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.

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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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Students</th>
<th>For Teachers</th>
<th>For Durham University</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• An enriching experience</td>
<td>• Expands teaching portfolio</td>
<td>• Aligns with Education, Global, WSE Pillars of DU Strategy:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Enhances employability competencies  o ie Global awareness, networking</td>
<td>• Professional development / Academic progression  o Bridging gap between AP band 1 - 2</td>
<td>o Internationalising the Curriculum agenda</td>
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<tr>
<td>• International Experience  o Taster for traditional mobility</td>
<td>• Develops personal and departmental international partnerships  o Scope for initiating research links  o Potential to travel</td>
<td>o WP / Fair Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Accessible &amp; no cost</td>
<td></td>
<td>o Employability</td>
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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?
  o 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
  o Recognition (acknowledgement of VE importance by Senior Leaders / workload modelling / buy out of staff time)
  o Incentivisation (financial / administrative support)

• Cost
  o 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!