

# Virtual Mobility

Barbara Good, 20<sup>th</sup> UNICA EduLab Meeting, 6 December 2019



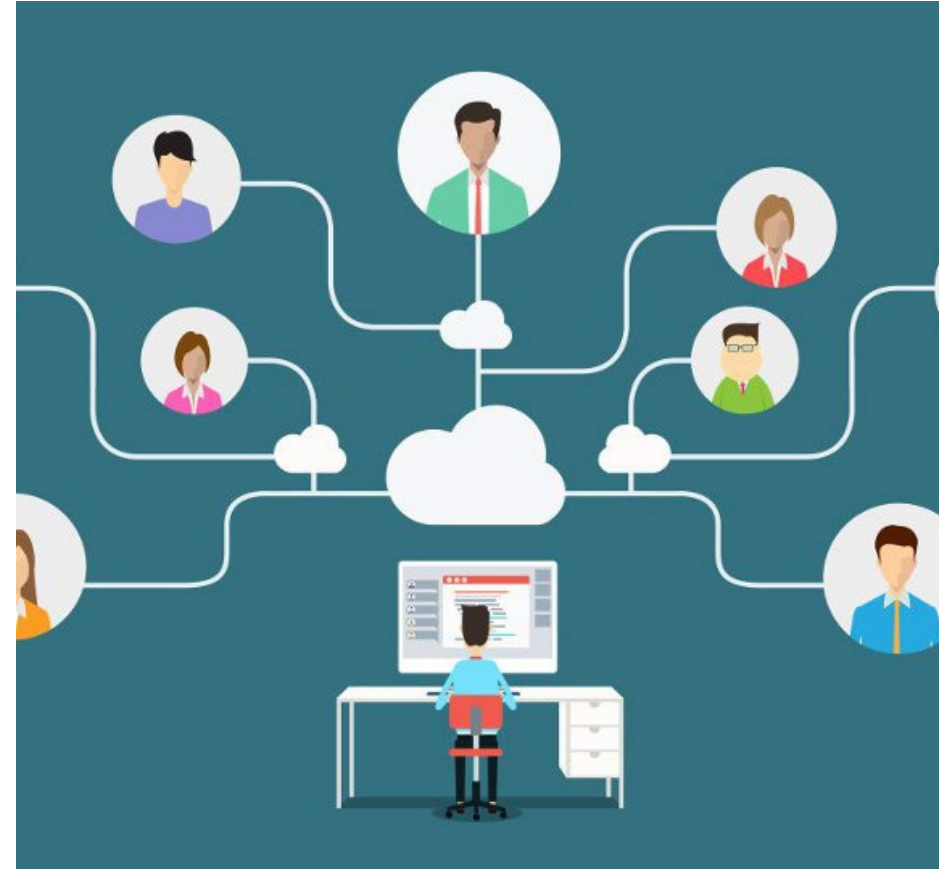
## What is virtual mobility?

- Also called **Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)** or **Virtual Exchange** or **Blended Learning**
- Virtual mobility refers to students and teachers in higher education cooperating with a class at another university outside their own country, in order to work on a joint project or teach and study a topic from an international perspective
- Can be fully virtual or combined with short mobilities
- Students reflect with each other, thereby facilitating a cross-cultural dialogue that brings a global dimension to the course content
- Asynchronous and synchronous collaboration possible
  - Using e.g. Whatsapp, Skype, Zoom, Adobe Connect



## Why virtual teamwork?

- Global competencies are increasingly becoming a workplace requirement
- Demand for personnel capable of high performance in a multicultural workplace is rising
- Prepare for global business environment
- Create learning opportunities to ensure personal experience, reflection, and re-adjustment



<https://leadingwithtrust.com/category/virtual-teams/>

## Opportunities and benefits

- Experience the challenges of working in multicultural virtual teams and practice how to deal with them
- Cross borders without leaving home
- Understand advantages (and limitations) of technology
- Build relationships with teammates via technology
- Make it personal
- Build relationships with people you have not met

## Challenges

- Difficulties related to cross-cultural communication
- Coordination and collaboration under the conditions of geographic dispersion
  - Beware of time difference!
- Differences in work styles
  - Relevant for students and professors
- Time-consuming for professors to prepare a virtual mobility course
- Establishing a shared meaning and building consensus at a distance

## Joint Classroom Programme at University of Vienna

- “Joint classrooms” are courses held in collaboration with a partner university, combining digital tools and short periods of travel to enable international networking
- Lecturers at the participating universities design a course and teach it together using a "blended learning" approach
- Part of the University of Vienna’s internationalization@home strategy
  - Enable students who can not be mobile for a whole semester to gain international experience
- International Office provides funding, in particular for co-funding travel costs of students
  - Up to EUR 6000 per Joint Classroom



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## Examples of Joint Classrooms at the University of Vienna

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<https://international.univie.ac.at/en/internationalunivie/joint-classroom/>

## Transnational Organised Crime

- **Organisation:** Andreas Schloenhardt, Susanne Reindl- Krauskopf, Faculty of Law
- **Partner universities:** The University of Queensland, Australia / University of Zurich, Switzerland
- **Topic:** „Wildlife trafficking“ (2018 and 2019)
- In cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)





<https://stories.uq.edu.au/small-change/tackling-wildlife-trafficking-with-the-worlds-oldest-zoo/index.html>

## Course set-up

- “Blended learning” approach, i.e. a combination of online learning and attendance at lectures
- Preparation stage: the students enter into an intensive online exchange and prepare themselves for the one-week seminar
- One-week seminar, which is held annually, so far alternating between Brisbane and Vienna
- Part of the programme includes visits to international organisations and embassies

## Lamentations in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East (2018)

- **Organisation:** Prof. Marianne Grohmann, Department of Old Testament Studies and Biblical Archaeology
- **Partner university:** The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
- For students of protestant theology and Jewish Studies (University of Vienna)
- Included a one-week mobility in Jerusalem at Hebrew University
  - Seminars, lectures, discussions, visits to museums



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Many thanks!

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