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# WORKING IN VIRTUAL AND INTERCULTURAL TEAMS

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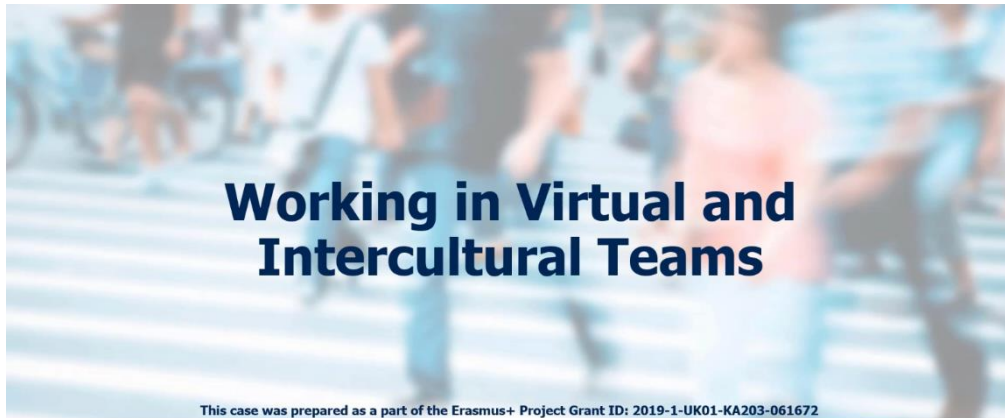
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Video case study can be accessed [here](#).



# WORKING IN VIRTUAL AND INTERCULTURAL TEAMS – TEACHING GUIDE & NOTES

## 1. Summary of case study

This is an introductory case on the topic of being open-minded and interculturally aware when working in culturally diverse virtual teams.

Virtual meetings and virtual team work are not a trend but have become a valued and truly integrated practice within companies.

In this video case you will find out about how students and professionals can cope and deal with the challenges and opportunities when working remotely in diverse teams and/or across borders.

More specifically, you will find out how open-mindedness and being interculturally aware can support the quality of your online communications in diverse teams.

## 2. Suggested methodology for ‘solving’ case study

This case can be used to ask learners different questions on the following topics:

### 1. Communication challenges

- What are possible communication challenges when having online meetings?
- What are possible communication challenges when having meetings with people from different backgrounds?

### 2. Cultural differences

- What differences can you find with respect to approaching time?
- What differences can you find related to separating private and business related matters during conversations and meetings with people from different backgrounds?
- Have you experienced differences related to the following issues or topics, for example:
  - Introductions? the way people are addressed?
  - Gender?
  - Group forming?
  - Hierarchy within the team?
  - Follow up of actions and/or problem solving?



### 3. Open-mindedness

- What are the benefits of being open-minded about working together in diverse teams?
- How can you create openness towards other ideas, working methods, or problem solving approaches?
- How can you involve everyone during decision making?
- How can you gain some expertise in dealing and working with remote teams? What are some crucial tips?

### 3. Possible answers

#### 1. Communication challenges

What are possible communication challenges when having online meetings?

Getting connected and technical difficulties, getting things done, starting on time, getting buy-in for actions

What are possible communication challenges when having meetings with people from different backgrounds? What are some consequences?

Misunderstandings through wrong assumptions and language barriers, stereotyping, not involving everyone, different levels of participation, low sense of ownership and thus low involvement, different expectations, pacing of ideas.

#### 2. Cultural differences

What differences have you seen in respect to approaching time? How is a sense of time experienced by team members?

Starting and ending too late, too early, on time. Is time precious and valued, so not to be “wasted” or is spending ‘longer’ periods of time valued?

What differences have you seen related to separating private and business-related matters during conversations and meetings with people from different backgrounds?

Are informal chats acceptable? Are they a must? How much time can be spent on informalities?

Have you experienced differences related to introductions?

Formal or informal introductions? Required or expected?

Have you experienced differences related to gender approaches?



Equal chances and involvement of all?

Have you experienced differences related to hierarchy?

Active or low involvement of the chair/manager?

Have you experienced differences in follow up of actions and/or problem solving?

Structured versus a more flexible approach?

#### 4. Open-mindedness

What are the benefits of being open-minded about working together in diverse teams?

A synergy of ideas, different approaches and solutions, the benefit of different perspectives.

How can you create openness towards other ideas, working methods, or problem-solving approaches? Creating an environment where everyone feels safe and is invited to speak.

How can you involve everyone during decision making?

Ask for everyone's input and possible concerns in order to come to a good decision or consensus.

How can you become experienced in dealing and working with remote diverse teams?

Use any opportunity to participate in virtual cross-border teamwork as much as you can, prepare an agenda to facilitate involvement of all meeting participants, practice active listening, learn about the differences, expectations, and assumptions, keep an open mind.

#### 4. Extra Questions

How can you increase personal self-awareness and cultivate open mindedness, to create an effective diverse team?

How can you deal with conflict and frustrations? How prepared/aware are teams to deal with conflict?

Why is giving feedback so important when managing diverse or global teams? How do you give appropriate feedback?

How does establishing clear work norms help to be an effective diverse team? Can you give an example?

How can you instil trust and connectivity among team members? Can you give an example?

How would you describe the role of the team leader of diverse teams?

