

Lesson Plan: ACE at Work

Attitude, Creation, Experience under real workplace pressure — for C1+ Business English students

Level: C1-C2

Time: 50-60 minutes

Focus: Speaking, professional mindset

Best for: Business English, workplace communication

Learning objective

By the end of the lesson, students can apply the ACE framework (Attitude, Creation, Experience) to real workplace situations, building a practical, repeatable response to the discomfort of using a second language under professional pressure.

1. Warmer (5 minutes)

Ask: describe a recent moment at work where you were misunderstood in English, or hesitated before speaking up. What did you do in the moment right after? Discuss briefly as a group, without judgement, this happens to everyone working across a language gap.

2. Presentation: the ACE framework (10 minutes)

Introduce the three questions:

Attitude. What posture do you choose in the half-second after a mistake or misunderstanding? A quick, unbothered repair ("sorry, let me put that differently") beats visible embarrassment every time.

Creation. The actual task in front of you, the report, the pitch, the email, is the real practice ground, not a distraction from "real" language learning.

Experience. The working relationships built across a language gap are usually stronger than expected, once the initial awkwardness passes. Colleagues register effort before they register grammar mistakes.

3. Controlled practice: the repair phrase bank (10 minutes)

Build a shared list of quick, natural repair phrases for the Attitude moment, students supply options, teacher adds any missing ones:

- "Sorry, let me put that differently."
- "What I mean is..."
- "Let me rephrase that."
- "Sorry, wrong word, I meant..."
- "Let me try that again."

4. Freer practice: real situation roleplay (15 minutes)

In pairs: one student describes a real or realistic work situation (a difficult meeting, a presentation, a negotiation). The other deliberately interrupts or looks confused at least once during the description. Speaker must use a repair phrase and continue smoothly, practising the Attitude response under mild, controlled pressure.

5. Application: Creation and Experience reflection (10 minutes)

Individually, students write two or three sentences: one real task at work this week where English is the medium (a report, an email, a call), and one working relationship that's improved specifically because of language practice, however small. Share in pairs if comfortable.

6. Wrap-up (5 minutes)

Discuss: none of this replaces grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation work. It governs what happens to that language under real conditions, which is usually where the actual value shows up or gets lost.

The ACE framework (Attitude, Creation, Experience) is part of ThriveFul, an educational philosophy developed by Ian Springham.

Ian Springham | CertTESOL, Trinity College London | ianspringham.co.uk

Free to use in the classroom. For more lesson resources: ianspringham.co.uk/resources/