

2023-2024 SYLLABUS

INTRODUCTION TO
**DESIGNING A COLLABORATIVE
INTERCULTURAL ONLINE
EXCHANGE PROCESS**

VIRTUELE INTERNATIONALE
SAMENWERKING IN HET
HOGER ONDERWIJS



INTRODUCTION TO DESIGNING A VIRTUAL COLLABORATIVE INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE PROCESS

A VIRTUAL TRAINING FOR TEACHING STAFF IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Syllabus

INTRODUCTION	2
TRAINING OBJECTIVES	2
TASKS AND ASSIGNMENTS	3
1) Training materials (Canvas)	3
2) Discussion points & exercises (on Canvas)	3
3) Design lab	3
4) Online group sessions	3
PARTICIPATION AND ASSESSMENT	4
CONTACT	4
MODULE BREAKDOWN	6
Opening Module: Welcome to this training!	6
Module 1: Introduction to VIS and Virtual Exchange pedagogy	6
Module 2: Designing the student exchange journey in VIS	7
Module 3: Promoting meaningful engagement, learning and collaboration in VIS	8
Module 4: Deepen the learning and collaboration in VIS	9



INTRODUCTION

This virtual training for teaching staff in higher education is offered to support your virtual international collaboration, or *VIS*, project(s). This is part of the programme 'Virtuele Internationale Samenwerking in het Hoger Onderwijs', offering activities in support to higher education professionals who are developing *VIS* projects.

This training consists of different synchronous and asynchronous components, all taking place online. The training is designed for participants to learn with and from each other while engaging virtually in interactive practices and discussions. The total training time is estimated at 14-16 hours, including 1,5-2 hours weekly self-study plus 2 hours of weekly synchronous training time, over a period of 4 weeks.

By the end of the training, participants should be able to design and facilitate a *VIS* project including a sustained student exchange that promotes group-learning, encourages 21st-Century skill building like reflection and self-awareness, and creates a space for deep learning. Participants will also gain first-hand experience with the tools covered in the training through collaborative, action-oriented assignments and exercises focussing on the design and implementation of *VIS* projects.

TRAINING OBJECTIVES

- Gain understanding of Virtual Exchange pedagogy and its application in *VIS* projects to promote global learning experiences.
- Gain familiarity with the principles and best practices of designing and facilitating a successful *VIS* project.
- Develop skills in creating a collaborative and interactive virtual learning environment for international student exchanges.
- Learn how to promote group learning within a virtual setting, fostering active participation, effective communication, and knowledge sharing.
- Identify and integrate various tools and best practices into the design and implementation of *VIS* projects to enhance engagement and interactivity.
- Apply strategies for overcoming challenges and managing potential obstacles in virtual international collaboration, such as time zone differences and language barriers.



TASKS AND ASSIGNMENTS

1) Training materials (asynchronous, on Canvas)

This is a ***paced training***, which means that a new module opens each week. Participants are expected to have reviewed the module's training materials ahead of the online group sessions. The modules consist of multimedia learning materials, reflection activities and discussion questions, are accessible through the Canvas training platform.

2) Discussion points & exercises (asynchronous, on Canvas)

The training content on canvas also include discussions points marked by 'Let's discuss', and exercises marked by 'Activity'. Participants are expected to contribute, asynchronously, to these learning activities. They are specifically designed to elicit reflection, foster asynchronous interaction between participants and to facilitate peer-learning and collaboration.

3) Design lab (asynchronous)

Throughout this training, participants will be working on their own VIS project design. Step by step they will be adding learning components, best practices and digital tools to a process design. Participants will critically assess and improve their design, as well as engage in providing and receiving feedback from their colleagues. By doing this, they will collaborate on designing an intercultural online exchange process with impact, that is tailored to the needs of your VIS project. This design lab starts in module 2, and specific instructions are given at the end of each module's content.

4) Online group sessions (synchronous, ZOOM)

Participants meet online with fellow practitioners and your trainer on a **weekly** basis for a **two-hour synchronous (live) training session**. This training consists of **four synchronous sessions** in total. These virtual group meetings will take place on ZOOM. This is the time to deepen your understanding of the training content, learn from your colleagues, and put theory into practice through interactive exercises.

These virtual group meetings will take place on ZOOM¹, in a closed session. These sessions are highly interactive and therefore **timely attendance** and **active participation using both video and audio** is expected.

¹ You will receive an invitation including the ZOOM link to the meetings via e-mail. Please do not share this meeting information with others.



PARTICIPATION AND ASSESSMENT

To successfully complete this training and receive a certificate of completion, participants are required to:

- Participate actively in **at least 3 out of 4 synchronous sessions**²;
- Complete **80% of the asynchronous tasks and assignments** detailed above; through contributing to the discussions (marked by '**Let's discuss**'), asynchronous exercises (marked by '**Activity**') and the assignments as part of the **design lab**.

CONTACT

Questions about your participation can be emailed to Visinhetho@sharingperspectivesfoundation.com

² Active participation includes joining the session with working video and audio, contributing to discussions, and attending the full meeting.



MODULE BREAKDOWN

Opening Module: Welcome to this training!

- Getting started
- Welcome!
- Virtual international collaboration in higher education
- How does the training work?
- Virtual training session information
- How to use Canvas

Module 1: Introduction to VIS and Virtual Exchange pedagogy

Objectives

- Gain understanding of Virtual Exchange pedagogy and its application in VIS projects to achieve 21st-century goals and learning objectives.
- Recognize the significance of intercultural learning and exchange in enhancing the impact of the learning experience in VIS projects.
- Identify the teacher's role in a learner-led, collaborative Virtual Exchange approach and understand the benefits of adopting a process-oriented approach.
- Comprehend the role of technology in designing and implementing effective virtual intercultural learning experiences.

Asynchronous training content & tasks

- Pedagogy and approach:
 - ◆ Introduction to VE
 - ◆ The role of international learning and exchange in VIS
 - ◆ Adopting a process oriented approach
- The role of the teacher I
 - ◆ Towards facilitative teaching
- The role of technology I
 - ◆ Constructive online engagement and tech
 - ◆ Communication methods online
- Discussion point: Virtual international collaboration, intercultural learning and exchange
- Activity: Icebreaker on training expectations (from module 'Welcome to this training')



Module 2: Designing the student exchange journey in VIS

Objectives

- Acquire knowledge on how to design the student exchange process in VIS projects.
- Understand the essential building blocks to promote learning in the VIS student exchange.
- Recognize the importance of group dynamics in virtual settings and the benefits of developing effective group dynamics for virtual student exchange sessions.
- Develop strategies for promoting group ownership, including reflecting on expected behaviour, norm-setting, and goal-setting.
- Establish and maintain a collaborative working relationship with a VIS partner.

Asynchronous training content & tasks

- Ready, set, design
 - Promoting learning with your design
 - ◆ Sample design structure
 - The role of the teacher II
 - ◆ Building effective group dynamics online
 - ◆ Your role as a teacher/facilitator
 - ◆ Setting students up for success
 - Educators as collaborators in VIS
 - ◆ Purpose and goals of collaboration
-
- Discussion points:
 - Your role as a teacher/facilitator
 - Purpose and goals of collaboration
 - Design lab part I : Map your student exchange journey



Module 3: Promoting meaningful engagement, learning and collaboration in VIS

Objectives

- Understand the significance of directionality and quality of engagement in promoting deep learning and impactful cross-cultural experiences.
- Identify relationship and connection-building elements and apply them to online learning.
- Familiarize with assessing engagement in virtual groups and cultivate collaboration through interactive assignments.
- Utilize various online communication tools to promote engagement and strengthen connections in virtual international collaboration.

Asynchronous training content & tasks

- Student engagement and learning in VIS
 - ◆ Types of engagement and learning in VIS
 - ◆ Relationship-centred learning
- Foundational strategies for meaningful engagement
 - ◆ Assessing engagement
 - ◆ Methods for asynchronous and synchronous engagement
 - ◆ Working with different online communication tools
 - ◆ Cultivate collaboration through interactive assignments
 - ◆ Promoting engagement - reminders
 - ◆ Activities and tools for strengthening connections online
- Discussion points:
 - Relationship-centered learning
 - Cultivate collaboration through interactive assignments
 - Activities and tools for strengthening connections online
- Design lab part II: Promoting relationship-building and group engagement



Module 4: Deepen the learning and collaboration in VIS

Objectives

- Employ strategies to address disengaged groups and individual learners in online environments.
- Recognize the importance of critical thinking in engaging with differences and deepening understanding in VIS projects.
- Reflect on the learning and training experience as both a participant and a group member.
- Apply the acquired knowledge and skills in designing future VIS projects and addressing challenges related to engagement and critical thinking.

Asynchronous training content & tasks

- Deepen the learning and collaboration in VIS
 - ◆ Understanding the Barriers to effective engagement
 - ◆ Ensuring Clarity and Understanding
 - ◆ Critical thinking
 - ◆ Promoting or pushing critical thinking?
- More on promoting a constructive virtual group environment
 - ◆ Signs of disengaged groups and responding adequately
 - ◆ Working with Body Language and Non-verbal Communication
- Wrapping up
 - ◆ In sum
- Discussion point:
 - Promoting or pushing critical thinking?
- Activities:
 - Reflection and self-assessment
 - Final goodbyes and parting gifts
- Design lab part III: What is next?

This training is designed and implemented by The Sharing Perspectives Foundation, one of the consortium members of 'Virtual International Collaboration in Higher Education'.

The Sharing Perspectives Foundation is a not-for-profit offering contemporary online learning experiences for people to interact constructively across divides, whether national, cultural, social, or political. The Sharing Perspectives Foundation strives to work with education professionals and institutions to ensure that students all over the globe benefit from enriching, meaningful international exchanges and transversal skill building.

