



VIBES

Virtual Business Skills Empowerment

VIBES IO3: Educational Content Development

Summary



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VIBES tool for educational content development

VIBES IO3 – Educational content development is a modular systematic approach to creating curricula for multicultural virtual teamworking skills. VIBES IO3 builds on the findings of IO1 and IO2 of the VIBES project by moving from a needs assessment of the academic offerings and the business communities to a systematic method of creating student awareness and capabilities for working in the multicultural virtual teams' environments.

IO1 of the VIBES project mapped the existing practices for the development and acquisition of *virtual team working skills* and identified related trends in European education, noting the diversity and variation within the European educational spectrum. IO2 expanded the findings and established the VIBES Competence Framework for Virtual Teamwork. The framework provided inputs for the development of educational content in IO3. Educational content development was approached as a space which could be shaped flexibly in accordance with the context of the educator and the learners.

The VIBES framework does not aim to prescribe defined methods of teaching or learning. Instead, it highlights the key skills and competences for working in virtual environments and leaves space for co-designing the learning experience in different contexts and different skills levels. This allows for starting the learning journey from distinct stages and facilitating progress towards new objectives.

The VIBES project comprised three levels of education, high school, university, and graduate/professional education. Therefore, the problem space of the curriculum development was approached as a modular co-creation process of building the VIBES tool. Given the differences in educational practices, and the multi-level of the different educational organizations, a communal problem space that could support the issues of multi-cultural virtual teams was needed. The aim was to develop an approach that addresses development of virtual skills systematically, with different learning outcomes resulting from a similar learning path, while acknowledging distinct aspects of complexity in the process.

The systematic approach and the common learning path would enable cross level interaction, or iterative learning cycles, but still allow for autonomous differences of a specific educator’s preference to focus on a particular aspect for the learners. While dynamic flexibility at the level of individual course curriculum is required, a modular structure makes it possible to construct collaborative cross-level experiences where desired. In effect, the VIBES tool builds a multi-purpose space that can be modified or adapted to the specific needs of the educators and learners. It provides a flexible and comprehensive architecture of multi-purpose learning spaces for virtual teams.

VIBES tool in a nutshell

VIBES tool helps with breaking complex problem spaces into concrete action plans. To bring a holistic view to the problem at hand, it is looked at from various perspectives, from a list of selected topics relevant to the context. The tool is scalable, allowing to expand the view or narrow the focus by either number of selected perspectives, or with the number of topics and sub-topics. The tool is applied through a four-step process that allows deep focus on details while maintaining a comprehensive overview of the overall context. These steps are *Problem Space Mapping, Topic Descriptions, Activities Tables* and *Action Plans* (Figure 1.).

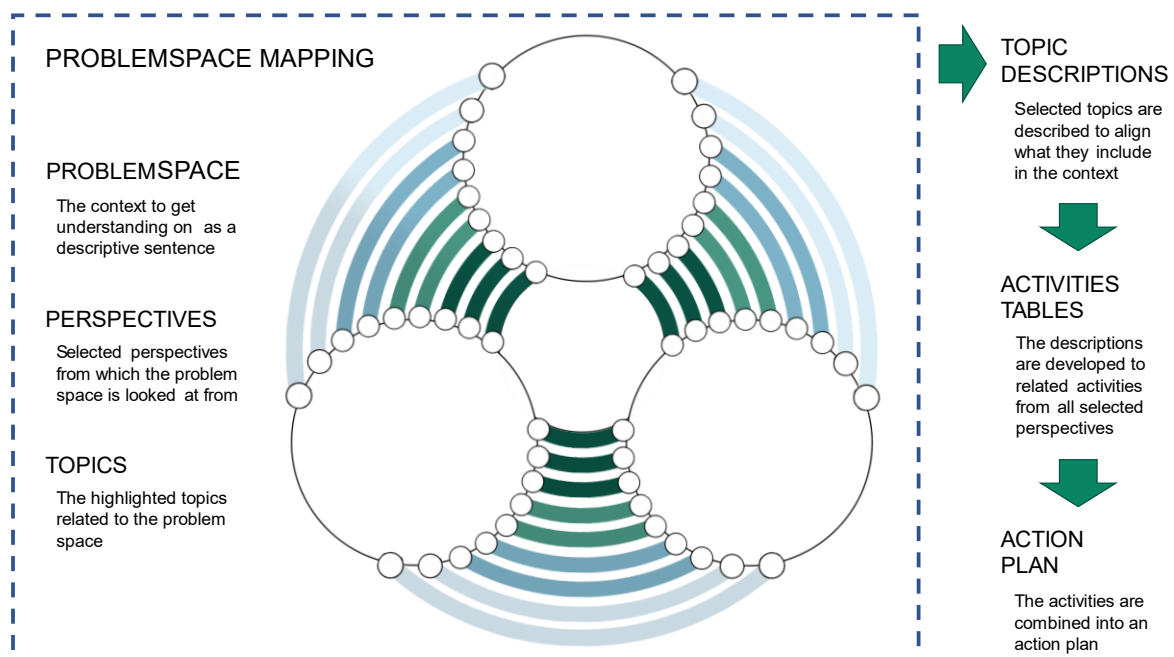


Figure 1. Structure of the Tool

Problem space mapping outlines the problem at hand. Focus is on defining and specifying:

- the problem definition, needs and focus in one descriptive sentence;
- a set of relevant perspectives to ensure holistic analysis of the problem space;
- the most important topics and sub-topics that help to break the problem into pieces that can be addressed with targeted actions.

Topic descriptions entails a more detailed analysis of the identified topics. Each sub-topic defined and explained clearly and concisely. The definitions ensure shared understanding of the concepts used and facilitate further analysis in the subsequent stages.

Activities tables build on the earlier steps by looking at the topics and sub-topics from each of the selected perspectives. The idea of the activities tables is to further explain the description and offer various perspectives, ideally, with each perspective bringing something new to the activities. Even though the step adds activities to the descriptions it should not offer the full solution at this point as that comes in the final step.

Action plans are the final step of the process. Tailored actions for each of the identified sub-topics are defined, taking into consideration the analysis through the selected perspectives. The actions are designed systematically by defining *Goals, Gains, Actions, Data, tools, and resources, KPI's* and the final *Action Plan*.

Curricula creation with the VIBES tool

In the VIBES IO3, problem space, perspectives, topics, and sub-topics were selected to support learning experiences at different academic levels. Building on the IO2 findings, these were connected to the different perspectives, topics, and sub-topics. The topic descriptions were used to define activities and develop action plans that serves as a basis of curriculum design.

In the VIBES project, the problem space was defined to be *Strengthening competences for working in multicultural virtual environments to support the evolving business world*, and the main perspectives were *company, individual* and *multi-cultural teamworking*. For a holistic approach, the topics selected were categorized under organizational issues, management

issues, team issues and individual issues. The complete mapping can be found in the table below (Figure 2).

PROBLEM SPACE

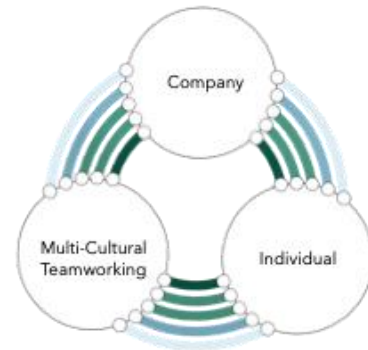
Strengthening Competences for Working in Multicultural Virtual Environments to Support the Evolving Business World

PERSPECTIVES

- Company
- Individual
- Multi-cultural teamworking

TOPICS

- Key topics divided under four categories
- Organizational issues
 - Management issues
 - Team issues
 - Individual issues



Categories	Topics	Sub-topics		
Organizational issues	Operations	Structure	Culture & Ways of Working	Tools
Management issues	People	Leadership	Management	Teamworking
Team issues	Development	Capacity	Capabilities	Learnings
Individual issues	Interactions	Coaching	Communication	Dynamics
	Self-management	Goals & Growth	Work-Life Balance	Motivation & Attraction

Figure 2. Problem space mapping for VIBES

Each of the sub-topics were then described to align what is meant by each term in this context¹. To narrow down the broad problem space, it was decided to concentrate on *culture and ways of working, management, communication, dynamics, and work-life balance* in the curricula development and application. For each of sub-topics, activities using the three selected perspectives (*company, individual and multi-cultural teamworking*).

The activity definitions developed through the process provide a vast overview of actions and capacities needed from different perspectives. Based on these, the final step brought the different perspectives together in one coherent action plan that serves as a basis of the curricula or study modules. To illustrate how the VIBES framework and the action plan feeds into curricula development and can be used to design learning content for different contexts, a set of example curricula and examples of course outlines were developed².

¹ For more information about the VIBES tool and the topic descriptions, activities tables and action plans, please see the full IO3 report and ‘VIBES IO3: Educational Content Development - Tool and topics’ document.

² The curricula examples are introduced in more detail in the full IO3 report and ‘VIBES IO3: Educational Content Development - Curricula examples’, ‘VIBES IO3: Educational Content Development - Virtual Teamworking Master

In essence, the VIBES tool provides an approach to focus and create the dialogue and moments of reflection in developing a learning journey towards enhanced virtual skills and competences. The journey can be tailored to different types of learners' needs and starting points. The VIBES tool ensures a holistic and systematic approach to problem solving through analyzing the problem space from multiple perspectives and topics. Educational content developed with the VIBES tool delivers a rich and rigorous learning path that fosters the development of skills and competences for operating in multicultural virtual environments and teams (Figure 3).

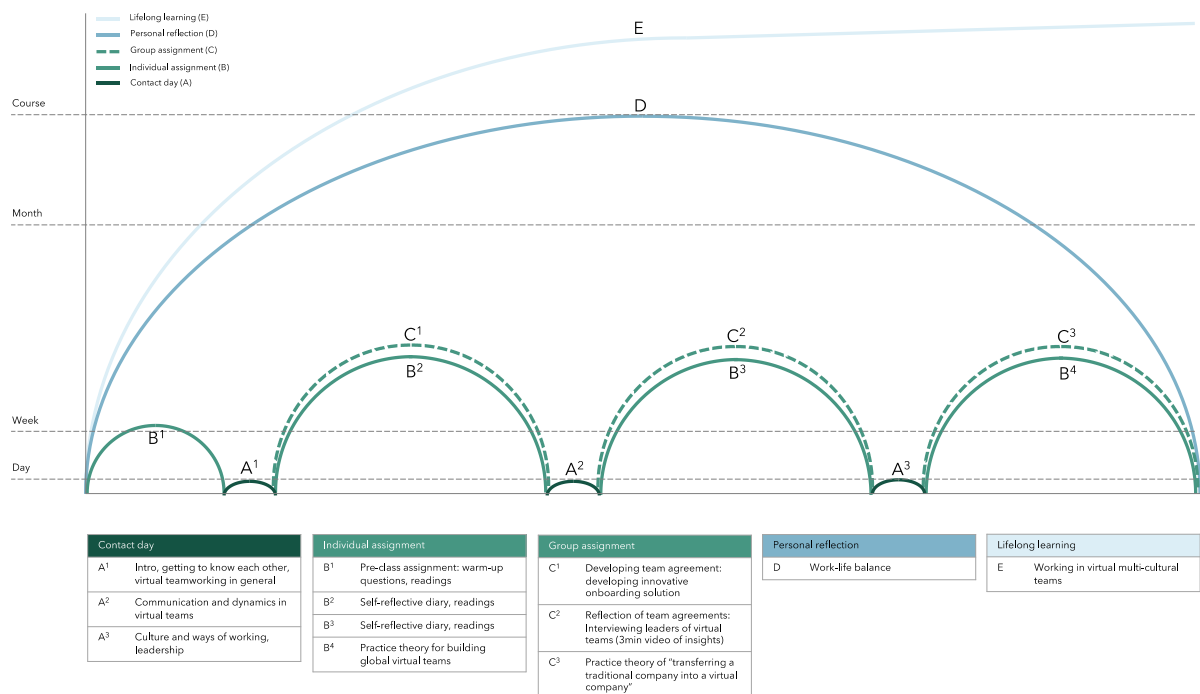


Figure 3. Learning path of a course developed with the VIBES tool

Class (Master's level)' and 'VIBES IO3: Educational Content Development - Virtual Teamworking Master Class (Undergraduate and high school level)' documents.

Additional information about VIBES can be found in the full edition of the IO3 report 'VIBES IO3: Educational Content Development'. The full report outlines the process of developing and testing the VIBES tool and methodology, use of the VIBES tool and its application for curricula development, descriptions of topics, sub-topics, activities tables and action plans developed in the framework of the VIBES project, as well as a set of example curricula to inspire further development on educational content for virtual teamworking skills and capacity building. Furthermore, in addition to this summary and the full report, a set of complementary documents are available with insights about:

- The key elements and use of the **VIBES tool** (*VIBES IO3: Educational Content Development - Tool and topics*)
- **Examples of curricula** developed with the VIBES tool demonstrating how the framework can be used to design learning paths for different contexts and learning profiles (*VIBES IO3: Educational Content Development - Curricula examples*)
- Full course **outline of a Master's level course on virtual teamworking** with a detailed course structure, agenda templates, assignments and suggested learning activities (*VIBES IO3: Educational Content Development - Virtual Teamworking Master Class (Master's level)*)
- Full course **outline of an undergraduate of high school level course on virtual teamworking** with a detailed course structure, agenda templates, assignments and suggested learning activities (*VIBES IO3: Educational Content Development - Virtual Teamworking Master Class (Undergraduate and high school level)*)

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