

ENHANCING INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS OF LANGUAGE LEARNERS VIA CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION: A CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH

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Abstract:

This paper describes an action research study which uses critical incidents in a cross-cultural communication course at a university in Vietnam to enhance intercultural sensitivity and problem-solving skills of English learners with a constructivist approach to language learning. The findings show that by actively engaging in the critical incidents the students were able to enhance their intercultural sensitivity about the ways in which different expectations, values, beliefs and behaviours can affect communication across cultures. They were also empowered with a variety of problem-solving skills to deal with cross-cultural misunderstandings in the incidents. The learners also positively evaluated the use of critical incidents as an effective way of cross-cultural learning. The study is expected to be used as a reference for implementing a critical incident-based pedagogy in cross-cultural communication courses.

Key words: Intercultural sensitivity; Problem-solving skills; Critical incidents; Cross-cultural communication; Constructivist.