

# **CRITICAL INCIDENT TECHNIQUE** IN EFL **CLASSES**

## Critical Incident Technique in Intercultural Communication

"A brief description of a critical incident of crosscultural interaction that would probably be misunderstood" (Hughes, 1986, p. 167)

WHY DO EFL **CLASSES NEED CRITICAL** INCIDENTS? ?



### Language Ability VS Intercultural Communicative Competence



## HOW TO MAKE A CRITICAL INCIDENT?



## CHOOSING THE TYPE OF CRITICAL INCIDENT

A critical incident can be based on:

- One's own personal experience
- Someone else's experience
- News
- Popular story (presented from a different perspective)

## **Narrated Incident**

#### Incident 1

Olivia and Eddie are exchange students at the University of California.

Olivia: Where are you from?

Eddie: I'm from Australia. And you?

Olivia: Me too! But, where are you really from? Where is your family from?

Eddie: Well, my parents are both South-Korean, but I was born in Australia.

Olivia: Korea? Oh my god, I love K-pop. Do you know BTS? They are my favorite band!

Eddie: Sorry...I don't know anything about K-pop.

Olivia: Are you sure you're Korean? Hahaha.

Eddie: Do you have any kangaroos in your back garden?

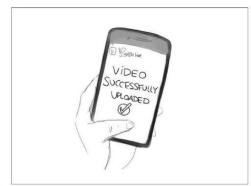
Olivia: Kangaroos? No, I don't.

Eddie: Are you sure you're Australian?

- What do you think of Olivia's reaction? How about Eddie's reaction?
- Have you ever seen or experienced a similar situation?

## Illustrated Incident









#### FOCUS OF FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION

- Analyze the incident (What do you think is happening/happened?)
- Share perspectives with others
- Evaluate the incident (Who was at fault? Why?)
- Share own experience in relation to the incident (When possible)
- Share how one would behave if involved in a similar incident



#### **Benefits of Critical Incidents for EFL learners**

Enriches **cultural knowledge** and increases **awareness** 

Stimulates critical thinking skills

Improves **communication skills** in the target language

Allows for **exchange of perspective** between students

"encourages participants to **tell their story**" (Urquhart et al., 2003)

Provides an opportunity to **prepare for a real-life situation** in the comfort of the "third-space"

Someone who speaks a foreign language well, but doesn't understand the social philosophical content of the language is a "fluent fool."



Milton J. Bennett

