Critical Incidents

BODY

[English]

2013

This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

The project, and this publication within it, was funded by the European Commission – DG Education and Culture, LLP Grundtvig Programme.
Quick summary of critical incidents related to BODY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belgium</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Hungary</th>
<th>Italy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent young refugees</td>
<td>The bag</td>
<td>Roma skirt</td>
<td>Private room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese handshake</td>
<td>Kisses</td>
<td>Japanese gesture</td>
<td>Hug</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soup and butter</td>
<td>Touching art</td>
<td>On the floor</td>
<td>Eating in class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese participant</td>
<td>Nodding</td>
<td>Swimming suit</td>
<td>Killing a bee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent students</td>
<td>Corporal punishment</td>
<td>Mixed role playing</td>
<td>Pakistani couple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handshake</td>
<td>Nose blowing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CRITICAL INCIDENT: “Nose Blowing”

Collected by Elan Interculturel, France, 2012
KEY WORDS: politeness, taboos, body fluids, hygiene

Culture of the person experiencing the shock
What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)
French woman in her early twenties working in South Korea as a French teacher in a military school. She already had experience living abroad having taught in both urban and rural contexts in India. She has a love for cultural exchange and at the time of the incident, she regularly contributed articles to an English newspaper about her cultural gaffes or shocks experienced while in Korea.

Culture of the person “causing” the shock
What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)
Young students in a military school. The narrator did not have any individual background information on the students at the time of the incident, but they seemed to have a great respect for order, hierarchy and rules. While the school is mostly male, the French class had a more balanced number of male and female students because female students seemed particularly interested in the French language.

Description of the situation
I was a French teacher at a military academy in South Korea. It was winter and I was giving my lesson as usual, but I couldn’t help noticing that most of the cadets had colds and quite a few had runny noses. None of them attempted to blow their noses and just continued to snuffle throughout my lesson. I was a bit annoyed by this as it made it difficult to concentrate on my lesson. Finally, I took out a packet of tissues and attempted to distribute tissues to the students with runny noses so that they could blow their noses. I was quite surprised when they all refused the tissues because they clearly needed them. After they refused the
tissue, I continued my lesson as usual, but I remained confused by their reaction. Afterwards, I spoke to the commandant (the director of my department) about what had happened. He explained to me that in South Korea, it is considered rude to blow one’s nose in public. I was very embarrassed when I finally understood the reaction of my students.

1. Elements of the SITUATION
The incident took place in a classroom with 25-30 students. The room was set up with several rows of desks facing the front and the narrator standing in the front of the classroom. The narrator was roughly the same age as her students and had recently begun her position as French teacher. Around 30-40% of the students were female.

2. EMOTIONAL REACTION
I experienced irritation when the students would not blow their noses, considering their behavior to be rude. After this initial reaction, I thought that my students maybe simply didn’t have tissues with them, so I assumed that offering them the tissues from my bag would solve the problem. But when the students refused, I was confused and a little embarrassed. I was even more embarrassed after speaking with my boss and learning why the students had refused my offer.

3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hygiene:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For the narrator, a runny nose can contribute to the spread of disease. Tissues offer a way to prevent this spread by providing a clean, discrete means of addressing a runny nose. She was not only annoyed by the act of her students’ sniffling, but also slightly disgusted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manners/Politeness:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In addition to hygienic concerns, blowing one’s nose in public is considered to be good manners in French culture. It allows the sick person to address a runny nose in a discrete manner so that they can continue with the task at hand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the other person?

* e.g. postive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.*

Lightly negative. The narrator was initially a bit irritated by the behavior of her students.

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience? (Hypothesis!)

In Korea, as the narrator later learned from her boss, it is considered rude to blow one’s nose in public. Thus, just as the narrator perceived the behavior of her students as rude, they considered it vulgar to blow their nose in a classroom setting. This politeness code could be related to the idea that natural bodily functions are to be removed from the public domain. In blowing one’s nose in public, Koreans may feel that they are drawing attention to, rather than discretely addressing their runny nose.

For them, it may be best to ignore the runny nose while in public, or to sniffle without the use of a tissue and then to blow their nose once they are in private.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

For the narrator this experience caused her to question a practice that she always considered to be “natural”. In seeing that when it comes to blowing one’s nose, the opposite idea of hygiene and politeness apply, she realized that how her own notions of hygiene are culturally influenced. For her professional practice as a teacher, she realized that it is important not to force things on her students, even that which may seem simple or unimportant to her and to be open to adapting to a new cultural context so as not to offend those with whom she works or interacts.
Critical incident “The Hug”

Collected by CESIE, Italy, 2012. Edited by Elan Interculturel.

KEY WORDS: Reciprocity, non-verbal communication: meaning of physical contact/gestures, proxemics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture of the person experiencing the shock</th>
<th>What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sicilian / Female / Woman / Age 28 / heterosexual / unmarried / living with a Muslim-Bay Fall man / Catholic Christian worshipper but no churchgoer / Studies in Psychology / International NGO employee /</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture of the person “causing” the shock</th>
<th>What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British male / volunteering in Palermo, Italy / Age 24 / accustomed to respect the rules / being detached and undemonstrative / polite and reserved (not being accustomed to the confusion and disorganization have been the crucial elements at the base of the shock experience). Arriving in a country completely different in terms of habits, way of living, relation and contact with people etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Describing the SITUATION

A young man from UK came to Palermo for an internship in our institution. When he arrived he appeared really lost and frightened. I was the coordinator of his project and therefore I was worry about him and I tried to be warmly welcoming talking often with him. In those situations, our cultural peculiarities have met and crashed, especially relating the physical distance that I put between me and the man. The Sicilian people are really friendly and close each other, hugging each other so often, so I hugged him being attentive of him. My warm attitude towards him made him more shocked and it did not help him to overcome the feelings experienced. After some months, he was integrating to the city and he felt better, he was more opened and he told me to have felt uncomfortable at the beginning due all the differences experienced admitting me that also my close and warm attitude toward him made him embarrassed and not able to talk honestly about his intercultural shock. We discussed a lot and we finally clarified each other the cultural diversity that we carried and how it has created misunderstanding.

1. Elements of the SITUATION

The incident happened in Sicily, Italy.
As I wrote above, the misunderstanding came up because, from my side I did not realise how much different was living in Palermo compared to UK. I was not really aware that starting from the traffic to the weather, passing people, relations, way of living, a new language could be really a shock.
In particular I did not take into account, that my warm Sicilian attitude could have a strong impact to him.
From his side, I can say that he was not really open minded at the beginning, he was fixed on the differences without appreciating the new things he was experiencing.

2. EMOTIONAL REACTION

I felt frustrated during this period.
Later on when I resolved the misunderstanding, I found myself with more intercultural awareness.
It helped me to analyze always how foreigners could live in a new country, the difficulties they could face and I understood that it’s really non functional assuming your point of view without putting it into questions, especially if you work with foreign.

3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?

“It touched just my idea of the relation with people. I was used to be in a close contact with the people with whom I was working.I understood that people from other countries could have another relation style, being colder than me or not available to an immediate confidence.”
Reciprocity – in cultural anthropology reciprocity is a way of defining people’s informal exchange of goods, labour and even non-material things, for example responding to a positive action with another positive action. Physical contact means hospitality and caring in Southern cultures. As reciprocity is an important value in society, the refusal of this (the welcome gesture of the hug) can cause frustration.

Externalisation of emotions: showing emotions is accepted in Southern countries, and in general it is an important sign of recognition of the others.

Proxemics (E.T.Hall): the required personal/social space between people is different in the different cultures. If you step too close to the other person, you can hurt his/her personal sphere. It is related to physical contact which is different in the different cultures, in the the ‘warm, impulsive ‘cultures, physical contact and externalising emotions are important, while these can cause discomfort for other people.

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image do you have of the other person?

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image do you have of the other person?

Rather negative and critical: I had an image of the other person as a strange person, not open minded and not enjoying live.

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience?

(Hypothesis !)

“Many aspects of the new context made him live a shock experience. My approach to him, warmer than how he was used to experience in his country made him feel embarrassed and with some prejudices about me (the crazy coordinator, I supposed). “

Non-verbal communication - proxemics – personal/social space: keeping a certain distance with unknown persons is necessary, especially with future colleagues. This is related to the fact that in certain cultures personal and professional sphere are strictly separated, and it cannot be mixed up (for example no hugging of a future colleague).

Verbal communication has priority, it is more important to formulate the things in words, clearly, directly.

Non-verbal communication – not showing emotions: instead of the externalisation of emotions, it is rather their hiding that is preferred in many cultures. Hiding emotions is understood as being able to master them, not being the victim of them; in interactions it is a sign of politeness. From this perspective, the externalisation of emotions can seem insincere or even childish.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

“Both of us didn’t take into consideration or gave importance to the differences of culture and their peculiarities and the effects of these on the professional level. He never asked for further explanations regarding assigned tasks afraid of being hugged also in this kind of situation and I was not able to encourage him to be more active and participative.”

“These kind of misunderstandings happen but the important thing is to keep ourselves available for feedback by others or critiques which could make us more aware of ourselves and others behaviours and ways of approaching. We should understand that our point of view is not absolute and especially, if we are educators, it’s necessary to work on it.”

Reciprocity is a key issue in all interaction: it implies that we recognise each other as respectable interaction partners, while the lack of reciprocity implies precisely the opposite: a lack of recognition. It is for this reason that breaches of reciprocity has such an impact even in the most ordinary simple situations, such as not smiling back at someone, or not addressing the other with the proper politeness formula.
CRITICAL INCIDENT: THE BAG

**Collected by:** Elan Interculturel, 2012, France

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional domain of the narrator</th>
<th>Gender edu</th>
<th>Health edu</th>
<th>Sexuality edu</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General intercultural edu</th>
<th>Physical edu / sport</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>剧作</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Actor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Sensitive zone | The relationship to the body in acting + non-verbal communication through the attachment to an object that becomes almost an integral part of the body |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture of the person experiencing the shock</th>
<th>What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>剧作</td>
<td>The narrator is French. He has significant experience (about 30 years) in theater. He directs a theater company that participates in a number of social activities with the goal of giving at risk populations (whether that be those physically lacking in resources or psychologically vulnerable groups) access to culture and the arts. As an actor and trainer, he regularly works with individuals staying at Emmaus (a French charity that provides shelters).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture of the person “causing” the shock</th>
<th>What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>剧作</td>
<td>African women in their forties, possibly from Cameroon or Senegal (not sure) from poor backgrounds and low education levels. They possibly do not have any family in France. They are in the process of getting their legal statuses in order. They recently obtained documents allowing them to remain in France on a temporary basis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Describing the SITUATION | I lead a theater workshop with African women who are staying at Emmaus. One of them. A., was very tall, but was always hunched over and holding her bag, even when doing the activities. I asked her to put it down, but she refused because she was afraid of losing it, which would mean losing her French residence permit. After a bit of negotiation. A. agreed to leave her bag under a chair that she could watch from where she was standing while participating in the acting exercises. This incident happened several times. A. didn’t always agree to leave her bag, even when I offered to put it in a place where she could see it while acting. The day of the performance, she kept it under her chair on the stage. I let her do that because I knew that without it, she would be tense and worried and wouldn’t be able to perform her best. The bag was a source of constant concern for her. You could almost say that it was part of her, part of her body. I saw her again a few months later. She was more relaxed physically and stood up straighter. But she still couldn’t separate herself from her bag. |

| 1. Elements of the SITUATION | The activity takes place at an Emmaus shelter. Several people are present without having explicitly chosen to come to the workshop. Seeing the workshop as they pass by, they either decide to participate or not. The doors are left open. |

| 2. EMOTIONAL REACTION | At first I was confused, then I tried to find a compromise by asking A. to leave her bag under a chair that she could watch from where she was standing. |
3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?

The narrator has a western concept of theater and of the relationship with the body during role-playing activities. According to this conception, the actor must free her body of all that is connected to her real life (worries, objects, etc.). She must give up her own identity during the activity, «leaving herself» to allow the character to take over. Nevertheless, the narrator is always willing to make compromises and to learn from differences. His identity is administratively justified by his identity card, but if he were to lose it, he would only have to go through a simple administrative process to get a new one. The loss would have no importance for his future or for his identity as French.

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the other person?

*e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.*

Real. The narrator does not have a positive or negative image of A., but rather a neutral understanding of how her precarious circumstance influences her actions.

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience?

(Hypothosis !)

The narrator later learned that A. had administrative problems concerning her legal status in France. This situation, in which a person is trying to get the paper that will prevent her deportation, could have important psychological implications. This would explain the importance of the “piece of paper” that A. held such a great attachment to because it represented her identity in France. This paper was part of her or even was her in a certain way. Her bag contained her entire life. It is thus understandable that she did not want to let it go, out of a sort of survival instinct. The narrator had observed this same attachment to papers, personal affects, etc. (even if to a lesser degree) in several of those living at Emmaus. They slept with the jacket that held their wallet, even if it only held their residence permit. This survival instinct is linked to their precarious situation and the fact that they often sleep on the street.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

Yes, it is important that educators and other people who work with similar populations consider the place of the cultures of the groups they are working with in all processes of cognitive, sensorial, or esthetic transformation. Here, the word “culture” goes beyond the national or regional sense. Instead, it is related to the culture of a social group that is created by administrative, financial, or social constraints (for example, those faced by the homeless). The precarious situation and uncertainty faced by these people makes them adapt certain habits and survival reflexes that end up being ingrained in who they are. These habits translate the feelings of anguish and uncertainty felt by these people, feelings that generate the need to be physically anchored in a document that represents an identity difficultly acquired (or almost acquired).

It is thus important that a trainer show himself/herself capable of having:

- a sharpened sense of observation to identify the manifestations of this type of difference and to evaluate its importance for the person concerned
- empathy: instead of ignoring the manifestation of a difference or forcing the other person to give up certain needs that could seem insignificant (in this case, the need to keep one’s bag at all times), it is important to put oneself in the place of the other person to understand the importance given to a particular object and to accept it
- the ability to negotiate by trying to find a compromise that allows him/her to accommodate the needs of the other person (in this case, putting the bag in a visible location so that the participant can monitor it)
CRITICAL INCIDENT: Kisses

Country: France
Date of recording the critical incident: 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional domain of the narrator</th>
<th>Gender edu</th>
<th>Health edu</th>
<th>Sexuality edu</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General intercultural edu</th>
<th>Physical edu / sport</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Language teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sensitive zone

What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication,

Physical contact through kissing, social convention governed by different codes such as gender, age, hierarchy, the context, the nature of the relationship (professional / private, formal / informal, familiar, friendly, intimate, etc..) These codes differ across cultures.

Culture of the person experiencing the shock

What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

Flemish/Belgian/Dutch man in his 40s

Culture of the person “causing” the shock

What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

Young French students taking language courses.

Describing the SITUATION

Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.

As a Flemish, Belgian, Dutch man (quite an intercultural program already), I had noticed that my fellow Francophones would kiss upon their arrival at the workplace. This is a relatively rare practice in a Flemish environment where kisses are reserved for true friends. Having recently arrived in France, I was invited to a gala organized by my students. Upon arriving in the room, I saw some of my language students and wanting to greet them, I gave each a kiss. They were good sports and played along, but they died laughing.

1. Elements of the SITUATION

How many people were present? How many women / men?
What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible)
Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.
Relationship between the two groups (eg. colonial history, majority – minority)

A student gala where students of the narrator were present, including students to whom he gave language lessons. The situation was more or less informal from the point of view of the narrator.

2. EMOTIONAL REACTION

How did you feel in this situation?

Today, I still feel embarrassed when I think about it. In any case, I have become more selective when distributing kisses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From a Flemish environment where kisses are reserved for real friends, the narrator had noticed that his fellow Francophones exchanged kisses upon arriving at work. Wanting to adapt to his new cultural environment, and noticing that kissing on the cheek was almost systematic in France, he decided to mimic this behavior, even though it was not at all part of his own culture. His views on hierarchy are rather similar to the French concept. This hierarchy somehow lost its importance in a context he considered informal (that of a gala, in this case), which suggested a more friendly behavior.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the other person?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience? (Hypothesis!)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The narrator realized that there is a hierarchy in the elaborate ritual of the kiss in France: a teacher is not supposed to give kisses to his students, even in a more or less informal situation. He had over-generalized a very specific code. French culture is visibly more formal than Belgian/Flemish culture. The formal nature of certain relationships (particularly hierarchical) persists even outside the professional context.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, because it could cause problems in his professional practice as a teacher of these students, who could react badly to his gesture. In this case, it was not enough to try to adapt to cultural differences in order not to violate the codes. He needed to take into account how the environment was perceived by others (less informal than he thought) and the implicit rules of social relations and hierarchies (teacher-student) in practices related to politeness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**CRITICAL INCIDENT: Touching Art**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country: France</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of recording the critical incident: 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Professional domain of the narrator**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Sexuality</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>edu</td>
<td>edu</td>
<td>edu</td>
<td>disability</td>
<td>edu</td>
<td>edu</td>
<td>Museum guide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sensitive zone**

What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (e.g.: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication, culture of the person experiencing the shock, etc.)

The notion of a museum is different according to the culture. The problem surrounded the necessary distance to respect when in front of a work of art and also the possibility to touch it.

**Culture of the person experiencing the shock**

What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

Twenty-two year-old French woman studying art history.

**Culture of the person “causing” the shock**

What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

Chinese visitor in his forties (so educated in the post-Mao period)

**Describing the SITUATION**

Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.

We were in the red room (paintings from the 19th century) of the Louvre when a Chinese visitor began to touch a painting of Ingres. I was so stunned that I practically screamed “Don’t touch!” (the phrase that the Louvre guards repeat several times per day). He seemed surprised and moved away.

1. **Elements of the SITUATION**

   How many people were present? How many women / men?

   What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible)

   Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.

   Relationship between the two groups (e.g. colonial history, majority – minority)

   The context was that of a museum: lots of people in movement...Sara was in the center of one of the red rooms, which are two symmetrical rooms separated in the middle by a square room. She was sitting in a chair with her back to the square room from which the visitors entered. They are very popular rooms and the team is usually under-staffed (as is the case in general in the museum). There were only two people for a very large room.

2. **EMOTIONAL REACTION**

   How did you feel in this situation?

   Sara was very surprised. She really wasn’t expecting this type of situation and thus didn’t know how to “react professionally.” It was personal for her because she respects works of art. For a moment, she was no longer a museum employee, but just a shocked observer.

3. **What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?**
Having studied art history and European culture, Sara considers a work of art to be almost sacred. It is unique and to be respected. This respect is shown by keeping a certain distance from the artwork and not touching so as not to damage it. A work of art is unique and should be conserved as best as possible for generations to come. A museum is a calm space where one must remain quiet so as to allow other visitors to interact with the artwork. At the Louvre, however, the size of the museum and the decoration give a “Disneyland effect.” Starting from the entry, the museum is not intimidating and doesn’t demand respect because it’s not austere, which is why some people break the rules.

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator you have of the other person?

*e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.*

Neutral because she didn’t understand the reason for his act.

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience?

*(Hypothesis!)*

She thinks that for Chinese people, the vision of art must be different. For them, Western pieces of art may be decorative pieces and thus available to be touched. Furthermore, museums and cultural heritage are very recent in China. Only paintings are considered as art. But the style of painting is very different in China, putting emphasis on Taoist notions of emptiness and openness. For them, full paintings (where the entire painting is covered) are considered decoration and not art.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

Yes, because even though the rules of museographics are universal, the conception of art differs according to the culture. When working in this type of place, one has to constantly interact with people coming from different cultural horizons and it is sometimes difficult to respect this difference when it goes against fixed professional rules that must be respected above all else.
**CRITICAL INCIDENT: On the floor**

**Country:** France  
**Date of recording the critical incident:** 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional domain of the narrator</th>
<th>Gender edu</th>
<th>Health edu</th>
<th>Sexuality edu</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General intercultural edu</th>
<th>Physical edu / sport</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Museum guide and guard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sensitive zone**  
What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (e.g: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication,

The concept of the museum and the physical attitude adopted there (in the way to sit, where to sit or not to sit, etc..) In such a place is visibly different in different cultures.

**Culture of the person experiencing the shock**  
What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

22 year-old French girl. Studies in art history.

**Culture of the person “causing” the shock**  
What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

Indian visitors, between 35 and 45 + Indian boy. Their culture seems less "formal" than Western culture.

**Describing the SITUATION**

*Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.*

I was next to the renaissance statues awaiting the arrival of my group. I was sitting when I spotted a small Indian boy who looked tired. I offered him my chair to down. I went to see if my group had arrived and when I gotback, his whole family (half a dozen people) had removed their shoes and were sitting in a circle on the floor around the boy. They got up and I did not react. Or rather, I acted like I had not seen.

**1. Elements of the SITUATION**

*How many people were present? How many women / men?*

*What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible)*

*Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.*

*Relationship between the two groups (eg. colonial history, majority – minority)*

The context was the museum: a lot of people, circulation...

**2. EMOTIONAL REACTION**

*How did you feel in this situation?*

I was very surprised and embarrassed because, as it was I who told the child to sit, I did not feel I was in the position to reprimand. I had not been expecting this situation, so I did not know how to respond professionally.

**3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?**

For her, the museums are to be respected. You should not behave informally there as if you were at home. In her culture, the act of removing one’s shoes and sitting in a circle in a museum is unthinkable! Taking off
one’s shoes is to enter an intimate space while the museum is a public place where proper attire is required out of respect for a place of memory and history. It is a place where one must behave and show respect. In other words: don’t disturb the other visitors, do not eat outside of designated spaces so as not to make a mess or risk damaging one of the works of art created by geniuses centuries ago. These works of art should not be spoilt by “ignorant people taking the lid of their Heineken” she said.

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the other person?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image of the other person</th>
<th>e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>slightly negative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience? (Hypothesis!)

Several factors come into play in this incident. Firstly, the act of forming a circle is a very common practice in India. Circles are formed for discussions because it allows everyone to easily contribute to making a decision (i.e., planning the program of the day for this group of tourists). One imagines that this group/family is from the Indian countryside as urban residents stand in a circle but rarely sit. However, it is quite common in India to sit down when tired wherever you are if no seating is provided for this purpose. We know that there are very few seats designated for the public in the halls of the Louvre. This group was definitely tired after all the walking that comes with being a tourist. In most cases, Indians walk very little and take other means of transport (cycling, etc.) when possible.

As for shoes, it is fairly common/normal to remove them when you can because it is more comfortable for sitting, but also for cleanliness because they are associated with dirt. They are generally removed before entering a private place or in some museums (which were residences before becoming museums).

Finally, the differentiation between public space/private space is not as pronounced in India as in the West, especially in rural India. So, a person can sit down and remove his shoes quite easily on the platform of a train station when he doesn’t find a place to sit. Similarly, some bus drivers sleep in their bus in winter or on top of it or next to it in summer. Some even take a shower next to the bus without it offending people. People will say, "Well, he must bathe...".

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

Yes, because when you work in this kind of place, you are constantly dealing with people from different cultural backgrounds and it is sometimes difficult to deal with this difference when it goes against fixed professional rules that must be respected above all else.
### CRITICAL INCIDENT: Bottom

**Country:** France  
**Date of recording the critical incident:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional domain of the narrator</th>
<th>Gender edu</th>
<th>Health edu</th>
<th>Sexuality edu</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General intercultural edu</th>
<th>Physical edu / sport</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Sensitive zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sensitive zone**

What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (e.g: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication,

The posterior - Morphology: the curve of the waist  
A representation of sensuality

**Culture of the person experiencing the shock**

What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

Female, 34 years old, bi-cultural French / Burkina Faso, born in France but spent 20 years in Burkina Faso. Educated in communication/public relations and inter-cultural relations. Feminist tendencies, profoundly sensitive to questions of male/female equality, Pan-Africanist, committed to valorizing African cultures

**Culture of the person “causing” the shock**

What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

2 protagonists in 3 different situations:

1\textsuperscript{st} situation: Female, white, 38 years old, bicultural French-English, born in United Kingdom but lives in France. Not much previous contact with Africans or African cultures but has recently become fascinated by Africa.

2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} situations: Male, French, 38 years old, born and bred in France. No contact / particular knowledge of Africa, lives in a Bohemian chic, multi-cultural area. In a relationship with a woman of African origin.

**Describing the SITUATION**

*Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.*

From a standing position I bend down to pick something off the ground. My legs remain straight and my back is completely bent towards the ground. My bottom is pointed backwards and my arms stretched out to pick up the object.

My companions seem wary, wrinkle their brows and make these remarks:  
"Why are you bending like that? You’re going to hurt your back. That’s a strange position to adopt!“ And one of them follows up with “You shouldn’t show your bottom like that”.

1. Elements of the SITUATION

*How many people were present? How many women / men?*  
*What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible)*  
*Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.*  
*Relationship between the two groups (e.g. colonial history, majority – minority)*
### Physical and social context

The first time: the narrator and her best friend as they walk down the street  
The second time: the narrator and her boyfriend as they walk down the street  
A third time: in the street, on a bicycle (with her boyfriend)  

In the three situations, there is an intimate relationship between the protagonists, which allows the questions raised to be addressed openly.

### 2. EMOTIONAL REACTION

**How did you feel in this situation?**

I wasn’t expecting a remark like this for a movement that I feel to be natural, so I felt surprise. At the same time I was thoughtful because I was perplexed by the reaction.  
I asked: “How would you do it? Show me”.  

Each of my interlocutors made the same movement, bending the knees, their bottoms lowered to the ground and their arms stretched out to pick up the object.  

Apart from surprise, some other reactions:  
- A bit cross at being accused of wanting to show myself off, of having an intention of coquetry when there was no such intention  
- A feeling of injustice, a need and desire to restore it

### 3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?

The narrator’s imagination, social perception:  
- The bottom has a social function, a strongly suggestive power  
The narrator grew up in an environment where women wiggle their bottoms and roll their hips in an explicit way when they walk.  
- Morphological heritage,  
The curve of the lower back underlines the rump and makes the posterior stand out from the rest of the body which is more noticeable and visually obvious.  
Because of the morphology of most African women, walking naturally requires a pronounced swinging movement. This physical constitution influences the “social game”.  
- The relationship with the female posterior for the narrator can be summed up as the “Myth of the generous posterior”  
Representations: criteria of beauty, good health, sensuality, eroticism.  
This part of the body is celebrated for its movements!  
- Explicit gaits (wearing traditional grass skirts, in dances)  
- Daily chores performed in a bent position (sweeping the floor with a short handled broom, preparing meals in the pot on the traditional hearth, washing clothes by hand, working the land for farmers).  
- Ease of movement of this part of the body, the art of setting it in motion: dances, and videos that celebrate the bottom (bust stuck out in front, bottom pushed out made to stand out). There is an actual dance of bottoms and pearls in several African countries. In Burkina Faso, the “Kiegba” dance (the bottom dance) is a traditional dance practiced to this day.  
Baudelaire: “When they walk, they look like they are dancing”  
- The esthetic of the bottom: artistic representations abound, showing the importance given to this criteria of beauty  
- A myth: A women has a bottom or she isn’t one!  
- Symbolic of the feminine curves: good health, femininity, fertility, maternity, sensuality  
- A freedom of speech and the simplicity to bring up everything related to the bottom (comments by men or women, mothers, friends etc.) celebrating its generous forms or on the contrary, devaluing a figure that isn’t generous enough.
Some women take pills to make their bottoms grow.

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the other person?
   e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.

A little sad: the bottom has become a negated body part
Lack of comprehension of a paradigm that somehow negates the relevance or the place of beauty

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience?
   (Hypothesis!)

   Relationship with the posterior: A body part to be hidden away, moderated. Showing off the bottom = coquetry, open and intentional sensuality, vulgarity, indecency, extravagance, lack of refinement, overt sexuality
   Preferred behavior: discretion, hiding body parts considered indecent, the body is disciplined/domesticated in order to be “presentable” in the public arena. Especially because the female bottom is a sexual object. The controversy in Western society is also interesting: on the one hand people (mostly men) are allowed to see the female posterior in a sexual light, but on the other hand women are judged if they draw attention to this “special” body part (also the case with breasts).
   Representation / rapport with the body: traditional Judeo-Christian separation of the body and the mind, a more positive value attached to the latter. In everyday public interaction, a ritualized effacement of the body dominates: putting behaviors in place which hide the carnal functioning, the body. Above all, do not highlight the body when using the body to move around or pick up fallen objects.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

   Change in behavior – cultural learning:
   The narrator was influenced by the reaction of her friends, which happened on two occasions.
   Now when in a public place (the street, the subway...), when she picks something off the ground she is careful to bend in the “Western” way in order not to shock. Self control – cultural adaptation.

   Questions about the relationship between the body and its link to culture
   Questions about the relationship with the body in our movements.
   The narrator realized that she had always lived with people who carried out this movement for various reasons. And equally that she had a perception of the posterior that was free from the weight of any taboos or negative cultural meaning. For her, it was a body part that was not at all shocking. But it also had a different cultural significance, which came from a different cultural context that was “natural” and taken for granted for the narrator.
   The Chicken-Egg relationship between physiology and culture: which came first? Is a morphological distinction at the source of a practice or does a cultural value form a body?

   The question of intention and attribution: cultural behaviors are often interpreted as being intentional, even when there is no particular intention.
### CRITICAL INCIDENT: Japanese Participant

**Country:** France  
**Date of recording the critical incident:** 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional domain of the narrator</th>
<th>Gender edu</th>
<th>Health Edu</th>
<th>Sexuality edu</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General intercultural edu</th>
<th>Physical edu / sport</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensitive zone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Sensitive zone**
  - What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication, non verbal communication)

- **Culture of the person experiencing the shock**
  - What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)
  - 36-year-old female intercultural trainer with Polish origins who has lived in France for 5 years. Many previous experiences of living abroad in the US, Europe, Africa.

- **Culture of the person “causing” the shock**
  - What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)
  - A woman of around 45-50 years old. Japanese, with experience living abroad. Her work puts her in regular contact with foreigners. She has come to an international workshop in London to further develop her intercultural communication skills.

### Describing the SITUATION

*Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.*

During an international workshop, the group is discussing issues of non-verbal communication. I ask the participants to give me examples of cultural differences in non-verbal communication. A Japanese participant signals she has an idea to share: « If I were in the position of the facilitator (me the narrator), I’d be very embarrassed because the group does not signal to her with their gestures and postures that they agree with her and follow her. I, on the other hand, am continuously showing her that I am following her with my non-verbal communication ». She finishes her contribution and I look around to see the effect of her speech on the group. I have the impression that the group is quite surprised, as am I. I feel astonishment and a bit of disbelief: this participant is continuously communicating to me with her posture, gestures, and I don’t see a thing. Nothing, not a gesture, not a grimace. The gap between what she said (communicating all the time) and what I perceived (nothing at all) was amusing and illuminating.

### 1. Elements of the SITUATION

- **How many people were present? How many women / men?**
- **What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible)**
- **Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.**
- **Relationship between the two groups (eg. colonial history, majority – minority)**

15 participants sat in half-circle around the flipchart paper, next to which the narrator was standing. All this in a nicely lit big training room in central London. It is quite a heterogeneous group in terms of nationality, age, gender, however the Japanese participant is the only one who does not come from...
Europe. There is no particular previous history between the cultural groups of the trainer and the Japanese participant. Both participant and trainer are conscious of cultural differences. In fact the participant, used to dealing with foreigners, often takes it upon herself to tell, explain or mediate elements of Japanese culture to the Western participants. Often she gives the impression of « transgressing » her original Japanese cultural codes to be very explicit, talk quite directly and integrate in the group of individualists around her.

2. EMOTIONAL REACTION

How did you feel in this situation?

Surprised then immediately ashamed for not being able to anticipate what would happen, embarrassed for not having reflected on my own ethnocentrism (not being able to perceive the signals the participant mentioned).

3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?

Individualist identity orientation and low hierarchy:

In western Europe, 2012, the professional culture of adult education is one characterised by a strong individualist tendency and low hierarchy. A training allows for the development of competences of the individual participants. The trainer is not considered the holder of all knowledge, but a facilitator. The participants can interrupt the trainer, they can ask for precisions, explanations and they can also disagree. The key element in the process is the individual comprehension – processing – integration of what the facilitator shows / presents / facilitates. If participants don’t agree, they can challenge the facilitator, and the debates are considered as something positive and valuable.

Direct communication style:

All the above is usually expressed directly and verbally (these being the dominant communication forms in most modern European societies). Non-verbal communication usually backs up or anticipates the verbal message. The arms, facework, eyes and eyebrows usually become more agitated when there is disagreement and doubt.

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the other person?

e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.

The participant’s desire to demonstrate that she was listening and interested in what the narrator had to say and her desire to give signals to that effect was seen as positive, but at the same time, the narrator was surprised because she had not recognized these signals. This led her to see the participant in a strange light because of the apparently great differences in their communication styles.

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience? (Hypothesis)

Interdependent identity orientation:

In Japan, the main concern of the partners is to find harmony during interactions. Focusing on the relationship is more important than decoding the message – more precisely the message is not independent of the relational level. Partners will thus try to protect the face of the other, not their own face, as they would do in « the West »: what must be avoided is the embarrassment the other, more than one’s own embarrassment.

In the training setting, it is unlikely that students would manifest disagreement and show doubt concerning the trainer’s contributions. The trainer is not interrupted and most of all not challenged directly.
Indirect, contextual communication style:

In Japan, the dominant communication style is indirect. Verbal messages that dominate interactions in Europe are much tempered with elements of contextual and non-verbal communication: positioning of the body, arrangement of the space, use of furniture. If in the West the face must usually communicate humour, emotions, and intention, in Japan the exteriorisation of emotions is usually avoided. Regarding eye contact, direct eye contact (considered a sign of honesty in France) could be interpreted as aggression and lack of respect. As a consequence, the non-verbal messages are subtler, sometimes even invisible to westerners. Ultimately, the trainer was not shocked to learn that there are different communication styles, but that she was not at all able to perceive the non-verbal signals that the Japanese participant thought she was explicitly giving.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

Cultural differences in non-verbal behaviour are very difficult to analyse, to learn, and to anticipate. The non-verbal repertoire can be different to the point where we are unable to properly decode the messages, and don’t even realise that there were actually messages sent.
Critical incident: Nodding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country: France</th>
<th>Date of recording the critical incident: 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional domain of the narrator</th>
<th>Gender edu</th>
<th>Health edu</th>
<th>Sexuality edu</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General intercultural edu</th>
<th>Physical edu / sport</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensitive zone</th>
<th>What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (e.g.: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication,)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The head: head movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-verbal communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture of the person experiencing the shock</th>
<th>What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female, 34 years old, bi-cultural French / Burkina Faso, born in France but spent 20 years in Burkina Faso. Educated in communications/public relations and inter-cultural relations. Sociable, enjoys interpersonal exchanges. Pan-Africanist, committed to the appreciation/recognition of African cultures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture of the person “causing” the shock</th>
<th>What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female, white, about 40, originally from America and settled in France. Member of an association for intercultural exchanges. Engaged in activities promoting understanding and exchanges between people of different cultures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Describing the SITUATION

Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.

I am talking with my interlocutor. She is telling me something but I don’t really understand what she is getting at. Just at the moment when I finally understand what she is telling me, I begin to agree with her. As an indication of my understanding and my agreement, I rapidly nod my head several times. I continue doing this for a few seconds while she is talking to me. All of a sudden she stops talking in the middle of a sentence. She turns her eyes away and I can see that she is blushing. Her face has changed and she avoids my gaze. I do not react.

1. Elements of the SITUATION

How many people were present? How many women / men? What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible). Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible. Relationship between the two groups (eg. colonial history, majority – minority)

Physical and social context:
At the tram stop at Issy les Moulineaux (near Paris), the two women were talking while waiting for the tram. They had just left a meeting held by the “Initiatives et Changements” association where they had both been involved in the meetings of the “circle of intercultural exchanges”. They hardly knew each other because they had only met once or twice. It was the first time that they had
an opportunity to talk together.

### 2. EMOTIONAL REACTION

**How did you feel in this situation?**

I was surprised that she broke off what she was saying. I was bothered and uncomfortable. A few minutes later, I realized that she was annoyed. After that I felt bad, I felt guilty. At the same time I could feel the injustice towards me. I didn’t say anything. A silence fell. Then the tram arrived and we said goodbye in a friendly manner.

### 3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?

Breaking up a conversation by nodding brings rhythm to the exchange and is a sign of interest and of being receptive to what is being said.

- Agreeing with a head sign is important to show that we have understood what our interlocutor is saying.
- Multiple nods confirm good understanding and also agreement with what is being said.
- More generally, facial expressiveness is seen as a way of showing empathy, being receptive and showing interest in what is being said.
- A lack of explicit reaction (non-verbal) is seen as indifference, a lack of empathy towards or interest in what is being said.
- The more we increase our head movements, the more we confirm the importance of what the interlocutor is saying.

### 4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the other person?

**e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.**

Slightly negative. For the narrator, the head has a role to play in non-verbal communication. It can be used to guide the flow of a conversation and make it dynamic but also to send additional messages in the same way as with gestures. She thus doesn’t understand the American woman’s annoyance with her polite gesture.

### 5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience? *(Hypothesis!)*

Several hypotheses:

- The American interprets the narrator’s quick nods as a sign of annoyance. For her, the nods mean “All right, I get it! No need to be so long-winded, you can be quiet now.”
- The American interprets the narrator’s quick nods as a sign of understanding. In this case, the understanding stage in a discussion is seen as the final stage in the discussion (or explanation). Therefore, there is no need to continue with the story because “it’s all understood, there’s nothing more to say!”, which begs the question of the relationship with knowledge. “The one who knows no longer needs to listen to the other”. And the other expressing “the knowledge” can no longer legitimately express his or her knowledge when the interlocutor already knows or “has already understood”.

### 6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

**Change in behavior – cultural learning:**

Because of this experience, when the narrator is listening to someone talking, she tries to control her head movements. She remains vigilant and tries to reduce the number of times she nods to express her understanding or agreement. She tries not to do it too abruptly or too rapidly.

**The danger of cultural misunderstandings:**

In the present case, the head movement can constitute a parasitical element for the quality and efficiency of her communication with others.
The question of intention and attribution:
Attributing an intention that is not the right one.

Questions about the relationship between the body and its connection to culture:
Non-verbal language can be interpreted in a variety of ways depending on the culture. It is difficult to reflect on non-verbal behavior in the moment it takes place.
In many African countries, facial expressiveness and the head play a major role in interpersonal relationships. To not use this mode of expression is negatively perceived: it is the sign of someone who is anti-social, insensitive or who is showing contempt.
CRITICAL INCIDENT: Swimming Suit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country: France</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of recording the critical incident: 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional domain of the narrator</th>
<th>Gender edu</th>
<th>Health edu</th>
<th>Sexuality edu</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General intercultural edu</th>
<th>Physical edu / sport</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensitive zone</td>
<td>What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication, different conception of the relationship to health and hygiene as well as of the proper distance to maintain in a professional context.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture of the person experiencing the shock</th>
<th>What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A 27-year-old Tunisian woman. She has lived in France for several years. She works in the field of intercultural communication and training.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture of the person “causing” the shock</th>
<th>What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian woman. Forty years old. She works in the performing arts field. She is interested in intercultural communication and participates in European projects on adult education.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Describing the SITUATION**

As part of a European project that involved the association where I was doing an internship, I recently took a trip with three colleagues and a participant (whom I was meeting for the first time) to Thessaloniki, Greece for an international meeting with our partners. During our free time, we visited the city and went to one of its beaches. Since I only had one swimsuit, I discussed with my colleagues my desire to buy another one. The participant in question said that she had forgotten her swimsuit and asked us (one of my colleagues and me) to lend her a swimsuit so that she could avoid buying one. I was so embarrassed by this unexpected request that I did not know what to say. The next time the participant insisted, asking me if I had bought a spare swim suit so that I could lend her my old one. To persuade me, she told me she was going to wash it before giving it back to me. To end this embarrassing situation, I told her that I did not intend to buy a new swimsuit anymore (I actually waited until my return to France to make this purchase). She seemed disappointed and told me she was going to buy a swimsuit herself then.

1. **Elements of the SITUATION**

   *How many people were present? How many women / men? What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible). Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible. Relationship between the two groups (e.g. colonial history, majority – minority)*

The incident took place during an informal conversation with colleagues over a drink in town, during an international meeting. The team sat around a table. The conversation was informal. There was the narrator, one of her colleagues and the Hungarian participant in question. Another colleague was also Hungarian, but appeared to be just as embarrassed by the attitude of the participant as the narrator. She
also did not agree to her request.

2. EMOTIONAL REACTION

How did you feel in this situation?

I was surprised, embarrassed and confused by an unexpected request that seemed very inappropriate. I experienced it as an unwanted intrusion into my privacy. However, I did not dare to openly refuse the request or to express the reasons behind this refusal so as not to offend the participant.

3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?

Separation of professional and friendly relationships: The narrator is someone who is both open and reserved. Thus, in a professional context, she likes to create more or less informal links with people because distant relationships end up weighing upon her. It is also more pleasant to work in a more or less informal context. However, in general, she wishes to preserve her privacy and intimacy.

Hygiene and privacy: For the narrator, the swimsuit is intimate apparel that cannot be lent to another person due to hygienic reasons that she considered obvious (possibility of contagion, etc.)

In addition to hygienic concerns, in a symbolic way, clothes are part of the "self." Sharing garments involves intimacy, and sharing underwear is particularly intimate.

Even if a close friend had asked her the same thing, she would have found it inappropriate. Coming from a person she met in a professional setting, the request seemed all the more inappropriate.

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the other person?

E.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.

Lightly negative

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience? (Hypothesis)

Because the colleague present at the time of the incident and two other colleagues also found the request of the participant to be inappropriate, the narrator concluded that the difference in conception is not due to that participant’s national origin, but rather based on a personal conception of hygiene and distance in the socio-professional context.

Hygiene and proximity: Indeed, when it comes to hygiene, the participant probably sincerely believed that by washing the swimsuit, she would solve the hygienic problem. She did not see the other problem that her request caused, namely that of the distance required in a professional context and even when it comes to friendly relationships for such requests. Her different conception of distance was also apparent when she stood next to others. The narrator had to discretely take at least one step back when standing next to her in order to engage in conversation because her face was sometimes only a foot from the narrator’s.

Passage from the professional register to the personal register: Each culture has its own rules for social distances that correspond to a certain relationship, but also regarding the passage from one type of relationship or register to another. While the transition between registers is less frequent (and often frowned upon) in France, in Hungary, professional relationships become friendly very naturally.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

Yes, in part because the professional context is not only restricted to the office but also includes professional trips, parties and other informal gatherings that cause ambiguous situations because they are both formal and informal.

On the other hand, this creates a problem in which the implicit rules of professional relationships remain very vague (where does the informal relationship begin and end?) and may depend primarily on the culture of the company concerned rather than a well-defined socio-professional consensus.

Finally, in general, this raises the question of how to behave when we interact with people whose frame of reference is radically opposed to ours and when this difference acts as a test of our "tolerance threshold".
CRITICAL INCIDENT: Killing a bee

Country: France  
Date of recording the critical incident: August 2012

These keywords will be used to search our “database” of critical incidents. You may note several answers for each incident.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional domain of the narrator</th>
<th>Gender edu</th>
<th>Health edu</th>
<th>Sexuality edu</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General intercultural edu</th>
<th>Physical edu / sport</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sensitive zone
What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication,)
Conceptions of the body: Human relationship with nature
Integrity of the body: desire to avoid pain (being stung by bee)

Culture of the person experiencing the shock
What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)
Twenty-four year-old French teacher who had recently arrived in India. Love for cultural exchange, but living abroad for the first time. Unfamiliar with local customs/practices.

Culture of the person “causing” the shock
What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)
Indian engineering students from all backgrounds, though mostly wealthy. A few poorer students at the school on scholarship. Most from a small city in the north of India near new Delhi. 19-20 years old, mostly men.

Describing the SITUATION
Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.
The incident took place at an engineering school in a small city in the north of India near New Delhi. I was teaching French to a group of engineering students. It was hot so I opened a window. Soon after, a bee flew in through the window. The bee was making it impossible to teach because I was afraid that it would sting me or one of the students. I finally took a notebook to kill it. To my surprise, the students protested, saying that I couldn’t kill it. They ended up chasing it out the window. The class continued, but I was a bit embarrassed.

1. Elements of the SITUATION
How many people were present? How many women / men?
What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible)
Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.
Relationship between the two groups (e.g. colonial history, majority – minority)
This incident took place towards the beginning of the semester. Most of the students had little motivation to learn French, and chose it because there wasn’t room in other language courses, but they had been respectful to the narrator, who was not much older than them. The classroom was set up in the traditional row of desks facing the front and the narrator standing in the front of the classroom.
### 2. EMOTIONAL REACTION

*How did you feel in this situation?*

Shocked, embarrassed. I thought it was my responsibility to protect the students and myself so that I could continue my lesson. I didn’t understand their reaction.

### 3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical integrity:</th>
<th>Conception of the body: For the narrator, human life is more important than animal life and thus avoiding personal pain or the pain of one of her students from a bee bite was seen as more important than the life of the bee.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional responsibility:</td>
<td>As the teacher, she also felt a certain responsibility towards her students as the authority figure in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation from, domination of nature:</td>
<td>Finally, there is the notion that, barring certain contexts, humans are to be separated from nature. To the narrator, the classroom seemed particularly unfit for a mixing of the two.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image do you have of the other person?  

*e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.*

neutral

### 5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience?  

*(Hypothesis!)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical integrity a priority:</th>
<th>Unlike the narrator, the students placed a value on the life of the bee, considering that it was worth their own momentary discomfort to save its life.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No separation of nature and humans – humans part of nature:</td>
<td>The students’ need for a complete separation between nature and humans may also be less strong than that of the teacher. In other words, the students may consider the relationship between humans and nature to be defined by harmony rather than by domination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual reference frame:</td>
<td>The narrator hypothesized on the students’ spiritual motivation for protecting the life of the bee. The principal that all human life is valuable could be part of their religious beliefs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

Yes. If the narrator had killed the bee, it could have negatively affected her relationship with her students. For the narrator, this experience was a learning opportunity. It was one of many critical incidents that she would have while abroad and served as a lesson in navigating intercultural situations.
CRITICAL INCIDENT: Silent Students

Country: Japan
Date of recording the critical incident:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional domain of the narrator</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Sexuality</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General intercultural</th>
<th>Physical / sport</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sensitive zone

What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (e.g., sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication, non-verbal communication. Lack of understanding or ignorance of cultural and communication codes.

Culture of the person experiencing the shock

What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

French. 32-years-old at the time. Teacher of French as a Foreign Language. Leaves for a three-month stay in Japan, but she stays there much longer, driven by a strong attraction to the country and the desire to discover new experiences, meet new people and learn new things. She had previously lived in Greece, Spain and Germany and had given French classes on an informal basis.

She had also worked in tourism as a guide and tour leader for groups (France, Corsica and Spain).

Culture of the person “causing” the shock

What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

A class of around 35 Japanese people who want to learn French. A majority of women, of all ages and diverse social and professional backgrounds. Ages range from 20 to over 50. Artists, businessmen, students, housewives, etc. All with the same goal: to learn and speak French.

Describing the SITUATION

Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.

I was hired by the Franco-Japanese Institute of Tokyo as a teacher of French as a Foreign Language. During my first lesson, in front of a class of 35 beginners, I had a shock: I began the class with introductions and BLAM! Complete silence. No reaction, emotionless faces, everyone looking at me, no one answering or speaking up. I keep trying, I renew my efforts...Nothing.

I wasn’t very comfortable; the students on the other hand expressed no discomfort and didn’t avert their gaze. I had to go right up to one particular person, stand in front of her and say “Bonjour”, all the while indicating with a hand gesture that I was inviting her to say “bonjour” in reply. The person seemed uncomfortable and put her hand in front of her mouth, answering with something barely audible while looking uncomfortably at her classmates.

I went up to a second person and I repeated my “bonjour” and my hand gesture....and so on for each student.

A few days later, I went for a drink with my student to an izakaya, a Japanese tavern, and there came my second shock: they literally bombarded me with questions about my private life: was I married? No...Then what kind of husband did I want to have? What was my blood type? etc.

1. Elements of the SITUATION

How many people were present? How many women / men?
What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible)
Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.

Relationship between the two groups (eg. colonial history, majority – minority)

A classroom, tables organized in rows one behind another facing the teacher’s desk. The students sign up for French language classes voluntarily. It’s not an educational establishment but a cultural Institute.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. EMOTIONAL REACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How did you feel in this situation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very lonely, embarrassed. A feeling of discomfort, of not being in the right place, of not knowing what to do. All these eyes fixed on me in total silence while I was asking myself what I was doing there, what language I was speaking and whether I was really cut out for this profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then I concentrated on one person, forgetting about the group, then the next person, and so on until the final student and I was once again able to face the group and feel that I was in the right place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afterwards, my feelings were mixed between the desire on one hand to lessen the distance between teacher and student, which is strongly marked by the respect shown by the students and on the other, the sense of pride which this respect stirred up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afterwards, in a less formal setting, I felt that the distance had suddenly been completely erased by my students. This was very disturbing and uncomfortable for me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?

The narrator carries French, European and Western culture within her. In her culture, the individual can easily express him or herself in front of a group and while the teacher/student hierarchy is quite pronounced, it is far less so than in Japan. Students speak up fairly freely and do not necessarily adopt polite formula when addressing their teacher beyond “sir” and the habitual use of the formal “vous”.

With regard to the hierarchical distance, it is more complicated because even if you find yourself with your students in a less formal setting (over a drink, for example), the distance remains in place. Students are not supposed to speak in a familiar way to the teacher and definitely not ask any indiscrete questions (relating to the teacher’s private/personal life).

What is more, it is very rude not to answer when greeted, in (almost) any context. This can be interpreted as an indifferent or even hostile reaction displaying a refusal to communicate.

When it comes to teaching French as a foreign language, she believes a lesson is about learning French, speaking it and discovering a culture through sharing, exchange and practice. Thus, the fact that the students refused to participate posed a great problem for the continuation of the lesson.

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the other person?

e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.

Negative. Caroline describes what she perceives to be her students’ view of the learning process as “archaic” (she thinks similar views existed in France long ago). She considers their behavior to be passive and immature. This perception is based not only on this one incident, but her overall experience living and teaching in Japan.

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience?

(Hypothesis !)

First of all, there is profound respect for the teacher (the Sensei) who is the person who knows, the person who is listened to. In Japan, respect must be shown to the person who knows and teaches, the teacher (Sensei also means master). There is therefore a strong sense of hierarchy in relationships without necessarily any feelings of inferiority or of being undervalued.

Next, in Japan classes are given as lectures and students are not at all used to expressing themselves in class. Finally, it is very difficult for a Japanese person to step forward within a group; it is impolite. This results in difficulties in speaking up, even if it is only in order to answer a question. But....how can a language be learned without speaking it?

Beyond the learning process, these two incidents could be based on broader cultural codes involving social interaction.
6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes. Based on experiences teaching in Japan beyond this individual incident, Caroline has learned that her teaching practice must be adapted in order to bring the other to find a new way of communicating, sharing and learning, because it is difficult to teach a language as knowledge to be passed on, without any interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is also necessary to understand from within what are the signs of respect that are in no way demeaning but which, in this kind of situation for example, obstruct the learning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finally, she must be willing to consider what broader cultural codes are involved in any misunderstandings that occur with her students. This applies both to the incident that takes place in the classroom and the other incident when they all go out for drinks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**CRITICAL INCIDENT: Corporal Punishment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional domain of the narrator</th>
<th>Gender edu</th>
<th>Health edu</th>
<th>Sexuality edu</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General intercultural edu</th>
<th>Physical edu / sport</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Summer youth leader</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sensitive zone**

What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication, Conceptions of appropriate use of violence, protection of the child, values related to discipline)

**Culture of the person experiencing the shock**

What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

An American woman in her early twenties, the narrator had lived in Egypt before, but generally stayed in mostly American/expat environments. University student. Well-travelled. Passion for social issues and the arts. The incident takes place while she is in Egypt for the summer.

**Culture of the person “causing” the shock**

What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

1) Sudanese refugee students in their tweens to early teens. Escaped military violence in Sudan to be exposed to racism and discrimination in Egypt. Little education. 2) School director. Also Sudanese. Middle-aged man.

**Describing the SITUATION**

*Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.*

I was a summer leader of youth activities with Sudanese refugees from a refugee camp near Cairo. Because I was so close in age to my students, I sometimes had discipline problems from certain students when we did some classroom activities. One day, two students were being particularly difficult and I sent them to the director’s office for disturbing my class. I later learned that the director had beat the children for their misbehavior. I was even more shocked by the students’ nonchalant behavior regarding the incident the next time I saw them. After this experience, I didn’t know how to handle discipline issues in my class. On the one hand, I did not want to send any more students to be beaten by the school director, but the students didn’t take my forms of discipline (mostly trying to talk/negotiate) seriously. That summer was a real challenge for me.

1. **Elements of the SITUATION**

How many people were present? How many women / men?

What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible)

Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.

Relationship between the two groups (eg. colonial history, majority – minority)
The classroom was small and not very well equipped with supplies. There were about 15 students. They had a lot of energy and were very active. They seemed to like the narrator, but she found them difficult to control. Besides knowing that they were refugees, the narrator knew little about their pasts and it was rarely discussed in class.

2. **EMOTIONAL REACTION**  
*How did you feel in this situation?*

Shocked, angry, guilty. I was shocked that the director would beat students simply for being disruptive in class and even more disturbed by the fact that the students seemed unfazed by this punishment. I felt guilty for having been the one to send the students to be beaten, even though I had not known in advance that they would be punished in such a manner. I felt uncomfortable around the director and that I should speak out, but I did not quite know how. Finally, I felt frustrated because discipline continued to be a problem in my class and I did not know how to resolve it.

3. **What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?**

- **Protection of children**: In western cultures children are considered – at least in theory – autonomous entities having the same rights as adults. Children are to be protected/cared for and never dealt with violently. Treating children violently only teaches them to be violent. In the case of refugee children, the need for protection seems even stronger.

- **Physical integrity**: punishment/discipline is sometimes deserved but it cannot entail any threat to physical integrity, it cannot include physically hurting the child.

- **Rejection of violence**: Even when it doesn’t involve children, violence in all forms is wrong.

- **Differences in pedagogical/methodological approaches**: When young people are difficult to reach in the classroom, in a Western context, the answer would typically be a pedagogical one – how to increase motivation and interest in the subjects being taught. The solution would thus involve changing teaching methods. Thus, this is not only a question of different points of views on socialization and childhood, but also on learning and teaching.

4. **Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the other person?**

*E.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.*

Negative. The narrator was deeply troubled both by the disciplinary methods used by the school’s director and by the reaction of the students.

5. **What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behavior that caused the shock experience?** *(Hypothesis!)*

- **Corporal punishment**: The use of corporal punishment seems to generally be accepted by both the students and the school director as a form of discipline. The students may have acted out in the narrator’s class because they were not used to verbal communication as a form of discipline. Similarly, the school director may dissociate corporal punishment from the notion of “violence.” Perhaps to him, he considers physical punishment to be the only valid way of disciplining children.

- **Relationship to individualism, physical integrity**: Underlying the approach to corporal punishment is probably a less individualistic orientation to the person, the children included. Thus, the students did not take the punishment personally, and thus, they did not harbor any resentment towards the narrator afterwards, even though her complaint was the reason for the punishment.

6. **Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?**

Yes. The narrator ultimately preferred to sacrifice some control in her classroom to prevent the use of violence as punishment by the school’s director.
### Critical Incident: Mixed Role Playing

**Country: France**  
**Date of recording the critical incident: 2002**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional domain the narrator</th>
<th>Gender edu</th>
<th>Health edu</th>
<th>Sexuality edu</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General intercultural edu</th>
<th>Physical edu / sport</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensitive zone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Language teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication, gender norms/equality)

**Culture of the person experiencing the shock**  
What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

Young French woman in her twenties; love of travelling and discovering new cultures. At the time of the incident, she had already lived in India for more than a year, but had moved from a more urban area to a more rural/traditional environment.

**Culture of the person “causing” the shock**  
What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

The students in question were from a rural more traditional part of India. They were from modest backgrounds and more traditional religious/cultural beliefs. They were young adults (late teens or early twenties).

### Describing the Situation

Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.

I was a teacher at an institute of technology in a small town in India. I wanted to organize a role-playing activity in a mixed class and the girls and boys refused to sit next to each other during the preparation of the activity. When we had completed the preparation, they also wouldn’t stand next to each other during the performance of the skit. It was embarrassing. I was not expecting this reaction to an activity that was supposed to be fun.

1. **Elements of the Situation**
   - How many people were present? How many women / men?
   - What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible)
   - Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.
   - Relationship between the two groups (eg. colonial history, majority – minority)

The class was relatively small (fewer than 20 students) and a balanced number regarding gender. The narrator, having already spent considerable time in India, felt that she had a relatively good knowledge of Indian culture. Though the year had just started, she got along well with her students, so she was not expecting any conflict.

2. **Emotional Reaction**
   - How did you feel in this situation?

Confused, embarrassed
3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?

Western gender norms: In the narrator’s culture, it is not a problem for men and women to mix because they are considered to be equals. While she considered herself to be open to cultural differences, she was surprised that a mundane activity (standing next to someone of the opposite gender during a performance) would elicit such a response.

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the other person?

*Example: positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.*

Slightly negative

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience? (Hypothesis!)

The students in question, coming from a more conservative/modest background had different religious and cultural beliefs regarding the mixing of genders. For them, it was not at all appropriate for men and women to mix together in such a way, even if it was “just acting.”

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

Yes. Having already lived in India, the narrator felt that she had grown to better understand Indian culture. This experience showed her how different local/regional cultures can be within a larger national culture. She had never had such a reaction from her students when living in the north of India and as such, wasn’t expecting it. This shows that it is important to consider how local context or even individual factors can play a role in cultural norms. As the school year continued, she would better acclimate herself to the local culture and be able to see the ways in which it was different from the area she had lived in when she first arrived in India. A broader learning outcome is that cultural difference can appear in any context, even within a national culture or within smaller subcultures.
CRITICAL INCIDENT: Pakistani Couple

Country: France

Professional domain of the narrator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Sexuality</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General intercultural edu</th>
<th>Physical edu / sport</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Intercultural mediator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sensitive zone
What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication, culture of the person experiencing the shock

Culture of the person experiencing the shock

What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

French woman in her fifties. Left-leaning. Experience in intercultural mediation.

Culture of the person “causing” the shock

What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

Pakistani couple in their fifties. Probably Muslim. From a traditional environment.

Describing the SITUATION

Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.

I had to deal with a criminal mediation between a married couple of Pakistani origin: Mr. and Mrs. X. The subject of the complaint was: violence. The two kept a straight face during a good part of the mediation. Nothing seemed to reach them, including their own history and the consequences it could have. Generally, there are a lot of emotions during exchanges of mediation, especially when it comes to family matters. Usually it shows on the face and through non-verbal signals (posture, gestures, micro movements, etc.). But this time, nothing seemed to be reflected in the physical and non-verbal actions of the couple or rather, I realized that my reference point for understanding non-verbal communication wasn’t working.

I told myself that I had to find a way to resonate/connect with them. So I matched my breathing to that of Mrs. X. It is difficult to accurately describe the breathing, but I felt it was short and shallow. We were in the process of discussing their family when I noticed breaks in her breathing rhythm at this moment in the conversation. I felt that there was something important - without really knowing what. I then asked her about her family, something like “for you family is important?” Suddenly, though nothing seemed to move, I saw a tear in Mrs. X’s eye. A single tear rain down her face without a single flick of the face or body. From that moment on, I realized that a connection was made between the two spouses. The discussion took a different direction: instead of blaming each other, they shared their difficulties in French society, the difficult weight of their families, the importance that everyone had for each other, the need to support and help each other, etc.

Everyone apologized explaining that even though they didn’t have the words to say it, that they didn’t want to start over, but to find a way together to improve their behavior. The complaint was lifted, mutual commitments and a Memorandum of Understanding were signed.

1. Elements of the SITUATION

How many people were present? How many women / men?
**What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible)**

*Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.*

**Relationship between the two groups (e.g. colonial history, majority – minority)**

The mediation took place in an office. The mediator was sitting in close proximity to the couple, which allowed her to feel the breathing rhythm of Ms. X.

### 2. EMOTIONAL REACTION

*How did you feel in this situation?*

The mediator was very surprised at the impassive attitude of the couple divorcing (for violence, most importantly) because this attitude contrasted with the usual attitude of many couples with whom she had worked. When she realized that her non-verbal references did not work, she changed her strategy adapting to her interlocutor’s codes, which allowed her to get to the point that posed a real problem.

### 3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?

Being female, French, European and Western, the narrator has the values of individual liberty (regardless of family pressure; that will not determine the individual’s behavior or lifestyle choices), equality between the sexes and the rejection of violence, which is a crime in the eyes of Western laws. However, as a mediator, she works on being non-judgmental and not jumping to interpretation: do not judge the violence, do not judge the "aggressor" (she knows from experience that there are often two victims and two attackers in a conflict) etc. She also learned that not judging codes/cultural practices (arranged marriage, for example) was essential in her work. Thus, for this incident, it’s mostly the non-verbal aspect that was a culture shock for her, because she had the impression of not having"access", not being able to "get into their emotional world." It’s through the body (without relying only on vision or hearing, which are generally used most in communication) that she could find a way to "understand" Mrs. and then Mr. X. She did this through techniques of calibrating and matching the breathing rhythms of Mrs. X.

### 4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the other person?

*e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.*

Neutral. Because she has learned to not judge the cultures of those with whom she works during a mediation, the narrator did not have any negative preconceptions about their cultural beliefs. She had taken a similar non-judgmental position regarding the violence that was the reason for the mediation.

### 5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience? (Hypothesis!)

The narrator thinks that Pakistani society is patriarchal and that women have a reduced public role. Mainly organized on a tribal basis, Pakistani society operates according to norms and traditions established by men. Thus, all decisions involving the participation of women in society, for example, education, marriage, work, travel, etc., are made by the men of the family. This is why, as is the case with many Pakistani couples, it is their families who chose the spouses (arranged marriage) for the couple in question. As a result, marriage and divorce become a family affair in the broadest sense.

In addition, the narrator assumes that the opinion of others (especially the family) matters enormously. Divorce is such a source of shame and dishonor.

Regarding the non-verbal, the narrator has heard that Pakistanis do not make many gestures when speaking and do not exhibit negative emotions in public. Public displays of affection are not acceptable, even between a man and his wife. Pakistani couples maintain a certain distance between themselves in public. In general, women abstain from even pronouncing the name of their husbands in conversations. Moreover,
the Pakistanis do not like to discuss their wives in public.

The narrator believes that Pakistanis prefer to control their anger and emotions. Demonstrations of anger or emotions almost always draw a considerable gathering of people, who are not concerned, but are curious. This again poses the problem of exposing oneself to the opinions and ridicule of others. This is probably why Pakistanis tend to avoid violence during physical altercations.

The above explanations are just one possible hypothesis proposed by the narrator. It is important not to assume that the above is true for ALL Pakistanis or that there are not other possible explanations/reasons for the behavior of the couple involved in this incident.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

Yes, because a cultural mediator must constantly question his/her cultural codes of verbal and non-verbal communication to see if they work. He/she must also be prepared to set them aside in order to adapt to his/her interlocutor. Ultimately, it is essential for him/her to learn not to judge other cultural codes even for sensitive issues like domestic violence and arranged marriage. This distancing of the personal frame of reference is essential in conflict resolution. At the same time, the narrator must be careful not to rely on cultural stereotypes to explain the behavior of individuals.
CRITICAL INCIDENT: Handshake

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country: France</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of recording the critical incident: 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional domain of the narrator</th>
<th>Gender edu</th>
<th>Health edu</th>
<th>Sexuality edu</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General intercultural edu</th>
<th>Physical edu / sport</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensitive zone</th>
<th>What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (e.g: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication, misunderstanding or ignorance of cultural codes and communication.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Misunderstanding or ignorance of cultural codes and communication.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture of the person experiencing the shock</th>
<th>What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>French. 34-years-old at the time. Caroline lived in Japan 5 years where she immersed herself in the culture and language and married a Japanese man. Back in France, she teaches French as a foreign language and intercultural communication as part of the Continuing Vocational Training program, working primarily with Japanese expatriates in Japanese companies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture of the person “causing” the shock</th>
<th>What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A group of 4 or 5 Japanese expatriate French learners with different language levels. They are employees of a Japanese company and did not choose to come to France. Suddenly dropped into the French subsidiary of their company, they do not know the language, the culture, or French codes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Describing the SITUATION**

*Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.*

I give French lessons every morning to 4 or 5 Japanese employees with different French levels. One morning, one trainee is missing when I start my lesson. He arrives a few minutes late, enters the room, walks up to me and holds out his hand to greet me. I take his hand to shake saying hello. To my surprise, he does not shake his hand up and down but rather twists it from left to right (as if he were playing foosball). I am embarrassed and do not know how to react: either I pretend that nothing strange happened (but it seems that other trainees saw this incongruous gesture) or I comment and explain what a handshake is, but I’m afraid of embarrassing the trainee. In the end, I decide to say nothing. During the next class I explain French manners and introduce the handshake through demonstration: I myself face each trainee, hold out my hand, introduce myself and ask everyone to do the same. Since then, I always introduce this practical exercise in FLE (French as a foreign language) courses for Japanese trainees.

**1. Elements of the SITUATION**

*How many people were present? How many women / men?*

*What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible)*

*Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as*
**2. EMOTIONAL REACTION**

*How did you feel in this situation?*

Temporary discomfort, quick hesitation between saying nothing and taking advantage of the situation to explain the simple gesture of the handshake. Because I am familiar with Japanese culture, I hesitated because I did not want to make the trainee in question lose face in front of his colleagues. Reacting on the spot would have been tricky.

**3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?**

Touch and physical contact follow well-defined rules that seem obvious when ultimately they really aren’t... Having internalized the custom of the handshake in the West, Caroline is uncomfortable when interacting with a person who makes the effort to appropriate cultural gestures of the host country, but fails. However, this gesture is less obvious than it seems in French culture and Western cultures generally speaking. Indeed, looking more closely, we can find some variations in handshake practices across Western cultures. For example, for some, a "normal" handshake consists of taking the right hand of the other person with one’s right hand and not shaking. It is only to make the handshake friendlier that top to bottom shaking of the hand occurs. A very warm handshake also consists of placing one’s left hand on the back of the hand of the other person or on his right arm. Other variations in handshake practices also exist.

**4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the other person?**

*E.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.*

Neither positive nor negative. Just a misinterpretation or misunderstanding of a gesture that is simple for the French, but unknown for the Japanese trainees. She also feels that it is her responsibility to teach her students “proper” French cultural customs.

**5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience? (Hypothesis!)*

The Japanese do not usually shake hands. In Japan, people greet each other by tilting the torso towards the speaker. Generally, there is little physical contact. They are embarrassed by having to kiss someone they do not know (which is a custom in France).

The trainee, however, wanted to show his respect for the role of the teacher or for the “Sensei” who knows and teaches. Sensei also means "master". Moreover, he probably had a strong desire to do his best to meet the codes of the host country. The ridiculousness of the situation that embarrassed Caroline probably escaped him: for him, there was nothing ridiculous about it because he had not quite mastered the gesture.

**6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?**

Yes, because it shows the need to know and take into account the other person’s values so as not to make him lose face or stand out from the group. Ultimately, this incident shows that it is through this kind of incident that one can enrich and improve his/her learning methods and professional practice (in this case, introducing the handshake in a French as a foreign language class). It might also be interesting to consider the practice of the handshake from an intercultural approach. After demonstrating the practice of the handshake, the narrator could allow her students to demonstrate their own greeting practices or use the occasion to explore other greeting practices from different cultures.
CRITICAL INCIDENT: Violent Young Refugees

Name of organisation: mht
Country: DK
Date of recording the critical incident: 2012

Professional domain of the narrator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender edu</th>
<th>Health edu</th>
<th>Sexuality edu</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General intercultural edu</th>
<th>Physical edu / sport</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sensitive zone

What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication,

- Young people’s need for gender specific body contact – and different norms for physical contact to own gender.

Culture of the person experiencing the shock

The narrator is a Danish female teacher, specialized in language teaching and teaching in basic skills. The teacher was 35 years old at the time for the incident, and she was working with young foreign people in a language center. She had been teaching foreigners for several years and was known to have a good grip on making trusting relationships to both adult and younger foreigners, attending the courses in the language center. She considered herself an experienced teacher with practical knowledge about integration challenges as well as pedagogical challenges in general.

Culture of the person “causing” the shock

What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

Young male refugees (18-20 years old). Most of them had arrived unaccompanied from Afghanistan. Some others of them were first generation immigrants, mostly with Turkish and Arabic background.

Describing the SITUATION

Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.

I was teaching a class of young people learning Danish etc. Both in the class room and especially during the breaks I noticed that the young men in the class were showing a very physical and violent behaviour towards each other:

- They were on the one hand slapping each other, hitting each other and fighting.
- They were on the other hand also touching each other very tenderly and having a soft physical contact with each other.

All together: they touch, hit and hug! But this only took place among the young men. It was very significant that towards men and towards the young female students in the same class the young men behaved very evasive and even shy.
As soon as I got nearby them and tried to contact them – they would avoid any hand-contact with me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Elements of the SITUATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>How many people were present? How many women / men?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Relationship between the two groups (e.g. colonial history, majority – minority)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The class was composed of 20 young students, male and female. They were taught Danish, mathematics, social science, knowledge about the Danish society and culture. Some of the youngsters already knew each other, but most of them did not know each other beforehand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. EMOTIONAL REACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>How did you feel in this situation?</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The female teacher felt surprised, a little embarrassed and also frightened, because she did not expect them to have such close physical contact with each other. It was difficult for her to understand that they could be violent and affectionate at the same time. She was especially embarrassed and surprised to see young men with immigrant background being so physical towards each other – but never towards the young women. She also felt somehow rejected as a female, when they clearly evaded her.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>In Denmark this kind of behaviour is not usual among young men at a certain age. Usually this kind of behaviour is connected with very young children around 6-10 years old.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>It may also be an adolescent phenomenon, but not a behaviour for young men in the teen years.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>They would usually turn their physical interest towards young women, expect in the case of homosexual relationships.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image do you have of the other person?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As mentioned the young men at this age would be expected to turn their physical interest and affection towards the opposite sex. Especially, it would be expected that young male from muslim countries would be far more cautious to be in physical contact with other men. It may be misinterpreted as signs of homosexuality. Therefore, as a female teacher, the narrator would feel a bit rejected, while the lack of interest may also be interpreted as a sign of a general disrespect of women - and an expectation of being the dominant sex, ruling over women. This may cause an initial distance to the narrator as a female teacher, being the “head of class”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience? (Hypothesis !)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The young men cannot have close physical relations to women, except with regard to engagement and marriage. They therefore may allow themselves a closer physical contact with persons of the same gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexual relations are, in general, not accepted. But a close physical contact is not unusual in male groups and communities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The situation in the classroom reflects the fact that traditions and norms around close and even intimate physical contact and closeness are different in various social and cultural contexts. This applies for the contact between men and women as well as the contact men-to-men, respectively women-to-women.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

The teacher in this situation should try to distinguish between the violent and the affectionate part of the physical contact among the young men, though this distinction may be rather difficult. They should not on one side hurt each other. They should learn to control their violent behaviour. On the other hand, this reactions may be seen as a way of showing feelings and affections in a physical manner.

In this case we may also assume that the teacher’s concept of “violence” differs quite a bit from the concept of “violence” among the young men. Through the physical action the young men probably express and communicate a wide range of feelings, also including mutual strength, dominance, competition, gender identification etc.

This would be useful knowledge for any teacher, dealing with youngsters as well as adults with a different social and cultural background - as part of the intercultural sensibility.
**CRITICAL INCIDENT: Japanese Handshake**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional domain of the narrator</th>
<th>Gender edu</th>
<th>Health edu</th>
<th>Sexuality edu</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General intercultural edu</th>
<th>Physical edu / sport</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensitive zone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication, Non-verbal communication, body-boundaries, privacy)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture of the person experiencing the shock</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The narrator is a Danish middleclass female teacher, 38 years at the time. The narrator is working as a language teacher in a Danish Language Center in a borough nearby the Capital area. As an obligatory part of the language teaching the narrator also teaches in the subject Cultural Understanding with focus on teaching newcomers and immigrants about Danish social and cultural traditions etc. In this connection she is approached by other professional acquaintances from the community, asking her to welcome two Japanese visitors and inform them about Danish educational systems, Danish cultural traditions etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture of the person “causing” the shock</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The other protagonists are two Japanese female teachers from the region of Fukuoka, around 30 years old. It is known, that the Japanese teachers were for the first time in Denmark, but apparently they had been to other European countries on some kind of study travel.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Describing the SITUATION**

*Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.*

I had accepted to guide and counsel two Japanese visitors, who had come to Denmark in order to study Danish education. At the first meeting at my office, I started to greet them with a normal handshake.

They looked in a surprised way at my outstretched hand. Then they reluctantly took my hand, both of them holding my hand between their fingers, as if my hand were dangerous.

At the end of our meeting the same action took place, when we were departing.
1. Elements of the SITUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many people were present? How many women / men?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship between the two groups (eg. colonial history, majority – minority)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The incident includes three people, a Danish female teacher and two Japanese female teachers visiting Denmark and probably some other parts of Europe on a study tour. The three persons are gathered in a relatively small school office, having a meeting for the first time. The Danish teacher has accepted to spend some time informing and guiding the two Japanese teachers about Danish educational systems, didactic principles etc. Meeting the foreign guests for the first time and being the hostess for the meeting, the Danish teacher – in her self-understanding – greets the visitors politely by reaching forward the hand to a formal greeting and handshake. The Japanese visitors did not react adequately, but clearly demonstrated with both body language and facial expressions that this way of greeting made them a bit uncomfortable. The Danish teacher thought that the Japanese visitors perhaps needed some more training to get accustomed to this way of greeting, and that it would ne easier for them next time. Thus, she repeated the greeting and handshake at the end of the meeting, still having the same reaction from the others.

2. EMOTIONAL REACTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How did you feel in this situation?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The Danish teacher felt embarrassed, as she stood there with her arm outstretched in the air. The Danish teacher perceived the situation like this that two very nice and smiling women were actually behaving very unpolite ly by ignoring her friendly and welcoming greeting. The Danish teacher had not expected to be treated like that from visitors, who actually came to her office in order to get some informations and advice etc. She offered her time volunteering, and then she was met with a somehow rude attitude. Apart from feeling anger, she felt a little used. But it also puzzled her that the Japanese women – being professional teachers and used to guide others – did not explain why they felt uncomfortable by following the Danish rules of polite greeting.

3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in you?

A number of norms and values about hosting and guest status were at stake in this incident:

- **Reciprocity and respect for the host:**
  Accepting and returning the handshake (the welcoming gesture) means accepting his/her greetings, and by not accepting it the social pattern of reciprocity was hurt.

- **Handshake in western societies:**
  The ritual of the handshake is important in European societies. It can vary by culture, but in general it is commonly done upon meeting, greeting, expressing gratitude or completing an agreement. It has its choreography, where it is coded who should initiate the handshake, how strong it should be etc.

- **Politeness:**
  You shouldn’t express refusal towards someone who you haven’t met, and who is going to be your host. But you are also welcome to say if you do not like something.

- **Show signs of “cooperation”:**
  As the host, there are certain expectations towards the foreigners about assimilating to local rules (such as the handshake ritual). Accepting the handshake offered means adapting to the hosting culture in a way, which can be the sign of the will of cooperation.
- **Direct communication:**
  In Western European cultures, people in general communicate directly. They say what they mean, and gestures have importance, too, but words have priority.

4. **Based on the analysis of question 3 what image do you have of the otherperson?**

  e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.

The situation raised an impression of an ambiguous image, mostly negative. At the surface the Japanese teachers were very friendly and smiling. But at the same time they in the situation appeared as tackless and without any empathy towards their hostess and her need to welcome them in a polite and “correct” way according to her norms and traditions.

5. **What could be the norms / values / representations of the otherperson / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience? (Hypothesis!)**

In general, the body has a more private character or “status” in the Japanese society. The Japanese people – in general – do not hug and kiss in the public sphere and towards people they are not very closely linked to. They prefer to hold a certain physical distance towards other people.

Also in Japan, in general, it is considered to be very rude to communicate very directly about one’s needs and one’s dislikes. It is important to avoid hurting other people by being very directly in the communication. Therefore, the Japanese women in the incident received the handshake.

But this incident became critical for all three women, while the Japanese women actually didn’t succeed in hiding their discomfort by the handshake. Thus, quite opposite the intentions, the Japanese women were, in fact, hurting the Danish woman. She, on her side, was not able rapidly to “read” the others discomfort. Instead, she insisted on shaking hands with both of the Japanese women by the start and the end of the meeting.

6. **Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?**

The situation shows how important it is to be aware of non-verbal communication and of different conceptions of politeness.

**Non-verbal communication:**

Greeting ritual is different in Japan. Bowing would be the general greeting gesture. Bowing represents many nonverbal messages such as introductory greetings, farewells, thankfulness, degree of familiarity, social rank and gender. These messages are expressed by the depth of the bow, the position of the hands, the frequency of the bow and by who initiates. Many Japanese will often offer a handshake to foreigners. Sometimes they will try a combination of handshake and a bow.

**Indirect, contextual communication:**

Communication strategies differ in cultures. In societies with indirect, high-contextual communicational style (like the Japanese), people tend not to verbalize everything, for them it is more important to keep the relationship with the partner in the communication, and meaning is conveyed by suggestion, implication, nonverbal behaviour, and other contextual references. In Japanese culture the physical distance is very important. People don’t express feelings in public (They do not hug, kiss and hold by the arm in public).
**CRITICAL INCIDENT: Soup and Butter**

**Name of organisation:** mht consult  
**Country:** DK  
**Date of recording the critical incident:** 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional domain of the narrator</th>
<th>Gender edu</th>
<th>Health edu</th>
<th>Sexuality edu</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General intercultural edu</th>
<th>Physical edu / sport</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sensitive zone**

What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication,

- Healthy nutrition in an ethnic-intercultural perspective.
- Fear of reverse discrimination.

**Culture of the person experiencing the shock**

What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

Danish female adult teacher, 34 years old at the time of the incident. The teacher could be characterized as middleclass with a strong engagement in gender politics as well as in the social and cultural issues. The teacher was teaching various societal, gender-related, health related and psychological issues, concerning all together women’s life and possibilities in society.

**Culture of the person “causing” the shock**

What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)

Refugee woman from ex-Jugoslavia, around 45 years old at the time. The woman had started out as an adult student in the school. At the time of the critical incident she was working in a subsidized job in the school. She had come to Denmark as one of the many refugees from the war in ex-Jugoslavia. She had labour market experience and many years of general experience as a housewife doing all the cooking and kitchen work herself in the family.

**Describing the SITUATION**

*Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.*

I was working in a school for adult women, both Danish women, immigrant women and refugee women. The school had a comprehensive learning programme for the women, heading all together at labour market integrations among the women. Thus, the learning programme was multidisciplinary combining basic competences with labour market education and general topics to empower the women physically and mentally. As part of the learning programme some of the women had the chance to work in subsidized positions on a professional basis in the school workshops, including the school kitchen preparing lunch for both teachers and adult students. A woman from Ex-Jugoslaviawas working as an assistant in the school kitchen at the time. One day she was steering the preparations, as the nutrition teacher has fallen ill. The woman decided to...
serve a special soup from her homeland.
A number of teachers were gathered in the kitchen room shortly before lunchtime, and we witnessed that the woman was putting several packages of butter into the soup. We – the teachers – looked a bit concerned at each other – and then I asked the woman, if she was sure to use that much butter in the food. The woman responded that butter makes the soup better – and continued to stir the butter into the soup.

1. Elements of the SITUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many people were present? How many women / men?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship between the two groups (e.g. colonial history, majority – minority)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The incident took place in the school’s kitchen, a rather large room, which apart from the kitchen, covered a number of café tables used for lunch time as well as meeting places. The ex-Jugoslavian woman and employee was in the kitchen, being in charge of lunch that day in the schools kitchen. Another immigrant woman was assisting in the kitchen. 5-7 teachers were sitting around a couple of café tables discussing some educational issues before lunch time.

2. EMOTIONAL REACTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How did you feel in this situation?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The narrator felt - together with all the other teachers - disgust when looking at the butter shining in the soup. The narrator seemed a bit sickening, since she and all the other teachers were very conscious of healthy and low fat diet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The narrator at the same time felt embarrassed to correct the kitchen assistant in doing her job in the kitchen, since the school was the first school for immigrant women with a direct goal of equality and empowering women from various countries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?

The narrator felt that the kitchen assistant was completely out of line with modern Danish/Western principles of healthy eating. The school actually had a healthy lunch scheme, while a lot of the women attending the school were having health problems, partly due to overweight and unhealthy eating habits. Butter in large scale was at the time one of the more controversial products.

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image do you have of the other person?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The image of the woman from ex-Jugoslavia somehow was contradictory. The woman was a very kind and caring person, and when she got the chance to decide for lunch, she would like to serve something delicious from her homeland. The narrator had a strong empathy for this way of expressing good feelings through “good food”. But on the other hand, the narrator couldn’t help herself from feeling repulsed by the woman’s cooking. The woman actually raised a image of being old fashioned, ignorant and even “politically incorrect” in the situation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience? (Hypothesis I)
The narrator had a double feeling towards the woman, being aware of the fact that the butter could be seen as a luxury item in the light of the material goods that the woman together with all war victims of her homeland had suffered before coming to Denmark. Thus, the free access to butter had an almost symbolic meaning for this woman in the situation. The butter represented the welfare in the new situation as immigrant in a welfare state as Denmark. This symbolic value may have greater importance than the value of the good health issue in the situation.

At the same time the “butter soup” may also represent a real difference in cooking standards. The woman was at the time older than the majority of the teachers in the school. It is likely that she was brought up with other cooking traditions and norms of “good food”. This may both be due to differences in ethnic-cultural experiences and due to age differences.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

The incident reflects more intercultural aspects:

A) It is important as adult teachers to raise awareness of different norms and standards concerning health, including the norms and traditions of cooking.

B) It is at the same time important to be aware of the mechanisms underlying the fear of discrimination. As teachers in a school of diversity the narrator and her colleagues were very vary of any tendency to inequality or lack of respect for other ethnic-cultural traditions and norms. Thus, the narrator and the other teachers failed in the situation to show professional responsibility in order to maintain the school principles of healthy nutrition.
**CRITICAL INCIDENT: Roma Skirt**

**Country:** Hungary  
**Date of recording the critical incident:** 13 April 2012, Budapest  
**Ars Erotica Foundation - Hungary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional domain of the narrator</th>
<th>Gender edu</th>
<th>Health edu</th>
<th>Sexuality edu</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General intercultural edu</th>
<th>Physical edu / sport</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sensitive zone**  
What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication, verbal and non-verbal communication, belonging to a community / subculture, education, health, [ethnic, gender, urban] identity,  

**Culture of the person experiencing the shock**  
What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability particular subculture etc)

45-year-old, “white” Hungarian, from the majority, middle-class, educated, urban, woman, mother, from Budapest

**Culture of the person “causing” the shock**  
What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability particular subculture etc)

Middle-age Roma woman, mother, low-educated - illiterate, belonging to a Gipsy community, living in the countryside

**Describing the SITUATION**

*Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.*

My child needed hospital care so I spent a long time in a hospital. As cancer is not a selective illness, we had Chinese, Arab and Gypsy families in the hospital room with us. We were like a large family, a real community. We made joint effort to try and mitigate the shock that newcomers had. One day a Roma woman came from outside Budapest with his son who had leukaemia. She was the traditionalist type, using her old Gipsy language and engaged in future-telling and spell-casting. All the patients including other Romas kept out of her way. However, she wanted a company, too. Even more so, since her relatives lived a long way away so no one came to visit her. Probably because I was wearing a skirt in the hospital and tied my hair in the same way as she did, she felt we had something in common. So she tried to make friends with me.

1. **Elements of the SITUATION**

*What happened? Where did it happen? Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural?)? Try to be as objective as possible.*

She knocked at the door of our room and made a gesture with her hand calling me out. With her arms folded, she straightened up and shot the following question at me:

“Are you a Gypsy or a peasant?”

I assessed the question very quickly. I thought about it seriously and concluded that to the best of my knowledge I was not a “Gypsy”. So what option was I left with. “I am a peasant”, I answered with some incertitude, not being able to fully identity with that category either.
The situation happened in a Budapest hospital specialized in children care suffering from cancer. It happened in the room where the narrator’s children was treated. There were also other people around in the room. The atmosphere in the hospital was as in every “average” hospital – many people but probably culturally a bit more colourful.

2. EMOTIONAL REACTION

How did you feel in this situation?

Uncomfortable - I was so shocked that it did not even occur to me to step out of the situation. “I am a peasant”, I answered with some incertitude, not being able to fully identify with that category either. But her question offered me only two options.

3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?

Identity threat – she had to choose between two rejected identities, she could not really identify herself with any of them, but still she answered and she was afraid of who might have heard the answer. And ‘peasant’ can be said as an insult in general Hungarian street language, it means ‘simple minded’.

Communicational norms – hospital: place for certain communication, behaviour; the question about identity was unexpected. Also among strangers. Furthermore, the woman decoded the non-verbal communicational signs of the Gypsy woman as threatening (folded arms, straight back, direct question in a strong voice etc).

Woman / mother identity. She wanted to be communicative (even maybe in solidarity?) with another mother in the hospital and talked to the Gypsy woman. But she felt uncomfortable with the identification, why she was picked by the Gypsy woman – the skirt was the common point.

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the other person?

e.g. postive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.

Negative

Judging by her voice, first the narrator felt and thought she was aggressive. Her body language (folded arms, straightened back) was provocative. As if she was ready for a fight in case the narrator gives the wrong answer.

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience? (Hpothesis !)

“A “civilised European” would make acquaintance slowly and quietly. His body language would not be offensive. Perhaps his handshake could be strong. As a way of making acquaintance, he would introduce himself rather than ask a question. Let alone asking a question like this. But of course she was not aware of the nature of her question or what it measured on the “strength scale”. ”

Community vs individualism: the Gypsy woman was looking for an ally, she needed company, this is how she chose the other woman (simple sympathy – who had similar skirt) to talk to.

Communication norms – hospital is a public space, where people come and go, meet, and have something common (here it is a child with illness); so it is absolutely normal to talk to the others and to discuss. But probably she is not going very often to formal institutions; this could be the reason of her strange behaviour (strong voice, folded arms).

Meaning of words – using the word ‘peasant’ means ‘non-Gypsy’ for certain Gypsy communities, similar to ‘gadjo’. This was probably not meant to be an insult, just referring to the Gypsy and non-Gypsy dichotomy.
6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

Stereotype and assumption are a part of our cultural heritage throughout individual life by learning norms and values which characterized the social group belonging.

**Professional practice:** In a training situation it can also happen, that highlights that the cultural differences can lead to a confrontation where the trainers and the trainee cannot understand each other because of the cultural gap preventing a common understanding. It highlight as well as the professional is challenged even more when it feel concerned by the frame of the difference.

In each case the trainer / researcher has to evaluate the conflicting values, and be prepared for the possible identity conflicts – threats.

Open communication in a situation like that is very important, just like feedback/asking questions back, and a receptive and open approach to people coming from a cultural background which is different from yours.

**OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION**

In spite of my answer she started to be loyal to me. Perhaps she did not believe what I said and thought we were akin. She came to see me several times a day, we “talked” in her language, and I helped her understand what the doctors told her about her son’s disease. In return, out of gratitude, she cast spell on my daughter “with her eyes and words”, the way only real gypsy women can do.
CRITICAL INCIDENT: Japanese Gesture

**Country:** Hungary  
**Date of recording the critical incident:** 13 April 2012, Budapest  
**Ars Erotica Foundation - Hungary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional domain of the narrator</th>
<th>Gender edu</th>
<th>Health edu</th>
<th>Sexuality edu</th>
<th>Training concerning disability</th>
<th>General intercultural edu</th>
<th>Physical edu / sport</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Sensitive zone | What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (e.g. sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication, body language) | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture of the person experiencing the shock</th>
<th>What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (Think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability particular subculture etc)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian female language teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture of the person “causing” the shock</th>
<th>What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (Think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability particular subculture etc)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japanese man living in Hungary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Describing the SITUATION**

*Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.*

I gave a one-to-one lesson to a Japanese man. After the class I said goodbye to him and walked away on the corridor. Suddenly he called me, I turned back and saw him showing a gesture with his stretched arms, which I interpreted as “GO!” So I turned and went on, but then he called my name again. I turned back again and saw him doing the same gesture meaning “KEEP ON GOING”. Next time when I saw him I found out that in Japanese this gesture meant “COME HERE”. He wanted me to come back so that he can pay me for the class.

1. **Elements of the SITUATION**

*What happened? Where did it happen? Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.*

Two people say goodbye to each other. A Japanese man and a Hungarian woman. The man calls the woman her name. She turns back. He starts to gesture with his hands as if showing something away. So she walks away again. He calls her name again. She stops, turns back and again sees him “showing her away.” So she walks away.

2. **EMOTIONAL REACTION**

*How did you feel in this situation?*

I turned back after the first call and when I saw his hand gestures I was totally confused. I did not understand why he called me if he wanted me to go away. After the second call I felt angry, ashamed and humiliated.

3. **What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?**

A polite call always should be accompanied by a polite body gesture.
A man respecting a woman.

It’s impolite to laugh at someone.

A client should not take advantage of the situation and instruct the teacher like a dog.

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the other person?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| The narrator’s first reaction was: “What an impolite person!” |
| Her second reaction was: “What disrespectful behaviour!” |

Perhaps also in accordance with the emotional reactions: this male person with roots in the Japanese society behaves patriarchal and stresses that though I’m the teacher, he is superior to me due to his sex.

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Hypothesis I)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| One must be polite to other people. |
| One should never be indebted to others. Make sure you settle your debt. |

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

| The situation was assessed very quickly. |
| Assessment of the situation was immediately followed by a judgement. |
| You may encounter a culture shock even if you have learnt about the other culture |
| Also, the culture shock will always be triggered by the mix of emotions and reflected values that are most important and present for the person, who experiences the incident. In this case, it seems that the female teacher perhaps was most preoccupied by her own role as a female teacher being “the head” of male adult students, presumably with other gender norms. Thus, she was very much aware and sensitive as for the gender part of the situation – him calling her back as if she had to obey his demands. |

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

| Such incidents regularly happen at Hungarian-Japanese companies, but people do not really care about them. However, a negative judgement after such an incident may pave the way for a bad relationship in the future (it may even poison the relationship). |
CRITICAL INCIDENT: Private Room

Name of organisation: CESIE
Country: ITALY
Date of recording the critical incident: 20th of March 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional domain</th>
<th>Gender edu</th>
<th>Health edu</th>
<th>Sexuality edu</th>
<th>family roles, family values</th>
<th>General intercultural edu</th>
<th>barriers of privacy/intimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sensitive zone
What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident?

Personal space / privacy + relations with others / Family concept: Very big families are a common thing, including children, parents, grandparents, uncles, cousins and nephews. In Senegal a family can count more than 60 people living together.

Culture of the person experiencing the shock
What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience?

Female / Sicilian / Age 26 / Christian Catholics / first experience in an African context / volunteering /

Culture of the person “causing” the shock
What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience?

Senegalese family / Christian Catholics /

Describing the SITUATION
I was doing my volunteering period spending 10 months in Senegal collaborating with local NGOs, sharing the experience with other 10 young adults from different European countries. Myself and the other volunteers lived with local families under the same roof and there were many “critical incidents” happening in this time, due to living in confined spaces with many people from a very contrasting culture who had very different approaches to communal living.

The particular (almost ongoing) critical incident that to me was the most invasive into my personal sphere was related to my private space. I was living with a large family with many young children, I had a room for my own - but with a curtain instead of a door, and the children used to come into without “knocking” or asking permission. For them it’s normal to live all spaces of the house, no boarders between walls. I felt undressed at any time being home, I just didn’t feel free enough to enjoy the experience as I should have.

1. Elements of the SITUATION

What happened? Where did it happen? Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural?)? Try to be as objective as possible.

What happened?
Living with a large family with many young children, the volunteer had a room for her own but with a curtain instead of a door and the children would often come into her room without “knocking” or asking permission.

Where did it happen?
In Senegal.

Who were the protagonists?
(i) An Italian volunteer and a
(ii) Senegalese family.

Was there any history between them (personal or cultural?)?
The family hosted her in their house for ten months, but before her arrival they didn’t know each other. The cultural pre-departure training was preparing her and the other volunteers to the existing difference – but the living it, it’s different!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. EMOTIONAL REACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How did you feel in this situation?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The emotions of the narrator were frustration and anger from having her personal space invaded consistently. The emotion from the family were confusion as they did not understand why I was so angry and frustrated with the situation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in you?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The value which was questioned was each person’s notion of personal space and privacy in the space which surrounds us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conception of family:</strong> the northern/occidental conception of family tends to be more nuclear (including less generations, usually parents and children) and also tends to include a smaller number of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proxemics:</strong> the physical distance from other people (who are not our intimate friends of family) could be bigger in Italy than in Senegal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individualism (rather than collectivist, interdependent orientation):</strong> Most European societies have an individualist tendency, meaning that the basic unit of society is the individual: the priority is the individual’s needs, point of view, and feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Privacy:</strong> The individualist orientation also show in the need for autonomy and privacy: Europeans tend to need “their own space”, being able to separate physically from others, being able to take actions without being seen / heard / disturbed by others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image do you have of the other person?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The volunteer found the family strange because they could not understand or perceive the notion of privacy which is a concept that they had not experienced before.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extended family:</strong> Very big families are common, including children, parents, grandparents, uncles, cousins and nephews. In Senegal a family can count more than 60 people living together. That seems improbable, nevertheless there is no space for privacy and no one complains. Everyone has a clear role to play in the house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interdependent / collectivist orientation rather than individualist:</strong> the basic unit is the family, the priority is the family’s needs and interests. The individual roles are distributed to create a well functioning unit of family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proxemics / physical contact:</strong> the physical distance between people is smaller, physical contact is common. The child carrying practices are telling: the most common carrying style is to attach the babies on the back of the mother to ensure permanent physical contact during the mother’s daily activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Privacy:</strong> In accordance with the above the need for a separate private space for the individual is less important. The physical separation, isolation from the others is less of a value than the proximity to the others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Professional practice → need to promote intercultural understanding not only with the person “entering” a different culture but also those living in the different culture who welcome the other person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Understanding and respect of cultural differences comes from both sides.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The mediation involved meeting and talking with the different hosting families and helping them understand how to live with people from different cultures.

The development of simple rules helped resolve the situation. In the case of the critical incident the volunteer has shared her feelings with the group of European colleagues and she got to know that this kind of emotional reaction occurred to almost all project participants even of the following project editions. The group of European volunteers after her, in 2010 went for a publication that deepens and explains the social characteristics of Senegal for the use of future participants and anyone interested in the Senegalese culture - so to analyze better the cultural differences.  
http://cesie.org/media/2012/01/Guide-Sedhiou.pdf
Name of organisation: CESIE Centro Studi ed Iniziative Europeo
Date of recording the critical incident: 21st of March 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional domain</th>
<th>Gender edu</th>
<th>Health edu</th>
<th>Sexuality edu</th>
<th>Higher Education Studies</th>
<th>General intercultural education</th>
<th>Physical edu / sport</th>
<th>Other: Please, specify</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sensitive zone
What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident?
- Non-verbal communication
- Behaviour
- Child raising
- Definition of sin/being disrespectful
- Attitude towards senior/superior people
- Social interaction rate
- Behaviour concepts, types and frames (differences in countries)

Culture of the person experiencing the shock
What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience?
Bulgarian heterosexual female / Age 27 / Born in Botevgrad, a small city in the Sofia region. She has obtained a Master’s Degree in International Public Management and Public Policy from the Erasmus University Rotterdam and a Bachelor’s Degree in Public Administration from Sofia University St. Kl. Ohridski. She has been actively working in the sphere of European projects management.

Culture of the person “causing” the shock
What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience?
Heterogeneous class of Dutch master degree students.

Describing the SITUATION
The example of a critical incident I can give is taken from the period when I was having my masters’ degree in the Netherlands, so it can probably be considered on a professional level. The first time I had a class at the university, around lunch time, a couple of my colleagues took their sandwiches out of their bags and starting eating. This, of course, created a lot of noises during the class. Moreover, they even continued chewing while answering the professor’s questions! I thought they should be ashamed of that or at least feel uneasy (I expected some reaction from the professor at least) because I consider it unacceptable and really disrespectful, but it seemed more than normal to everybody except me. There was no sign of surprise or disapproval from the side of the teacher. It was way too much for the notion of good behavior that I have as in my country we were taught to always show great respect towards the seniors and especially in class (which sometimes even creates some inferiority and fear in students). For e.g., you can be kicked out from the class for chewing a chewing gum in front of your teacher.

1. Elements of the SITUATION
What happened? Where did it happen? Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.

What happened:
Some of the university colleagues of a Bulgarian Erasmus student in exchange in Netherland were acting disrespectfully in class according to her opinion and her standards and frames of behavior. However This behaviour were considered perfectly normal in Netherland.
Where did it happen:
At the University, in a classroom while a course was given by a teacher. All students attending this course were present.

Who where the protagonist:
(I) A young Erasmus student from Bulgaria in exchange in Netherland
(II) The others Dutch student attending the same course

Was there any history between them (personal and cultural):
The protagonists are studying together in the same university but their cultural history are different as one of the protagonist is from another country. She was used to different methodology and teaching process as well as different social behavior at school in her culture.

2. EMOTIONAL REACTION

How did you feel in this situation?
The Erasmus student felt ashamed of their actions as the way she was taught to behave in such an environment is completely opposite, and cultural differences were evident. She was shocked and curious in the same time and asked her colleagues for explanation after the class. they said it was just normal.

3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in you?

Different concepts of authority and hierarchies:
Attitude towards seniors (student-professor relationship) and the concept of respect are closely related. The professor represents the authorities, the knowledge’s holder. Students have to show their respect by keeping a distance and listening. The hierarchies are clear and determinate. The narrator – having her origins in another, Eastern European society and culture – is used to act more in order with strict collective and hierarchical norms and values.

4. Based on the analysis of question 3, what image do you have of the other person?
e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.
The narrator has a slightly negative image. She thought they were churlishness, acting with insolence in a rudely and provocative way. The narrator has individualistic manner of behaviour. The master students are acting anti-authoritaric on their own needs without any concern of the institutional framework.

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience?
(Hypothesis!)

Closer relationships between students and teachers:
The educational environment is less formal and exchange on a equal basis are permitted.

Less hierarchical structure in the educational system/university world:
Showing respect is not expecting by being quiet and silence but expected through results and building well-being environment.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

there are many similar examples of the “clash” between Eastern European and Western European norms and values as for authoritarian versus anti-authoritarian behaviour in institutions like universities etc. Actually, some other cases of the kind have led to the consideration that public institutions should be more aware and also more explicite about “behavioural rules” in order to guide foreign students and avoiding cultural shocks. So, this incidents really confirms the need of intercultural awareness in public institutions and other places - not to bring about a conception of “us-and-them”, but in order to clear some expected misunderstandings that in worst case may lead to termination of studies etc.
The project, and this publication within it, is funded by the European Commission – DG Education and Culture, Grundtvig Programme.

This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.