Speaking and Listening – Level 6

Group discussion: The difference between a mistake and an accident

Part B

Note: Students have been numbered left to right from 1 to 8.

TEACHER Can we learn from every mistake?

STUDENT 3 Don’t think so.

STUDENT 6 Yes.

TEACHER Don't think so?

STUDENT 2 No.

TEACHER Think it’s yes?

STUDENT 2 No.

TEACHER What do you think?

STUDENT 7 Uh … Not every mistake.

TEACHER No? What do you think?

STUDENT 8 Not really every one.

TEACHER Can’t learn from every mistake? What do you reckon?

STUDENT 5 I think you can. There’s some way. Like, you might not notice it but it’ll implant in your brain.

[TEACHER LAUGHS]

I have an example of this. May I share?

TEACHER Yes.

STUDENT 5 [MUTED] well, no, she won't mind if I tell it.

TEACHER Let’s hope not ’cause you’ve said her name now. [LAUGHS]

STUDENT 5 Yes. So … So [MUTED] was going somewhere on a boat and they were waiting for their uncle to come out of the rest rooms, but he hadn’t arrived yet, and the boat left. And, so, there were 30 minutes in between each boat trip, when it arrived at the dock, and it turned out, when they got on the boat, they found out that the other one had sunk …

TEACHER That’s right.

STUDENT 5 Yeah.

TEACHER I remember this story.

STUDENT 5 Yep.

TEACHER So …

STUDENT 3 Oh, yeah, I heard that.

TEACHER Was that a mistake or an accident?

STUDENT 4 Accident.

STUDENT 6 Accident that …

STUDENT 4 Slash, mistake.

TEACHER [LAUGHS]

STUDENT 5 It’s a mistake because their uncle made the mistake of using the toilet at that exact time.

STUDENT 4 No, but it’s a good thing. But it’s a good thing because the boat sunk.

STUDENT 6 Mistakes are good things, though. Who ever said mistakes are bad things?

TEACHER Okay.

STUDENT 2 But, like, how do you learn from that? How do you work out that …? Say I’m about to go on a ferry, like, say I’m gonna go on Spirit of Tasmania and go to Tasmania, how do I know that if I go to the toilet, how do I know that the boat’s gonna sink? How do you learn from that?

STUDENT 5 Well …

STUDENT 3 What’s the difference between a mistake and an accident?

STUDENT 6 Accidents …

STUDENT 3 Is there a difference?

STUDENT 4 Oh, uh …

STUDENT 6 An accident is something that might have a bad outcome but a mistake’s something that often has a good outcome.

STUDENT 2 I reckon … I reckon it’s the opposite.

TEACHER I was gonna say, does that really depend on your own outlook? Because I think there’d be plenty of people who think mistakes are a bad thing.

STUDENT 2 Yeah, I think …

STUDENT 4 My …

STUDENT 6 Some people also might get, you know, hung up on certain mistakes and be just, like, ‘Ohh, I made that mistake! I didn’t shoot that goal in basketball!’

TEACHER So, in the end …

STUDENT 6 And then, at training, they’re just, like, ‘Oh, whatever. I quit. I failed you guys.’

STUDENT 4 My …

STUDENT 6 Like, I think it really does depend on, I suppose, your outlook. But I do think you can learn every … um, things from any … of all mistakes.

STUDENT 5 Tissue.

TEACHER What would you define an accident as?

STUENT 4 Oh, an accident as something that you acc…

STUDENT 2 Uh …

STUDENT 3 You can’t really say ‘accident’ …

STUDENT 4 Something that you … something that you did but you, um, like … you didn’t do it on purpose.

TEACHER Okay.

STUDENT 4 But it wasn’t a mistake.

STUDENT 3 That’s still the same as a mistake because you don’t do it on purpose.

STUDENT 2 You’ve got to put it in dictionary talk: ‘It was an action that you didn’t mean to do.’