

A36 Ms. Kohlhaas / German lecturer / Engineering Studies

Interaction partner(s): Indian students
Moment of enquiry: WS 08/09
Experience of difference: Meaning of facial expressions and gestures

Ms. Kohlhaas teaches engineering, and in her seminars, she deals with quite a number of foreign students. Overall, she enjoys teaching international students, but the Indian students are a cause for concern: Whenever she explains something, the Indian students slowly shake their heads from side to side. Ms. Kohlhaas then wonders how she could describe the situation to make it easier to understand for the students, and she tries to explain it in a more simplified manner. Then when she asks if the students have understood everything, the Indian students keep shaking their heads. This behaviour confounds Ms. Kohlhaas very much.

1. Why does the Indian students' behaviour confuse Ms. Kohlhaas?
2. What does the Indian students' head shaking mean?