Critical Incident #1 – Incident B - The dynamic between student and teacher in a secondary educational classroom environment.

While these are short scenarios, they provide us with many different cultural issues. The first issue for this scenario that stood out to me was the possibility of an age difference between the student and teacher with the teacher being younger than the student. Next was the Ph.D. that the student held that the teacher might not have and only have a masters. The third thing was that both the teacher and student are females. Following that would be that Jacquie (teacher) just came from China and Japan where the cultures are much different than Canada’s. Finally, there is the testing of the teacher from the student and the ultimate confrontation.

The first issue of age difference can be a big one. Most people when they think of school, think of the teacher being older than the student. This stereotype holds mostly true when you think about the ages of college students; 13 million under 25 and 8 million over 25 (http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372). In the secondary classroom setting, the median ages of the teachers is 42.7 years and the highest percentage of teachers falling into the 30-49 category (http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009324/tables/sass0708_2009324_t12n_03.asp). There is the preconceived notion that if you are older than the teacher you obviously know more than they do and in general that is the idea whether you are in a classroom or not.

As with the misguided perception of age being the qualifier for knowledge, so is the degree difference. While only 52% of teachers hold a masters degree or higher (http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=28), that does mean this particular teacher does not know what she is doing. All of the “testing” the pupil did to the teacher would be evidence of the student feeling superior to the teacher. However, once the teacher stood up to this student by confronting her that she was welcome to leave if she did not like the class, the student responded with a much deeper respect for the teacher.

Female dynamics can sometimes clash resulting in a misperception of each other. Emotional expressions of the teacher may have provoked an automatic response in the student that served as nonverbal stimuli where the student felt threatened in her personal space (H.C. Miller, A-S. Chabriac and M. Molet, 2012). Of note, the amygdala is responsible for the social distancing and could be the cause of any tension or friction (H.C. Miller, A-S. Chabriac and M. Molet, 2012).

The difference in classroom cultures could be attributing to the difference between this teacher and the student. The teacher just spent 10 years in China and Japan where they are very strict and formal and avoid pleasantries (http://www.wordtravels.com/Travelguide/Countries/China/Basics). The Chinese and Japanese rely heavily on nonverbal cues (http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/chinacountryprofile.html?highlight=YToyOntpOjA7czo1OiJjaGluYSI7aToxO3M6N-joic2Nob29sljt9) and the teacher was maybe reading too much into this student’s nonverbal. In Canada, the etiquette is a little more lax and the student was demonstrating not necessarily disrespect for her, but a more laid back tempo. Canada uses more verbal demonstration in communication (http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/canada.html?highlight=YToxOntpOjA7czo2OjIjYW5hZGFsIj8O) and thus the student was speaking their mind instead of using her nonverbal style.
Critical Incident #2 – Incident 9 – The process of being late and taking up other’s time by not respecting them, entire concept of time is lost.

I first see the issue with lateness. That is surprising to me that it is not a given to some to be on time. This student is always late, but also very interruptive to the entire class by showing up late and explaining himself. The other issue in this scenario is that beyond his own concept of time, he doesn’t realize that the class is on a certain schedule that needs to be adhered to in order to complete all lessons for the day. This can cause a backup of work, which may cause the teacher to have to keep all of the students later, thus impacting their personal schedules.

Being chronically late is a habit picked up by some people. As Zuckerman states, chronic lateness is referenced in clinical literature that leads to a broader discussion including time as integral to the development of a self, the development of a concept of time, awareness of time, and denial of time as representative of death anxiety (J.R. Zuckerman, 2012). Lateness can be described in many psychoanalytical terms and appears that it is a very personal thing that has many facets to it. Freud says, “it is part of the job of the ego to encounter the external world and bring an awareness of time as a result” (S. Kegerreis, 2013). In other words, this student has learned something growing up that has inhibited his concept of time.

As often times with people who are late, they interrupt the situation through many ways such as opening/closing a door, having to walk in front of others, maybe they drop something that turns everyone’s attention to them and sometimes they need to catch up in the conversation, and must ask questions everyone else has moved beyond, in order to do so. Having no concept of his own time, means that he also is not aware of and does not respect the time of others as shown by him going on and on about why instead of speaking to the teacher after class. If necessary, the teacher may have to keep the students late in order to get in all of the day's assignments. This causes all personal schedules to be thrown off due to one student’s lateness.

Critical Incident #3 – Incident 18 – A friendly and helpful reception seemed not to want to be bothered on their break, which was hard for Peter to understand.

This scenario seems to be going very well with the worker doing his job and the customer pleased with all the help he’s received. However, it goes downhill when Peter expects the same worker to answer another question after the person has gone on break. The first thing I noticed was that Peter expected the receptionist to answer his question just because this same person was very helpful to Peter initially. I also see that the worker sees his break as time off of doing his job and he shouldn’t be bothered. Coupled with that is the worker maybe dissatisfied with his job and refusing to do any work outside of his scheduled hours.

In conclusion, these scenarios are great at working through many of the differences each different culture presents. Culture is not just the differences between two countries, but also within the different groups we have within our lives (i.e. school, work, friends, family, etc.)

http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009324/tables/sass0708_2009324_t12n_03.asp
Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology 2013, Vol. 67, No. 3, 188–194 The Impact of Facial Emotional Expressions and Sex on Interpersonal Distancing as Evaluated in a Computerized Stop-Distance Task
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Clinical Practice
‘WHEN I CAN COME ON TIME I’LL BE READY TO FINISH’: MEANINGS OF LATENESS IN PSYCHOANALYTIC PSYCHOTHERAPY
SUE KEGERREIS