

Learning Review: The conference



Brief description	Case study in which perceptions, expectations and experiences regarding external appearance in a professional context are addressed.
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain the concept of interculturality• Analyse professional and personal interactions from a cultural perspective• Understand and discuss relevance of the topic in a global, professional and personal context
Time	Approx. 45-60 min.
Method	Culturally unspecific; Distributive/instructive
Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case study
Implementation	n/a
Notes	n/a
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Task

Case Study: The conference

At a conference, Luisa gives a joint presentation with Barbara and Jack, two colleagues from England. Luisa already knows Barbara from online meetings in which they prepared the talk. Jack has not met her yet, but knows that he is an IT specialist who is working with Barbara on a larger project.

On the day of their talk, Luisa and Barbara are standing outside the conference building having a coffee during the coffee break. As they do so, Luisa sees a young man enter the premises dressed in gothic clothes and with colourful strands of hair, tattoos and darkly made-up eyes. She assumes that he has made a mistake in the building. But Barbara approaches him, beaming with joy, greets him warmly and introduces him to Luisa: It is Jack.

Together they go back into the building. At the entrance, several security staff approach them and ask Jack to identify himself and open his rucksack. On Barbara's and Luisa's explanation that he is a speaker, they react incredulously at first, but let him pass.

On the way to the lecture room, Luisa notices how the conference visitors stare at Jack and whisper among themselves. As they set up their laptops, the first participants enter the room. After seeing Jack, some stop in the entrance and ask if they are in the right room.

The presentations by Luisa and Barbara go well. Afterwards, Jack presents an IT application he developed that solves several of the problems that were addressed in the presentations before. The participants are very interested and pester Jack with questions.

At dinner afterwards, Luisa notes that Jack and she are passionate about playing football and singing.

Read the case study and discuss the following questions:

- What perceptions, expectations, experiences do you perceive in all participants?
- What consequences does this have on the respective behaviour?
- From your point of view, how does Jack perceive the situation?
- What concrete possibilities do you see to make such encounters constructive?
- What can you concretely say or do to negotiate a common culture in intercultural interactions with all participants?

Source: Andrea Voigt