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eLearning

BigBlueButton User Manual for Students

Content:

BigBlueButton is an *open source* tool. Therefore, changes and additions to this manual may be made at any time as a result of ongoing developments. Therefore, you should always refer to the most current version of this user manual.

Status: November 23, 2020

1   General Information

Please work through this user manual in the virtual meeting room **a few days before your first BBB appointment** (seminar, lecture or other event). This will give you the opportunity to contact the eLearning team at the htw saar in case of difficulties or problems with the technology before your BBB sessions start and to find solutions.

You can find the latest support hours on the Moodle homepage. You can reach the support team in Moodle via the following link: Support for Moodle and BBB for students and instructors. The link can also be found on the Moodle home page under Support.

You can test and try out all the steps and simple functions presented in this guide before or outside your BBB session irrespective of Moodle at the following link https://test.bigbluebutton.org/

2   Technical Requirements

2.1   Browser settings

There is no need to install special software for BigBlueButton, but you should use one of the following browsers:

BBB works best with the current **Chrome browser**. If you don't have it yet, you can download it here:
Chrome: https://www.google.com/intl/de_de/chrome/
You can also participate in virtual lectures using a tablet (iPad and Android) with the Chrome browser. However, it is not possible to share applications or the screen when using a tablet.

Experiences with **Firefox** vary, some computers have problems with sound and/or video transmission. If you don't have it yet, you can download Firefox here:
Firefox: https://www.mozilla.org/de/firefox/new/

The **Microsoft browser Edge** only began supporting the web conferencing system BBB in its latest version (15.01.2020 Chromium-based). All previous versions do not support BBB.

In principle, BBB works for **iPad**, but you should use a newer and sufficiently powerful device. Please make sure you are close to a WLAN access point.

2.2   Network connection

The most stable Internet access is provided via a LAN cable, but WLAN also usually works. Your Internet connection should fulfill the following criteria:
- At least a 1 MBit/s download and 0.5 MBit/s upload rate
- However, a 5 MBit/s download and 1 MBit/s upload rate would be ideal

To check these values, you can use a common speed test such as https://breitbandmessung.de

2.3 Headset and camera

If you want to speak during a web conference, you'll need a headset. We don't recommend the use of external speakers or microphones that are built into your computer/end device. This can result in disruptive feedback noises and unwanted background noise.

Smartphone headphones are often used as headsets, but only have one plug where audio input (microphone) and audio output (headphones) are combined. If your computer/end device only has separate connectors for audio input and output, then you will need an adapter.

If you want other participants to see you during a web conference, you will also need a camera (web cam). In this case, the camera built into your computer or end device is usually sufficient.

3 Access to BBB

### 3.1 How can I find and access my meeting room in BBB?

You can find the respective meeting room in **the Moodle course** you have enrolled for. Look for this symbol in the course and, if necessary, read the lecturer's instructions:

You can access the room by clicking on this symbol **during the times indicated for the respective seminars**. As a rule, you cannot access the rooms outside of the agreed times.

3.2 How do I enter a session room?

If you are a student and meet all requirements to enter a room, simply click on the button *"Join session"* to join take part in the session:
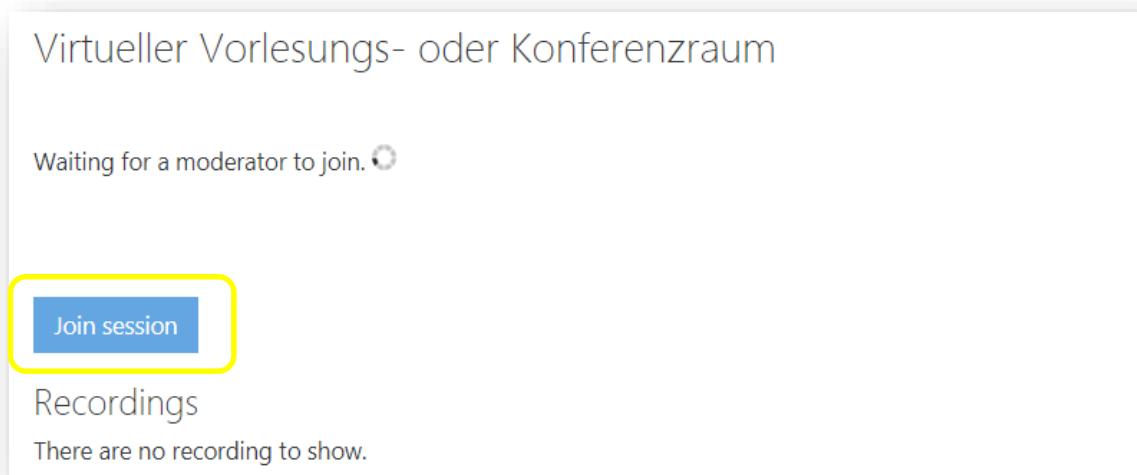
If the button is not clickable for you, that does not mean it is deactivated. It is simply not possible for you to participate in a session at that moment. You will then receive the following message on this page *"Waiting for a moderator to join."* The moderator (i.e. the lecturer) has the possibility to let participants into a session only after everything has been prepared. You may have to wait a little until then.

The first time you attend a session, the browser will ask for permission to use a microphone and/or ca mera. You must give your permission in order to work with BBB. Your permission is only valid for the respective web session with BBB.

3.3   Joining a session with sound (microphone)

After giving your permission, a new tab will open in your browser and you will see the session room in the background, but first you will be asked via a pop-up how you want to join the session:
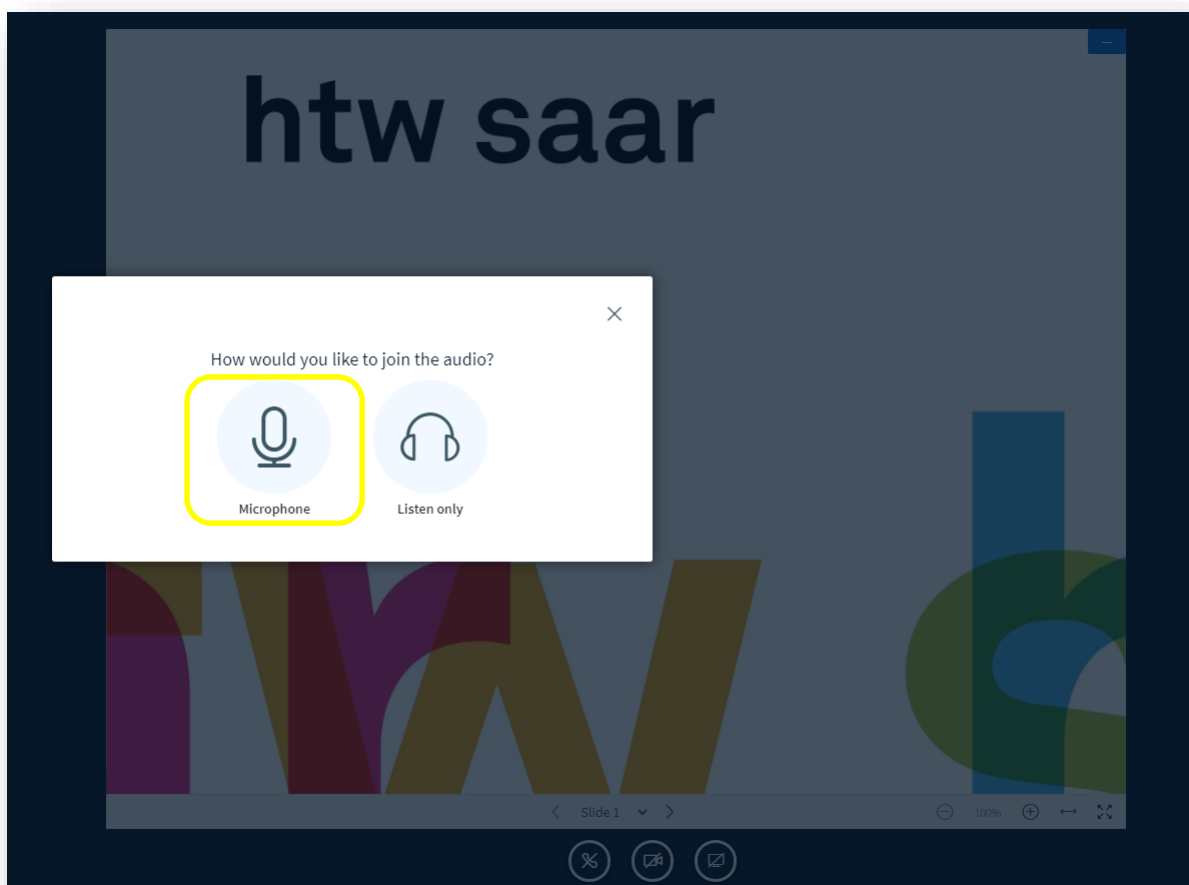

If you have a microphone, it is best to select **"Microphone"**, even if you aren't sure you will be speaking during the session. That way, if you decide to speak later, you can do this by simply activating the microphone. If you click **"Listen only"** and want to say something later, you will have to go through the sound setup again. Please make sure that you **mute your microphone during the session as long as you are not speaking** in order to minimize noise.

The next step is to allow your Internet browser to use the microphone:
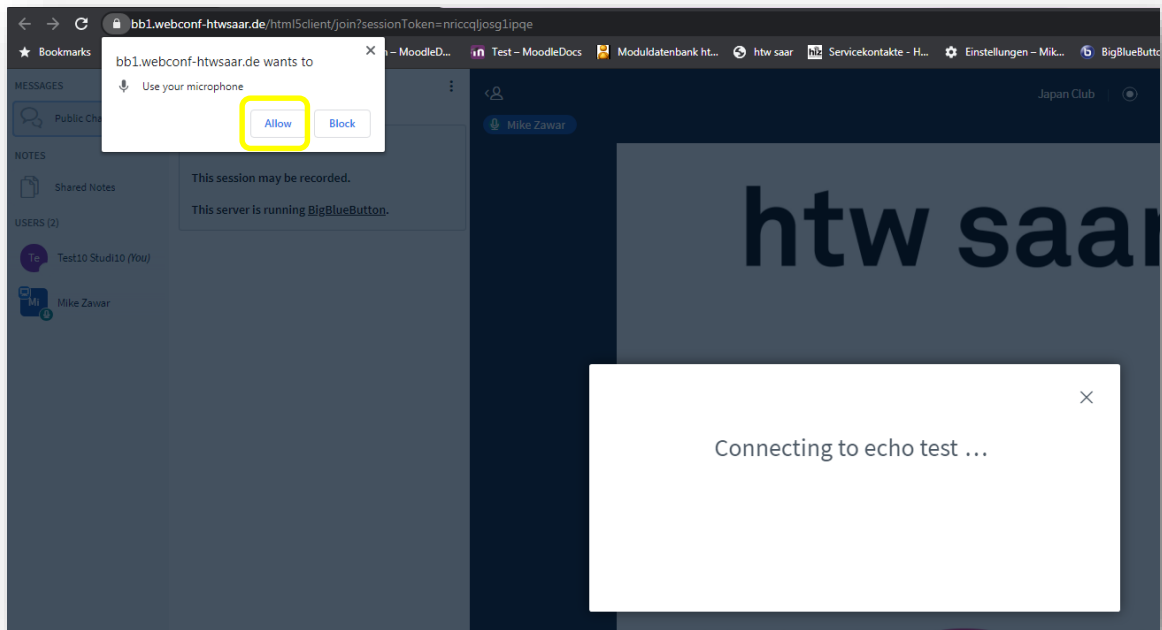
3.4   Echo test

If you have decided to participate with a *"Microphone"* and confirmed all dialogs, a new pop-up with an "echo test" will appear.
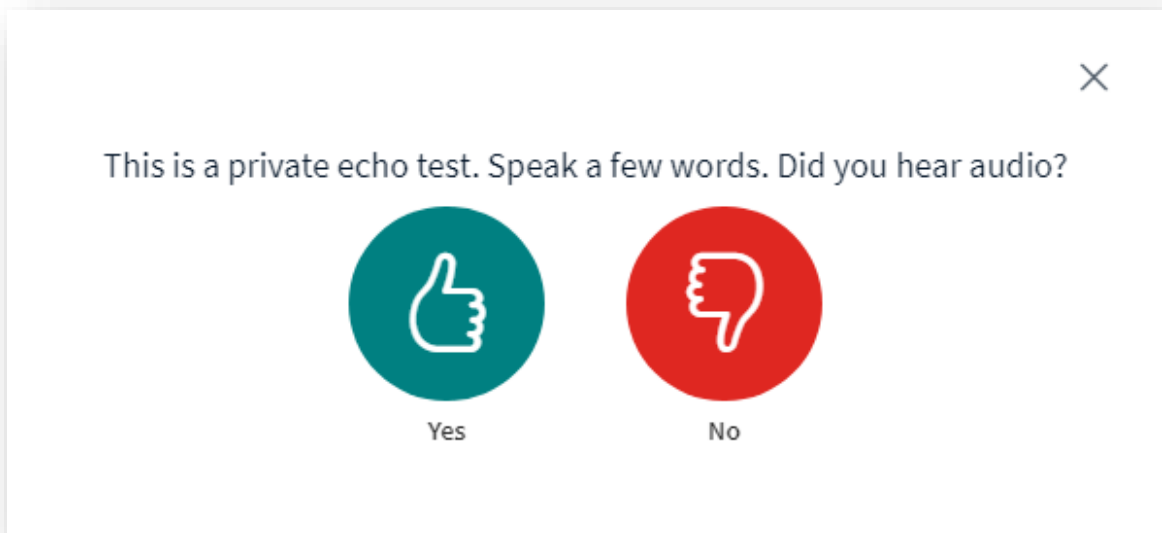

Simply speak a few words here and if they are played back or echo, that is, if you can hear them, then click on the green button *"Yes"* (thumbs up). This allows you to check if your microphone is working. Now, we are going to assume that everything worked and that you have clicked *"Yes"*.

If you click on *"No"*, a window will appear where you can select the sound source for further configuration or where you can see the available input and output devices and share them if necessary.

3.5 Joining a session with sound and video

If you have chosen to participate using a microphone and the echo test was successful, you will now find yourself in the session room (as shown below in the example with 2 participants):
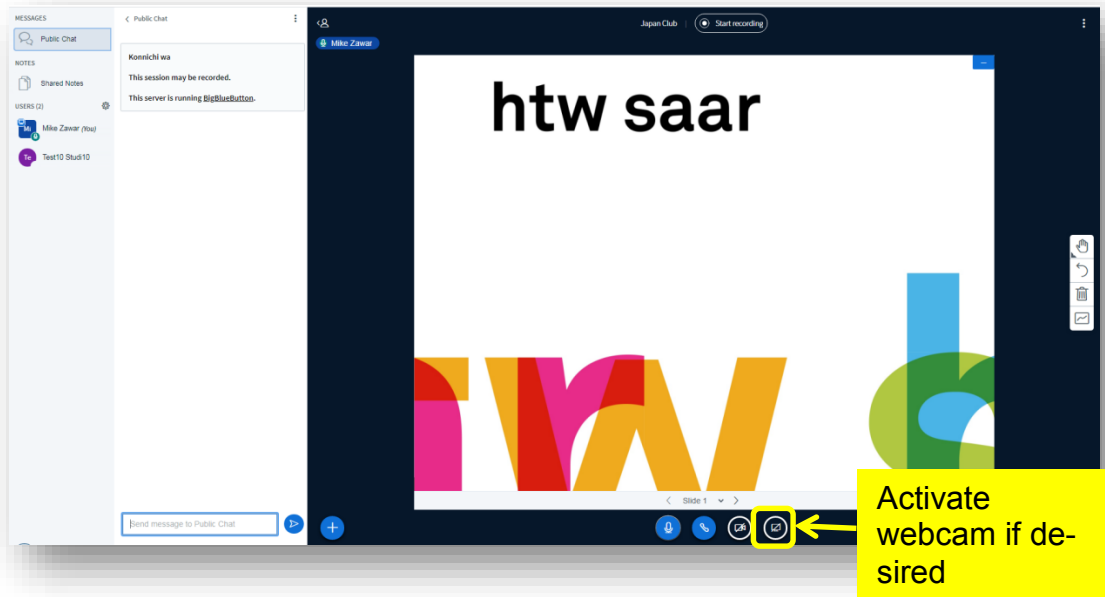
If you would also like to join the session using your webcam, then click on the round button with the camera symbol in the control bar at the bottom, which shows *"Share webcam"* when you hover over it. Your browser may ask you (several times) to approve the use of the webcam (which you should confirm). After confirming, a new pop-up with webcam settings will appear. When you see your webcam image and all settings fit, click *"Start sharing"*:
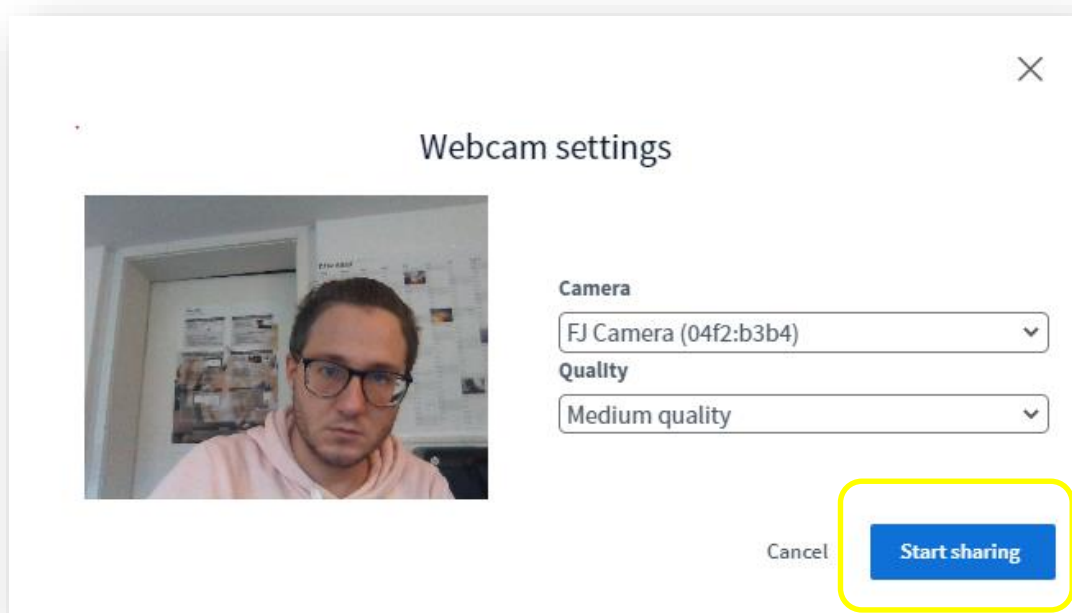
Your webcam image will then appear in the upper image area above the presentation:
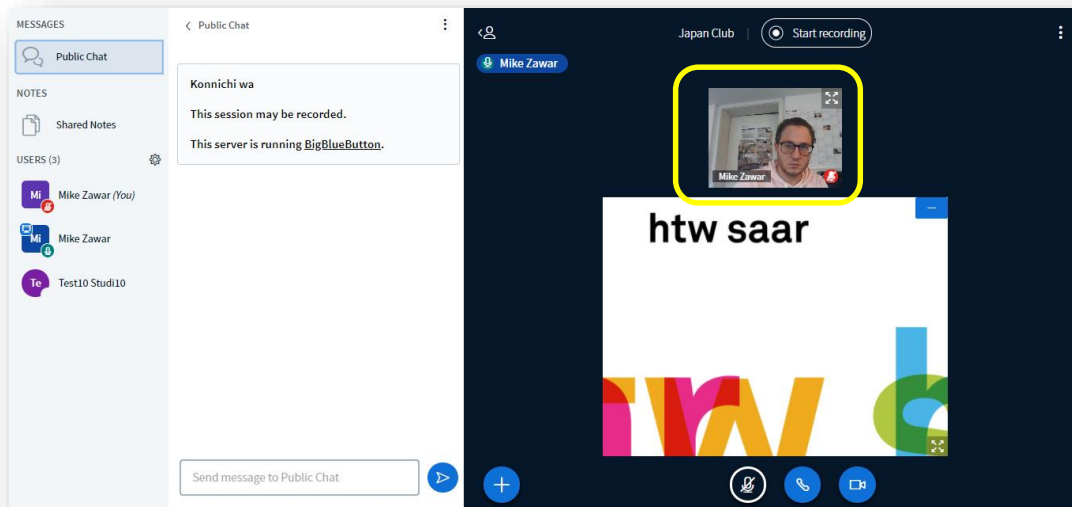
Please note: You can only activate your webcam if the instructor has previously enabled this function.

3.6   Problems entering the session room?

If, unexpectedly, something (e.g. audio or video) does not work, first check whether sharing is allowed in the browser. To do so, go to the padlock symbol in front of the URL in the browser.
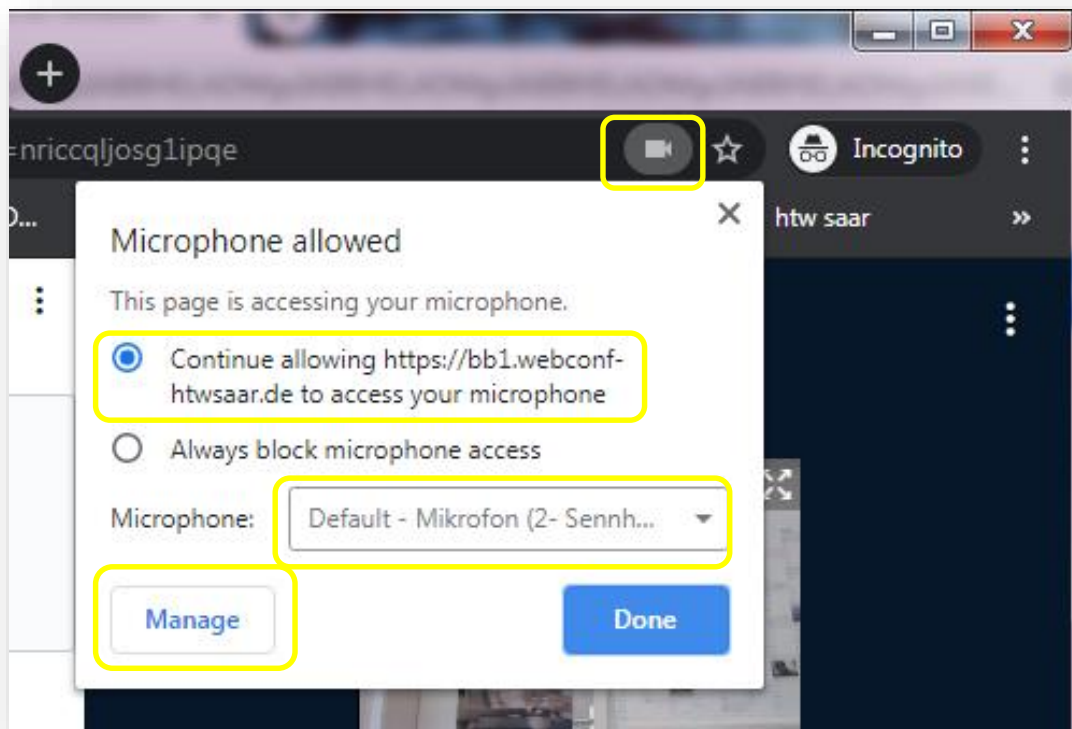
Also check that the sound is turned on and that the volume is high enough by clicking on the speaker icon in the Windows bar at the bottom right.
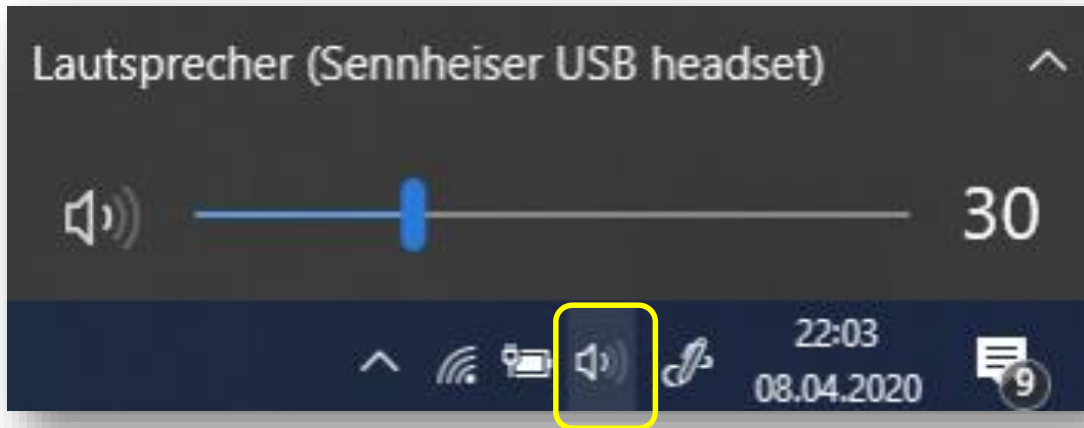
You may also have to select the correct output device here.

3.7 Video summary

You can also watch a video showing all of the steps you have taken so far:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYYnryIM0Uw (in English)

## 4 My Role as a Participant

4.1 Audio/Video transmission

Just like events in the "analog" world, video conferencing also has some "etiquette rules". The most important one is that you, as a participant, make sure that your **microphone is muted** when you enter a virtual session room, even if you arrive early. The lecturer sees who enters the room and will welcome you accordingly. The same applies to your webcam, which you should also only switch on after being asked to by the respective lecturer.

In addition, other communication rules may be agreed upon in the respective sessions in order to ensure smooth and effective cooperation for all involved.
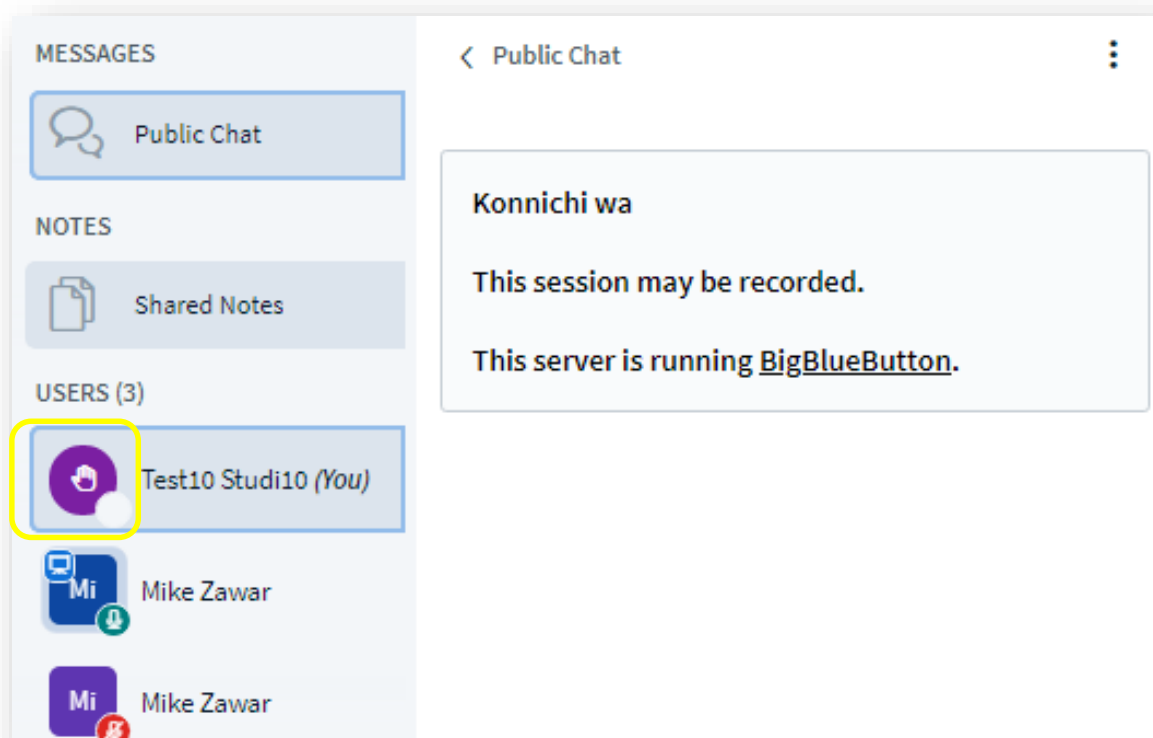
4.2 Status

In lectures or other events with many participants in the virtual room, but little exchange between them, interaction via the status icons is possible.

Example: A lecturer wants to teach a course online for a larger group. In this case, he is the only person who can be seen by the camera. However, now he would like to receive feedback from you as a participant, e.g. how many people understood the subject matter. Status changes are ideally suited for this purpose. If you click on your own name in the participant list, a context menu opens
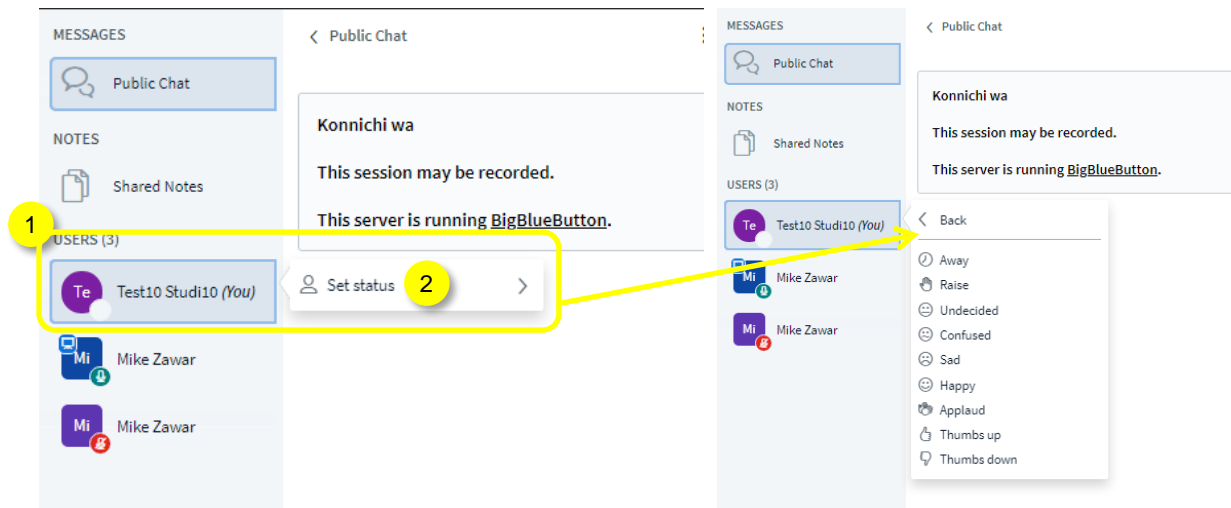
If you then click on the menu item *"Set status"*, the context menu changes and displays the available statuses. Now select, for example, *"Raise"* to raise your hand.

This sets the status for you and your icon changes to a hand icon.

You can also use the context menu to remove the status yourself, e.g. after you have asked your question.

Please note: In events with many participants the list of participants is very long. Therefore, even individual status messages can quickly become confusing for the lecturer if they are

changed frequently. A bit of discipline from all participants is necessary here. This is why you should only use the *"Set status"* function when requested to do so by the lecturer or in accordance with the communication rules applicable to the event.

4.3 Chat

With the Chat you can ask questions without interrupting the lecturer in his lecture. To do this, click on *"Public Chat"*, then enter your question at the bottom of the message box and press the blue arrow icon.
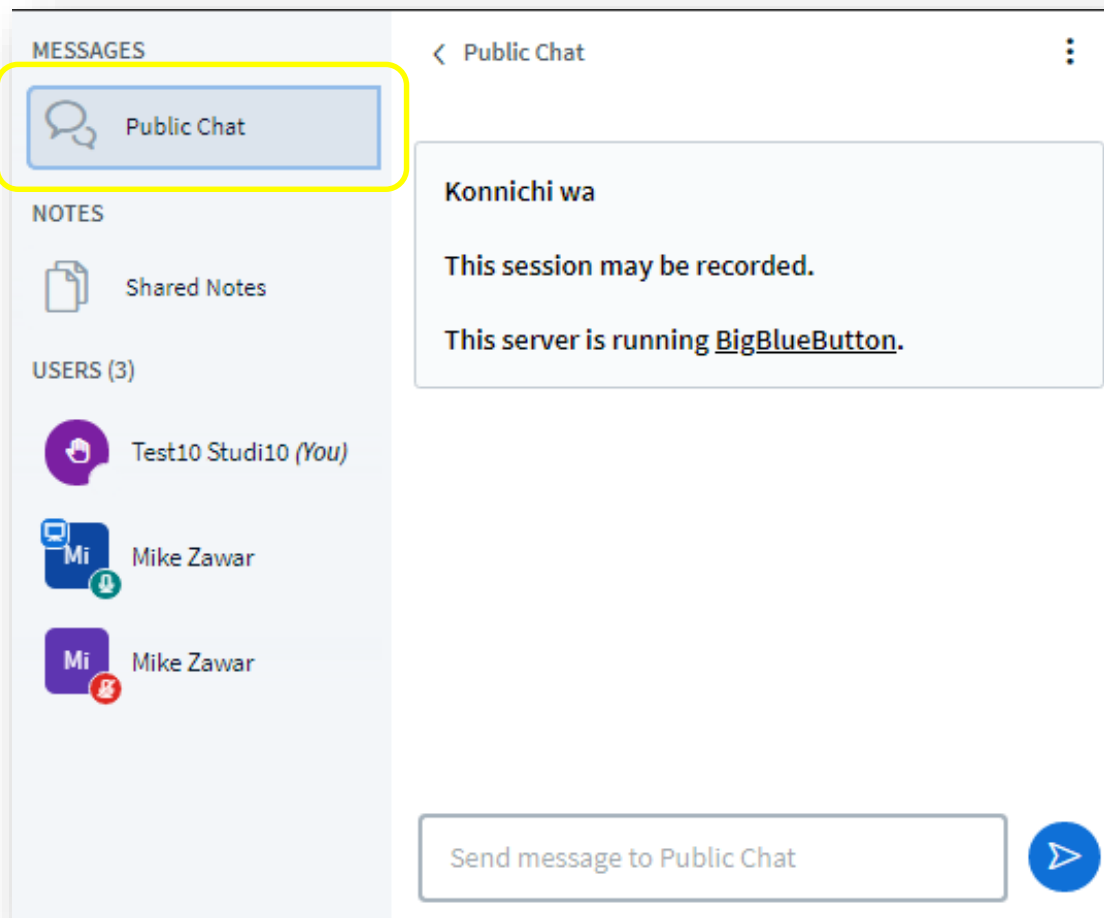

Your message will then appear in the chat area for all to see.

Please note: In events with many participants the chat can quickly become confusing. A bit of discipline from all participants is necessary here. Therefore, use the chat only when requested to by the lecturer or according to the communication rules applicable to the event.

If you want to communicate with another participant, you can also start a private chat. To do this, click on the name of the desired participant and select *"Chat"*. Please note, however, that this function is only available if it has been unlocked by the instructor.

4.4 Shared notes

In the *"Messages"* area there is a field for shared notes that can be used by all participants. Participants have more space here than in the chat, for example, to ask more complex questions, write a protocol or record ideas. The notes can also be edited (e.g. bold, italics, underline, links).
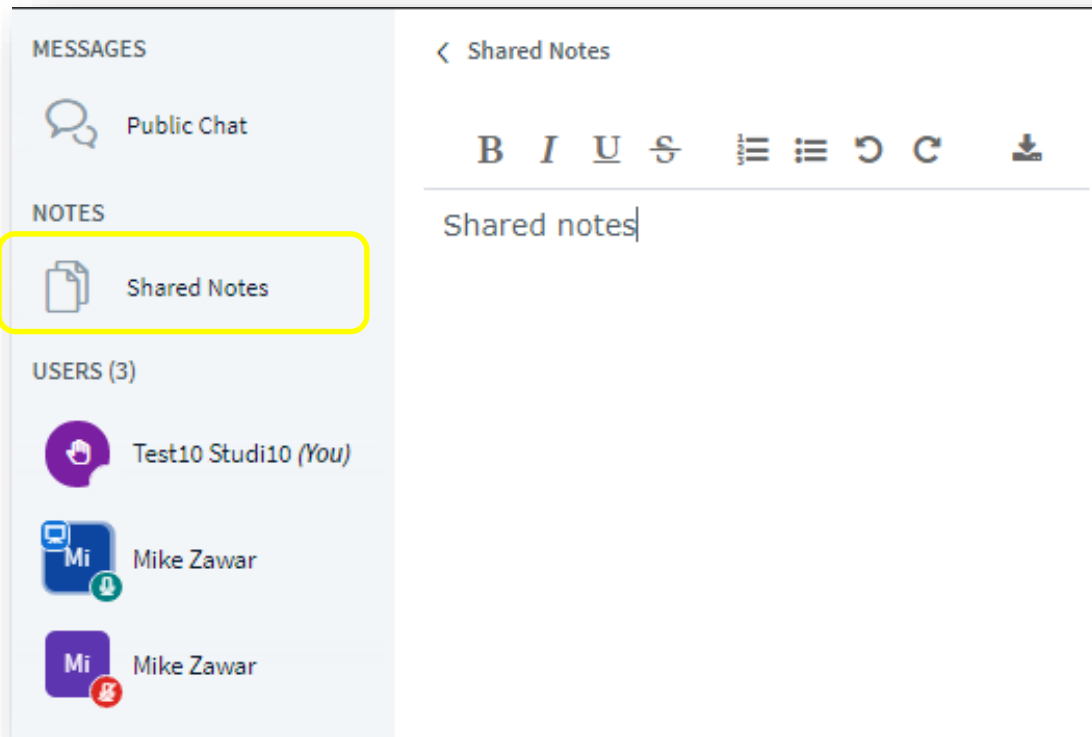
If the *"Shared Notes"* area is not open on your computer, a red symbol next to it indicates whether someone is actively editing the notes.
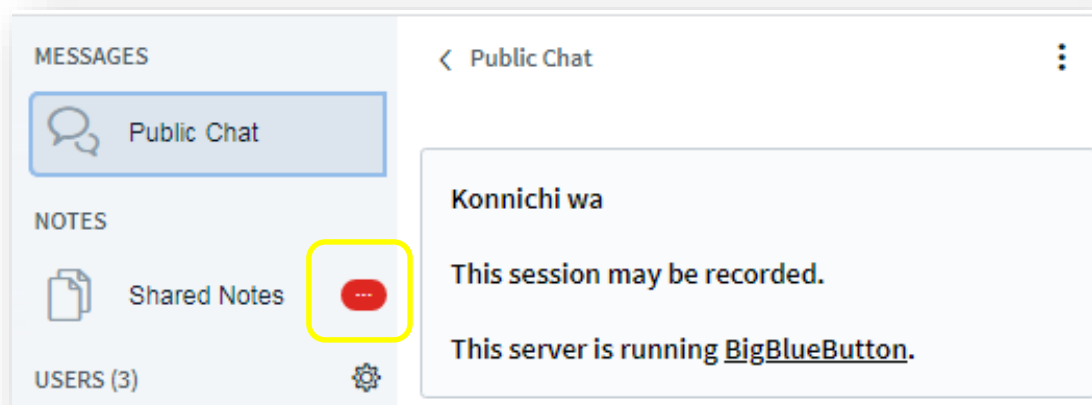
During the conference, these notes can be saved as HTML and txt files by all participants at any time. To do so, click on the symbol with the double arrows. After a conference ends, the shared notes are automatically deleted.

Please note: Some discipline on the part of all participants is necessary when using shared notes, so that everyone can work on them equally and no information is lost. Therefore, use the shared notes only when requested to by the lecturer and according to the communication rules applicable to the event.

4.5   Downloading presentations from the lecturer

You can download the current presentation from a session in BigBlueButton under certain conditions. To do so, the lecturer must release them for download. This is indicated by the small black arrow at the bottom left of the active slide.


Please wait for the lecturer's invitation here as well. Then click on the small black arrow and the download will start automatically. Depending on your computer settings, you will find the file in your download area under a letter-number combination.

5   Being Active as a Participant Yourself

5.1   Acting as presenter

As a presenter, you are authorized by the moderator to hold your own presentation during the current meeting or to show content from your computer to the other participants on the presentation screen.

The small blue screen icon in the upper left corner of your personal icon in the participants' bar indicates that the lecturer has given you the right to present.
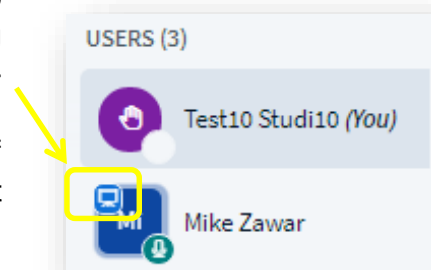
5.2   Uploading presentations - before and during events

Just as in face-to-face events, you can also hold a presentation in a virtual room and show slides.

Please note: When uploading to BBB, the uploaded files are converted into graphics (one graphic per page or slide), which **deactivates animations** in PowerPoint or PDF, for example.

You have two options for uploading:

• Before the event:
You send your presentation to your lecturer in time and he or she uploads it to BBB. It is then at your disposal for the corresponding event.

• During the event:
Keep your presentation ready on the computer you are using to attend the event.

In both cases, the next steps are the same: As soon as you receive the okay to hold your presentation from the lecturer, you will see a plus symbol in the lower left corner of the presentation area. If you click it, a context menu opens. Select the menu item *"Upload a presentation"*.

A window will appear (invisible for the other participants) with an overview showing which files in the meeting room have already been uploaded and an area for uploading new files.


If your presentation was **previously** uploaded by the lecturer, it will be displayed here - (here as an example, the file "behat_tests_moodle_dach_19.pdf")

You can also drag and drop the presentation from your computer into the dashed field **during the currently active session**. Your presentation will then be converted by BBB, which may take a few moments. Then it is also ready for upload.

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The small green checkmark also indicates which presentation is selected for display. By clicking the *"Upload"* button, it will be uploaded to the current session. A progress indicator gives feedback on the progress of the process. If the presentation has been completely uploaded, it will appear in the session room in the presentation area.

5.3 Sharing my screen - applications and full screen

If you want to show animated presentations or information from your computer, you can use the *"Share Screen"* function. Again, you must first obtain presenter rights from the moderator. Then you will find the necessary button in the control panel to the far right of the button that allows you to share your webcam. When you hover over the button, the text *"Share Screen"* appears.
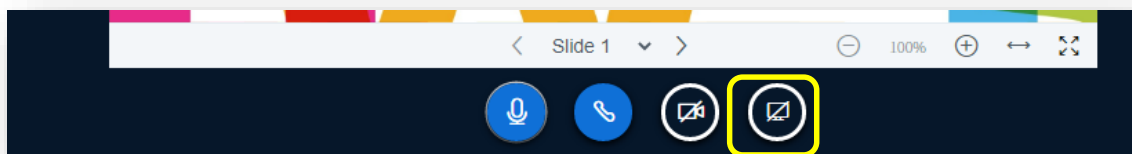
A window will then open (invisible to the other participants). Here you can decide whether to share a specific **window of an application** or **the entire screen**.
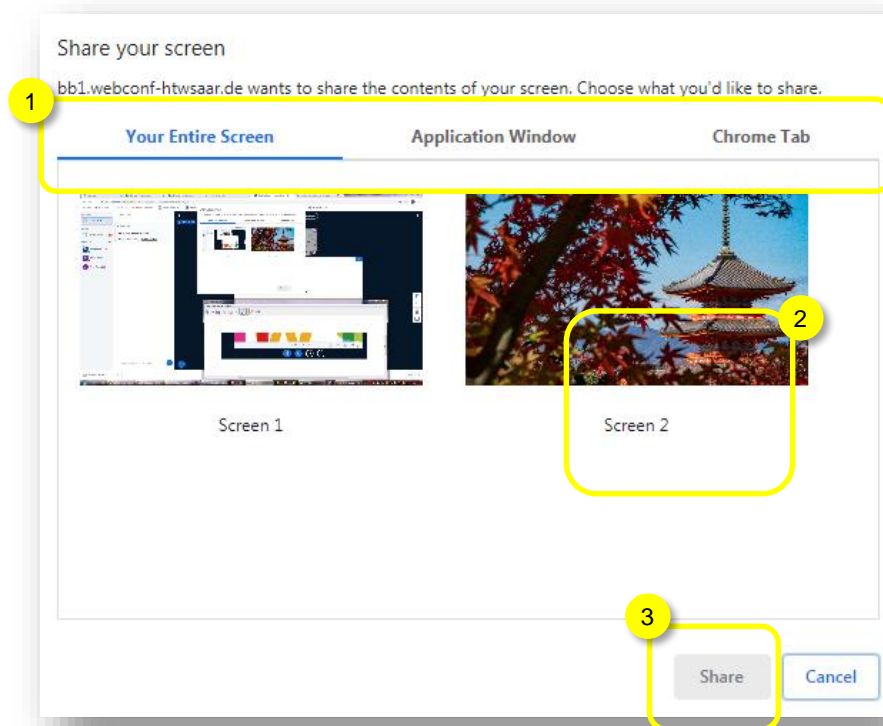
Once you have made your selection, confirm this decision by clicking the button *"Share"*. Now everyone attending the event can see your application (e.g. an Excel spreadsheet or a PowerPoint presentation) and you can work or run animations directly in the application.

Please note: Before you share an application from your computer, it should already be open, but not minimized.

When you are finished sharing your application window/full screen, exit the share function by clicking the button *"Stop sharing your Screen"*.

5.4 Working in breakout rooms

Breakout rooms are - independent of the main session room - sessions that exist side by side but are independent of each other.
In the interface they look exactly like the main room and are opened **in a new tab**.
You can create up to eight of these rooms only if you are a moderator or have presenter rights.
You can either enter these rooms as a participant (e.g. for group work) on your own or you can be assigned to them when the rooms are created.

You will be asked to enter the room and go through the echo test again.
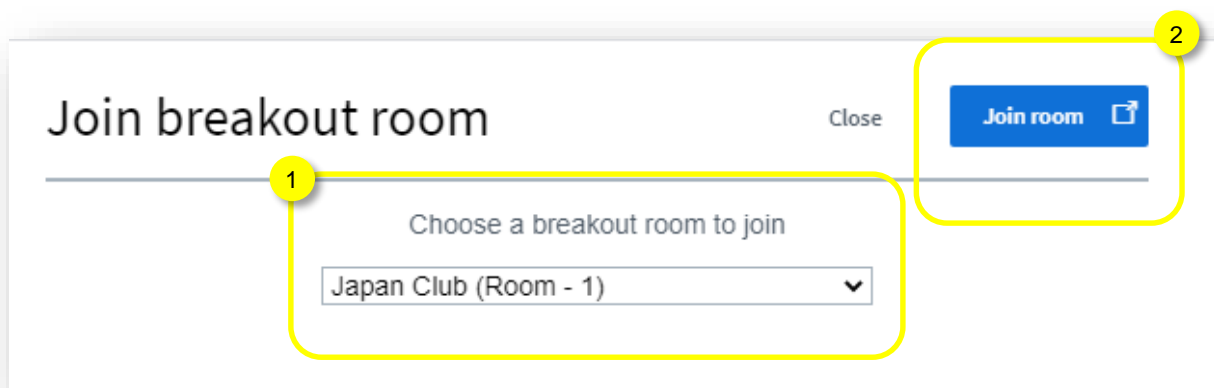
If you, as a participant, are assigned to a specific room, you can only see this room and the main session room. However, you can switch between the two, e.g. to ask lecturers a question regarding a task. Your lecturer can enter all breakout rooms at any time to support you in your group work.
In the breakout rooms you, as a participant, all have the role of "Moderator" and share the role of "Presenter" for the respective room. You can use all of the functions presented here (audio, webcam, chat, shared notes, upload presentations) as in the main room.

Additionally, a time limit is set for the breakout rooms, which is visible in each room.
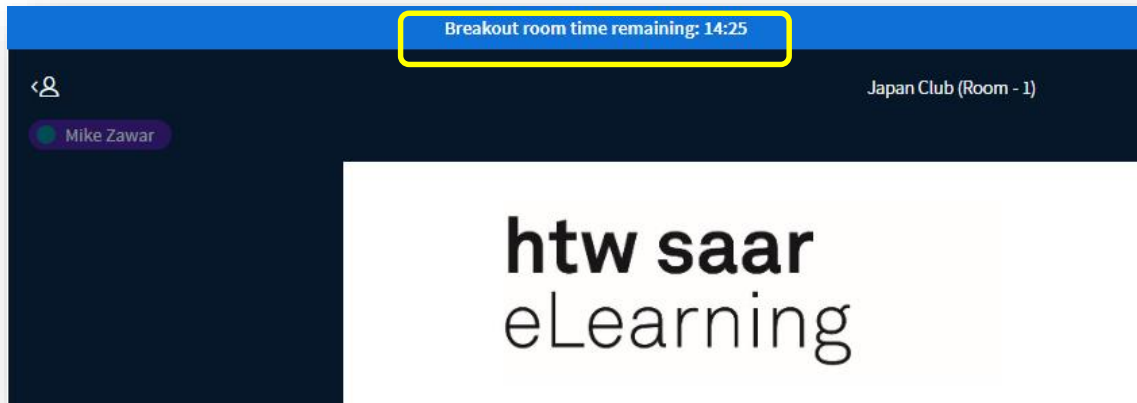
After this time has elapsed (or after manually closing the rooms early), you as a participant will automatically be called back to the main room. You will go through the audio settings again (echo test).

Please note: Be sure to save all necessary results from your breakout room, such as chat histories or shared notes well in advance of the time limit. When the room is closed, all results are deleted automatically.

5.5 Leaving an event

In the upper right corner of the presentation area there is an icon with three dots.

Use it to log out of a meeting properly.