

**D56 Sabine / Germany / Foreign Languages in Adult Education**

Interaction partner(s): two Chinese students  
Moment of enquiry: WS 06/07  
Experience of difference: Organisation of cohabitation

Sabine, a German student, is sharing an apartment with an American and two Chinese students. The four women get along well, but tidying and cleaning issues frequently cause friction among them. Sabine and the American are annoyed that the Chinese students do not show the same amount of effort when it comes to joint tasks, even though they have discussed this topic several times. Finally, Sabine sets up a cleaning schedule. They all discuss it together, and all four agree to it. Yet, the Chinese don't stick to the plan, and after the discussion, they clearly withdraw from the other two. One day, Sabine explodes and they get into an argument, with Sabine expressing her opinion very loudly and directly. The Chinese students don't say anything and start crying, which leaves Sabine quite perplexed. After a long, tearful talk, the peace is re-established, and after that, the two Chinese participate in tidying and cleaning the shared apartment.

1. How does Sabine try to solve the problems in the shared apartment situation?
2. How do the Chinese perceive these resolution strategies, and what expectations regarding "normality" is their behaviour based on?