

# VIBES

Virtual Business Skills Empowerment

VIBES IO3: Educational Content Development

Virtual Teamworking Master Class  
(Undergraduate and high school level)



Erasmus+



LAB University of  
Applied Sciences

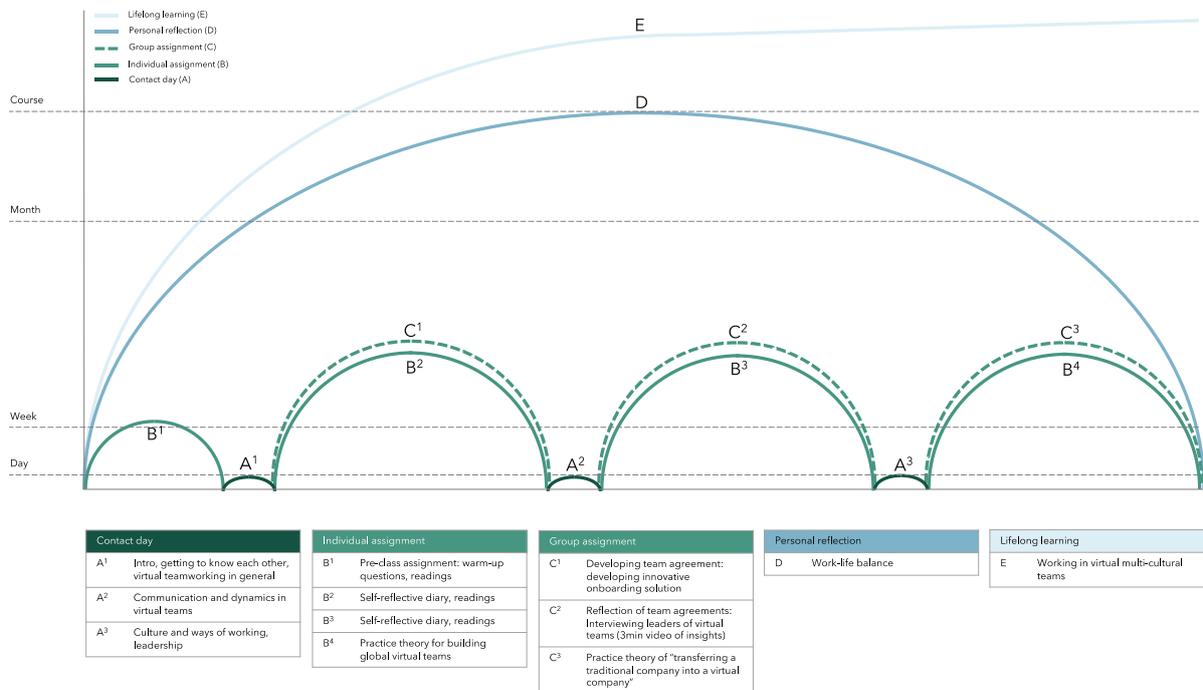
## Table of Contents

Virtual Teamworking Master Class	1
Difference between university and high school teaching	2
Course outline	3
Pre-class assignment	7
Additional options	8
Day 1 Outline	9
Day 1 Agenda (Example)	9
Day 1 Group Assignment	12
Day 1 Individual assignment	13
Additional options	14
Day 2 Outline	15
Day 2 Objectives	16
Day 2 Agenda (Example)	17
Day 2 Homework / Group Assignment	22
Day 2 Homework / Individual Assignment	24
Day 3 Outline	25
Day 3 Objectives	25
Day 3 Agenda (Example)	27
Final individual assignment	29
Final assignment in groups	31

# 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 **undergraduate and high school** 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.



## **Difference between university and high school teaching**

The difference between university and high school is that you must be aware that students in high school are transforming into adults and have mixed interests (no specific subject interest). The focus is thus on general education.

- High school student must attend classes and they **need extra encouragement and motivation** (grades, skipping exams, travel)
- They must understand that the activity prepares them for university and labor market
- They need more help and incentives to participate
- They are heterogeneous groups, including also with students with special needs
- They would benefit from a token to show their success on social media (i.e., **recognized certificate**)
- The social background varies, and the school must sometimes loan equipment and tools for students for them to complete their studies (equipment, Office 365 package)

The assessment and grading criteria differ from that applied in universities. There are also differences in materials. These should be reflected in the course design (e.g., university: academic paper / high school: simple paper). The curriculum is different. Working with the same content as in the other levels is possible, but coaching must be more intense, supportive, and motivating. The main difference is thus not necessarily in content, but in methodology and material.

In high school it is important that **all the students are being heard and appreciated**. The goal of high school is personal development.

## Course outline

<b>Course title</b>	Virtual Teamworking Master Class
<b>Educational level</b>	Second Year Undergraduate and High School Students, (8 – 20 students)
<b>Credits</b>	3 -5 ECTS
<b>Schedule</b>	8-week course with 3 full day contact days, depending on the Institutional requirements for the module.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>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. <b>It is important to make sure all team members are engaged through a clear onboarding.</b></p> <p>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. <b>Virtual communication requires emotional intelligence and awareness of communication and interaction styles, as well as a low threshold to contact others.</b></p> <p>Student learns about dynamics in companies. <b>Facilitating group dynamics in a way that engages everyone and all members feel included is important.</b> 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.</p>
<b>Transferrable</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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	<p>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.</p>
<b>Practice</b>	<p>Virtual/Contact days include lectures and discussions on the topics of culture and ways of working.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Students will apply relevant theory and utilize relevant tools when presenting their solutions.</p>
<b>Theory and tools</b>	Academic and professional text related to teamwork
<b>Assessment</b>	<p>Bloom's taxonomy is used as a base of assessment.</p> <p>Grading 1-5</p> <p>1-2: The student understands what culture and ways of working means in a company context.</p> <p>3-4: The student can understand the company culture and ways of working and can apply their learnings from various sources.</p> <p>5: The student understands company culture and ways of working. They can apply their learnings and create new innovative approaches.</p>

## Pre-class assignment

<b>Expected outcome</b>	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).
<b>Warm-up questions</b>	<p>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):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) What is the difference between traditional and virtual teamwork?</li><li>2) What is the role of virtual teamwork in your life?</li><li>3) Think about tools that you have used to communicate virtually, list them, and describe their pros and cons?</li><li>4) Bring examples of multicultural differences regarding communication that can affect virtual teamwork?</li></ol>
<b>Reading task</b>	<p>Secondly, students are asked to familiarize themselves with the following material, one material from each topic (in this example virtual teamwork basics, work-life balance, and intercultural collaboration).</p> <p>Materials (articles, Ted Talks, podcasts) available <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Virtual teamwork basics: 2-3 materials</li><li>● Work-life balance: 2-3 papers</li><li>● Intercultural collaboration: 2-3</li></ul> <p>(Master level articles here: <a href="#">here</a>)</p>

## Additional options

<p><b>Warm-up questions</b> (Examples, advanced group)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) How would you explain/describe VT to a stranger?</li> <li>2) Describe you VT experience</li> <li>3) Which challenges you have experienced</li> <li>4) What would you like to learn about VT-s</li> <li>5) Bring examples of multicultural differences that can affect virtual teamwork?</li> <li>6) Think about tools that you have used to communicate virtually, and describe their pros and cons?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Warm-up questions</b> (Examples, beginners' group)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Have you ever experienced virtual teamwork?</li> <li>2) Having conversation over video, what have been the main challenges?</li> <li>3) What would you like to learn in the upcoming class?</li> <li>4) Bring examples of multicultural differences regarding communication that can affect virtual teamwork?</li> <li>5) Think about tools that you have used to communicate virtually, and describe their pros and cons?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Methods for gathering the answers from learners</b></p>	<p><i>Students can send the answers to the lecturers by using the following methods (examples):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Padlet / Mentimeter / <small>Flinga</small></i></li> <li>- <i>by doing a presentation "Pecha Kucha" and sending it to lecturer's e-mail or uploading to dedicated place</i></li> <li>- <i>by sending the answers by e-mail/uploading to a dedicated place</i></li> <li>- <i>in Moodle / in Canvas</i></li> <li>- <i>or in any other preferred way</i></li> </ul>

## Day 1 Outline

### Introduction and onboarding - Establishment of effective teamwork

<b>Expected outcome of Day 1</b>	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 <i>establishing effective virtual teamwork</i> . Through homework assignments, learners will get to know the main challenges and best practices of <i>onboarding</i> in virtual teams.
<b>Meeting format</b>	if possible, then 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.
<b>Meeting length</b>	4h and 15min, 6 a/h (together with breaks)

### Day 1 Agenda (Example)

<b>INTRO (30 min)</b>	
<b>Introduction (15 min max)</b>	Lecturers will set the scene and explain students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why are here (short intro, why is virtual teamwork important)?</li> <li>- What would be their learning journey like</li> <li>- The deliverable and course structure</li> <li>- The tools that would be used (Moodle)</li> </ul>
<b>Get to know each other (10 min)</b>	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. <p>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.</p>

<b>Collaboration agreement (10 min)</b>	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). <i>This is a living example of making agreements in virtual teams and in the beginning of virtual team meetings.</i>
<b>GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER (40 min)</b>	
<b>Charades (30 min)</b>	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.
<b>BREAK (15 min)</b>	
<b>Short check-in exercise</b>	Show on your fingers, how are you feeling (1-5)
<b>MULTICULTURAL VIRTUAL TEAMS (2h)</b>	
<b>Short intro to teamwork (5 min)</b>	The differences between teamwork and groupwork
<b>Reflecting on the pre-class assignments (30 min)</b>	<p><b>Reflection of questions 1 &amp; 2 (differences between F2F and VT, and role of VT-s in students' lives):</b> Share students to groups (4 groups per class), ask them to discuss the following questions (30min):</p> <p>2 groups will discuss:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What is the difference between traditional and virtual teamwork?</li> <li>2) What is the role of virtual teamwork in your life?</li> </ol> <p>Then ask each group to share their insights and have a discussion with all learners together.</p> <p>Lecturer can show couple of slides and tie with the discussion (or to wrap up the discussion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Historical overview of virtual teamwork.</li> <li>- Discussion about virtual teamwork: why, what is the difference</li> </ul>
<b>Reflection on question 3 (tools): 30min</b>	<p>In a big a big group make a list of tools that students have used, and group them based on their functionality (communication, instant information sharing, non-instant information sharing, collaboration, scheduling, collaboration, project management, etc.)</p> <p>Ask students to think about the pros and cons of each category of tools. Together with students create a padlet by using the categories developed in class, and let students comment each category with pros and cons related to these tools.</p>

<b>BREAK (15 min)</b>	
<b>Energizer (15min)</b>	<a href="#">danish clapping game</a> / different game for virtual environment
<b>Cultural differences (45min)</b>	Share students to groups and ask them to make short infographics of multicultural differences, focus on 1-2 differences. 3) Bring examples of multicultural differences regarding communication that can affect virtual teamwork? Follow up with additional discussion on stereotypes.
<b>LANDING &amp; HOMEWORK (30min)</b>	
<b>Landing and follow-up (30 min)</b>	<p><b>Assigning learners to virtual teams:</b> Max five students per team. Learners will get to know each other outside the contact meeting.</p> <p><b>Assigning learners to virtual teams:</b> Max five students per team. Learners will get to know each other outside the contact meeting.</p> <p><b>Giving homework tasks</b></p> <p>At the end of the day, lecturers describe what assignments are expected from the students to be done before the next day.</p> <p><b>Landing exercise:</b></p> <p>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.</p>

## Day 1 Group Assignment

<b>Team agreements</b>	<p>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, team logo, and make team agreements: including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How will the team collaborate with each other?</li><li>- where &amp; when will the team share information (which channels are used for which information)?</li><li>- What is the expected response time by teammates?</li><li>- How will the team solve arising conflicts</li></ul> <p>Students are asked to make the agreements as a living document in Google Drive and share the link with the lecturer.</p> <p><i>Additional idea: teams can be introduced to Agile values, and they can be asked to agree on agile values within their teams.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p>Deliverable: Teams are asked to make a 5-minute video/ or a presentation introducing their team to other learners. The students will upload the videos in YouTube (they can be made private) and shared only with the lecturer and students in the current class. So that learners can get to know other teams.</p>
<b>Onboarding solution</b>	<p>Learners are asked to come up with an innovative solution for virtual onboarding that would make the onboarding experience smooth and inclusive for the new employee. Deliverable: learners are asked to make a 7-minute video introducing their solution and upload it to YouTube/Moodle, etc.</p>

## Day 1 Individual assignment

<p><b>Reading</b></p>	<p>Learners are asked to familiarize themselves with the <a href="#">following materials</a> (articles/book chapters, videos etc.) regards (communication and dynamics in virtual teams). At least 1 material must be selected from each topic. The topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communication: 2-3 materials</li> <li>● Dynamics: 2-3 materials</li> <li>● Feedback (short reading)</li> </ul> <p>MA level reading material available <a href="#">here</a></p>
<p><b>Digital well-being</b></p>	<p>Learners are asked to switch off completely from all media (phones, tablets, TV, etc.) for at least 2 hours each day.</p>
<p><b>Learning diary</b></p>	<p>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 <u>after the first two group assignments are finished</u>:</p> <p><b>Question 1.</b> Describe how your team has been functioning so far. How did you develop a common solution as a team?</p> <p><b>Question 2.</b> Describe your experience of working together with people from different cultures (the differences, the challenges, the benefits)?</p> <p><b>Question 3.</b> What have you learned from the first two group assignments and class meeting in terms of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Developing team feeling?</li> <li>b. Developing a joint understanding about the task and your role in the team?</li> </ol> <p><b>Question 4:</b> Describe your experience of using different communication tools in your team (pros, cons, your preferences)?</p> <p><b>Question 5:</b> What have you experienced after switching off your digital tools at least 2hours per day?</p>

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

<p><b>Icebreaker/energy booster where people get to know each other</b></p>	<p><b>Tell a story:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Team Check-In:</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>Discuss answers of the pre-class assignment</b></p>	<p>Lecturer will facilitate a discussion of the results of the pre-class assignment (questions). This can be done, for example by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Collecting Pecha-Kuchas from learners and asking them to present their answers to others.</li> <li>b) Showing a word-cloud or wall with stickers/main results, after collecting learners' input through mentimeter/padlet or with any other similar tool.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Basics of teamwork (difference between teams and groups, etc.)</b></p>	<p>If there is more time, then students can be asked to form groups and discuss the differences between teams and groups, before the lecturer shows his/her slides.</p>

## Day 2 Outline

### Contact day 2 - Communication & dynamics

<p><b>Expected outcome</b></p>	<p>Student learns about <i>communication</i> 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.</p> <p>Students learn about <i>dynamics</i> in teams. 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They explain important intercultural differences in communication</li> <li>• and teamwork plays a role.</li> <li>• In virtual team situations, you use discussion techniques appropriate to the addressee</li> <li>• You use conflict resolution strategies in a team.</li> </ul> <p>Basics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capture the main points of a conversation.</li> <li>• Summarize the content of simple texts in the foreign language again.</li> <li>• Use one in the foreign language for everyday situations and for vocabulary appropriate to the occupational field.</li> <li>• They differentiate between appropriate oral and written forms of communication.</li> <li>• <i>They explain the opportunities and risks for the appearance in analog and digital networks.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Meeting format</b></p>	<p>Virtual if possible (virtual format enables to experience all the virtual communication related challenges)</p>
<p><b>Meeting length</b></p>	<p>2 times 2 hours meetings (in a virtual environment learners get exhausted more quickly).</p>

## Day 2 Objectives

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

Communication	Dynamics
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>

attention should be paid to communicating with non-native speakers.	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)

<b>Part 1 – 3h – Communication style, consistency, and quality</b>	
<b>Energizer/ icebreaker (5min)</b>	Start by asking learners how they are feeling by using reactions (emoticons in zoom). This way the learners will learn the functionalities in zoom.
<b>Meeting agreement (5min)</b>	The lecturer proposes meeting agreement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Microphones off when not speaking</li> <li>- Cameras on to allow the instructor to better understand how the learners are doing.</li> <li>- Preference for questions (in chat, with voice?).</li> </ul>
<b>Intro to communication topic (20min)</b>	Ask students to highlight the positive impressions of the experiences in day 1 (related to any level of interaction/communication). At least 1 positive experience.  It can be elaborated to discuss how important it is to share good things in a virtual environment, as it tends to not be discussed so often in virtual meetings. And making a transition between student experiences in day 1 and topics in day 2.
<b>Theory (5min)</b>	Present theory (couple of slides) about communication. Inspiration can be acquired from <a href="#">here</a>
<b>Making connection</b>	a) <b>(30 min)</b> Show the individual reflection questions first (as a reminder) and then ask students in smaller groups (different

<p><b>between day 1 and 2 (45 min)</b></p>	<p>groups than the virtual student teams) discuss the most important take-aways regarding virtual communication from answering individual reflection questions and while doing the onboarding solution in day 1. Boil the results down to 3-4 main findings. Ask students to go to PowerPoint/canvas and to choose an infographic (template) and make an infographic about the most important aspects /take-aways of communication in virtual teams. Make an infographic/poster/presentation, illustrating the main take-aways.</p> <p>b) <b>(15min)</b> Presentation and discussion.</p>
<p><b>Communication style (10min)</b></p>	<p>Example: give students an example: “a person who always has to be right, and you need to make an agreement with that person within 20minutes”, how would you approach it?</p> <p>Tie their responses to differences in communication style.</p>
<p><b>Communication style role-play (20min)</b></p>	<p><a href="#">The Bono - 6</a> thinking hats exercise, in a big group. Ask students to count numbers, dedicate each number thinking hats. Present students with a case and ask them to respond using their “hats”.</p>
<p><b>Communication quality and consistency (20min)</b></p>	<p><b>Short theory (5min):</b> discuss the Key-Items of effective communication, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Being consistent (in words and in actions)</li> <li>- Being clear (in your intentions, wants, needs and wording)</li> <li>- Careful and active listening</li> <li>- Respecting others</li> </ul> <p><b>Consistency/ change (15min)</b></p> <p><b>Brief the participants.</b> Ask all participants to stand up. Tell them that you are going to give them instructions on which direction to look. They must turn their head (only their head, not the body) and look in the appropriate direction.</p> <p><b>Explain the details.</b> When you say, “Up”, the participants should tilt their head and look at the ceiling (or the sky). When you say, “Down”, the participants should lower their head and look at the floor (or their feet). When you say, “Left”, the participants should turn their head to their left. When you say, “Right”, the participants should turn their head to the right.</p> <p><b>Give directions.</b> Say the words up, down, left, and right in a random order and encourage the participants to follow your instructions. Keep giving directions at a rapid pace.</p> <p><b>Change the meaning of the words.</b> After about a minute, tell the participants that you are going to make a change. From now on, up will mean down and vice versa. So, when you say “Down”, the participants should look up at the ceiling. Similarly, when you say “Up”, the participants should look down at their feet. Explain that the meaning of the words left and right remain the same. Call out the four directions in a random order and ask the participants</p>

	<p>to follow instructions. Remind them, however, that they must remember the new meaning of the words up and down. You will see many “mistakes” and lots of embarrassed laughter.</p> <p><b>Conclude the session.</b> Announce the end of the activity after about another minute.</p>
<b>Debriefing (15 min)</b>	<p>Ask the participants how difficult it was to follow instructions when the meanings of words were changed. Ask them to discuss any similar experiences they might have had in their real life.</p> <p><b>Learning Points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to be consistent (while using some communication tools, giving instructions, etc.).</li> <li>• It important to listen and pay attention to instructions/ what has been said.</li> <li>• It is hard to unlearn things that you are accustomed to (connects with cultural and any other experiences that underlie people's behaviors, understandings.</li> <li>• If there is a real need to change something, then consider that changes take time - and it's perfectly okay.</li> <li>• There is a need to make sure that everyone understood the changes and probably to repeat the message since people will not grasp things instantly.</li> </ul>
<b>Clarity, drawing game (10min)</b>	<p>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 <b>the drawing game with a discussion of lessons learned regarding communication clarity &amp; consistency.</b></p>
<b>Landing exercise (5min):</b>	<p>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?</p>
<b>Part 2: approximately 2h – inclusion, cohesion &amp; trust</b>	
<b>Icebreaker/check-in exercise (10min)</b>	<p>Diversity bingo (explained <a href="#">here</a>)</p>
<b>Inclusion, cohesion &amp; trust (45min)</b>	<p><b>Quick brainstorming (10min):</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Theory (5min):</b> putting the terms into context of virtual teamwork.</p>

	<p><i>Inclusion</i> - nobody is forgotten, left out, everybody can speak out during meetings, and everyone is heard.</p> <p><i>Cohesion</i> - 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.?</p> <p><i>Trust</i> - 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?</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Exercise lessons learned (30min):</b> split students into three groups and assign them to discuss their own real life virtual student team experiences regarding the topics above (inclusion, cohesion, trust). Each group has one topic. After discussion, they choose one most interesting real-life example and present it to the rest of the class.</p>
<b>Feedback (35 min)</b>	<p><b>Theory (5min):</b> show a short <a href="#">video</a> about feedback</p> <p><b>Exercise (30min):</b> 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 (<a href="#">template available here</a>)</p> <p>Continue by identifying in a big group the characteristics of constructive and unconstructive feedback.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>Then divide learners into pairs and give them a task to give positive and negative feedback to each other based on cases developed by the lecturer.</p>

	<p>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?</p> <p>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 is 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.</p> <p>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?</p>
<p><b>Landing exercise to finish the day (15min)</b></p>	<p>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.</p>

## Day 2 Homework / Group Assignment

<p><b>Team reflection</b></p>	<p>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 you have learned in day 2?</p>
<p><b>Interviews with team leaders</b></p>	<p>(Possibility to give some short guidelines for doing effective interviews, and some example questions to ask, depending on the level)</p> <p>Now that learners have learned effective communication aspects in teams, it is time to zoom out and look at the organizational level. Ask learners to interview team leaders of different virtual teams (from different organizations).</p> <p>If it is difficult for some reason to ask students to make interviews (either they haven't been prepared for making good interviews, or they do not have access to virtual team leaders, learners can be asked to:</p> <p>Familiarize themselves with organizations that operate 100 remotely, based on the following material, or by searching material on their own.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">ten video</a> interviews with leaders from 100% remote organizations.</li> <li>● Top <a href="#">10 Virtual Companies</a> in 2020</li> <li>● <a href="#">15 Fully Remote Companies</a> That Thrive on 100% Virtual Work</li> </ul> <p>Based on either data, ask learners to come up with a list of best practices for building up effective communication and dynamics within organizations.</p> <p>Possible deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Infographic (still, dynamic GIF)/ poster</li> <li>- Podcast/screencast</li> <li>- Interview (portrait, live action film)</li> <li>- Tutorial</li> <li>- Video</li> <li>- Presentation</li> </ul>

**Feedback to other groups**

Learners are asked to analyze deliverables of 2 other groups and provide feedback on their work

## Day 2 Homework / Individual Assignment

<b>Reading</b>	Learners are asked to familiarize themselves with materials regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>culture and ways of working</i></li><li>- <i>management</i> in virtual teams</li><li>- <i>net etiquette</i></li></ul> Reading material available <a href="#">here</a>
<b>Learning diary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Question 1.</b> Describe how your team currently works in terms of different roles and different responsibilities? Regarding what you learned about communication in a virtual team, think about your team and evaluate your communication?</li><li>• <b>Question 2.</b> What kind of challenges and benefits have you experienced while working in a multinational and multicultural virtual team?</li><li>• <b>Question 3.</b> Did you experience misunderstandings, conflicts and crises while working in a virtual team? Can you describe them and identify their origins? Which ones do you consider to be outside of your control and which ones could be tackled? If you have solved them, how?</li><li>• <b>Question 4.</b> 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?</li><li>• <b>Question 5.</b> What have you experienced regarding <i>communication</i> after switching off your digital tools at least 2h per day? If you had the choice, when would you like to communicate virtually and when would you like to communicate physically?</li></ul>

## Day 3 Outline

### Cultures and Ways of Working

<b>Expected outcome</b>	<p>Student learns about <b>cultures and ways of working</b> 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.</p> <p>Students learn about <b>people management</b> in a virtual environment. In a virtual environment there is a risk for micro-managing, and emphasis should be on leadership instead of management.</p> <p>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.</p>
<b>Meeting format</b>	Physical meeting preferred
<b>Meeting length</b>	4h and 15min together with a break

### Day 3 Objectives

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

<b>Cultures and ways of working</b>	<b>People management</b>
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)

<b>Energizer/Check-in (10min)</b>	<p>Physical trivia</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Physical trivia is an easy energizer which will only take a few minutes but will certainly help your participants feel concentrated again.</p>
<b>Leadership (1h 20min)</b>	<p><b>Invite a real (preferably top-level leader) to the course as a guest.</b></p> <p><b>Main take-aways from homework (20min):</b> Analyze in a bigger group the main take-aways from both individual and group level homework. Map with learners the main challenges of virtual organizations. Ask the leader to do a short presentation about their organization (15min). And then ask him/her to reflect on the challenges mapped with the learners before. Ask the leader to reflect how have they tackled the challenges.</p> <p>Topics to cover: organizational culture (how flexible are we, can we work from anywhere and anytime, how we report about our schedule, activities, problems, etc.), how to we schedule meetings, how available are leaders for problems/questions, how to different teams &amp; units communicate with each other, what are the challenges there and how to solve them, how to build net-etiquette, etc.</p> <p><i>If it is not possible to invite those leaders, the lecture can cover these topics as a discussion with the learners. Discussing each challenge and analyzing together, how those could be avoided.</i></p>
<b>Break (15min)</b>	
<b>Short theory (5min)</b>	What is net-etiquette and digital wellbeing, why it is important?
<b>Net-etiquette (10 minutes)</b>	Pre-reading assigned before class. Discuss important elements of netiquette. How to create flexible collaboration and communication culture within the company by ensuring employee digital wellbeing at the same time (referring to the right to disconnect)? How you as a team member can ensure the digital wellbeing of others?
<b>Experience sharing on virtual teamworking experience (1h 30 min)</b>	
<b>Sharing experiences (10-15 min)</b>	Read what have you been writing in your personal diary and your take-aways after each day

<b>Experience sharing (45 min)</b>	<p>Use the same formula of “energizer” as in the transition from day 1 to day 2: involve the students and ask to share 1 negative, 2 positive aspects for virtual teamwork.</p> <p>The instructor will moderate the discussion, either digging deeper after each response, or after everyone has finished sharing their ideas. Lecturer may want to ask what the role of technology / virtual setting was / cultural differences / leadership, etc. in mediating this experience. The idea is to push students to question how technology and virtual settings can alter experiences, interactions, acquisition of competences.</p>
<b>Landing exercise to finish the day (15min)</b>	<p>Lecturers can ask learners to take 5 minutes to write down the main take-aways from the day and share 1-2 that are most important to them with the rest of the learners.</p>
<b>Homework instructions (15min)</b>	<p>Instructions for final assignments</p>

## Final individual assignment

<p><b>Learning diary</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Question 1.</b> 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?</li> <li>- <b>Question 2.</b> Identify key takeaways from the 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?</li> <li>- <b>Question 3.</b> Create a list of concrete activities/actions for yourself to deepen and apply the knowledge gained.</li> <li>- <b>Question 4.</b> 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?</li> <li>- <b>Question 5.</b> Describe how you as a virtual team members will act in the future, when working in VT-s. What will be the most important things that you can do to enhance the productivity and teamworking experience for everyone?</li> <li>- <b>Question 6. Reflection about the course</b> 1) What did you like the most about the course? 2) What would you like to change about the course?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Practice theory for building global virtual teams</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>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).”</b> 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:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First, make a list of factors and processes that you believe have the greatest influence when establishing and developing an effective GVT.</li> <li>- Consider how a team might be able to build a capacity to solve diverse problems (tasks).</li> <li>- Ponder what the role of relationships, leadership, cultural differences, etc. in GVTs is.</li> <li>- Think about the role of establishing processes, routines, and about setting different roles for members.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Think about how to avoid and manage conflicts in virtual teams.</li><li>- Then, read/review your own reflections documented in this paper related to the three cases. Start with the reflections for case 1.</li></ul>
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

<b>Group assignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) In a group, write a <b>practice theory of</b> “Transferring a traditional company to a virtual company”. Together, make a concise practice theory (a manual) for people who oversee leading this transfer.</li><li>b) First, make a list of factors/constraints and processes that you believe have the greatest influence regards this process.</li><li>c) Consider how organization can tackle these factors/issues/processes.</li><li>d) Ponder what the role of relationships, leadership, cultural differences, etc. in the process.</li><li>e) Think about the role of changing existing processes, routines, etc.</li><li>f) Think about your own experience as working as a virtual team in this course</li></ul>
<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>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.</b>

# V/BES

## Virtual Business Skills Empowerment

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



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Applied Sciences