

# VIRTUAL COLLABORATION IN EUROPEAN TEACHER EDUCATION

## Newsletter agenda

This newsletter will present the following topics:

- **Start of a new semester- start of a new virtual exchange!**
- **Online Workshop – Integrating Virtual Exchange in Initial Teacher Education Programmes**
- **Coming up: Field trip to Aix-en-Provence**
- **Expert opinion - Claudia Ingrisich-Rupp on: how can educators use virtual exchange for their teaching in teacher education?**
- **Introducing virtual exchange initiatives at the PH Freiburg**

If not done yet, please register for the newsletter by clicking the following link: [Registration newsletter VCIETE](#)

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## **Start of a new semester- Start of a new virtual exchange!**

On October 16, the new academic semester at the PH Freiburg is starting!

Thus, a new group of 25 students will participate in a virtual exchange course entitled: "International and comparative perspectives on education, teaching and diversity". Through this course, PH students will collaborate virtually with French students from Aix-Marseille University. They will be given the opportunity to share their knowledge and experiences on the (teacher) education systems in Germany and France, which helps them to develop their professional awareness as "European Teachers".

The virtual exchange will be complemented with a physical study visit in France.

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## **Online Workshop: Integrating Virtual Exchange in Initial Teacher Education Programmes**

On November 21, at 4 p.m. the VCIETE team will offer a webinar on the integration of virtual exchanges in teacher education. Join us for this occasion, where Vasileios Symeonidis, Verena Bodenbender (PH Freiburg) and Maria Impedovo (Aix-Marseille University) will discuss the current state of virtual exchanges at PH Freiburg and will present good practical examples for utilising virtual exchanges and hybrid mobility in teacher education. The agenda of the event will soon be uploaded to the [VCIETE website](#). Some of the questions that will be discussed are:

- To what extent can virtual exchanges enhance the (international) learning experience of student teachers?

- Which aspects need to be considered when planning and implementing elements of virtual exchange in teacher education?

*When?* 21.11.2023, 4pm-6pm

*Where?* Online via Zoom

*Access data?* Zoom Meeting

<https://ph-freiburg-de.zoom-x.de/j/63881803055?pwd=eDIFSHBXRjhOSHIHbU1xeU4zQVpYdz09>

Meeting ID: 638 8180 3055

Passcode: 496549

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## Coming up: Field trip to Aix-en-Provence



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We are happy to confirm a new field trip to the South of France!

The course “International and comparative perspectives on education, teaching and diversity” will once again include a physical mobility. Following the signing of an official collaboration between PH Freiburg and Aix Marseille University, participants of the specific course will attend a field trip to the city of Aix-en-Provence. The field trip will provide the opportunity for students from both universities to physically meet, finalise their project and present them in public, receiving feedback from international guests. Workshops and cultural activities will also be part of the field trip, including a visit to French schools.

Here is the most important information:

*Where:* Université Aix-en-Provence

*What:* Seminars, workshops and cultural activities

*When:* December 03-06/07

Further information will be provided soon.

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# European teaching collaboration in practice – an expert opinion.

Today: Dr. Claudia Ingrisch-Rupp

Dr. phil. Claudia Ingrisch-Rupp is a tenured member of the Faculty of Education at the PH Freiburg. As a researcher and lecturer, she is an expert in the field of Educational Science. Her research focuses on teacher professionalism, the governance of education systems, international comparative education, and qualitative research methodology. Currently, her research interest lies in the digitalisation in education. Claudia holds a European Teaching degree ("Europalehramt") and a M.A. for Bilingual Teaching and has worked in various international research projects.

In this post, Dr. Ingrisch-Rupp writes about possible applications of virtual exchanges in teacher education.

## How can educators use virtual exchange for their teaching in teacher education?

Virtual exchanges (VE) can be a powerful tool in teacher education. They can be used to promote student teachers' professional development, enhance the internationalisation strategy of TE institutions, and support digital transformations in teacher education. VE is "an umbrella term which refers to the numerous online learning initiatives and methodologies which engage learners in sustained online collaborative learning and interaction with partners from different cultural backgrounds" (O'Dowd, 2023, p. 11). VE can be employed across a variety of disciplines and teaching contexts. In the following, I would like to offer some ideas of how to use a virtual exchange in teacher education. Building upon these examples, I will briefly outline possible benefits and challenges of VE projects.

There are a **variety of ways of how VE projects can be integrated** into teacher education courses. To follow up **practical experiences at schools**, a VE could be used for joint digital classroom observations. The students could watch live or recorded lessons to gain a better understanding of diverse teaching methods or classroom dynamics. They also could compare different school settings and local contexts of teaching and learning. Additionally, teacher students could create collaborative projects which might involve lesson planning, developing teaching materials or joint research projects. In the field of **foreign language teaching**, a VE could be implemented for instance, to improve foreign language skills, foster intercultural communicative competences or integrate intercultural learning in authentic contexts. In the context of **social sciences**, teacher educators might use VE to discuss global issues like climate change or educational inequality. They might also relate local perspectives to more global perspectives. Student teachers could engage in debates, research projects or joint initiatives to explore these topics. In **STEM education** (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), students could jointly develop and complete experiments, analyse data or engage in problem-solving. Furthermore, **professional development** (in general) could be fostered by inviting experts and colleagues worldwide to discuss the latest topics relevant for education at various levels. For instance, student teachers could compare educational systems or different ways of tackling challenges in education. By this international comparative perspective, student teachers could widen their perspectives and gain a deeper understanding of their own and foreign education system.

As can be seen by these examples, VE can be beneficial for student teachers' professional development across various disciplines: VE may foster global perspectives, create (inter-) cultural awareness, support communicative competences as well as strengthen foreign language skills. As the student teachers work jointly with students from other cultural backgrounds, their collaborative skills as well as digital skills can be developed. Moreover, VE are not very cost-intensive and may offer a good

alternative for teacher students who cannot spend an entire semester abroad.

Beneath these benefits, VE may also present some challenges. For instance, technical equipment including suitable software as well as a good internet connection is a vital pre-condition for all participants joining the VE. At times, students might need assistance with technical problems. Another challenge might relate to the timing of the VE. Universities in different countries might have different academic calendars and could be located in different time-zones. By careful planning, however, this issue can be solved. Also, synchronous as well as asynchronous communication formats could be offered throughout the VE. Additionally, suitable assessment formats as well as concerns related to data privacy should be considered carefully.

In conclusion, VE can present a very suitable tool for achieving various competences, e.g., it may offer valuable opportunities for global learning and cultural enrichment. Educators should be aware of possible challenges associated with VE projects. Careful planning, technical support, and clear learning objectives help to maximise the benefits of VE and mitigate challenges. Thus, VE can be indeed a powerful tool in teacher education.

Sources:

O'Dowd, R. (2023). *Internationalising Higher Education and the Role of Virtual Exchange*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315393704>

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# Introducing virtual exchange initiatives at the PH Freiburg

## **LIVE CHILE**

The PH project "LIVE CHILE - Teacher Education International through Virtual Exchange Formats", funded by BWS plus from 2021-2024, promotes the mobility of student teachers and lecturers as well as virtual collaboration in research, curriculum development and teaching through a combination of physical and virtual exchange and cooperation formats in research and teaching. The core idea of the project is a holistically conceived internationalization of teacher education. In addition to traditional physical mobilities (mobility grants are provided for students as well as teachers) virtual teaching collaborations and projects also provide an internationalization of teacher curricula "at home" , with a special focus on accessibility and educational equity.





The Latin American partner is the Universidad de Concepción (UDEC) in southern Chile. Founded in 1919 as Chile's first regional state university, it is the country's third-largest university and one of the most important universities in Latin America - not least in the field of teacher education.

Within the framework of the project, the piloting of a virtual teaching cooperation between the participating universities took place from May to June 2022, in the form of a language and culture tandem, the contents of which had been designed in close cooperation between the Institute of Roman Studies/PHFR and the German Department/UDEC. The participating students were spanish-teaching students (PHFR) and Chilean students of the DaF program.

Building on two teaching cooperations that had already been established, another virtual cooperation seminar took place in the summer semester of 2023,. Further virtual cooperation formats with the Universidad de Concepción are planned for the coming semesters.

[Link to Homepage](#)

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## **Nett Devise**

The focus of the Nett Devise project is the development of a (virtual) curriculum on the topic of education for sustainable development (ESD). For this purpose, content is created for a virtual exchange seminar in combination with face-to-face events, in which the students deal with questions on ESD. The target group are

students of teacher training in primary and secondary education, on which all partner institutions are specialized.



The curriculum consists of a total of three seminars á 3 ECTS credits:

In the first seminar "ESD in Practice" ESD topics are taught in the context of a one-week lecture and suitable excursions at one of the five partner universities (here: Winter School in Nijmegen from 15-19.01.2024). In advance, the students are prepared for the ESD topics in the face-to-face seminar by a "Green intercultural mentoring tool kit" developed in the project.

The second seminar will take place directly afterwards virtually (via Moodle). The seminar topics are "Introduction to ESD", "World Citizenship" and "Globalization". A different lecturer is responsible for each topic, so that each partner university is actively involved in the teaching content. The contents deal with questions and learning contents around the topic of ESD.

The third seminar "ESD at Home University" takes place at the respective home university of the students. This seminar must be completed if the student wishes to receive the official ESD certificate, which is also currently being developed as part of the Nett Devise project.

The Nett Devise team is convinced that future teachers are important change agents to spread the idea of a more environmentally friendly and inclusive way of life. Not only the ESD content, but also the application of sustainable and inclusive intercultural cooperation are transported by our teachers to their

future school classes. Their experiences in the virtual exchange are thus the basis for their own implementation in the schools.

[Link to Homepage](#)



Virtual Collaboration in European Teacher Education

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