



An Introduction to Virtual Exchange, a.k.a COIL

(Collaborative Online International Learning)

'A powerful form of global
learning for students and
educators'

Global Strategy Group
Emma Moore, 18.02.21



A model of collaborative teaching and learning using technology to create accessible, meaningful, shared, global learning opportunities for students (and teachers) without the need to travel



University of Western Australia definition of VE



Elements that define a 'Virtual Exchange'

- **Online, Cross Border Collaboration**
 - An online programme that is co-created and co-taught by 2 educators in different countries
- **International Perspective Sharing**
 - The student cohorts engage virtually, via asynchronous and synchronous project and group work
- **Driven by defined Learning Outcomes**
 - Linked to content, but moreover to support the development of 21st Century skills such as digital literacy, creative thinking and intercultural competencies
- **Sustained, assessed and reflective**
 - Duration of VE is pre-defined, typically 3-10 weeks and should be assessed, either credit bearing or extra-curricular.



NB: VE is different to a MOOC or Distance Learning Course



Example VE: 'Technology & Society' (USA & Lebanon)

Objective:

To explore the influence of technology on Health and Fitness.

Model:

Embedded into the home university module for both student cohorts. Sustained over 8 weeks.

Activities:

2 student cohorts looked at wearable devices, use of online video, prompting by cell-phones from doctors and public health officials, and whether or not these had an impact on people's behaviour in their own community.

Other activities well-suited to VE:

- Data analysis / modelling / testing
- Collaborative document building, research or design
- Peer Review
- Critical Discussion / Debate
- Reflective component to finish



What are the Benefits of Virtual Exchange?

For Students

- An enriching experience
- Enhances employability competencies
 - ie Global awareness, networking
- International Experience
 - Taster for traditional mobility
- Accessible & no cost

For Teachers

- Expands teaching portfolio
- Professional development / Academic progression
 - Bridging gap between AP band 1 - 2
- Develops personal and departmental international partnerships
 - Scope for initiating research links
 - Potential to travel

For Durham University

- Aligns with **Education, Global, WSE** Pillars of DU Strategy:
 - Internationalising the Curriculum agenda
 - WP / Fair Access
 - Employability
 - International Partnerships & Reputation building
 - Int. Student Recruitment
 - Green Agenda
 - **Potential Gateway to TNE**



Examples of VE / COIL at other Universities:

SUNY, USA – Created the COIL concept in 2004

UCL – Run a Portuguese language VE with UNESP-Rio Preto, Brasil

Edinburgh – Have participated in blended VE projects funded by EU.

UC San Diego - Piloting a marketing themed COIL with Florence University of the Arts

Coventry – 100+ COIL projects per year, supported by their COIL Centre.

UWA, Australia – Early stages, getting 'buy-in', designing protocols, delivering training webinars for staff, running pilots.

Matariki & Coimbra networks also keen to support members to develop VE



VE Considerations / Challenges

- **Where does VE 'sit' within the university?**
 - As an educational practice, VE bridges elements of **Education**, **Global**, and **WSE** strategies. Curriculum design and teaching methods are involved as well as partnership development. Key internal stakeholders: CLAS, IO, DCAD, Career, CIS + ...
- **Encouraging staff buy-in & engagement**
 - Recognition (acknowledgement of VE importance by Senior Leaders / workload modelling / buy out of staff time)
 - Incentivisation (financial / administrative support)
- **Cost**
 - VE, in theory, should be free to deliver, but there are cost implications – staff time, training for staff, IT infrastructure and support, potential travel cost for staff to meet partners.



Comments, questions, suggestions welcome!

