Disclaimer: Teacher discretion is advised in showing this episode to school-aged students. The animation contains nudity and some explicit material depicting toilet and bathroom use and therefore may be unsuitable, especially for younger viewers. That said, if the maturity level in the class allows for it, the episode could be a springboard to some useful discussion around cultural differences and taboos concerning body image, nudity etc. The advice here would be to signal to students that the class will be engaging with some potentially sensitive or uncomfortable material and that absolute maturity is required. Students should also feel no pressure to share opinions or experiences, but just to listen.

**Learning Outcomes:**

In this lesson, students will:

1. Define and discuss the concept of the “taboo”.
2. Reflect on and discuss their opinions regarding attitudes. towards health and the body in Germany and New Zealand
3. Research, present and compare taboos from other world cultures.

**Before viewing:**

1. (Re)introduce the word “taboo” to students. Ask for a definition from the class, write it up on the board (with the German “das Tabu”).
2. Signal to students that this episode will contain material that could make some of them feel a little uncomfortable (see disclaimer above) but that discussing taboos is a natural and useful part of learning about another culture, as it often brings us face to face with other people’s and our own values. Arguably, we have the most to learn by experiencing the awkwardness or difficulty of “cultural clashes” where something that is “unspeakable” or unacceptable in one culture is not an issue for the other culture, or may even be embraced.
3. (If appropriate) Ask the students in pairs or threes to brainstorm at least 3 cultural taboos (these might be in New Zealand or in another culture they have experience of – things that are not usually done or spoken of in public. Signal to the class that it is not appropriate in the classroom context to discuss anything of a sexual nature – that this is a natural taboo that will be left as such. Encourage students to reflect on surprising or “minor” taboos rather than major ones (e.g., sitting on tables or looking people straight in the eye in Maori culture), perhaps taboos in families or intergenerational taboos.
4. The class shares some of their taboos and the teacher writes some ideas on the board around the word “taboo” and its class-made definition.

**After viewing:**

**Personal Response – 8 minutes**

1. Do you agree with the German “Sitzpinkeln” message? Do you think it would be possible to change the stand-up peeing culture in New Zealand? Why or why not? Write a paragraph explaining your views.
2. Imagine you are in Duncan’s position, emerging from the changing room at a German sauna wearing your brand-new togs and a gruff pool attendant points to a sign that reads “Textilfrei” (no clothing allowed, literally “textile-free”). Would you: (circle one of the following)

1. Get back into your clothes and go home?
2. Ignore the instruction and continue into the sauna in your togs?
3. Get undressed and brave a “textile-free” sauna experience?

1. Explain in a few sentences why you chose the option above.

1. “You Kiwis are such prudes!” Do you agree with Jörg’s statement? Mark with a cross where you sit on the following continuum? Remember, there are no “rights” and “wrongs” here. Be honest about how you feel.

I feel that the Kiwi taboo around nudity is…

Form Harmful Normal and acceptable Important

1. Write a few sentences explaining your opinion above.

**Pair share and Class Discussion**

Students stand up and find someone from the other side of the room to work with. They sit down together and share their answers to the questions above they found most interesting.

The teacher leads a class discussion on questions 1 to 4. Here it would be useful if the teacher played “devil’s advocate”, representing Jörg or the German visitor who just doesn’t understand the Kiwi way.

**Anthropologists and Sociologist go forth!**

In the following activity, students will form research teams and embark on a virtual journey to different parts of the world to gather information on taboos for the class. This could continue as a homework activity.

Before they set off, remind or teach the students that a good researcher:

1. Uses reputable sources rather than sensationalist or amateurish material from the internet. This would be a good opportunity to talk about some ways to tell the difference and give the class some leads to begin their research (including some more academic resources for senior students).
2. Refrains from making personal judgements about the information. Let it speak for itself and be especially respectful when entering the territory of a world culture other than your own.
3. Remains critical about the information sources. A good, simple way to evaluate whether a source is sound is to check whether the information is mentioned in other sources.

Task:

1. Students form mini research groups of two or three.
2. The teacher allocates each group a different area of the world (eg: Central America, Asia, Eastern Europe etc.).
3. The students spend 15 - 20 minutes researching the taboos of a culture / country within that area. They could consider the following questions:

1. What is the taboo?
2. Why or how did that taboo come about?
3. Does New Zealand share this taboo?

1. Each group presents its findings to the class, writing the name of the culture or country on the board and some important information about the taboo underneath.
2. When all the groups have presented, students find 2 similar and 2 different or even opposite taboos.
3. The teacher writes the following statement on the board: “We should be able to do and say anything as long as it doesn’t explicitly harm others. We need to finally free ourselves of our cultural taboos!” Do you agree with this or do taboos have a purpose and should we respect them?” Students write for 5 minutes in response to this question, followed by a pair share and teacher-led class discussion / debate.