Case Study:
Nonverbal / paraverbal / extraverbal communication

Brief description

A case study is used to illustrate the influence of non-verbal, paraverbal and extraverbal communication on the perception of other people.

Goals

- Raise awareness of the influence of nonverbal, paraverbal and extraverbal signals on the perception of other people.
- To clarify the connection between nonverbal, paraverbal and extraverbal signals and individual assumptions and attributions.
- Reflect on own assumptions based on nonverbal, paraverbal and extraverbal signals of others.

Time

Approx. 45-60 min.

Method

- Culturally unspecific
- Distributive/instructive

Material

- Case study

Implementation

The trainer divides the participants into small groups. They discuss the case study and answer the following guiding questions:

- Thomas, the actor of the case study does not yet know the participants of his course. Nevertheless, he makes several assumptions about their knowledge, motivation, and skills. What are these? Give three examples of Thomas' assumptions and presumptions.
- From your point of view, what factors influence Thomas' perceptions?
- What impact might these assumptions and presumptions have on the course of the seminar?
- What nonverbal, paraverbal and extraverbal messages do the course participants send out in each case? Do you think they are aware that they are sending these messages?
- What could Thomas do differently in this situation?

Evaluation in plenary: The participants present their results. The trainer moderates the presentation and summarises the core results.

Source

Andrea Voigt

Developed as part of the EduBox project: EduBox – Intercultural Communication – Online Modules (Version 2.0. Hamburg Open Online University HOOU). Glocal Campus Jena, https://glocal-campus.org.

Worksheet: Case Study – Nonverbal / paraverbal / extraverbal communication

Task

Case Study: Nonverbal / paraverbal / extraverbal communication

Thomas is a paramedic and is meeting the participants of his first aid course for the first time today. They arrive one by one and take their seats. Thomas notices two men of his own age, whom he greets in a friendly manner.
Next, a very delicate-looking woman enters the room. "Hmmm" thinks Thomas. "She'll probably keel over the first time she sees an open wound and blood." She sits down quickly and wordlessly, but shortly afterwards greets another participant very warmly who enters the room wearing a doctor's coat. "What is she doing here?" wonders Thomas. "If she doesn't think she knows everything better. That can be exhausting."
Shortly before the course starts, a group of young people come in, talking loudly and laughing. Thomas sighs, "They must be young people who want to get their driving licence and have to show a first aid course for it. Actually, they don't really care and they will be more of a nuisance than productive contributors."
Ten minutes late, a woman and a man in business attire rush into the room, loudly apologising for being late. Thomas thinks to himself, "Why can't they be on time? They obviously think they are so important that they can afford to be. Besides, no one can give proper first aid in those clothes."

Read the case study and discuss the following questions:

- Thomas does not yet know the participants of his course. Nevertheless, he makes several assumptions about their knowledge, motivation, and skills. What are these? Give three examples of Thomas' assumptions and presumptions.
- From your point of view, what factors influence Thomas' perceptions?
- What impact might these assumptions and presumptions have on the course of the seminar?
- What nonverbal, paraverbal and extraverbal messages do the course participants send out in each case? Do you think they are aware that they are sending these messages?
- What could Thomas do differently in this situation?

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