueline.hemingway@xjtlu.edu.cn