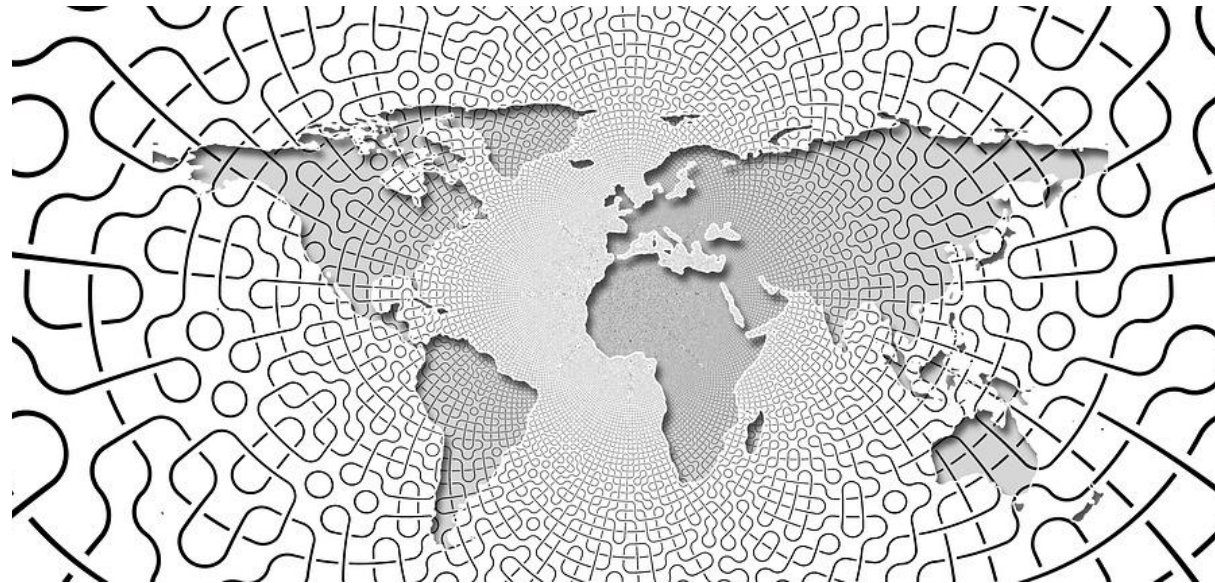


Making virtual language exchanges work



Jessica Etridge

Maître de Langue (English)

École Normale Supérieure de Lyon (France)

jessica.etridge@ens-lyon.fr

Anne-Catherine Mechler

Teaching Fellow (French)

University of Bath (UK)

a.mechler@bath.ac.uk

3 questions...

1. Have you ever had a language exchange partner in any form (pen friend, homestay, virtual exchange, face-to-face meet up) with the goal of improving your language skills?
2. Have you ever set up a language exchange with your students?
3. Have you ever set up a **virtual** language exchange with your students?



Making virtual language exchanges work

Welcome

1. How it all started & how we found each other
2. What is Virtual Exchange? (and what it's not!)
3. What are the benefits of a virtual language exchange?
4. Framework & modalities
5. Practicalities – getting the VE up and running
6. What we have learnt
7. List of links

< Discussion >

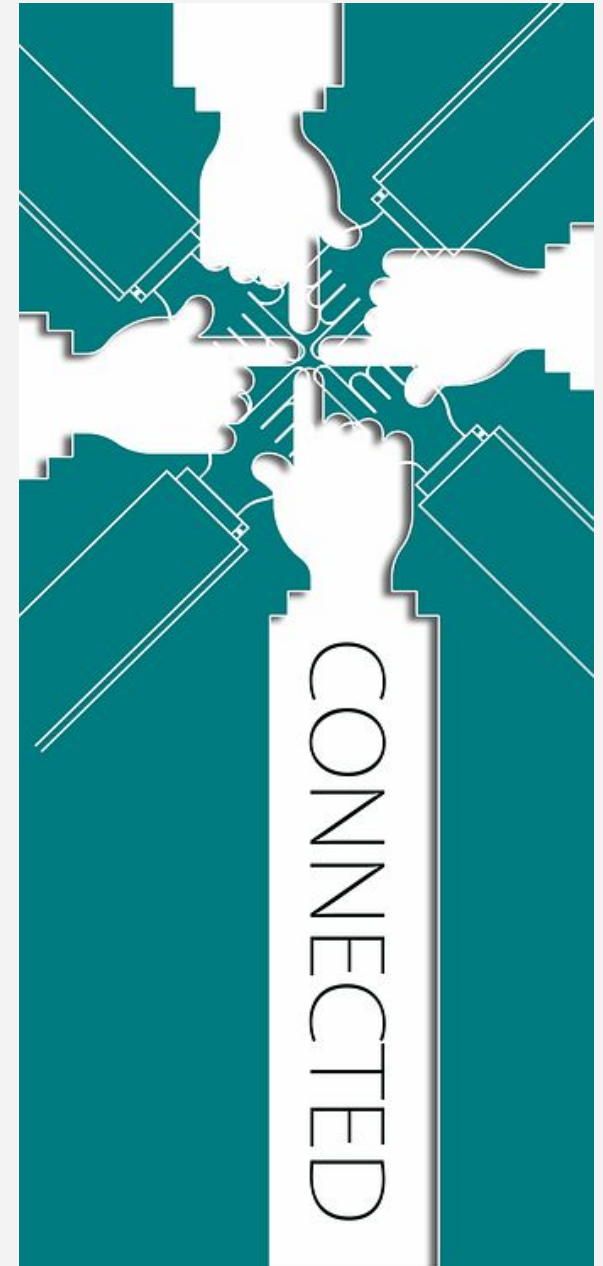
< Q&A >

< Students' perspectives >



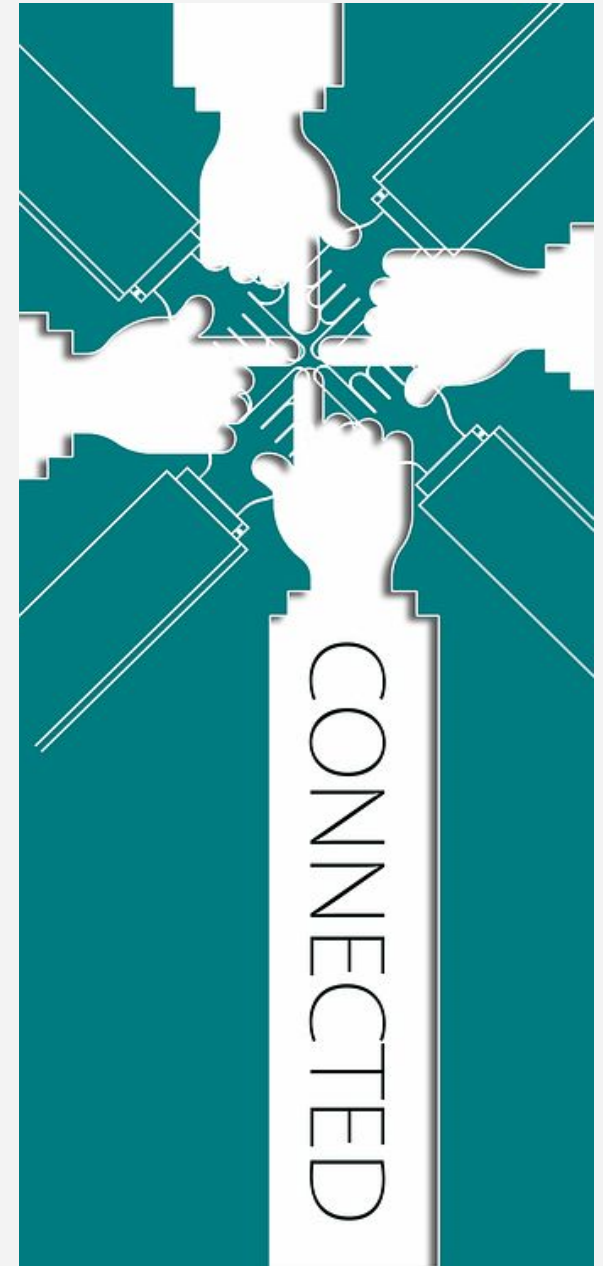
Making virtual language exchanges work

1. How it all started & how we found each other



Making virtual language exchanges work

1. How it all started & how we found each other
2. **What is Virtual Exchange? (and what it's not!)**



What is Virtual Exchange?

Terminology check

Virtual Exchange or VE

=

- ✓ Telecollaboration □ FL
- ✓ Online Intercultural Exchange □ FL
- ✓ COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) □ North America
- ✓ Teletandem or Telles □ South Am, Brazil
- ✓ Global Virtual Teams □ Management & Business

What is Virtual Exchange.. and what it is NOT?



- ✓ VE is technology-mediated.
- ✓ VE brings together students online.
- ✓ VE engages students in structured and specific learning tasks.
- ✓ VE is designed, developed and supervised by educators.
- ✓ VE fosters mutual understanding and collaboration.
- ✓ VE is designed to ensure that progress and success can be measured.
- ✓ VE is guided to help students reflect on what they learn.
- ✓ VE is sustained over an agreed period of time with regular interactions.
- ✓ VE is learner-led once students have engaged with the programme.



- × No magic 'match and learn'.
- × No replacement or competition for physical mobility

Making virtual language exchanges work

1. How it all started & how we found each other
2. What is Virtual Exchange? (and what it's not!)
3. **What are the benefits of a virtual language exchange?**

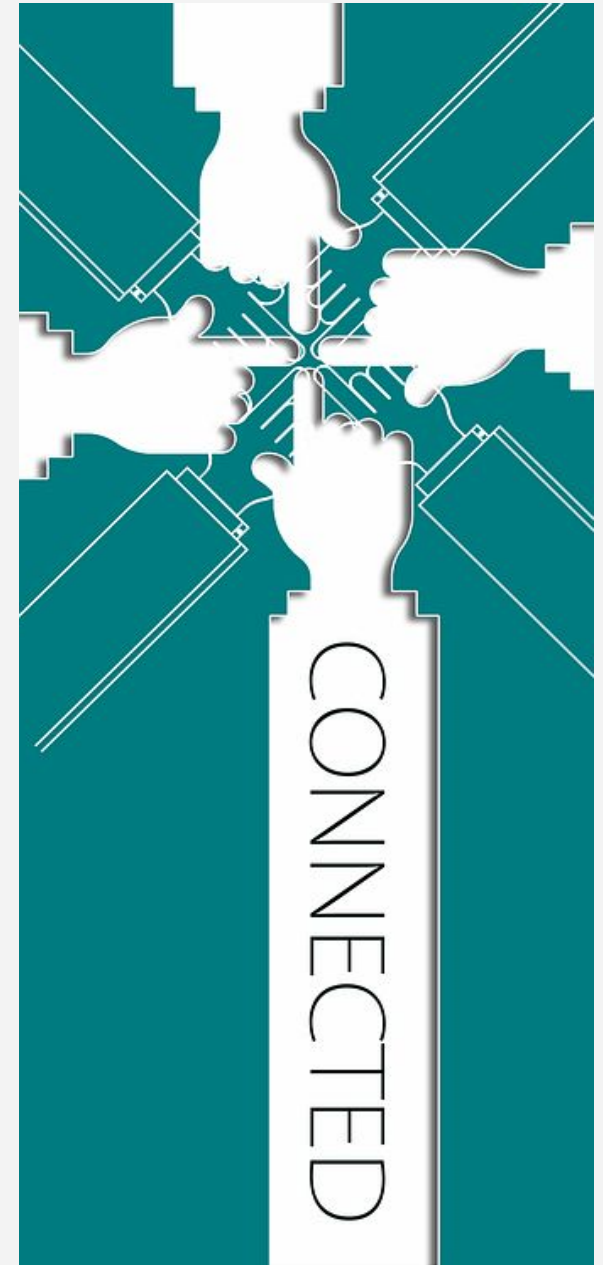


What are the benefits of a virtual language exchange?

- i. Gaining confidence with the language
- ii. Giving the language a real-world context: taking risks
- iii. Collaborative learning
- iv. Cultural exchange / Interculturality / Adaptability
- v. Organisation & time-management skills

Making virtual language exchanges work

1. How it all started & how we found each other
2. What is Virtual Exchange? (and what it's not!)
3. What are the benefits of a virtual language exchange?
4. **Framework & modalities**



Questions to consider

- What is the overarching aim?
- What are the learning objectives?
- What will the learning tasks be?
- What technology will be used?
- How and for how long?
- What evidence will there be of students' progress?

start with the end in mind

AIM, MODALITIES and SUCCESS CRITERIA

Aim

To help our university students improve their language and intercultural skills through a series of guided bilingual (French/ English) exchanges.

Modalities

- **Type of exchange:** e-tandem / video calls
- **Duration of calls:** minimum 40 minutes (½ English, ½ French)
- **Frequency:** once a week.
- **Duration:** 6 weeks.
- **Topics:** conversations based on suggested topics that students agree upon ahead of time.
- **Video platform used:** according to students' preference

Success criteria

Completion of a Learning Journal / *'Journal de Bord'*

Framework & modalities

Guidelines for students

- ✓ Prepare for your sessions before you meet online.
- ✓ Try to meet at the same time every week to form a habit.
- ✓ Make sure you agree on a topic for the following session at the end of each meeting.
- ✓ Be considerate of each other's time and switch languages halfway.
- ✓ Be mindful of sensitive or culturally loaded topics.
- ✓ Make sure to take notes both for your own learning and for your partner's learning during the meeting.
- ✓ Fill out the *Learning Journal* after each session and send it to your project co-ordinator.

Framework & modalities

Examples of suggested topics

- Education
- Food
- Travel
- Your city
- The arts
- Music
- Films or series
- Cultural differences
- Sports & hobbies
- History
- Books and literature
- The news / Current affairs
- Plans for the future and life goals

Inspired by material from [SEAGULL](#),

(Smart Educational Autonomy through Guided Language Learning)

aims to support tandem learning.

funded by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme.

Fantastic bank of resources, ideas and material!

Session 1	Topic: Getting to know you
Ideas	Finding out about your partner. Hobbies, interests, what they are studying.
Resources	Look here for ideas.
Preparation	Send an email to your VE facilitator to talk about yourself : your name, your age, where you are from, what you are studying, what your interests and hobbies are, what your plans for the future are – this will then be shared with your partner ahead of the first session. Prepare questions for them and think about what to say about yourself.
Session 2	Topic: The education system
Ideas	Finding out about how the higher education system works in France/ the UK. Discovering differences between the two systems.
Resources	Topic questions on education. Vocabulary for education.
Preparation	Send your partner a short video, article or link to a website that talks about the education system in France/ England. This could be something recent from the news e.g. linked to the pandemic/ tuition fees etc. It could also be something more explanatory about the system. What would you like to share?
Sessions 3, 4, 5 et 6	Feel free to choose from the following list of topics. Of course, you and your partner must agree on the same topics for the same weeks!
	Topic: Food
Ideas	Find out about famous dishes from your partner's country/ region/ city. Share the famous dishes from your country/ region/ city. Talk about attitudes to food in France/ the UK. Talk about eating habits in France/ the UK. Talk about food shopping habits in France/ the UK.
Resources	Topic questions on food. Vocabulary for recipes (pages 4-5) Vocabulary for describing food
Preparation	There are many different possibilities. Send a picture of your favourite dish/ something you've eaten that week/ the aisles in a supermarket/ a market that you go to. Send a recipe of a dish you like to prepare. Send an article/ video related to food in your country. What would you like to share?

Making virtual language exchanges work

1. How it all started & how we found each other
2. What is Virtual Exchange? (and what it's not!)
3. What are the benefits of a virtual language exchange?
4. Framework & modalities
5. **Practicalities – getting the VE up and running**



Practicalities – getting the VE up and running

1. Voluntary applications
2. Selection criteria
3. Information meeting
4. Finding the right partnerships

Profiles

Examples



Bonjour, je m'appelle ..., j'ai 21 ans et j'habite à Lyon. J'étudie actuellement à l'ENS de Lyon la langue espagnole après avoir obtenu une licence en Humanités et passé un bac scientifique. Je suis née à La Rochelle, une jolie ville de bord de mer située dans le Sud-Ouest de la France. J'ai ensuite passé trois années à Paris et deux années à Versailles pour mes études, deux magnifiques villes chargées d'histoire et remplies de beauté.

Je suis passionnée par l'art en général, mais plus particulièrement par la littérature et le cinéma. J'admire, comme artistes français, les écrivains Stendhal, Balzac et Marguerite Yourcenar, et les cinéastes Henri-Georges Clouzot, Jacques Demy, François Truffaut et Luc Besson. Par ailleurs, je joue de la harpe et de la flûte traversière depuis toute petite, et je pratique aussi la danse classique, un art exigeant et gracieux qui me passionne. J'aime aussi suivre la politique et comprendre les débats qui agitent nos sociétés, en essayant de comprendre les enjeux grâce à une perspective historique.



Hi, my name is I am currently living in Bristol, but I am originally from Kent, near London. I am in the first year of a Masters in “Security, Conflict and Human Rights”, in the department of Politics and Social Policy. The Masters is to prepare me for a PhD that I will begin next year about inequality and the environment in Colombia. I have a wide range of interests that include world politics and current affairs, but also literature and the arts. My undergraduate degree was in English Literature and since graduating I have been eagerly searching for novels and authors in other languages. This is one of the main reasons why I am learning French – both to read books from francophone countries and to watch French cinema without subtitles!

Apart from reading my hobbies also include watching football, listening to DJs (I’m a big fan of French House music), and more recently cooking. For the last few years, I have also lived in various parts of Spain, teaching English in academies and schools. Partly due to this (and also my research), I maintain an interest in both Spanish and Latin American culture and politics.

Practicalities – getting the VE up and running

1. Voluntary applications
2. Selection criteria
3. Information meeting
4. Finding the right partnerships
5. Making the first contact
6. Managing the project from afar

Learning Journal

Example of a session

Session 3

Date of the exchange: 15/03/2021

Theme: **Cinema and series**

My documents

I talked about Jean-Luc Godard, one of the most famous French directors in 1960's; We also talked about "La Nouvelle vague", a cinema's movement created at this time;



And I present to Connie, *Les Demoiselles de Rochefort*, a movie created by Jacques Demy and we listened on of the music of the movie (which is cult in France!):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Edqk-jQAmIY>

Connie's documents & Vocabulary

Would I lie to you: https://www.comedy.co.uk/tv/would_i_lie_to_you/ = famous program (BBC : <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007r3n8>). A television **set**: un plateau (télévisé).

A host, a presenter : un présentateur télé

Film recommandé par Connie : *Les vacances de Monsieur Hulot* de Jacques Tati

To **mock** : se moquer, caricaturer

Magic wand : baguette magique

The vomit: le vomis.

Take advantage of (qqch): profiter de quelqu'un

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1ZYhVpdXbQ> : *Dancing in the rain* (music hall)

to be **provocative**: être provocateur

a detective: un détective

to have an unusual feature: avoir une apparence originale, atypique (on parlait de Tilda Swinton)

Bilan de la séance: It was soooo great to talk about movies and series because we like the same things! I didn't have the time to talk about other famous French director but it doesn't matter because it was spontaneous... We talked about other interesting things!

Theme decided for next lesson: **art, music and youtube videos**

Practicalities – getting the VE up and running

1. Voluntary applications
2. Selection criteria
3. Information meeting
4. Finding the right partnerships
5. Making the first contact
6. Managing the project from afar
7. Constant collaboration with partner colleague

Making virtual language exchanges work

1. How it all started & how we found each other
2. What is Virtual Exchange? (and what it's not!)
3. What are the benefits of a virtual language exchange?
4. Framework & modalities
5. Practicalities – getting the VE up and running
6. **What we have learnt**



What we have learnt

Challenges

- Time & schedules
- Maintaining students' motivation

Unexpected outcomes

- Student ownership of learning
- Long-lasting friendships
- Skills development
- Professional development

Making virtual language exchanges work

1. How it all started & how we found each other
2. What is Virtual Exchange? (and what it's not!)
3. What are the benefits of a virtual language exchange?
4. Framework & modalities
5. Practicalities – getting the VE up and running
6. What we have learnt
7. **List of links**



Making virtual language exchanges work – Links

Don't know where to start? Looking for ideas? Need help to find a Virtual Exchange Partner? Look no further... 😊

- Material from [SEAGULL](#) (Smart Educational Autonomy through Guided Language Learning)
- Telecollaboration in Higher Education: [UNcollaboration](#)
- Virtual Exchange with [Erasmus+](#)
- Virtual Exchange in the US: [The Stevens Initiative](#)
- COIL organisation: [Sunny Coil](#)
- Evidence-Validated Online Learning through Virtual Exchange: [EVOLVE](#)
(EVOLVE Project now closed but great bank of resources)
- [Dr Robert O'Dowd's](#) research works
- University of Bath: [Skills Centre: Foreign Languages](#)
- ENS de Lyon: [Centre de Langues](#)
- [Virtual Language Exchanges](#) at the University of Bath

Jessica Etridge

Maître de Langue

École Normale Supérieure de Lyon (France)

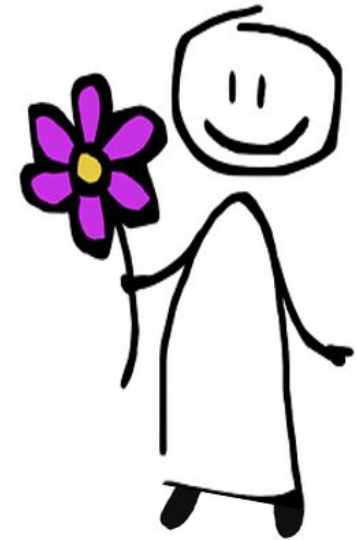
jessica.etridge@ens-lyon.fr

Anne-Catherine Mechler

Hypothetical Virtual Exchange

What kind of VE would you put in place in your institution/context?

1. What would the final outcomes be? What would the main goal of the VE be?
2. Would it be project-based or more of a simple exchange?
3. Would the students work in tandems or small groups? Or a mix of both?
4. How long would the VE last?
5. How would the educators be involved?
6. How would you measure the success of the VE?



Any queries, please don't hesitate to contact us!

Jessica Etridge

Maître de Langue (English)

École Normale Supérieure de Lyon (France)

jessica.etridge@ens-lyon.fr



Anne-Catherine Mechler

Teaching Fellow (French)

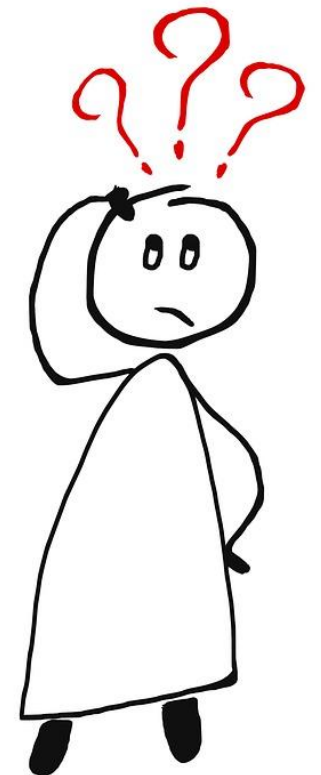
University of Bath (UK)

a.mechler@bath.ac.uk

Skills
Centre



UNIVERSITY OF
BATH



Feedback from students

... when asked to describe their experience in 3 adjectives...



Feedback from students 2

Through the VE Programme, you become a better listener and develop a greater appreciation for another culture. This increased cultural awareness is very important in broadening the mind and working in harmony with people.

We helped each other! We had the right amount of support, but also the right amount of independence.

I had a great feeling with my partner and the organisation (French/English) offers us a moment without any "shame situation" because we are not afraid by mistakes.

It exceeded my expectations! I didn't expect to come out of the programme with a friend who I still talk to even after the programme is over, so that is fantastic!

It has fostered my cultural understanding and improved my navigation of a new culture at a time where this is difficult to achieve. It has involved independent work, time management and respect for the other person and their preferences, all crucial in the modern, interconnected world.

I learned a lot about Wales (she came from this area), and I was just glad talking in English. However, I don't really know if it helped improve my fluency, maybe just 6 weeks were not enough.