

B02 Karolina / Poland / Foreign Languages in Adult Education

Interaction partner(s): German lecturers
Moment of enquiry: SS 08
Experience of difference: Conventions between students and lecturers
when addressing each other

Karolina, a student from Poland, is studying at a German university. She quickly realises that the communication between lecturers and students is quite casual compared with what she is used to from her studies in Poland. But she is having a hard time getting used to this, and every time she has to be in direct contact with a lecturer, she feels confused. Especially the writing of e-mails is difficult for her. What opening should she use? Is it okay to greet the lecturer with a “hello” as in verbal communication, or should she use a more formal address such as “Dear Professor X”? Therefore, Karolina avoids writing e-mails to lecturers, but sometimes it can’t be avoided.

1. What role expectations are behind the Polish student’s communication problems?
2. Is there such a thing as a greeting convention for e-mail contact between students and lecturers?