



Cultural Awareness and Appreciation

CA-05

WebQuest



CQ⁺

De-escalating Polarisation
in Europe



THEME ALLOCATED:	Cultural Awareness and Appreciation (CA-05)
TITLE OF THE WEBQUEST:	Learning from critical cultural incidents
INTRODUCTION	
<p>In today's globalised societies where frequent exchanges and contacts have increased; interconnections, identities collide and expand. It may become more common to encounter critical incidents on cultural grounds.</p> <p>Culturally critical incidents can occur in all contexts, happen suddenly and/or unexpectedly, and are related to socio-relational contexts: in education, health care, in public offices, among friends, at work, in shops, sometimes even in the family.</p> <p>Critical incidents will provide access to real experiences with minimal cultural indicators and support the development of intercultural competence by developing more complex interpretations and responses to situations.</p> <p>The possibility of analysing the critical incident will later make people learn what happened and try to improve.</p> <p>Critical incidents are short dialogues and scenarios that highlight an aspect of intercultural communication that may be unfamiliar or challenging when encountered in the real world.</p> <p>Critical incidents are tools to increase understanding of human attitudes, expectations, behaviour and interactions. In intercultural training, critical incidents are brief descriptions of situations where a misunderstanding, problem or conflict arises because of cultural differences or where there is a problem with intercultural adaptation and communication.</p> <p>Deloitte's recent report found that the number of jobs in soft-skill-intensive occupations is expected to grow by 2.5 times the rate of jobs in less soft-skill-intensive occupations. And by 2030, Deloitte predicts that soft-skill-intensive occupations will make up almost two-thirds of the workforce by 2030</p>	



(<https://leadershipmanagement.com.au/soft-skills-diversity/>). In general, they enhance cultural competence, which has become necessary in many workplaces and includes several skills, most notably intercultural communication, one of the soft skills increasingly in demand.

You are an assistant professor and your professor has been called in by a business consulting company. They have asked him to implement a development method to retain human resources precisely to support companies that have many employees from different backgrounds. Companies often lose these resources because they cannot adapt to intercultural differences or because conflicts arise based precisely on diversity. You decide with your professor to construct a series of video resources that could be adaptable to different workplaces. These videos will be based on developing awareness of cultural differences, to improve cultural competence and not only make relationships in organisations more constructive, but also to improve the well-being and sense of inclusion of people from different countries. You think that even at university there are often students studying abroad who could be helped through these resources. You decide to record the first video and submit it to your professor.

TASKS

The task involves analysing critical incidents as moments of intercultural learning. These critical incidents will demonstrate practical examples of instances whereby a lack of cultural awareness exists. You will gain knowledge of how to recognise intercultural critical incidents, especially those that can occur in many social spaces. Some links will be given where you will gain the opportunity to deepen the case of the critical incident, and others will guide you to develop a reflection through it to improve the learning of certain skills. Other web resources will allow you to deepen intercultural communication in particular, but also to develop awareness and sensitivity, empathy, and active listening. Each "incident" provides enough information to demonstrate the background, describe what happened, and possibly reflect the feelings and reactions of the people involved

It will be asked, as a "final product" to make a video where the before and after of a "critical incident" can be shown. The critical incident in the video can be taken from a real case of students participating in the group. In this case, you can use their quotes,



their photos, and live action! Remember, the production does not have to be perfect. Be authentic!

For the identification of the critical incident, students can be asked to write a list of do's and don'ts in their culture. This can be a simple writing assignment or you can ask them to present the list to the class. Ask students to translate some traditional sayings from their culture. They are often very different and interesting to compare with equivalents from another culture. You can discuss traditional body language and hand gestures in your students' culture, or conversation questions on manners.

Alternatively, you can take a cue from the numerous videos indicated in the resources below.

PROCESS

Step 1- *The cultural critical incident.*

In this phase you can read documents and watch videos on intercultural critical incidents in different work contexts. Numerous examples can be found as a tool and also the categorisations that have been made to deal with critical incidents can be used as tools for reflection (Handbook)

video example of an intercultural critical incident

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGyTXhnYbnM>

Critical Incidents videos and guides and tools in workplace and health care

- <https://www.norquest.ca/search.aspx?q=critical%20incidents#gsc.tab=0&gsc.q=critical%20incidents>

Hospital Critical Incident Manual

- <https://healthydiversity.eu/media/head-manual-of-critical-incidents.pdf>

Health professionals' encounters with ethnic minority patients: the critical incident approach

- <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/nin.12421>



Step 2- Identify a critical incident as a case study and reflection questions

The critical incident to be recognised in the video can be chosen from the real case discussed or from the links provided. If it is the case that it is from a real case, students can reenact and recreate the critical incident as a role play or dialogue.

Alternatively, the critical incident could be taken from the links provided:

- <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/users/interculture/deliver11.htm>
- <https://www.norquest.ca/NorquestCollege/media/pdf/about/resources/inter-cultural-resources-for-educators/critical-incidents-for-intercultural-communication-toolkit.pdf> (pag. 51)
- <https://www.futurelearn.com/info/courses/intercultural-communication/0/steps/11044>

Once students have processed the basic information from the critical incident, they should focus on the more difficult questions of why and how, trying to provide a basic description of the context and a hypothesis explaining the behaviour. Based on this, students can generate questions for discussion.

Who is involved? What happened? Where did the situation occur? When? Why was there a difficulty? What was the intended purpose? To develop a comprehensive understanding, you could compile your own list of key words and key questions about the critical incident. You could deconstruct the scenario from each participant's point of view using simple questions. Form a basic understanding of the social or communicative situation. Try to understand the participant's perspective and create a sense of empathy through interpretation. Why did the behaviour in question occur? How can the difficulty be overcome? Students should write down their own interpretations that can be shared and discussed.

Questions to explore cultural differences:

<http://iteslj.org/questions/culture.html>

Step 3- Tools for analysing the cultural critical incident

In the resource links below are provided, schemes and suggestions for using the critical incident as a resource for learning intercultural competence. (cognitive comp.tant scheme). Other resources help to reflect on the differences between cultures and exercises on cross-cultural incidents are also offered.

Cultural incidents to increase cultural awareness

- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262254211_Critical_Incidents_for_



[Raising_Cultural_Awareness](#)

Guide

- [Scene by Scene Breakdowns](#)
- *Toolkit for Intercultural Competence*
- <https://diversity.ncsu.edu/cultural-competence-toolkit/>
- *Cultural aspects and values that differ between cultures*
- <https://blog.culturaldetective.com/2012/08/23/watch-out-what-a-values-lens-is-and-is-not/>

Watch at the video and do these exercises on cross-cultural incidents

- <https://sisu.ut.ee/multilingual/7-2-critical-incidents-cross-cultural>

Table entry for observations/reflections on the physical, cognitive, behavioural, emotional aspects of the cross-cultural critical incident:

- <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/8d5a-Critical-Incidents-in-the-Workplace-a-Guide-for-Employees.pdf>

Step 4- Intercultural competences and the soft skills to improve them

After deciding on the critical incident you are going to record, you should now consider how you can “resolve” the situation for your video. The following links provide advice and guidance on how you can apply cultural awareness to critical incidents:

videos on intercultural competences

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ugzWjl2tv0>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-3gbex09tk>

Top ten tips for effective intercultural communication

- <https://www.chrysos.org.uk/blog/top-ten-tips-for-effective-cross-cultural-communication>

Inclusive language



- <https://buffer.com/resources/inclusive-language-tech/>

Active listening

- <https://practice-school.eu/part1/module4/>

Take the test and explore your cultural profile

- <https://hbr.org/2014/08/whats-your-cultural-profile?registration=success>

Step 5- make two videos

Two video products can be made to show the difference between situation A and situation B.

Situation A should demonstrate the critical incident that you have decided upon in the previous steps. Situation A will show the incident without a solution, and will highlight the lack of cultural awareness and resolution between your two protagonists.

Situation B will build on Situation A and will offer a resolution based on the cultural awareness tips you covered in Step 5. The purpose of the 2 videos is to provide your viewers with a DO and DON'T version of events.

The video should be between 2 and 4 minutes long maximum.

- *Free video editing resources*
- <https://www.zdnet.com/article/best-free-video-editing-software/>
- <https://www.oberlo.com/blog/best-free-video-editing-software>
- <https://www.powtoon.com/>

EVALUATION

From the following statements, mark the extent of your knowledge after completing this WebQuest (where 1 - very little, and 5 - a lot):

I acquired a new learning method based on critical incidents (marks 1 to 5)

The critical incidents method is useful for developing cultural awareness (mark 1 to 5)

The critical incidents method is useful for improving intercultural communication:



(Mark 1-5)

The activities engaged me with interesting and relevant content, provided opportunities for reflection, critical thinking, evaluation and self-exploration (Mark 1-5)

How useful is the critical incident method for managing intercultural relations? (Mark from 1 to 5)

Critical incidents help to develop more complex interpretations and responses to situations (mark 1-5)

I got to know some useful soft skills to improve intercultural relations (mark 1 to 5)

I acquired new information about how different cultures can interact in communication (marks 1 to 5)

The exercises and activities proposed motivated me in my research and made me curious (marks 1 to 5)

This web quest helped me to extend my investigation and interest in intercultural soft skills (scored 1-5)

This resource made me approach diversity in a more conscious way (mark 1-5)

CONCLUSION

This Web Quest explored critical incidents, which are encounters of different cultural values and how these can be demonstrated through verbal and non-verbal communication.

Critical Incidents are tools to increase understanding of human attitudes, expectations, behaviour and interactions. They aim to engage participants on a personally meaningful level as they examine different attitudes and behaviours.

When one person says or does something, the words and actions are perceived by another. When that person's perception of the message is different from the meaning intended by the communicator, misunderstandings occur.

In order to become skilled in intercultural communication, you must first self-observe your own culture and the culture(s) of those around you.

Observation also involves describing people's behaviour in a non-judgmental manner, consciously filtering out cultural prejudices and using emotional reactions as clues for understanding. Observation also looks at potential motives, examining possible



reasons why people might have behaved the way they did.

The method of critical incidents makes it possible to detect potential obstacles of a situation, through focused observation of behaviour and attitudes seen from different angles.

How do my values influence my behaviour in this situation? How does my view of the challenge involved influence my behaviour? Observing the underlying motivations of those involved can help facilitate effective intercultural communication and understanding.

Cultural values provide guidelines on what is considered right or wrong, good or bad, within a culture. Not only are these values important within the culture, but they can also be problematic for those outside the culture. It is important to explore the values and motivations of others, which might differ from your own.

The validation of other cultures in an unbiased manner teaches sensitivity, empathy and a general understanding of different views of different religions, practices and customs (Barrett et al., 2012).

In today's diverse work environment, communication problems can take on an additional dimension of complexity. Each culture has its own set of tacit assumptions and tendencies when it comes to face-to-face interactions, and trying to get your point of view across effectively can sometimes be difficult in intercultural communication even when there is no language barrier

It is not only about understanding cultural codes, but above all about becoming interculturally effective.

Cultural competence is never an end point; it is an ongoing process of intellectual curiosity, intentional learning and critical thinking about cultural issues and conversations in order to understand the issues of the society in which one lives, why others have different views on these issues, how these issues impact on us in the same way or in different ways from others, and how to work and engage in critical dialogue with others in a way that is reflective, respectful and productive.



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