

# Welcome: Socio-cultural Skills for Knowledge Transfer

KTSoftSkills - Soft Skills for Knowledge Transfer  
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# By the end of this session, you will be able to...

Explain different cultural models at individual and organizational levels to understand their implications for professional interactions.

Differentiate various collaboration models, motivations, and work approaches used across cultures and disciplines.

Assess the impact of socio-cultural differences on team dynamics and collaborative effectiveness.

Demonstrate effective collaboration with stakeholders from various cultural and professional backgrounds.

# Agenda

Time	Topic	
20 min	Introduction & Icebreaker Game	Group Exercise
40 min	Cultural Dimensions	Group Work & Mini Lecture
15 min	Break	
30 min	Theories on Socio-cultural Differences	Mini Lecture
60 min	An informal KT meeting	Role-play Exercise
15 min	Wrap up	Group Discussion



**Let's get to know  
each other better!**

Check out the list of questions in  
the next slide.

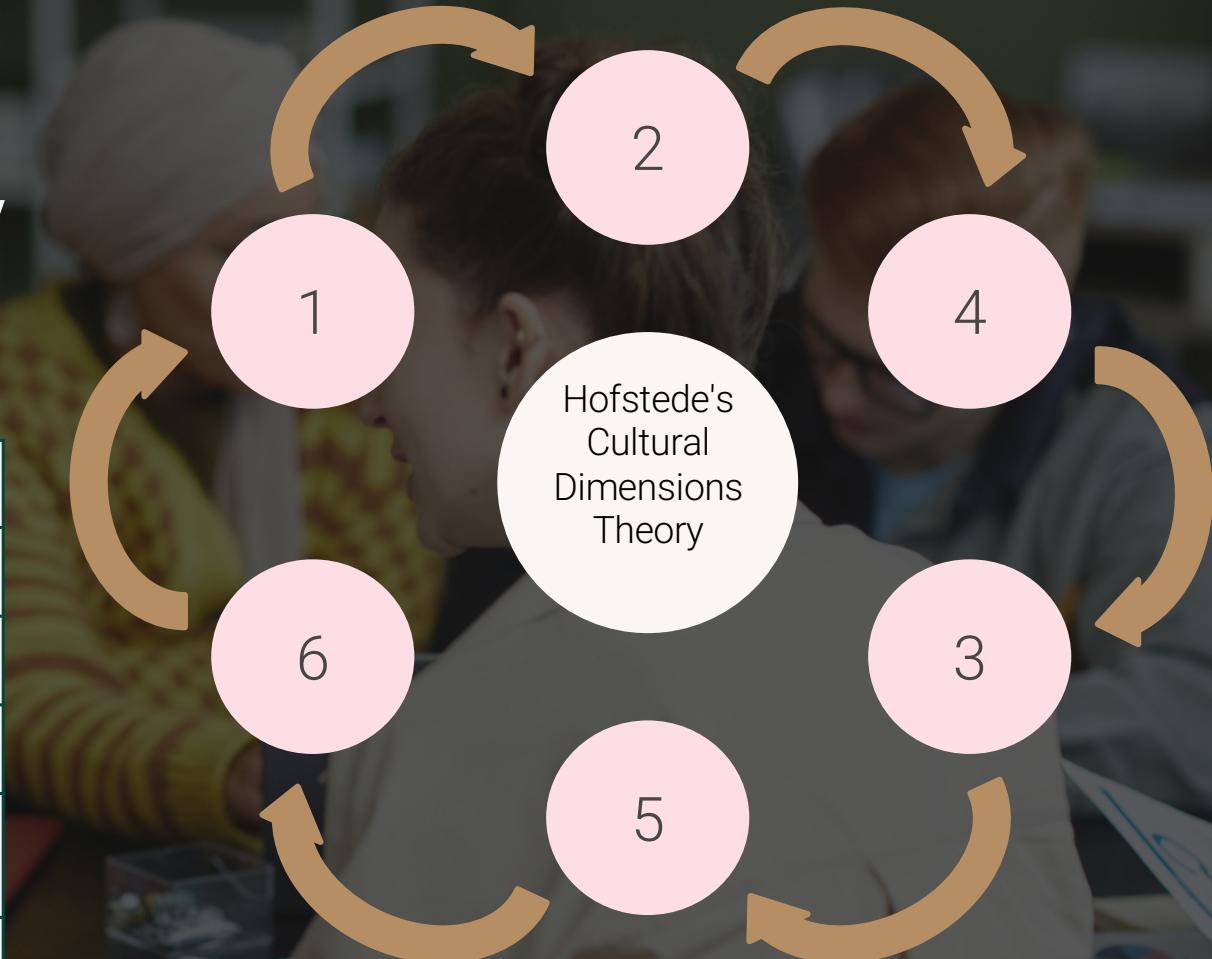
Pick up-to 3 questions to ask each  
other.

Be authentic!

- What books on your shelf are begging to be read?
- Which do you do more often: hum or whistle? Hum or whistle your answer.
- What's something you intended to do today, but didn't? Why not?
- What's the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word "fun"?
- What's the best New Year's resolution you've ever made?
- What magic tricks do you know? Perform one now.
- What's your favorite item to cook? Why?
- Are you a hugger or a non-hugger? Why?
- Are you ever a high-maintenance person? Explain.
- Are you superstitious? Give an example.

# Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory

1	Power Distance
2	Individualism vs Collectivism
3	Masculinity vs Femininity
4	Uncertainty Avoidance
5	Long Term vs Short Term Normative Orientation
6	Indulgence vs Restraint





# Cultural Dimensions in Practice: Challenges in Knowledge Transfer Work

Let's explore how Hofstede's cultural dimensions manifest in workplace interactions and decision-making, particularly in the context of knowledge transfer across institutions, industries, or countries.

# Cultural Dimensions in Practice: Challenges in Knowledge Transfer Work

*In 3-4 people groups*

15 min Group Discussion

5 min Presenting ideas

Pick **two** Hofstede dimensions that you think most affect knowledge transfer processes.

## Discuss:

- How do these dimensions show up in your everyday work (e.g., during contract negotiation, technology pitching, stakeholder alignment, IP discussions)?
- Have you experienced a cultural mismatch or misunderstanding related to one of these dimensions?

**If you have extra time:** Brainstorm actionable tips for KT professionals to communicate effectively across different cultural dimensions.

# Academic and business logics

Universities and industry represent two different logics that have different goals, cultures, and structures.

The academic logic seeks “fundamental knowledge, research freedom, rewards in the form of peer recognition, and open disclosure of research results”.

The commercial logic “is thought to entail different and partially conflicting practices and norms, including bureaucratic control, restrictions on disclosure, and the private appropriation of financial returns”.

This heterogeneity creates a fruitful basis for developing new innovations and accessing complementary knowledge across institutional boundaries.

However these differences create different socio-cultural environments, which are governed by different rules, norms, behaviors and expectations!

## Socio-cultural differences

In the KT domain, socio-cultural differences can be interpreted as **proximity dimensions**

The term *proximity* was originally used in the area of economic geography to denote geographical closeness

In innovation literature, the concept relates to a number of proximity dimensions, which are viewed as important pre-conditions for innovation and inter-organizational collaboration

# Proximity dimensions

## Cognitive proximity

Actors that are cognitively proximate perceive, interpret, understand, and evaluate the world in similar ways

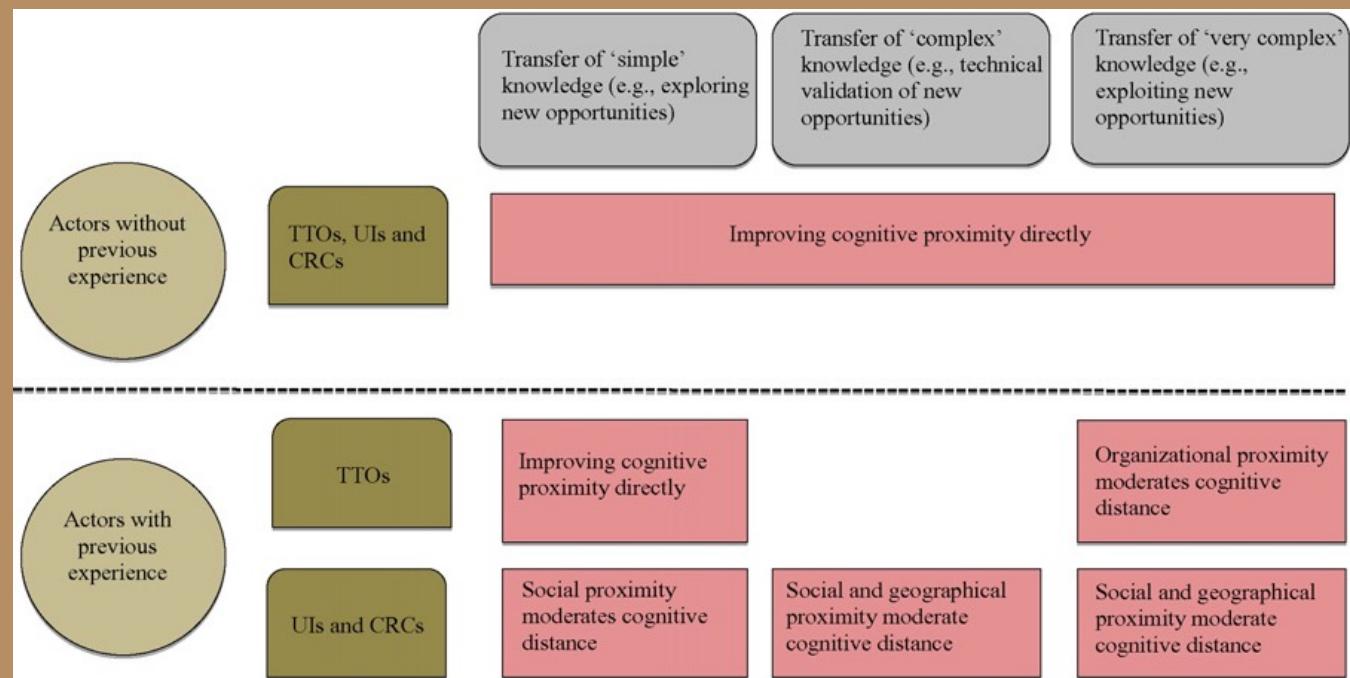
## Organizational proximity

Organizations with similar routines and rules may collaborate more easily because of organizational proximity

## Social proximity

Actors that have developed trust, friendship, kinship, and common experiences are socially proximate

# The KT Professional can improve *proximity* between University and Business



From Villani et al., 2017



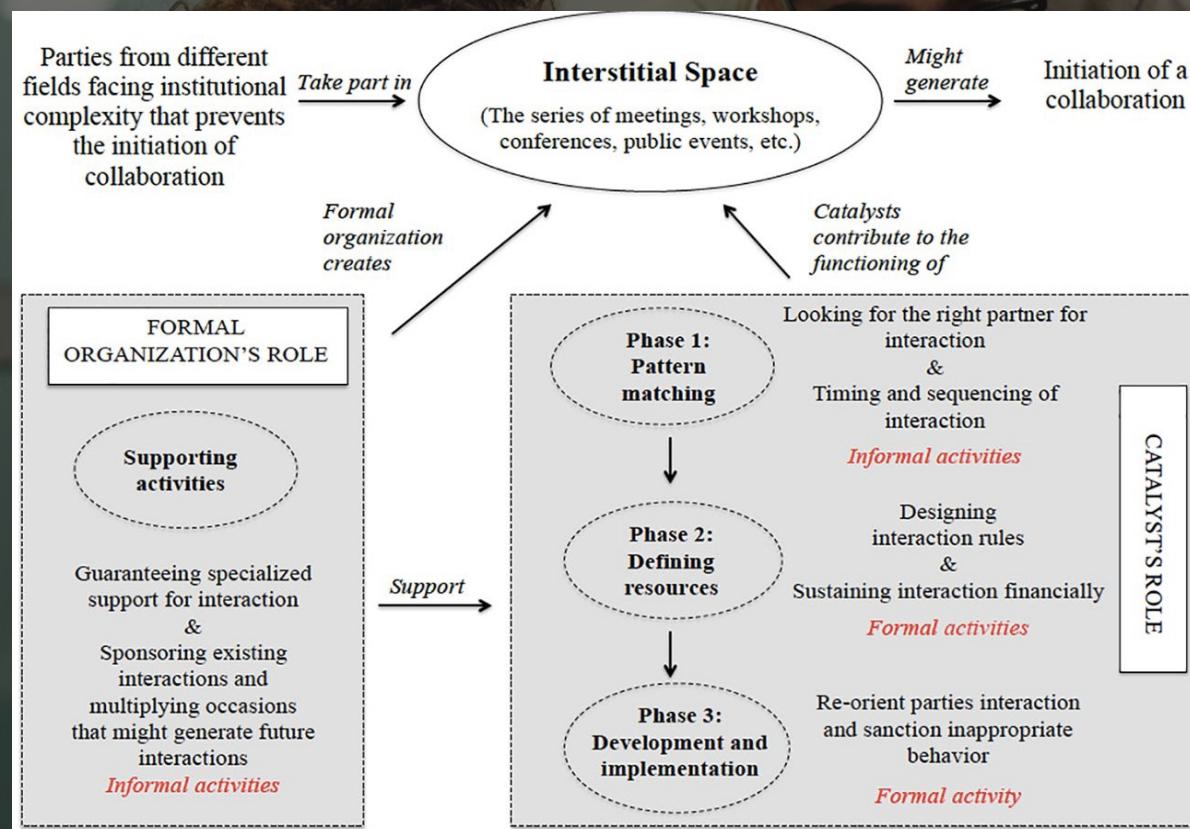
## The KT Professional can improve *proximity* between University and Business

The KT Professional has different opportunities to reduce cognitive proximity that characterizes KT activities.

The most effective mean depends on:

1. Whether actors have previous experience of KT collaboration
2. The degree of complexity of the knowledge being exchanged

# The KT Professional as a Catalyst



From Villani & Phillips., 2021

# Types of business collaboration

Open innovation has paved the way to different types of business collaboration models.

The business collaboration models can be divided into four main models.

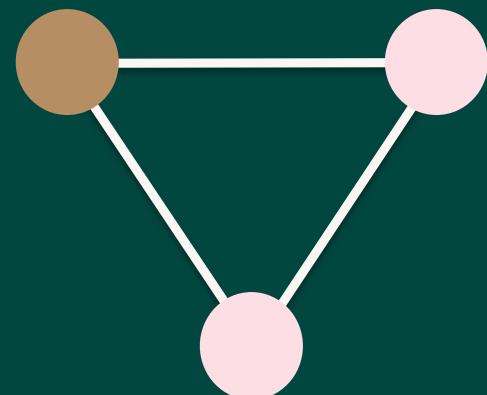
1. Strategic alliance
2. A portfolio of collaborators
3. Innovation networks
4. Partner ecosystems

# Types of business collaboration

## Strategic alliance

Agreement between two or more independent parties that temporarily combine resources and efforts to reach their strategic goals.

Strategic alliance creates value by improving current operations, changing the competitive environment and easing entry and exit.

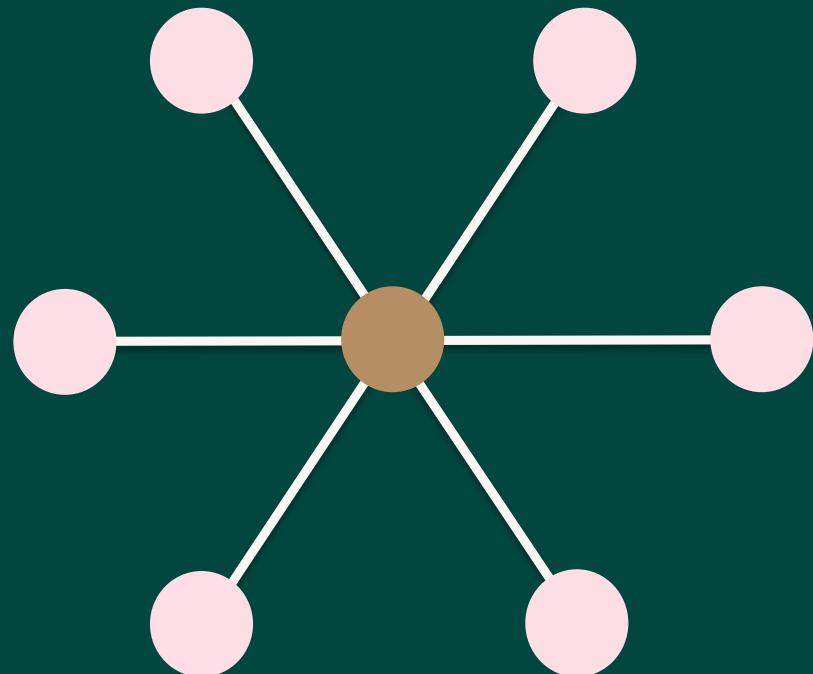


# Types of business collaboration

## A portfolio of collaborators

Portfolio management allows to extract the best practices from partner experiences, assimilate knowledge and spread those internally.

Portfolio is the base of more advanced collaboration models.



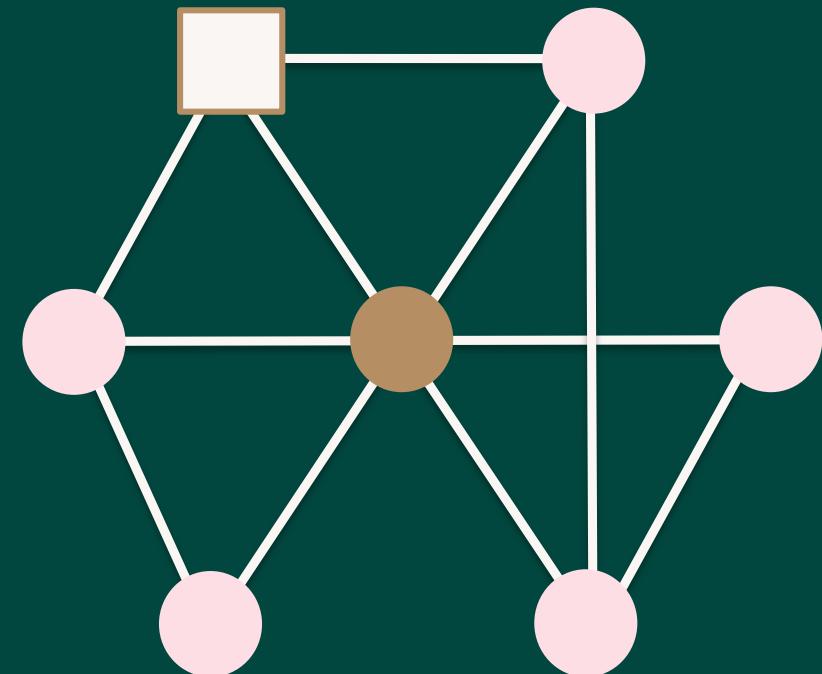
# Types of business collaboration

## Innovation networks

Networks include groups of stakeholders that share R&D goals and interests related to products, processes or business models.

In innovation networks, all stakeholders are interconnected, orchestration is less strict, and competition is lower compared to previous models.

Innovation networks help quick development and secure long-term survival.

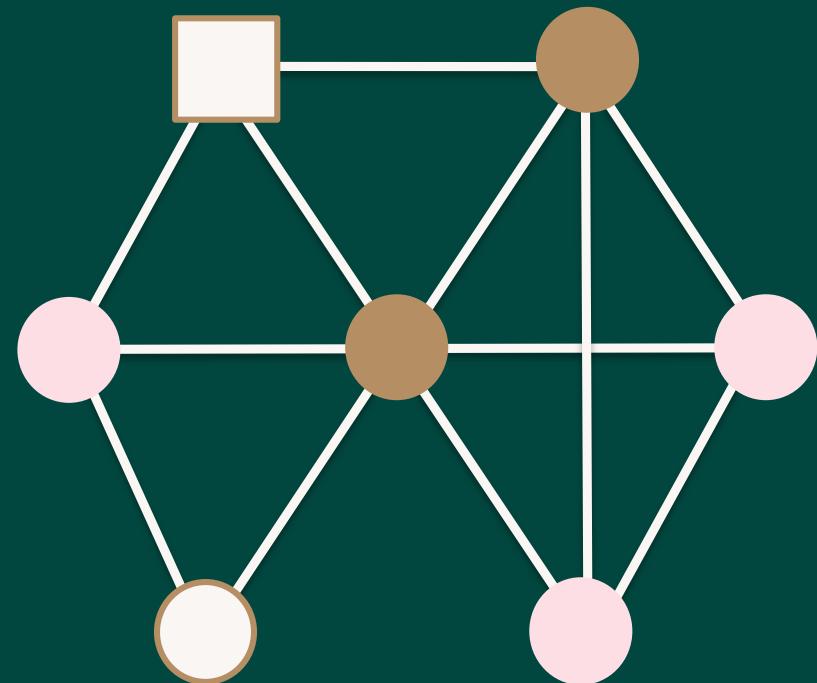


# Types of business collaboration

## Partner ecosystems

The most advanced type of collaboration. In ecosystems, value is uniquely determined by the collaborators and/or customers.

Ecosystem takes the innovation out of a single, local company and makes it a joint orchestrated activity.



# Time for role-playing!

- 20 min Preparation: Reading confidential briefs of your role
- 10 min Role-play: The First Impression (Research & Investor)
- 30 min Debriefing

# Just to keep in mind...

Make sure you understand all the details of your role. Feel free to ask if you have any questions.

Never break your role in the simulation. It's the only way to fail this exercise. Take the simulation seriously.

React authentically to the communication style and proposals of your counterpart.

	<b>Researcher</b>	<b>Investor</b>
<b>Background</b>	Italian, highly specialized in medical AI, seeks funding but is cautious about giving up control. Eager to talk about technical details.	American, interested in business potential. Wants to learn about serious market threats.
<b>Goal</b>	Arrange a formal meeting when the lab results are confirmed in 6 months with the investor. As the investor has a senior position, you prefer to continue talking with the same person. Not with the juniors.	Here to find good investment leads. Direct potential investment opportunities to junior colleagues. Very busy and doesn't prefer to attend the first meetings until the process is mature.
<b>Communication style</b>	Respects hierarchy and authority. Emphasizes his/her own authority and position in the research team. As a senior leader, makes all the important decisions.	Prefer flatter, informal structures. As a senior leader, delegates the important tasks to the lower-level experts.
<b>Triggers (Negative influencers)</b>	Offended by being addressed informally with the first name, confused by silence, sees directness as rudeness.	Dislikes answers that are always optimistic and not specific. This approach triggers a feeling of distrust.
<b>Building rapport (Positive influencers)</b>	If the investor recognizes the hard technical work behind the results, you'd be impressed.	Time is money; punctuality and speed are appreciated. Direct communication is appreciated.



# Debriefing

- What strategies did you use to advance your goals?
- Were there any moments of misunderstanding due to cultural or communication style differences?
- How did you respond to being pushed outside your comfort zone?
- What could be done differently to improve mutual understanding and negotiation outcomes?

# Thank you!



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