

A06 Ms. Müller / German lecturer / German as a Foreign Language

Interaction partner(s): Taiwanese female students  
Moment of enquiry: WS 08/09  
Experience of difference: Role expectations towards students

Ms. Müller teaches German as a Foreign Language at a German university. In one of her conversation courses where current socio-cultural texts are discussed, there are also three Taiwanese girls who always sit in the last row, place their laptops in front of them and whisper among themselves throughout the entire class. Despite repeated requests and encouragement from Mrs Müller, they do not participate in the class in any way, even though the course is primarily about acquiring oral language skills. The other course participants increasingly dislike this behaviour. Finally the lecturer demands in a forceful tone of voice that the Taiwanese close their laptops once and for all. The students are flustered. They claim that without their laptops, they cannot understand the texts and follow the class. They need their laptops to look up unfamiliar words and then compare the results. This work seems more important to them than participating in the class discussion, especially since their German is not yet very good.

1. Why does the German lecturer perceive the Taiwanese students' behaviour as disruptive?
2. What could be the reason that the Taiwanese students make vocabulary work their priority?