

## "THE PRESENT IMPERATIVE"

### MOVIE CARD

**Title:** THE IMPERATIVE PRESENT (Italy, 2021, 2')

**Director:** Elia Moutamid

**Cast:** Sara Pezzotta, Amina Ridaoui

**Produced by:** Coop. Ruah - Project Z.E.L.D.A.+

**Abstract:** In the Italian class for foreigners, the lesson on the present imperative turns into a challenge where the imperative is...



### SHOCK

The class of young immigrants at the CPIA (Provincial adult education centres) where I teach is now in its third month of teaching and I prepared a lesson on the present imperative: I cut out rectangular pieces of cardboard and, on each of them, wrote a task that was easy to perform in the classroom. At the beginning of the lesson, I handed out a card to each pupil. The pupil had to read carefully what was written on the card and, when asked by the teacher, had to carry out the instructions on the card. Everything was going very well until I asked a young pupil named Amina to read out her imperative sentence: "Shake hands with Malik". After reading the delivery, Amina did not move. I then asked her if she understood what she had read. Amina nodded, but remained motionless, obviously uncomfortable. I could not understand Amina's attitude. A good pupil, Amina was always ready to do the work required and showed great interest in all the activities proposed. When I repeated my question to Amina: "Shake Malik's hand" she was very embarrassed and begged me not to force her to do this exercise. Her adolescent eyes expressed infinite discomfort. The whole class was waiting for this sort of challenge to evolve. Wanting to show my authority in front of my group of teenagers, I insisted one last time on Amina who, panic-stricken, burst into tears.

### SENSITIVE ZONES

Gender, gendered relations

### SCENE PHOTOS



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**ACTIVITY WITH THE GROUP**

Critical incident grid analysis

See IMPERATIVE PRESENT fact sheet

# FACT SHEET

## "THE IMPERATIVE PRESENT"

### TAGS (3 CATEGORIES)

Is this activity focusing on one of the 3 steps of the method or tackling a transversal challenge facilitators may face?	Step of the method	YES	Decentering X	Discovery of the frames of references of the other X	Negotiation
	Challenge treated	NO			

### SMALL DESCRIPTION

*Please explain in a short paragraph (using grammatically correct full sentences) what your activity is about, why did you create it?*

By watching the short film "THE IMPERATIVE PRESENT, stimulate the trainees' ability to analyse, ability to view the language and focus on key concepts.

This activity represents a possible development/training in the concept of culture shock which can then be deepened through the critical incident methodology.

### Quick info

TIME FRAME	GROUP SIZE	FACILITATION LEVEL	COMFORT ZONES	MATERIALS
30-45 min	3-18	Beginner	challenging	Video Fact sheet Flipchart papers Markers

### Preparations needed

Prepare the setting:

1. To watch the short film;
2. For group work;
3. For the plenary with posters and slides.

### INSTRUCTIONS STEP BY STEP

*Please give step by step instructions of your activity, including debriefing. Be direct, address the reader as a facilitator directly: eg. ask your participants to stand in a circle...*

#### Step 1.

Presentation and viewing of the short film.

#### Step 2.

In subgroups, analyse the behaviour of the teacher and the pupil who are the protagonists of this short film, starting by identifying the appropriate answer - from the options offered - to the question "How do you explain Amina's attitude?".

**Step 3.**

- a) Plenary sharing of subgroup work
- b) Analysis of the subgroups' work in relation to similarities and differences.

**Step 4.**

Re-elaboration of the activity with "targeted" contributions on explanation-intervention-prevention to be presented through appropriate slides.

**Step 5.**

Conclusions with a relaunch of MCE's intercultural approach and the critical incident methodology with analysis of personally experienced culture shocks.

**Hints for the facilitator**

Leave freedom of expression and interpretation, adding (and not correcting) the elements that you think are useful to bring to the attention of the trainees.

**RESSOURCES (WHO INVENTED THIS ACTIVITY OR WHO INSPIRED IT?)**

*If you invented it, please write the name of your colleague and institution as you'd like it to be referenced*

*If you used ideas /activities of others please put full reference as concretely as you can*

Activity developed by RUAH team involved in ZELDA project (IO5) starting from: Faculté de l'éducation permanente Université de Montréal, " *Situations interculturelles au quotidien. Incidents critiques* ", ADDIMMUM, 1998

**FILM FACT SHEET for group work****INTERCULTURAL SITUATIONS IN EVERYDAY LIFE:  
THE PRESENT IMPERATIVE**

Instructions for use. Before reading/viewing the critical incident "The Present Imperative", it is important to know that it is from the information included in the text/video that the reader/viewer will have to try to select the most appropriate answer. Although several answers may seem plausible, there is, for each incident, an appropriate answer, following up the clues contained in the incident. This method forces the reader/viewer to go beyond easy generalisations made from fixed descriptions of different cultural groups, to examine the particularities of each situation and the characteristics of each character, within a precise context. After reading/viewing the incident, one should stop at the question posed after the incident and try to give one's own answer without reading the answers proposed in the text; one can then compare one's answer with those suggested.

**PRESENT IMPERATIVE**

*The class of young immigrants at the CPIA (Provincial adult education centres) where I teach is now in its third month of teaching and I prepared a lesson on the present imperative: I cut out rectangular pieces of cardboard and, on each of them, wrote a task that was easy to perform in the classroom. At the beginning of the lesson, I handed out a card to each pupil. The pupil had to read carefully what was written on the card and, when asked by the teacher, had to carry out the instructions on the card. Everything was going very well until I asked a young pupil named Amina to read out her imperative sentence: "Shake hands with Malik". After reading the delivery, Amina did not move. I then asked her if she understood what she had read. Amina nodded, but remained motionless, obviously uncomfortable. I could not understand Amina's attitude. A good pupil, Amina was always ready to do the work required and showed great interest in all the activities proposed. When I repeated my question to Amina: "Shake Malik's hand" she was very embarrassed and begged me not to force her to do this exercise. Her adolescent eyes expressed infinite discomfort. The whole class was waiting for this sort of challenge to evolve. Wanting to show my authority in front of my group of teenagers, I insisted one last time on Amina who, panic-stricken, burst into tears.*

**How do you explain Amina's attitude?**

- A) Amina has an aversion to the boy (Malik) whose hand she has to shake because he is rude and vulgar in class.
- B) Amina did not understand the delivery she read and did not want to show her ignorance in front of her classmates.
- C) In Amina's culture it is not allowed to shake hands with a boy. This physical contact is unthinkable.
- D) Egyptian Arab Muslims are introverted pupils who do not dare to stand out in a group.

**Interpretation.** Answer A cannot be chosen because there is no clue to this; answer B has to be eliminated because there is no evidence that Amina has not understood. Answer C is the most appropriate answer; since the boy is not a member of her family, Amina feels uneasy about carrying out the request. Answer D is an ethnocentric answer: it is not so much a question of annoyance as of different codes in the relationships under a gendered lens, between men and women.

**Explanation.** The need to shake people's hands at the beginning of a meeting, to welcome them and sometimes to kiss, are appropriate behaviours in certain circumstances and contexts. However, these modes of contact may vary from one country to another; while for some groups, kissing is the expected meeting ritual, the number of times it must be done (four times in Benin and two to three times in France), or the people to be kissed (people of the same or opposite sex) may vary. In some areas, these rituals are even excluded and considered totally impudent; it is the bow or a simple head salute that codifies the encounter. In Islam, as in other religions and cultures, individuals adhere to the values and beliefs of their group at different levels. Among Muslims there will thus be more or less practising individuals. Since it is the Koran that dictates behaviour, the handshake between Muslims of the opposite sex may be judged as inadmissible contact for some, as it may have a sexual connotation. This gesture is therefore unthinkable for some Muslims, especially between people with no family or marital ties.

**Intervention.** Individualised teaching is often used as a teaching strategy for students in basic courses. It takes place in groupings of at least two people. The formation of subgroups of varying numbers, formed according to particular criteria, may be a free choice of a teacher. Whatever the origin of the people involved, when teaching does not work, it must be modified and other working methods must be proposed; this does not mean that one must abandon one's pedagogical objectives. Moreover, it is important to be aware that young people in basic training classes need time to appropriate ways of doing things that are different from their own.

**Prevention.** The presentation of different worldviews, including the ones of the natives in the specific context, could be the subject of useful training courses for both 'natives' and newcomers. It should be avoided to take it for granted that there is only one way of behaving, without hesitating to present those valued in the culture to which one belongs.

Interpretation is often carried out from one's own culture and on the basis of a hierarchical point of view, as if the other's culture had less value. Ethnocentric interpretations have the effect of reducing the cultural specificity of the other. It reduces and alters reality.

To the extent that one opts for the ethnocentric response in this exercise, this response should therefore encourage one to look for other possible interpretations, more appropriate and better related to the other culture and context. This response can also be a good opportunity to become more aware of one's own culture as a filter, since it often constitutes a transference made from the characteristics of one's own culture.

If the answer is one of the other inappropriate ones, one has to re-read/review the incident paying more attention to each piece of information. In this way one can become aware of the pre-established ideas, generalisations or "guiding images" that often influence one's interpretations and that have perhaps led to seeing things in the text/video that are not written/presented. These answers sometimes highlight stereotypes that do not take into account the variety and heterogeneity inherent in each cultural group. This type of answer therefore encourages awareness of quick perceptions that are not worth validating. Finally, one must continue to ask oneself what strategies can reduce misunderstandings by avoiding or preventing these situations. The ideal solutions are often those that enable everyone to be equipped to prevent the onset of the same difficulties.



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