

# Virtual Exchange: A Viable Reality in Academia

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Presented by:  
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# OUTLINE

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- Define Virtual Exchange
  - List its Benefits
  - Identify Expected Challenges
  - Suggest Engaging Activities
  - Share a Faculty Testimony
  - Relate VE Initiatives to LAU Strategic Plan
  - Call for Action
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# What is Virtual Exchange (VE)?

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Virtual exchange in higher education:

1. involves the use of digital technologies to facilitate collaborative learning and intercultural communication between students and faculty from different academic institutions around the world.
2. creates an interactive and innovative space for students to learn in more engaging and creative environments by enabling participants to take part in joint courses, research, discussion, dialogues or projects without the need for physical travel.
3. is a virtual mobility providing a global learning experience that has become a viable reality in academia!



# What are VE Benefits?

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The common benefits are:

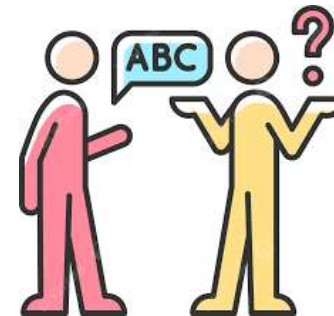
- Exposure and Collaboration
- Diversity and Inclusivity
- Digital Literacy and Communication Skills
- Accessibility and Cost Efficiency
- Human Interaction Sustainability



# What are VE Expected Challenges?

Expected challenges can be:

- Time Zone Difference
- Cultural Misunderstanding
- Language Barrier
- Students' Participation and Engagement
- Institutions Preparedness
- Technical Problems and IT Support



# What are Certain VE Activities?

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It is recommended to consider some of the engaging activities:

- Socratic Dialogue Seminar
- Harkness Activity
- Role Playing or Simulations
- Reflections or Journals
- Social Annotation
- Peer Revision Activity



# LAU Faculty Testimony

## ADOPTING A DIGITAL SOCRATIC DIALOGUE THROUGH VIRTUAL EXCHANGE

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### INTRODUCTION



This project connected students from Lebanon (LAU) and Morocco (AUI) on topics related to technology and moral philosophy. Students met through digital platforms, exchanged ideas and developed a **low-stakes** virtual exchange assignment together.

### OBJECTIVE

To emphasize dialogue as means of truth-seeking and decision-making. Using Socratic Dialogue as a means of **dialogic inquiry**

### RELATED LITERATURE

Students learning in an inquiry-based virtual environment reported **higher levels of engagement** (Ismailov, 2021) virtual team collaboration **develops intercultural competence skills** in students (Swartz et al., 2020)

### STAGES



- 4-5 students in each group
- Shared resources/guidelines on Socratic Dialogue (Google Doc)
- Icebreaker Activities (via Webex/Zoom)
- Model Dialogue Session
- Socratic Dialogue Session (via Webex/Zoom)

### SOCRATIC DIALOGUE

Discussions, not Debates  
Socrates claimed to 'know nothing'  
Raising concerns, doubts  
Asking Questions



### ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

- **Recognize** ethical issue
- **Identify** Stakeholders
- **Discuss** fact vs. opinion
- **Evaluate** alternative actions
- **Reflect** upon possible outcomes



### CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

Some negative attitudes (Basharina, 2007) initially; lack of challenging others' views (Lee, 2011; Liaw & Master, 2010), technological problems (Lee, 2009; Liaw, 2006; Wang & Chang, 2011)





# How Does VE Relate to LAU Strategic Plan?

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- Pillar 2: Educate for Impact

Prepare LAU students for the rapid global transformations resulting from the fourth industrial revolution and numerous political issues as presented by the UN SDGs through exposing them to scholars from different local as well as international institutions.



# Call For Action

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- LAU is reaching out to collaborate with AMICAL institutions to integrate virtual exchange programs.
- We are interested in a collaboration with faculty teaching philosophy or ethics.

- Our contacts:
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# Thank You

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