

[1st CDS Awareness Raising Meeting Webinar](#)

‘Transforming teaching through soft skills, social engagement and virtual mobility competences’

‘ Virtual Exchange ’

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"We created the Aurora Alliance to generate graduates, equipped to contribute to addressing societal challenges as social entrepreneurs and innovators"



WP 3.3 Aurora Borderless Learning

Aurora Borderless Learning (ABL)

- All students in the **four domains** have had a meaningful and fully recognised international experience before graduation.
- 50% of all students at Aurora partners have had a meaningful and fully recognised international experience before graduation.
- All students at all partners have access to a meaningful international experience with seamless recognition.
- 50% of all students acquire B2-level competence in a 1st foreign language, 30% of all students acquire B1 in 2nd.

All Aurora students have access to one set of digital services, aligned with the European Student Card and EuroPass; Aurora students can register through one Aurora course catalogue.

Why?

Providing students with international experiences and intercultural encounters is key to equipping self-confident and critically thinking young people for their life paths in a global open society.

WP 3 Aurora Learning for Societal Impact

Task 3.1 Aurora Competences Framework

Task 3.2 Aurora Social Transformation

Task 3.3 Aurora Borderless Learning

Task 3.4 Aurora Pilot Domains Coordination

Task 3.5 Aurora Teaching for Societal Impact

Task 3.6 Aurora Learning Analytics



“Evidence shows that the highest priorities of internationalisation policies for EU Member States and individual HEIs are still the outgoing mobility for students, student exchanges, and attracting international students. However, **mobility will always be limited** to a relatively small percentage of the student and staff population: higher education policies must increasingly focus on the **integration of a global dimension** in the design and content of all curricula and teaching/learning processes (sometimes called “internationalisation at home”), to ensure that the **large majority of learners, the 80-90% who are not internationally mobile** for either degree or credit mobility, are nonetheless able to acquire the international skills required in a globalised world. (2013, p. 6)”

European Commission Report: [“European Higher Education in the world”](#)

WP3.3.1

Borderless Learning – Recognition and Mobility

WP 3.3.1 Main Project activities
Overcoming Recognition and mobility obstacles
Study at Home while Abroad
Virtual exchange, Short-term, Blended mobility programmes and 'Bootcamps'
Short-term Mobility Fund and housing mechanism
Inclusive Internationalisation
Peer Learning Events

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Virtual Exchange

The engagement of groups of students in sustained online intercultural interaction and collaboration...

... with partners from other cultural contexts or geographical locations...

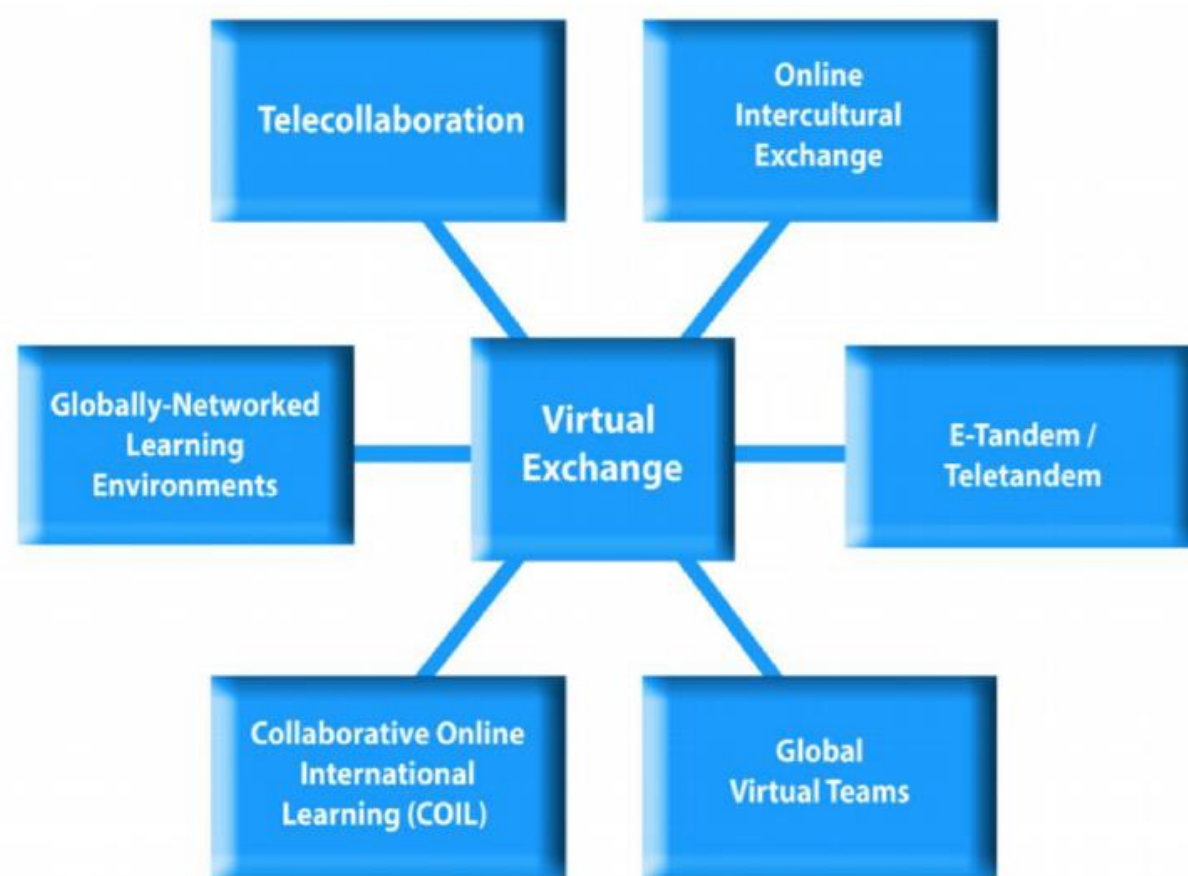
...as an integrated part of their course work or studies...

and under the guidance of educators and/or expert facilitators

[Robert O'Dowd](#) (Universidad de León)



Overview of existing terminology



A bit more terminology... but important...

Virtual Mobility

Students and teachers in HE study or teach for a short period at another institution outside their own country, without physically leaving their home.

Virtual Exchange

Students engage in collaborative online work with students from other HEI as part of their studies at their local institution

Virtual Mobility	Virtual Exchange (COIL, Telecollaboration)
Students register with foreign university.	Students continue in their home university and following their usual courses.
Students follow lectures and classes at the partner university via online platforms.	As part of their work for their course at their home institution, students interact online with other students at partner university.
Students focus on course content provided by lecturers in the partner university.	Students focus on interaction and collaboration with students in the partner university.
Students receive credit / grades from the partner university for their work / exams.	Students receive a part of their grade in their course at home institution for their participation and work in their online project.

Examples for integration of VE into international education

Pre-Mobility	Blended Mobility	Class to Class Exchange
<p>Students are engaged in VE with partners from the partner university before their international mobility e.g. after successful participation students can be awarded extra points for Erasmus application (selection criteria)</p>	<p>Periods of online collaboration between classes before travelling to meet and complete projects at one of the partner universities -> new incentives through the Erasmus prg. 2021-27</p>	<p>Teachers in two or more classes organize and mentor collaborative tasks for their students to complete online together as part of their coursework. Students receive a percentage of their final course grade for their portfolios and/or presentations based on their collaborations</p>

Learning Outcomes for students

- Core learning outcomes
- Intercultural competence
- Learning with and together with others
- Critical digital literacy
- Language skills
- Disciplinary Skills (e.g. leadership and self-management)

Teacher Outcomes

- New teaching skills e.g. project based learning
- New solid relationships with partners/colleagues abroad

Get a picture of it...



<https://evolve-erasmus.eu>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFB7ooV6lWQ>

Important to take into account

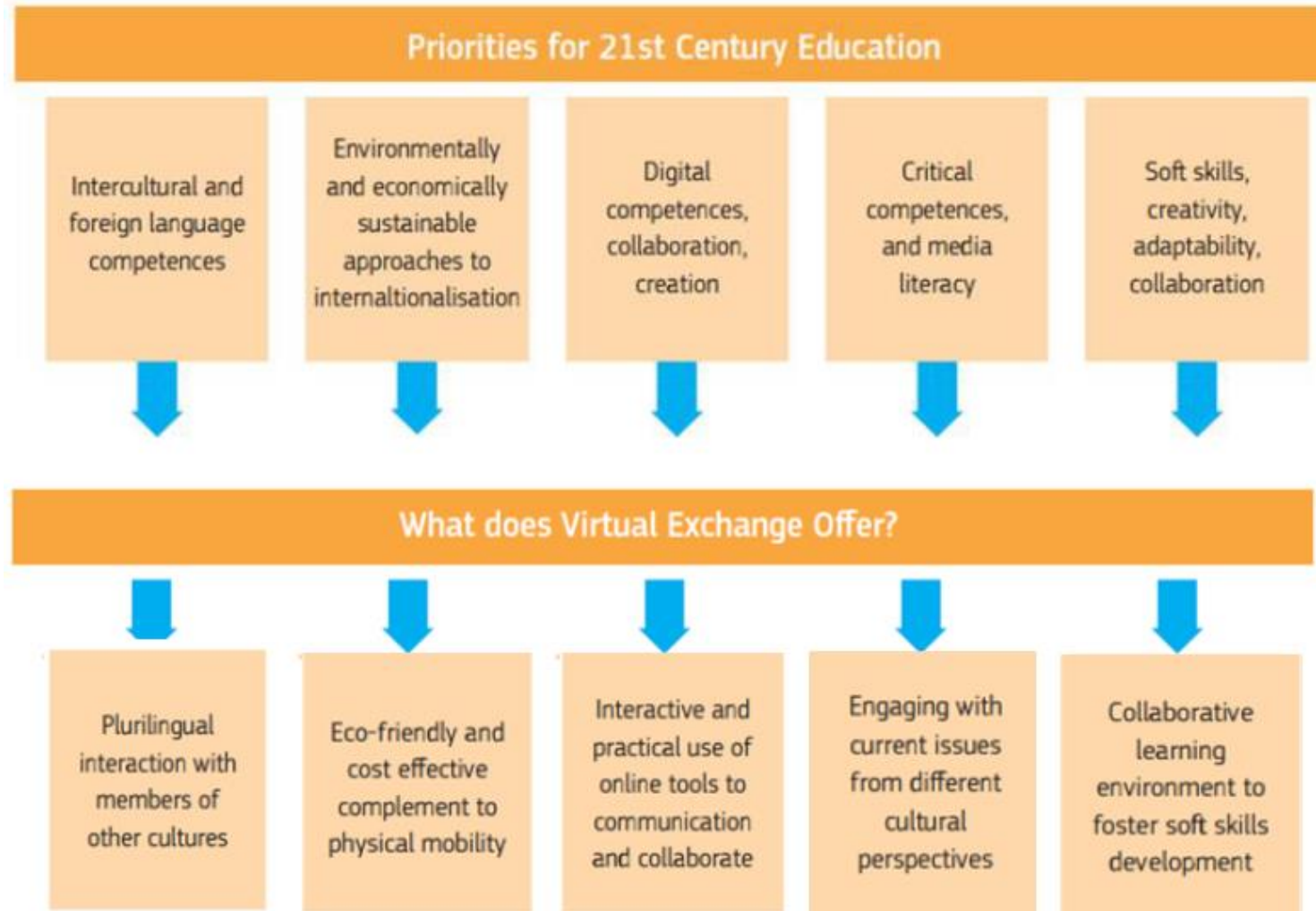
- VE should **not** be seen as being **in competition** with physical mobility
- VE is not about “match and learn”. Students need **mentoring** by teachers or facilitators as they engage in their online intercultural collaborations with different cultural groups. Teachers should therefore be trained to carry out this role of pedagogical mentoring.
- VE requires **integration** into the university curriculum and explicit recognition of students’ **learning outcomes**.
- Teachers’ engagement in VE initiatives requires time and a significant **extra workload**. Support for teachers through the provision of training, technological infrastructure and **academic recognition** is key.

The role of International Offices and Univ. Management

- Development of a **VE strategy** in alignment with the institution's internationalisation strategy
- Information and **dissemination** events to explain the concept of VE
- Identifying dedicated faculty members or already existing best practice examples -> "VE champions"
- Organizing **training** events for teachers (inhouse or from external providers)
- Identify networks which will help teachers to find partner teachers for the VE exchanges.
- Create awareness among and collaborate with university management to link VE with teacher promotion and **recognition of innovation** (e.g. reduction of teaching work load, points for internal promotion)
- Identifying **funding** options, e.g. for travel costs for planning meetings with partners, for blended VE projects or for employment of student workers as VE-tutors in order to support teachers.



Pros of VE in a nutshell



Some further reading and resources

Information documents for International Officers

- Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange: Handbook for International Relations Officers: <https://erasmusplus.rs/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/EVE-Handbook-for-IROs-final.pdf>
- Stevens Initiative: Virtual Exchange Guide for Senior International Officers: <https://www.stevensinitiative.org/resource/guide-for-sios/>

Virtual Exchange initiative

- Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange <https://europa.eu/youth/erasmusvirtual>

Platforms, Projects and Organisations

- UNICollaboration <https://www.unicollaboration.org/>
- EVOLVE <https://evolve-erasmus.eu/>
- The Stevens Initiative <https://www.stevensinitiative.org/>
- SUNY COIL Center <https://coil.suny.edu/>

Training opportunities

- <https://www.unicollaboration.org/index.php/training-3/>
- <https://www.eaie.org/training.html>

Some best practice examples

- COIL at University of Minnesota Duluth <https://www.d.umn.edu/coil/getting-started>
- Short article on benefits of COIL projects by D. Gokcora: file:///C:/Users/c1511002/AppData/Local/Temp/Benefits_of_Collaborative_Online_Interna.pdf

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"The main aim of Aurora is to facilitate international exchange amongst students and faculty. And what we need to this, is to lower administrative barriers so that students can travel easily, enjoy their mobility and make the most out of it for their further careers."

Silke Meyer

Professor for European Ethnology
at the Department of History and European Ethnology
Universität Innsbruck