VIBES

Virtual Business Skills Empowerment

VIBES IO3: Educational Content Development

Virtual Teamworking Master Class (Master's level)

Erasmus+

LAB University of Applied Sciences

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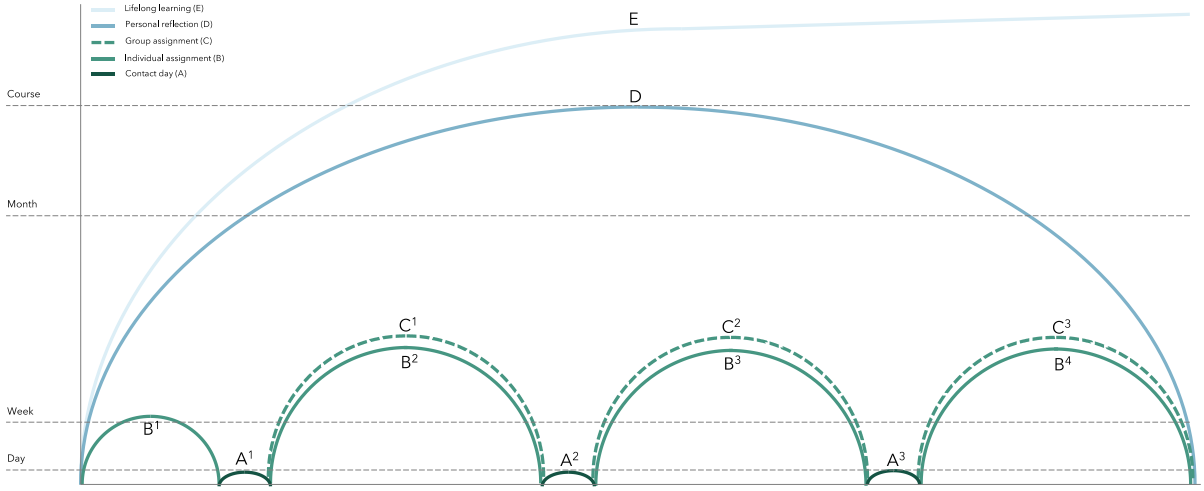
Virtual Teamworking Master Class

VIBES IO3 – Educational content development is a modular systematic approach to creating curricula for multicultural virtual teamworking skills. As an example of a curricula created with VIBES, this document presents a course outline for **Virtual Teamworking Master Class**.

The course is tailored for **Master's Degree** students. While the outline is prepared in a format that allows for it to be applied immediately, lecturers can also use it as a source of inspiration and modify any part of the course they wish to make it better applicable in their institution, specific context, learners' profile and such.



Contact day	
A^1	Intro, getting to know each other, virtual teamworking in general
A^2	Communication and dynamics in virtual teams
A^3	Culture and ways of working, leadership

Individual assignment	
B^1	Pre-class assignment: warm-up questions, readings
B^2	Self-reflective diary, readings
B^3	Self-reflective diary, readings
B^4	Practice theory for building global virtual teams

Group assignment	
C^1	Developing team agreement: developing innovative onboarding solution
C^2	Reflection of team agreements: Interviewing leaders of virtual teams (3min video of insights)
C^3	Practice theory of "transferring a traditional company into a virtual company"

Personal reflection	
D	Work-life balance

Lifelong learning	
E	Working in virtual multi-cultural teams

Course outline

Course title	Virtual Teamworking Master Class
Educational level	Masters Class, (8 – 20 students)
Credits	3 -5 ECTS
Schedule	8-week course with 3 full day contact days; Depending on the Institutional requirements for the module.
Objectives	Student learns about people management in virtual environment. In a virtual environment there is a risk for micro-managing, and emphasis should be on the leadership instead of management. Managing in virtual space often requires more time and support to employees, both emotionally and with their roles, to reach common targets. **It is important to make sure all team members are engaged through a clear onboarding**. Student learns about communication in virtual teams. In a virtual environment, limited non-verbal communication and heavy reliance on written communication can lead to misinterpretations. **Virtual communication requires emotional intelligence and awareness of communication and interaction styles, as well as a low threshold to contact others.** Student learns about dynamics in companies. **Facilitating group dynamics in a way that engages everyone and all members feel included is important.** As information is scattered and it takes more time and effort to explain things, the tempo of the interactions can become stiffer and breaks can easily be forgotten, which can then lead to multitasking and individuals not concentrating fully.
Transferrable	Student learns that language capabilities, listening and use of persuasive dialogue impacts teams' capability to reach set goals and consensus. To reach the agreement, it takes more time and effort in the virtual environment. Student learns that there is tendency for increased micro-management in virtual environment and emphasis should be in leadership instead of management. Self-management and peer support by the team members reduces tendency of micro-manage. Student learns the importance of self-awareness and calling attention for support when needed from manager or team

	member. It is important to be empathetic, to provide support to other team members, by respecting cultural differences. Because of isolation there is heightened need for supporting team members, both emotionally and with their role. Student learns that virtual meeting should be led in a way that is engaging and everyone is being heard. It is individuals' responsibility to actively engage themselves in meetings. All team members should react supportively and create an engaging environment. Student learns the importance of creating a systematic continuous onboarding process that is engaging and comprehensive, as the starting point in global hiring is more varied in the virtual space. Building team cohesion is a key success factor to efficient team working. It requires more accountability from the individual as informal guidance is less available in the virtual environment. Student understands the limitations of non-verbal messaging in a virtual environment and the need to verbalize more than in face-to-face communication. Non-verbal communication can be facilitated for instance by setting norms to keep cameras on. Team members can also ease communication through active listening or responding, even though it might not be a prevailing practice in individual cultures. Student understands the relevance of emotional intelligence in interpreting communications and learns how managers can mediate the range of considerations in virtual teams. Cultural differences can create stereotyping and conflicts in teams, so collaboration requires consideration, patience, and emotional intelligence. Student learns to be active and take responsibility to reach out and respond to others to maintain contact in a virtual environment. Companies should foster a culture of availability and accessibility regardless of hierarchy and allow team members to develop understanding of how to communicate with each other. Student learns to be aware and assume accountability for own communication and interaction style. Employers set the tone and

	norms of appropriate communication and individuals and teams should reflect the defined style. Particular attention should be paid to communicating with non-native speakers. Student learns to pay attention to written communication in a virtual environment and understands the risks of misinterpretation, especially when interacting with non-native speakers. Team members should make it easy to ask for clarifications and companies should support spoken communication and clarity of shared understanding in writing whenever possible. The student learns when being active in participating meetings the individuals need to pay attention to and give room to others, the active and the passive participants, as well as the introverts and extroverts. Companies should facilitate dynamics that everyone is engaged and included. Because culture defines the expected behavior, there is increased need of inclusivity to overcome prescribed patterns. The student learns that virtual work culture should promote and expect the members to concentrate fully in virtual environment and limit multitasking. By making sure there are not too many and too long meetings it is easier to support focus. The student learns that the tempo is stiffer in the virtual environments. When facilitating meetings, the agenda and time needs to be managed and breaks should be scheduled in between meetings. The length of the meetings should not get unnecessarily long and other people's scheduled should be respected. The student learns that because of differences in cultural backgrounds it takes even more time and effort to explain things in the virtual environment and to keep track of sub-conversations in harder. It is important to be prepared and distribute material beforehand when going to a meeting as it helps with aligning perspectives and increases efficiency. By appropriately utilizing tools it is easier to visualizing things. The student learns that as information is scattered and there is a potential information overload, there is a need to create coherent approach to maintaining information and communicating it.

	Information needs to be well structured and centrally accessible for the team and everyone needs to be mindful what is shared and who needs the information.
Practice	Virtual/Contact days include lectures and discussions on the topics of culture and ways of working. They will need to make agreements about their own team dynamics, how and where they will communicate with each other, and then introduce their team to others. Students will create an onboarding process for a virtual team member and develop an awareness of the differences in groupwork or teamwork and how it affects communications in virtual multicultural teams which is supported by visual presentation and short video. Students will apply relevant theory and utilize relevant tools when presenting their solutions.
Theory and tools	Academic and professional text related to teamwork
Assessment	Bloom's taxonomy is used as a base of assessment. Grading 1-5 1-2: The student understands what culture and ways of working means in a company context. 3-4: The student can understand the company culture and ways of working and can apply their learnings from various sources. 5: The student understands company culture and ways of working. They can apply their learnings and create new innovative approaches.

Pre-class assignment

Expected outcome	learners will get into the right mindset and are guided to make connections with their own real-life virtual teamworking experiences. They familiarize themselves with work-life balance and intercultural collaboration topics (or any other topics chosen by the lecturer).
Warm-up questions	Students are asked to answer to following questions and send the answers to the lecturer by using the platform/tool that is most convenient (learning management platform used in the institution, or by e-mail): 1) What is the difference between traditional and virtual teamwork? 2) What is the role of virtual teamwork in your life? 3) Think about tools that you have used to communicate virtually, list them, and describe their pros and cons? 4) Bring examples of multicultural differences regarding communication that can affect virtual teamwork? NB! For executives we suggest using more advanced questions, they can be found below)
Reading task	Secondly, students are asked to familiarize themselves with the following material. The lecturer will assign materials to students, so that everything will be covered. Students will be asked to make notes and bring their notes to the class for discussion. The topics: ● Virtual teamwork basics: 5-7 materials ● Work-life balance: 5-7 papers ● Intercultural collaboration: 5-7 Reading material available here.

Additional options

Example questions (advanced group, for executives)	1) Describe you VT experience. 2) Which challenges you have experienced. 3) What would you like to learn about VT-s? 4) Bring examples of multicultural differences that can affect virtual teamwork? 5) Think about tools that you have used to communicate virtually, and describe their pros and cons?
Example questions (beginners, learners who have less experience with virtual teamwork)	1) Have you ever experienced virtual teamwork? 2) Having conversation over video, what have been the main challenges? 3) What would you like to learn in the upcoming class? 4) Bring examples of multicultural differences regarding communication that can affect virtual teamwork? 5) Think about tools that you have used to communicate virtually, and describe their pros and cons?
Tools / methods	Students can send the answers to the lecturers by using the following methods (examples): - Padlet / Mentimeter / Flinga - by doing a presentation “Pecha Kucha” and sending it to lecturer’s e-mail or uploading to dedicated place - by sending the answers to lecturer’s e-mail, uploading to a dedicated place - in Moodle / in Canvas - or in any other preferred way

Day 1 Outline

Introduction and onboarding - Establishment of effective teamwork

Expected outcome of day 1	By the end of the first day, learners have had a chance to get to know each other, the ways of working in this class and what is expected from them. The class has established an open and trustworthy communication environment. Thus, the learners have experienced activities that support *establishing effective virtual teamwork*. Through homework assignments, learners will get to know the main challenges and best practices of *onboarding* in virtual teams.
Meeting format	If possible, at least the first contact day should be held as a physical meeting. However, it is also possible to do all activities in the online meeting format
Meeting length	4h and 15min (with break)

Day 1 Agenda (Example)

INTRO to course and getting to know each other a bit (55 min)	
Setting the scene (15 min)	- why are here (short intro, why is virtual teamwork important)? - what would be their learning journey like - the deliverable and course structure - the tools that would be used (Moodle)
Charades (30min)	Introduction to each other IF the students do not know each other, or if there are new students in class: Explain your favorite hobby with your body movements only. Rest of the students try to guess the hobby.
Collaboration agreement (10min)	With the lecturer as facilitator, the class will agree on the rules of how learners and lecturers collaborate (open to each other ideas, open to share ideas, being discreet about sharing other people's ideas outside the class). *This is a living example of making agreements in virtual teams and in the beginning of virtual team meetings.*
MULTICULTURAL VIRTUAL TEAMWORK (1h and 20min)	
Quick check in (10min)	"How do you feel about virtual teamwork?" Choose a picture and show on fingers (everybody at the same time), which one they

	chose. And the lecturer can ask some students to comment their selection.
Connection to pre-class assignment (40min)	Using the method of placement map, split students in smaller groups (split them so, that they can be in the same groups like in the next assignment). Ask students to write their input either directly on the placement map, or with post-its, and then ask learners do discuss what are their experiences, where do they have commonalities, and where differences, and why? Derive to some 2-3 key-findings to the middle-box. *1) Which challenges you have experienced* *2) What would you like to learn about VT-s* *3) Bring examples of multicultural differences that can affect virtual teamwork?* *4) Think about tools that you have used to communicate virtually, and describe their pros and cons?* After learners have had time to discuss among them, ask them to come to the bigger group and share their insight (the middle box of placement map). Systemic questioning: lecturer can further challenge learners with *the wonder questions: "what can be done, so that the situation would get 10 times better or ten times worse".*
Quick theory (10min)	differences and similarities between teams' groups, historical development of VT-s
Split students into five groups (Jigsaw group puzzle) (20min)	Split students into smaller groups, so that each group has 1 student from each reading material category. Every expert must explain others what how or she was reading. https://www.jigsaw.org/
BREAK (15min)	
DIVERSITY IN VIRTUAL TEAMS (1h 15min)	
Energizer (15min)	**Physical Trivia** During the energizer, the lecturer will ask simple questions such as "Do you have a dog?" or "Does your name start with the letter A?". Instead of answering in words, learners must make physical movements. A jump can stand for a yes, and a clap with your hands can be a no. Physical trivia is an easy energizer which will only take a few minutes but will certainly help your participants feel concentrated again. Never have I ever game or virtual mindfulness (or any other that feels appropriate)

Quick round: what did you learn before break: (10min)	Every person says one thing, that he or she is taking from the first part of day 1 (popcorn method).
Cultural differences (60min)	Share students to groups and ask them to make short infographics of multicultural differences, focus on 1-2 differences. - Bring examples of multicultural differences regarding communication that can affect virtual teamwork? - Additional discussion on stereotypes.
LANDING & HOMEWORK (30min)	
Assigning learners to virtual teams	Max five students per team. Learners will get to know each other outside the contact meeting.
Giving homework tasks	At the end of the day, lecturers describe what assignments are expected from the students to be done before the next day.
Landing exercise	Ask learners to write down 3-5 main takeaways from the first day and share the most important one with the rest of the learners. If the meeting is held physically, then it would be nice if learners can sit in a circle.

Day 1 Group Assignment

Team agreements	Learners are asked to get together with their teammates and get to know each other better. They are asked to choose a team name, agree on the team moto, and make team agreements: including: - How will the team collaborate with each other? - where & when will the team share information (which channels are used for which information)? - What is the expected response time by teammates? - How will the team solve arising conflicts? Additional idea: teams can be introduced to Agile values, and they can be asked to agree on agile values within their teams. Example of Agile values: Interactions before processes and tools, deliverables are put before documentation, Teamwork and communication before concepts and contract, react to changes before following a plan. **Deliverable:** Teams are asked to make a 5min video/ or a presentation introducing their team to other learners.
Onboarding solution (optional)	Learners are asked to come up with an innovative solution for virtual onboarding that would make the onboarding experience smooth and inclusive for a new employee. Deliverable: learners are asked to make a 7 min video introducing their solution and upload it to YouTube/Moodle, etc. **Team Check-In:** Team Check-In enables all team members to start a new project day or a new work phase together. To begin all team members going clockwise, briefly describe their strengths and weaknesses (virtual stickers, or post-it), their current energy level, and their expectation to sync up. This strengthens the group feeling and builds empathy within the team. The agenda for the day is then discussed. Roles can be assigned, sub-goals defined, and open questions noted. Team check-in can be done at the beginning of each day.

Day 1 Individual assignment

Preparation for class	Ask learners to familiarize themselves with the white-board program (for example Miro), that will be used in class.
Reading	Familiarize yourself with the following material (articles/book chapters, etc.) regards (communication and dynamics in virtual teams Reading material available here.
Digital well-being	Learners are asked to switch off completely from all media (phones, tablets, TV, etc.) for at least 2 hours each day.
Learning diary	The purpose of this assignment is to reflect on your own work and the work of your global virtual team. Learners are asked to start a personal learning diary (which will be a living document). They are asked to start the diary by answer the following questions after the first two group assignments are finished: - **Question 1**. Describe and evaluate how your team has been functioning so far. How did you develop a common solution as a team? - **Question 2**. What kind of challenge do you expect working in a multinational and multicultural virtual team? - **Question 3**. What have you learned from the first two group assignments in terms of: o Developing common framework for the team. o Developing a joint understanding of the problem/task at hand. o Establishing a common way for tackling task and team related issues (communication, collaboration, team dynamics)? - **Question 4**. What have you experienced after switching off your digital tools at least 2h per day?

Note: Lecturer(s) are expected to give feedback after each reflection round to make sure that the learners are being deep and reflective in their diary. The diaries are private - only lecturers see them. The reflection from the lecturer can point out additional aspects to think about regarding their team working experience.

Additional options

Icebreaker/ energy booster	Helping people get to know each other: Examples below. Lecturer can also choose among their own favorite ones: **Get to know each other:** Show your participants how to use the "Raise hand" function on a video-meeting platform. A moderator leads the audience in a game and announces the first statement. All that can relate, raise their virtual hands. Using the "Show all raised hands" function, the moderator chooses a random person and calls them out. The chosen person has to say something related to the original statement, e.g., "I like to binge-watch TV series. My favorite TV show is Friends." All who agree with the second statement raise their hands once again. This way, the audience plays until a final statement comes up, or the moderator can set a new statement to begin again.

Day 2 Outline

Contact day 2 – Communication & dynamics

Expected outcome	Student learns about *communication* in virtual teams. In a virtual environment, limited non-verbal communication and heavy reliance on written communication can lead to misinterpretations. Virtual communication requires emotional intelligence and awareness of communication and interaction styles, as well as a low threshold to contact others. Students learn about *dynamics* in companies. Facilitating group dynamics in a way that engages everyone and all members feel included is important. As information is scattered and it takes more time and effort to explain things, the tempo of the interactions can become stiffer and breaks can easily be forgotten, which can then lead to multitasking and individuals not concentrating fully. - They explain important intercultural differences in communication - and teamwork plays a role. - In virtual team situations, you use discussion techniques appropriate to the addressee - You use conflict resolution strategies in a team. Basics: - Capture the main points of a conversation. - Summarize the content of simple texts in the foreign language again. - Use one in the foreign language for everyday situations and for vocabulary appropriate to the occupational field. - They differentiate between appropriate oral and written forms of communication. - They explain the opportunities and risks for the appearance in analog and digital networks.
Meeting format	Virtual if possible (virtual format enables to experience all the virtual communication related challenges)
Meeting length	2 times 2h meetings (in a virtual environment learners get exhausted more quickly)

Day 2 Objectives

Lecturers can select objectives from the table below to be covered within the day.

communication	**dynamics**
Students understand the limitations of non-verbal messaging in a virtual environment and the need to verbalize more than in face-to-face communication. Non-verbal communication can be facilitated for instance by setting norms to keep cameras on. Team members can also ease communication through active listening or responding, even though it might not be a prevailing practice in individual cultures.	The student learns when being active in participating meetings the individuals need to pay attention to and give room to others, the active and the passive participants, as well as the introverts and extroverts. Companies should facilitate dynamics that everyone is engaged and included. Because culture defines the expected behavior, there is an increased need for inclusivity to overcome prescribed patterns.
Students understand the relevance of emotional intelligence in interpreting communications and learn how managers can mediate the range of considerations in virtual teams. Cultural differences can create stereotyping and conflicts in teams, so collaboration requires consideration, patience, and emotional intelligence.	The student learns that virtual work culture should promote and expect the members to concentrate fully in the virtual environment and limit multitasking. By making sure there are not too many and too long meetings it is easier to support focus
Students learn to be active and take responsibility to reach out and respond to others to maintain contact in a virtual environment. Companies should foster a culture of availability and accessibility regardless of hierarchy and allow team members to develop understanding of how to communicate with each other.	The student learns that the tempo is stiffer in the virtual environments. When facilitating meetings, the agenda and time needs to be managed and breaks should be scheduled in between meetings. The length of the meetings should not get unnecessarily long, and other people's schedules should be respected.
Students learn to be aware and assume accountability for their own communication and interaction style. Employers set the tone and norms of appropriate communication and individuals and teams should reflect the defined style. Particular attention should be paid to communicating with non-native speakers.	The student learns that because of differences in cultural backgrounds it takes even more time and effort to explain things in the virtual environment and to keep track of sub-conversations is harder. It is important to be prepared and distribute material beforehand when going to a meeting as it helps with aligning perspectives and increases efficiency. By

	appropriately utilizing tools it is easier to visualize things.
Students learn to pay attention to written communication in a virtual environment and understand the risks of misinterpretation, especially when interacting with non-native speakers. Team members should make it easy to ask for clarifications and companies should support spoken communication and clarity of shared understanding in writing whenever possible.	The student learns that as information is scattered and there is a potential information overload, there is a need to create a coherent approach to maintaining information and communicating it. Information needs to be well structured and centrally accessible for the team and everyone needs to be mindful of what is shared and who needs the information.

Day 2 Agenda (Example)

Part 1: approximately 2,5h	
Energizer/ icebreaker	Start by asking learners to show with their fingers, how are they doing (scale 1-5). This way the learners will have to turn on their videos.
Meeting agreement (5min)	As a lecturer proposes meeting agreement: - Microphones off when not speaking - Cameras on to allow the instructor to better understand how the learners are doing. - Preference for questions (in chat, with voice?).
Warm-up (5min)	Share your superpower regards communication (use padlet, mentimeter, flinga or any other software)
Theory (5min)	Present theory (couple of slides) about communication. Inspiration can be acquired from here
Practical assignment regards communication (20min)	Split people into pairs, ask them to discuss their communication experiences in their while communicating virtually Ask them to prepare short examples (play) (30sec each) of a) a negative communication example; b) a good example. Give students short time for preparation (approx. 5min).
Making connection between day 1 and 2 (40-50 min)	a) (20-25min) In smaller groups discuss your most important take-aways from answering individual reflection quotations in day 1. Boil the results down to 3-4 main findings which are important to pay attention in virtual team (or in your team) and present it to the others.

	Lecturer can open Google Drive folder and make a list of the findings that students are sharing and then make share the list with other. b) (20-25min) In smaller groups discuss what you learned about onboarding during the first group exercise and individual reading. Ask learners to draw a picture illustrating the main take-aways. Organize a poster-session/trade-fare (using a white-board, for example Miro, Teams, etc.)
Communication style (45min)	Divide learners into four groups and ask each group to familiarize themselves with one of the following theories/frameworks: 1) The Belbin (www.belbin.com) 2) The Bono (http://www.debonogroup.com/six_thinking_hats.php) 3) Deloitte Business Chemistry (https://hbr.org/2017/03/the-new-science-of-team-chemistry) 4) Disk (https://www.discprofile.com/what-is-disc) Ask them to make a 3min presentation, where they explain others, what this method is about. After each team has presented, discuss how this roles/types can impact communication in virtual teams.
Communication quality and consistency (20min)	**Short theory (5min):** Three C-s of communication: clear, concise, and consistent. **Drawing game (15min):** (Virtual): Learners will be organized into pairs (breakout rooms). Both will draw a picture consisting of three simple objects (triangle, square and ring). Both will have 2 minutes to explain their picture to the other (without showing it). The other party draws the picture based on the explanation. Then the same thing is repeated - the one who draws will explain, and vice versa. Then the learners compare the results and discuss what works and what does not work in virtual communication. **Follow the drawing game with a discussion of lessons learned regarding communication clarity & consistency.**
Landing exercise (5min)	Now that learners have learned different aspects about communication in virtual teams, ask them to reflect and write down what will they change about their own communication in the virtual environment?
Part 2: approximately 2h (inclusion, cohesion & trust)	
Quick energizer	mindfulness works well with both physical and virtual meetings.
Quick brainstorming (10min)	Ask students to say what associates with the three terms. Ask 3-4 students to say what associates with inclusion, and then next 3-4 students about cohesion, etc.

Theory (5min)	Putting the terms into context of virtual teamwork. *Inclusion* - nobody is forgotten, left out, everybody can speak out during meetings, and everyone is heard. *Cohesion* - team feeling, 1 for all and all for 1. In theory it is easy to say that we are one team, but virtual team members tend to learn quickly that it is more efficient to work separately on different tasks. How to make sure that everybody knows who is doing what and how to have a common understanding of the whole task/project, etc.? *Trust* - Studies show that people in virtual teams start to overemphasize their own effort and think that other people are working less - how to overcome this? Reliability - how can you make sure that other people do what they said and show to other people that you are a person that can be trusted (being more open to share your progress to make the group aware about the small steps that you have been doing towards the end goal). Virtual meetings tend to be more task-oriented, and thus there is less time to get to know each other on a "human" level to build relationships.
Exercise lessons learned (45min)	Start with discussion what are the benefits and challenges of working in team and working solo. Move the discussion towards the topics of trust/inclusion and cohesion. Discuss in a bigger group: open a discussion/comparison about team trust & transparency related topics/issues in the work environment and between school environments? Discuss the differences, similarities, challenges, and best practices to overcome the issues (inclusion, cohesion, trust).
Feedback	Example: Start by analyzing with the learners what is the role of feedback in teams in general and why it is especially important in virtual teams. Continue by identifying in a big group identify the characteristics of constructive and unconstructive feedback. Discuss within the bigger group how to receive feedback (when it resonates with the receiver, then it will be applied, if not, then it can be thrown in a trash bin). Then divide learners into pairs and give them a task to give positive and negative feedback to each other based on a case developed by the lecturer. Example case a) you noticed that your colleague is getting late every time for the meetings for the past month. For that reason,

	everyone else must wait for him/her and the good flow of teamwork is affected. How do you give feedback to your colleague? Notice - sometimes it is good to start by asking questions. For example, what is the reason for the colleague to be late? Maybe his or her child went to school, and it located in the other part of the city, thus it is impossible for him/her to attend the meeting on time. Thus maybe, the meeting should be rescheduled. Example case b) you noticed that your colleague is putting additional effort to the work that your team is doing. How do you give feedback, so that it is not just praising but also constructive? Share a short video about feedback (for later watching)
Landing exercise to finish the day	Lecturers can ask learners to take 5 minutes to write down the main take-aways from the day and share one - for example the most important one - with others.
Assignment instructions	Instructions for the assignments

Day 2 Group Assignment

Team reflection	Together with your teammates, have a look together on the team agreements you made. Is there anything that needs to be changed/adjusted based on the experience of working together so far and based on what have you learned in day 2?
Interviews with team leaders	Interview team leaders of different virtual teams (from different organizations), come up with a list of best practices for building up effective communication and dynamics within teams. Possible deliverables: - Infographic (still, dynamic GIF)/ poster - Podcast/screencast - Interview (portrait, live action film) - Tutorial - Video - Presentation
Feedback to other groups	Learners are asked to analyze deliverables of 2 other groups and provide feedback on their work.

Day 2 Individual Assignment

Reading	Learners are asked to familiarize themselves with materials regarding *culture and ways* of working and *management* in virtual teams. Reading material available here.
Learning diary	- **Question 1**. Describe and evaluate how your team currently works in terms of different roles and different responsibilities? - **Question 2**. What kind of challenges and benefits have you experienced while working in multinational and multicultural virtual team? - **Question 3.** Did you, in your opinion and from your own perspective, experience misunderstandings, conflicts and crises situations? Can you describe them and analyze what the origins of the challenges were? Of those, which ones do you consider are outside of your control and which ones could be tackled and how in the next assignment? If you have solved them, how? - **Question 4.** Up to this point, what would you say are the factors that matter most in attaining effective virtual teams? What could YOU change to increase YOUR team's effectiveness? - **Question 5.** What have you experienced regards *communication* after switching off your digital tools at least 2h per day? When would you like communicate virtually and when would you like to communicate physically in the future (when you have the choice)?

Additional Options

Tell a story exercise	Physical meeting/ Virtual meeting: choose a random object and tell a story to others why it is so important to you. Then ask two numbers below the total number of people in the team and ask one of the numbers to remind us of what was important about the object for the other number and move around the room. Important to listen not only to tell your own story and the bigger the lie in the story the more likely it is that others will remember it. The students are not told in advance which number they need to pay attention to when they retell the story. The point is they are surprised by this additional step for something they would not really be paying attention to since they are mostly concerned about their own story.

Day 3 Outline

Cultures and Ways of Working

Expected outcome	Student learns about **cultures and ways of working** in virtual multicultural organizations. Diverse working cultures impact net etiquette and company norms. It is harder to have a balance between scheduled meetings and spontaneous dynamics. Students learn about **people management** in a virtual environment. In a virtual environment there is a risk for micro-managing, and emphasis should be on leadership instead of management. Managing in virtual space often requires more time and support to employees, both emotionally and with their roles, to reach common targets. It is important to make sure all team members are engaged through clear onboarding.
Meeting format	The first preference would be to have a physical meeting; however, virtual meeting is also good
Meeting length	3h and 15min

Day 3 Objectives

Lecturers can select objectives from the table below to be covered within the day.

Cultures and ways of working	**People management**
Students understand that companies need to facilitate transparent discussions on norms, values, and ethics in everyday working life in a way that allows employees to be able to familiarize themselves with them and act accordingly. As virtual environments often have multicultural teams, it is important to remember there are many ways of interactions.	Students learn that language capabilities, listening and use of persuasive dialogue impacts teams' capability to reach set goals and consensus. To reach the agreement, it takes more time and effort in the virtual environment.
Students learn that when developing a net etiquette company should construct it as a mix of different cultural behaviors, rather than a single dominant one. The guidelines and training need to be accessible and understandable by the employee	Students learn that there is tendency for increased micro-management in a virtual environment and emphasis should be in leadership instead of management. Self-management and peer support by the team

	members reduces the tendency of micro-manage.
Students learn that there are more multicultural and diverse working environments in the virtual, as companies can hire globally. The working environment should support and embrace diversity by allowing individuals to feel safe to express their differences and alternative ways of doing things.	Students learn the importance of self-awareness and calling attention for support when needed from a manager or team member. It is important to be empathetic, to provide support to other team members, by respecting cultural differences. Because of isolation there is a heightened need for supporting team members, both emotionally and with their role.
Students learn that in virtual teams there are often cross-functional teams with varied levels of experience amongst members. Members need to be egalitarian when interacting with one another, but this is harder in some cultures because of the hierarchical differences.	Students learn that virtual meetings should be led in a way that is engaging and everyone is being heard. It is an individual's responsibility to actively engage themselves in meetings. All team members should react supportively and create an engaging environment.
Students learn that there is a need to be very specific in communicating commitments and schedules as it is more important in virtual. Different cultures also have different perceptions of time. Teams need to respect agreed commitments and schedules to reduce uncertainty and ensure workflow.	Students learn the importance of creating a systematic continuous onboarding process that is engaging and comprehensive, as the starting point in global hiring is more varied in the virtual space. Building team cohesion is a key success factor to efficient team working. It requires more accountability from the individual as informal guidance is less available in the virtual onboarding process.
Students learn that conscious socializing is hard in the virtual environment and companies should put effort in supporting it by creating flexible dynamics where employees make themselves available for impromptu interactions. There should be a balance between scheduled meetings and spontaneous socializing to create flow of work.	

Day 3 Agenda (Example)

Energizer/Check in (15min)	Physical meeting: danish clapping game for physical meetings Never have I Ever or any other appropriate method for virtual meeting.
Making connection between day 2 and 3 (30min)	a) Short summary/report about what participants learned from interviewing the people in group assignment 2, sharing insights to the rest of the class. b) Discussion in a bigger group about the similarities and differences when establishing communication & collaboration on team level versus on larger organizational level? c) A poster session to connect learners most important take-aways from answering individual reflection quotations in day 2. Lecturer prepares 4-5 posters (either based on groups or topics), puts each poster a name, and asks learners to write their insights to the posters (can be done in padlet as well as with physical posters)
Stakeholder mapping (30min)	Think about the larger context (organization), and together with the learners: 1. map the stakeholders 2. Discuss about the concerns of the various stakeholder groups in a communication and collaboration process 3. analyze the stakeholders social, cultural, and generational values that affect their actions. discuss what are the aspects to take into consideration when developing the strategy for communication & collaboration culture, net etiquette, etc.
Break (15min)	
Organizational culture & leadership (60min)	Example: The first preference is that the lecture invites 1-3 leaders to contact meetings (either together) or as different sessions, and there will be an interactive discussion with the practitioners about the challenges and best practices of leading virtually. It would be great if those leaders come from different organizations (traditional and hierarchical ones to leaderless organizations). Topics that could be discussed with the leader: ● **Innovation topic:** there is a general understanding that it is harder to innovate virtually? Is that really the case? Can it be vice-a-versa? Can virtual teamwork (for example the ability to hire abroad) boost innovativeness? Are there any difficulties in

	virtual environment regards innovation and how can these be overcome? ● **Future skills: small discussion on that:** What are the future skills needed by leaders and employees? How to make sure that your employees and leaders have the right competencies? ● **Net-etiquette/digital wellbeing:** Discuss how you can create flexible collaboration and communication culture within the company by ensuring employee digital wellbeing at the same time (referring to the right to disconnect)? *If it is not possible to invite guest speakers, alternatively the lecturer can:* - *Make interviews (podcasts) with the leaders by her/himself* - *Divide students into 4-5 groups and then ask the groups to make interviews with leaders and make podcasts that last about 2-3 minutes and cover the main issues (to be listened by the rest of the groups).* - *Ask students to familiarize themselves with the following material and build a discussion based on that* - ***Ten videos** of 100% remote organizations.* - *Top 10 Virtual Companies in 2020* - *15 Fully Remote Companies That Thrive on 100% Virtual Work*
Landing exercise to finish the day (30min)	Fishbowl methods (if meeting is held physically), if virtually - then just a discussion facilitated by the lecturer. For example, making a word-cloud of the take-aways from the course. Fishbowl is a strategy for organizing group discussions. Students are separated into an inner and outer circle. In the inner circle or fishbowl, students have a discussion; students in the outer circle listen to the discussion and take notes. This engaging and student-centered strategy builds comprehension of complex texts/ideas while developing group discussion skills. In the "fishbowl," students practice responding to multiple viewpoints. Observations from students in the outer circle provide insight into what makes for effective small-group discussions. Research supports the use of fishbowls as an effective way to engage students with a range of abilities and in multiple settings. Fishbowl would be use here to discuss the main takeaways from the course: - what did the learners experience? What were the negative aspects/challenges - and what where the positive aspects? What to take from that experience to real life? Although the

	exercise is used for reflecting the course - the exercise itself can be reflected on as well. For example: - Can we draw parallels with inclusivity topic in virtual teams - what happens with students/team members, who do not wish to be in spotlight? How do they feel? How to engage them? Is it up to the facilitator to make sure they are engaged, or should every team member (including the shy ones make sure) that everyone - including themselves - are heard? How can we make sure that people are heard if they are very introvert (are there any good methods for that9? Also, what happens, if you are quiet in virtual teams - what are the risks (people forgetting you, not relying on you anymore, etc.).
Homework instructions (15min)	Instructions for final assignments

Final individual assignments

Learning diary	• **Question 1.** Evaluate on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) how your team can be classified in terms of 'becoming an effective multinational virtual team'. What, in your opinion, are the most decisive factors determining your evaluation of your team? • **Question 2**. Identify key takeaways from whole course and determine which ones are valuable and why, and which ones you would like to explore further/ put in practice in the future? • **Question 3**. Create a list of concrete lists of activities7actions for yourself to deepen and apply the knowledge gained. • **Question 4.** What, in your opinion, is the role of digital wellbeing within organizations? Is it the responsibility of managers or individuals (or both) to foster higher digital wellbeing, and why do you think that? • **Question 5.** Creates a picture of how your organization will (can) look in the future regard's virtual teamwork.
Practice theory for building global virtual teams	Write your own practice theory on "Organizing, managing, and leading geographically disbursed teams, with multinational team members who work mostly in a virtual context when solving consulting cases (GVT). Write your practice theory as if you were to write a manual. Consider what are the most important factors and processes you must establish to develop an effective team. Consider the following: a. First, make a list of factors and processes that you believe have the greatest influence when establishing and developing an effective GVT. b. Consider how a team might be able to build a capacity to solve diverse problems (tasks). c. Ponder what the role of relationships, leadership, cultural differences, etc. in GVTs is. d. Think about the role of establishing processes, routines, and about setting different roles for members. e. Then, read/review your own reflections documented in this paper related to the three cases. Start with the reflections for case 1.
c) Reflection about the course	1) What did you like the most about the course? 2) What would you like to change about the course?

Deliverable	Write a concise practice theory (or manual for people who will work in a similar setting) on how to establish, manage & lead effective GVT.

Final assignment in groups

Assignment	a) In a group, write a **practice theory of** "Transferring a traditional company to a virtual company". Together, make a concise practice theory (a manual) for people who oversee leading this transfer. b) First, make a list of factors/constraints and processes that you believe have the greatest influence regards this process. c) Consider how organization can tackle these factors/issues/processes. d) Ponder what the role of relationships, leadership, cultural differences, etc. in the process. e) Think about the role of changing existing processes, routines, etc. f) Think about your own experience as working as a virtual team in this course
Deliverable	Write a concise practice theory (or manual) for people who will be transferring a traditional organization to a virtual organization considering everything learned in this course and what you have learned beyond the course boundaries.

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Virtual Business Skills Empowerment

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Multicultural Virtual Environments
to Support the Evolving Business World

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