

# Navigate through VE: An Introduction to VE & COILs

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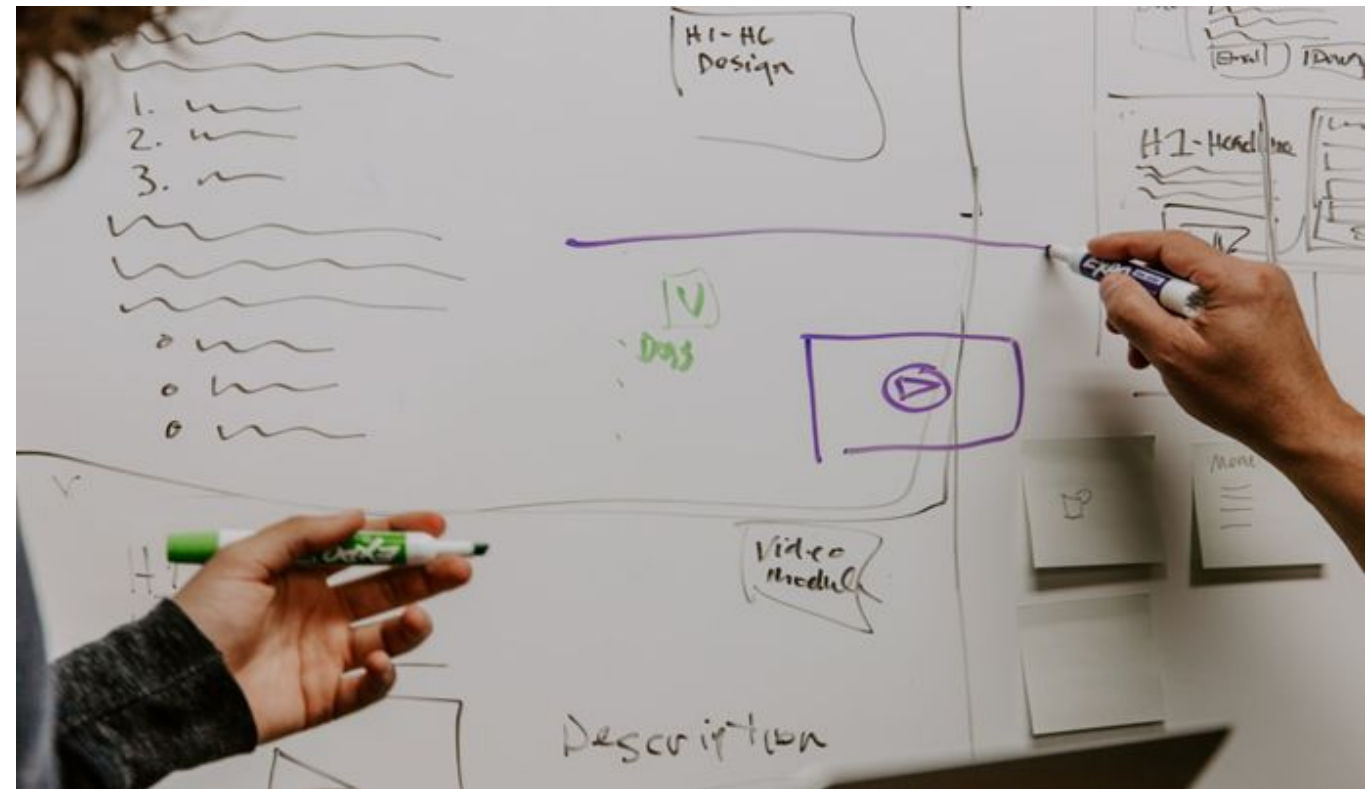
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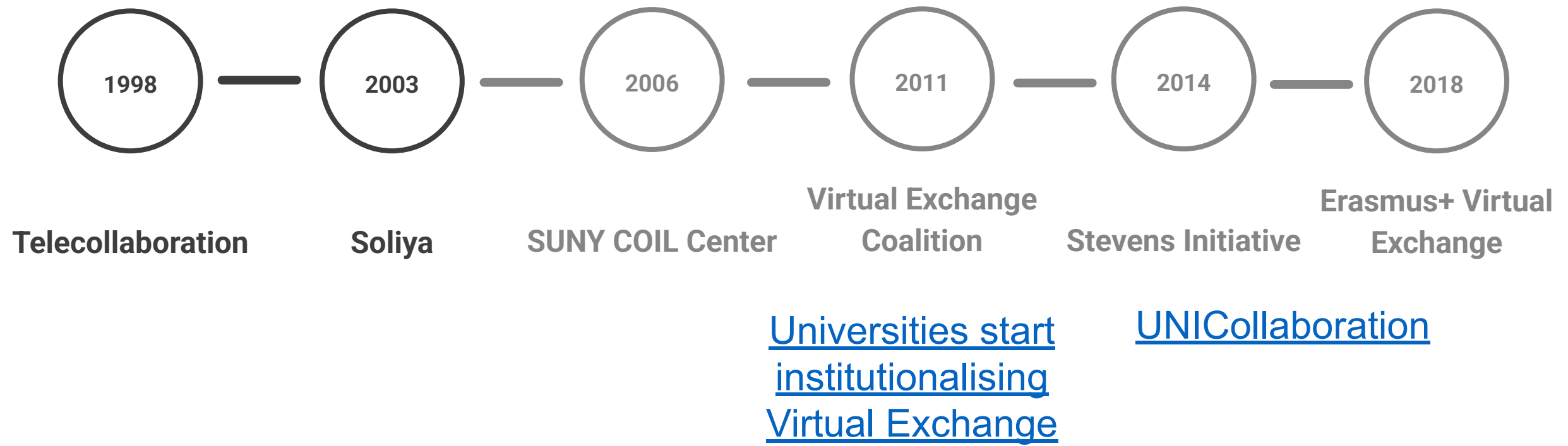


# Outline

- Virtual Exchange (VE) **Timeline**
- What **Virtual Exchange** is & is NOT
- The **2 types of VE**: pros and cons
- **VE integration scenarios**
- **Why, how and what?**
- **Challenges** / Major failures to avoid
- **VE Professional Development**



# Timeline



# What Virtual Exchange is and what it is NOT



# What is Virtual Exchange?

- **Pedagogical approach** developed over last 30 years from experience in the language education, educational exchange and study abroad
- **Technology-enabled, people-to-people**, sustained over a **period of time**
- Use of **media platforms** to enable deep, interactive social learning
- Interactions between students are **facilitated** to ensure they are meaningful
- Promotes **reciprocity** and allows for **equity** and **inclusiveness**
- Prepares, deepens, and **extends physical exchanges**, and can fuel new demand for physical mobility



# What Virtual Exchange is NOT

| Virtual Exchange   | Other forms of online learning   |
|--|--|
| Emphasis on <b>people to people</b> , intercultural dialogue and/or collaboration                          | Emphasis on <b>online access</b> to university course content, video lectures etc. |
| <b>Educators/facilitators guide interaction</b> between learners in different locations                    | <b>Educators provide educational content</b> to learners                           |
| <b>Intercultural learning</b> is one of the main educational outcomes <i>in addition to</i> course content | <b>Mastery of course content</b> is main educational outcome                       |
| Usually includes <b>synchronous</b> video communication with peers in small groups                         | Communication is predominantly <b>asynchronous</b>                                 |

# Virtual Exchange is...





# Virtual Mobility vs Virtual Exchange

**Virtual mobility:** “the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to obtain the same benefits as one would have with physical mobility but without the need to travel” (Bijnens, Boussemaere, & Rajagopal, 2006, 20 p. 5) and focuses on the **cooperation of educational institutions as well as the recognition of achievements.**

“**Virtual exchange** [...] is centred on the **interaction and communication** of geographically separated participants (Virtual Exchange Coalition, 2019). Instead of access to educational offers of cross-border universities, the focus is clearly on **exchange, competence building, and interaction in small groups** (European Commission, 2018). Administrators implementing these concepts in higher education are confronted with a variety of organisational, didactic, and administrative challenges.” (Schoop, Clauss & Askbar Safavi, 2020, pp. 19-20)

# Virtual Exchange vs Virtual Mobility



The two types of VE: pros and cons

# Different models of VE

## Co-Designed / Class to class

- parts of **existing courses adapted** to host a period of collaboration between students/learners set up a customised VE
- **Training, support and mentoring** recommended (as we do @ [UNICollaboration](https://www.unicollaboration.org/))



## Ready-made

- **experienced VE providers** (e.g. [Soliya](https://www.soliya.org/) and [Sharing Perspectives Foundation](https://www.sharingperspectivesfoundation.org/)) offer programmes on various topics
- **individual students/learners may join**, or one of these programmes can be integrated into the curriculum



# Co-designed VE: much confusion on terminology

COIL

Collaborative Online  
International Learning  
(Dooly 2008; Guth & Helm 2010)

Telecollaboration

(Dooly 2008; Guth & Helm 2010)

Online Intercultural  
exchange

(O' Dowd & Lewis 2016)

Global Classroom

(Dooly 2008; Guth & Helm 2010)

Global Learning  
Experience

(Dooly 2008; Guth & Helm 2010)

International  
Virtual Classroom

(Dooly 2008; Guth & Helm 2010)

Virtual International  
Collaboration - VIS

(Dutch Ministry of Education, 2021)



# Ready-made VEs

## Main features

- Based on a **theme**, e.g. the environment (e.g. **Climate Justice** or **CVeinAI\*\*\***)
- Developed in **collaboration** between VE providers and participating professors to develop curriculum and short video lectures
- **8-10 weeks**
- **Weekly assignments** (videologues and reflection)
- **Weekly 2-hour facilitated interactive video sessions** in small groups of students from other participating universities
- **Facilitators provide professors with feedback** on student participation and performance

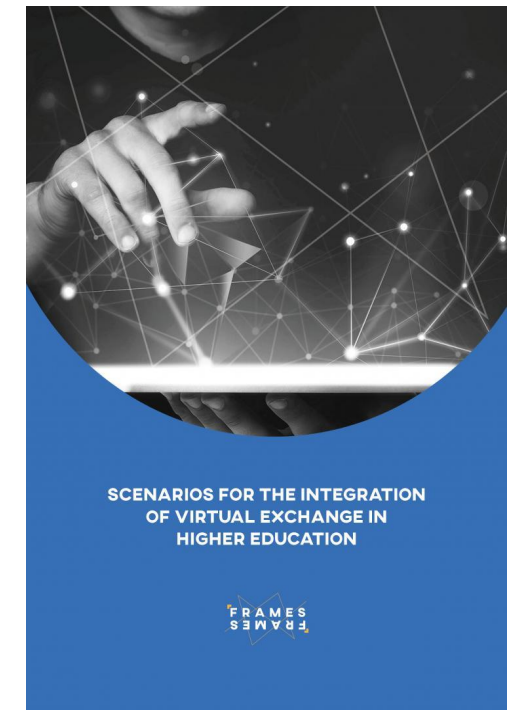
***MOOC vs IOOC? → interaction***

# VE integration scenarios

# VE Integration Scenarios

- **VE** as a **preparatory or follow-up** activity to **physical mobility** (blended mobility)
- **VE** as an **intertwined** component of a **physical mobility** (blended mobility)
- **VE** as a **stand-alone learning activity**
- **VE** as a **component of a course** (traditional or online)

<https://frames-project.eu/outputs/scenarios/>  
[October 2021](#)





### 1 VE as a preparatory or follow-up activity to physical mobility (blended mobility)

#### *VE either before/after mobility exchange*

- Focus on **preparation** to the exchange or **reflection** on the experience
- Creation of “**bonds**”
- **Reinforcing IaH**

### 2 VE as an intertwined component of a physical mobility (blended mobility)

#### *VE intertwined with physical mobility into a single educational experience*

- **Also (but not necessarily) while** students are abroad
- As **part** of a specific initiative
- **Activities linked to the mobility**

### 3 VE as a stand-alone learning activity

#### *VE recognised as an individual activity*

- Offered **within a degree** as “practicum” or compulsory/elective course or general course
- Supports **IaH and inclusion**

### 4 VE as a component of a course (traditional or online)

#### *VE as integral & required part of the course*

- **Recognition** linked to other course requirements
- VE used to support **course learning objectives**
- To give **international dimension** to a course

### 1 VE as a preparatory or follow-up activity to physical mobility (blended mobility)

#### *VE either before/after mobility exchange*

**Great for:** Offering high quality preparation for physical mobility, and ensuring that students make the most of their stay abroad or reflect on their international experience.

### 2 VE as an intertwined component of a physical mobility (blended mobility)

#### *VE intertwined with physical mobility into a single educational experience*

**Great for:** Diversifying the participating student body of a physical mobility, by including students who are unable to travel for longer periods of time.

### 3 VE as a stand-alone learning activity

#### *VE recognised as an individual activity*

**Great for:** Institutions to introduce VE projects centrally with more limited teaching staff involvement if desired.

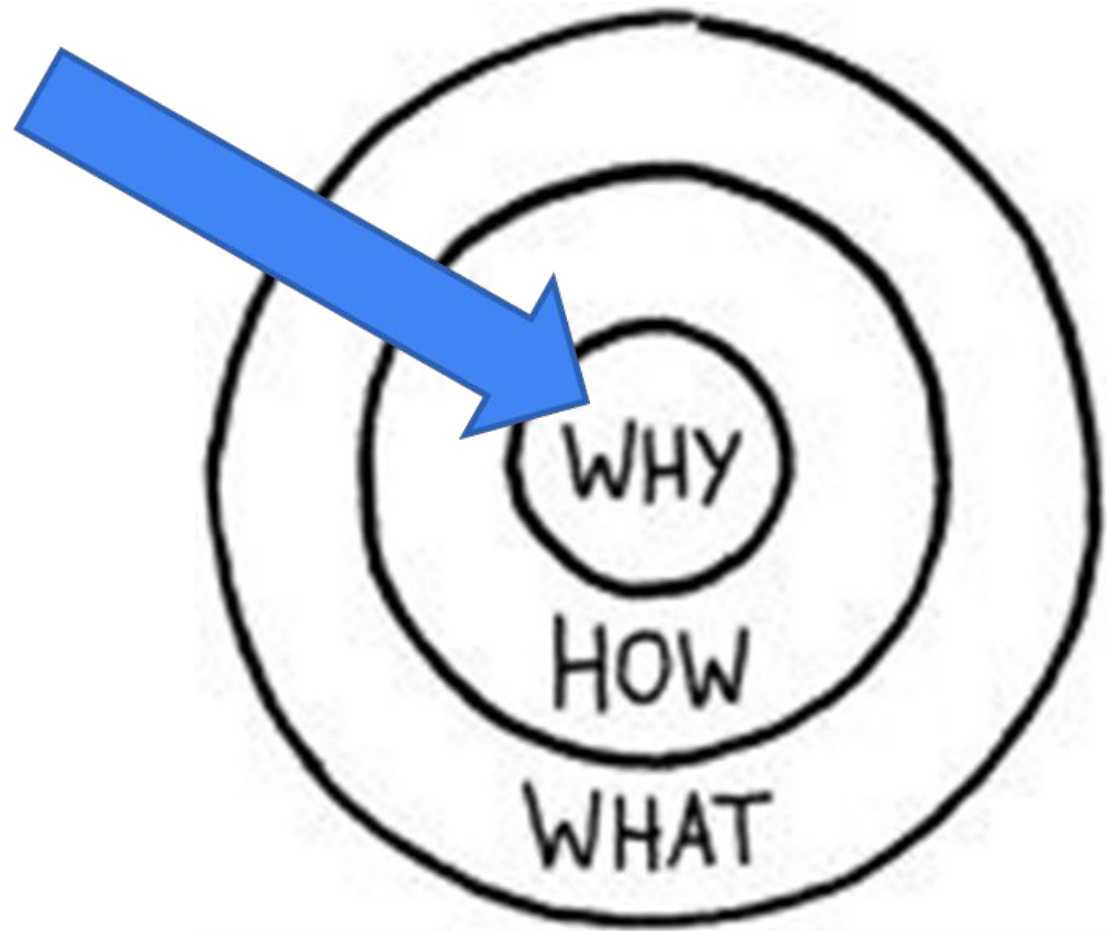
### 4 VE as a component of a course (traditional or online)

#### *VE as integral & required part of the course*

**Great for:** Teaching staff who wish to give their course an international dimension, either by integrating a VE project co-designed by the teachers, or by including a ready-made VE within a single course.

Now let's pause a second and reflect





*The Golden Circle  
by Simon Sinek*



# Why VE?

“Since I was young I have always dreamed to go abroad, see the world and meet foreign cultures. I could never afford or participate in Erasmus mobility, but **thank to this I succeeded in getting in touch with people around the world who I shared my ideas and my thoughts with.**”

“It is amazing that we all can share our opinions at the same time about the same topic. **It really opened my eyes because there are people from a lot of countries who made me realise that my point of view is not the only one.** I see the world from a Western Europe person point of view, and that is definitely not the only perspective. **I could see that each country has a very different way of thinking than me.**”

“Honestly, I didn't feel like a foreigner in this stream, **I was like a puzzle in this wonderful ecosystem of thoughts.** It was truly magical how everyone was immersed in the conversation, how each person was interested in each other, which makes this experience unique in the world of social media and fake communication.”

“**It's a beautiful linguistic and cultural dance between two or more parts.**”

## First... Why VE

- What are your **targets**? What are your **needs/aims**?
- Is it addressed to **students**?
- Is it addressed to **staff**?
- Is it part of **innovative education** strategy?
- Is it a way to address **challenging times** (e.g. covid19)?

## And only then... How and What?

- What are your **resources**?
- Which **technology**?
- **Ready-made** VS **co-designed**?

The focus is on  
the innovative  
pedagogy

## How? VE funding options:

- **Integrating VE in the internationalisation strategy** of a university
- E+ (**Erasmus mobility flows – KA1, BIPs, VE**) / other mobility forms, as pre-mobility activity too (**Arqus moVEs, CVEinAI, CliVEx VE**)
- **Integrating VE** in already existing/future projects or networks/EUAs, such as seminars or winter/summer schools (**VAMOS CB, Euroweek, FRAMES & GODIJIP SP, iOOCs**)
- Innovation/integration in educational offer: developing **new joint and flexible curricula** / challenge-based learning programmes (**Exploring entrepreneurial eco-systems / Global Virtual Teams / Romania and Hungary 100 Years Later**)
- Joint **staff training** strategies (**VE Staff Week**)
- **Online job placements** (**iOOCs**)



Any challenges or major failures?

# Challenges for HEI staff implementing VE

- **Difficulty** in getting into the concept
- **Lack of coordination**, hindering monitoring and reporting on “VE students”
- **Liasing with other offices**, e.g. educational offer/career office, to work on specifically designed courses or on the recognition of VE programmes, be it ready-made or co-designed.
- Establishing **fruitful cooperation with partners**
- **Time zone differences**
- ***No adequate planning since the very beginning!  
Including Assessment and Recognition!!!!***

**need for  
training!!!**



# VE Professional Development

# Professional Development

## New Offer

- VE/COIL field changed tremendously
- Much more expertise with the pedagogy
- VE/COIL now much more embedded

Yet a **gap** is there!

- **specific expertise** missing on specific topics
- need for **niche areas** to explore

 [unicollaboration.org](https://unicollaboration.org)



- ✓ Masterclasses – *New!!!*
- ✓ Modules – *New!!!*
- ✓ Webinars (1.5 hours)
- ✓ Workshops (3.5-4 hours)
- ✓ Intro, Advanced, VE strategy courses (16 / 20 hours)
- ✓ Mentoring





# Masterclass Features

- Advanced, intensive professional development units
- Aimed to equip educators/administrators/technicians & institutional leaders with what needed to implement and sustain VE / COIL programmes effectively in a range of contexts
- Insights and practical tools for integrating VE / COIL at HEI level

Masterclasses can be combined as building blocks, following different pathways and possible alignments

 [unicollaboration.org](https://unicollaboration.org)



2.5 hours

**Presentations  
& discussions**

**Zoom &  
Moodle**

**Open  
Badges**



# Modules

## Features

- Further development of respective Masterclasses
- aimed to provide educators/administrators/technicians and institutional leaders with in-depth understanding of the topics
- hands-on opportunity to work with peers on concrete projects
- can be combined as building blocks, following different pathways and possible alignments

4 hours

Presentations & discussions


Zoom & Moodle

Open Badges



[unicollaboration.org](https://unicollaboration.org)



- 
- ✓ Assessment in VE/COIL
  - ✓ Microcredentials & Open Badges
  - ✓ Critical Virtual Exchange – CVE
  - ✓ AI literacy in VE/COIL

 [unicollaboration.org](https://unicollaboration.org)

# Masterclasses & Modules

## 18 topics

- Research in VE/COIL
- Planning VE in the **Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes**
- VE in **healthcare/business/arts/STEM/foreign languages/ preservice teacher education** (choice of one area)
- VE/COIL for **Technical Institutions and Universities of Applied Sciences**
- VE/COIL for **Language Centres**
- **Digitalising joint and double degrees** through VE/COIL
- VE/COIL for **European University Alliances**
- **Intercultural Communication** in VE/COIL
- **Ethics** in VE/COIL
- **Controversiality & Conflict Resolution** in VE/COIL
- **Challenge-based** VE/COIL
- **Dialogue-based** VE/COIL
- **Technology** in VE/COIL
- Developing **Employability Skills** through VE/COIL





# How to overcome such challenges and succeed?

How to overcome them???

**Teamwork and collaboration**

**in addition to cooperation**

*“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” - Helen Keller*

# Resources

- [Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange – initiative by the European Commission \(2018-2020\)](#)
- [EVOLVE Introductory video on Virtual Exchange](#)
- [FRAMES Scenarios for the Integration of Virtual Exchange in Higher Education \(2021\)](#)
- [FRAMES Cases of VE in HE](#)
- [Helm, F. & Beaven, A. \(2023\) Designing and implementing virtual exchange: a collection of case studies](#)
- [UNICollaboration website](#)



And now to conclude:  
What is your answer to **WHY VE?**



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# Questions or concerns?



| 1 VE as a preparatory or follow-up activity to physical mobility (blended mobility)  | 2 VE as an intertwined component of a physical mobility (blended mobility)   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•e-Tandem/Arqus moVEs (University of Padova)</li> <li>•i-TELL PREP (University of Limerick)</li> <li>•Trans-Atlantic Engagement (Newcastle &amp; Indiana Universities)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•<b>Euroweek</b> (University of Girona)</li> <li>•NICE project (University of Edinburgh)</li> </ul>   |
| 3 VE as a stand-alone learning activity  | 4 VE as a component of a course (traditional or online)  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Soliya Connect Program (University of Padova)</li> <li>•Climate Movements (ESIEE Paris)</li> <li>•Teaching and Learning in Primary Education in International Comparison (University of Erlangen-Nürnberg and the University of Latvia)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•<b>Shared Garden</b> (Bordeaux &amp; León Universities)</li> <li>•University of Applied Sciences, Utrecht</li> <li>•Julius Maximilian University (JMU), Würzburg</li> <li>•Communication across Cultures (University of Limerick)</li> </ul> |

## Scenario 2: Euroweek

**Who:** Prime Networking, a European network of 17 universities, (under)graduate students

**When:** Since 1995 in Antwerp

**What:** Annual 1 week academic conference with students & academics from member HEIs

**How:** Students' teams from 2/3 HEIs cooperate to develop a project online before the Euroweek event. Research projects' results presented during conference to compete for prizes

**Why:** It aims to:

1. develop and advance cross-cultural and interdisciplinary training, academic programmes and research that add value to existing education, research and training responsive to a changing global environment in the fields of business and economics.
2. foster collaboration among the students of the member universities to tackle a specific challenge and topic, from an interdisciplinary perspective and providing the students with a unique blended intercultural and international experience.

## Scenario 2: Euroweek – Pros & Cons

### PROS

- **Inclusive and diverse student body**
- **Multidisciplinary** projects
- **Satisfaction** rates
- **Accredited** (but not the same way in each institution)
- Student **experience**
- Social **interaction**

### LESSONS LEARNT



- ***Students as ambassadors***
- ***Importance of VE component***
- ***Multicultural & multidisciplinary approach***
- ***Research collaboration & innovation***

### CONS

- **Relying on investment** by institutions (hours, resources)
- International dimension **recognition** somewhat lost



## Scenario 4: Shared Garden

**Who:** Universities of **Bordeaux and León**: undergraduate students of Applied Physics and Measurement Engineering (France) and graduates in Electrical Engineering (Spain)

**When:** 2 iterations, **2018-19 and 2019-20**

**What:** physical area situated on the **campus in Bordeaux**, given to students to allow them to design a garden under the philosophy of ecological and sustainable parameters.

**How:** Students plant, design watering system, measure humidity and production, and use these ideas to discuss and explore the possibilities and consequences of their decisions. **PBL**.

**Why:** It aims to:

1. help students **get a better insight into water shortage issues** by imagining a cheap eco-friendly watering system, which could be used for our Shared Garden.
2. enable students to **improve their communication skills** by working in English and to **work with an international team**; working on their soft skills is helpful for their future professional life.

## Scenario 4: Shared Garden – Pros & Cons

### PROS

- Engagement
- Multidisciplinary approach
- Pluralism, Motivation and Involvement
- Learning empowerment  
(but not the same way in each institution)
- Green and sustainable

### CONS

- Evaluation process
- Lack of motivation

### LESSONS LEARNT



- *Opportunity to enrich it with blended mobility.*
- *Easily adapted and launched in any other degree course and subject.*
- *No requirement for teachers to belong to the same area (multidisciplinary focus)*

And here a further thought to leave you with...

# How about VE in HE for staff?

**Who:** Universities in Germany, Italy and Morocco

**When:** 2018-19

**What:** VE planned as opportunity for staff CPD.

**How:** Leading institution is partner of a European Universities Alliance: important to increase the cooperation and mobility between staff and students, and their partners through VE. VE as a way of enhancing the quality of teaching and improving collaborations between staff in joint degree programmes.

**Why:** It aims to:

1. develop staff language and intercultural skills
2. enable them to work with staff at other institutions on a personal and professional level
3. establish longer lasting cooperation, share work perspectives & prepare for physical mobility.

# How about VE in HE for staff?

## Pros and Cons

PROS

- Development of IICs
- Opportunity to be trained without leaving home HEI
- Disrupting one's understanding through new insights
- Insights about individuals they could interact with in their daily work
- Green and sustainable

CONS

- Evaluation process
- Systematic integration as opportunity of CPD

For you to fill out...