



**Your name:**

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**Virtual intercultural teams**

**Session 2:**

**Culture and interculturality,   
a plea for an open and dynamic approach**

**Learning journal**



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The work is attributable to:   
Project Team „Edubox Virtual intercultural teams“ / HOOU

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## ► 2.2 Introduction

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|  | **Culture and virtual teams** |

Look at the word cloud below, which depicts associations connected with culture. Pick some expressions from here, and consider them in relation to culture’s influence in the context of virtual teams. Note down your findings.



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## ► 2.4 An open versus closed concept of culture

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|  | **Switzerland from a closed culture perspective** |

If you were only to consider the basic information given here, where might you find indications that a closed concept of culture often does not help us to get to know the people of Switzerland?

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|  | **Case: Beibei from East Frisia** |

Use the closed and open concept of culture to explain the confusion and misunderstanding between Beibei and the lecturer. In doing so consider: ‘What are the indications that suggest the lecturer based his question on a closed ‘container’ type thinking and conception of culture?

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|  | **Find your own example** |

Think about an example where an ‘either/or’ AND ‘both/and’ perspective could have supported a more differentiated view and note this down.

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|  | **‘Zooming’ – a new perspective on culture** |

Watch the YouTube video on “Zooming – A new perspective on culture” and answer the following questions.

What is zooming?

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What is meant by *zooming out* as much as necessary and *zooming in* as much as possible?

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How might *zooming in* on a virtual team support or hinder the development of a productive team culture?

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Why is zooming an important concept in order to get to know virtual team members? How can zooming help to consider different perspectives?

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## ► 2.6 Common cultural misconceptions and the potential of zooming for developing a collaborative team culture

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|  | **Interview with Prof. Jürgen Bolten – questions for reflection** |

Identify the main misconceptions regarding intercultural communication people have.

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Do you agree with Prof. Bolten’s statements? Support your answer with well-founded arguments.

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How can zooming in and zooming out help to develop a collaborative team culture?

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## ► 2.8 Learning review

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|  | **Apply what you have learned** |

Imagine that next month you start working for an international company and you know that your team consists of:

* a woman who was born in Ghana
* a woman who was born in Russia, immigrated to the UK as a little girl and graduated in the USA, and
* a young intern you don’t know anything about.

Now reflect on the following questions.

How can you apply what you have learned about the open and closed concept of culture to your team, considering the little information you have about your team members?

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What are some of the advantages and some of the disadvantages of a closed approach to culture based on national belonging?

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Think about 4-5 work related values or behaviours people from abroad would associate with the country or region you are from. They can be positive, negative or neutral. Note that these attributes come from a closed culture point of view.

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Now assume that during your first online meeting, your boss introduces you to the team as   
“This is your new colleague from...” mentioning your home country. Imagine that your colleagues associate you with the behaviour or values you just wrote down. Which expectations would you want to fulfil and which not? How would you feel about this situation, in which you are perceived from a closed-culture point of view?

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Give examples of situations in which your ‘automatic’ assumptions and behaviour have been thrown into question by your diverse environment.

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