

What to expect during your VE journey



- 1 Be open-minded about working with teachers and students from different expertises and disciplines. Everyone has something to offer and the learning outcomes can be really inspiring and offer new perspectives and viewpoints on given topics.
- 2 Manage your expectations. Remember that 'less is more'. Avoid overloading the course with content and make sure you allow time for your students to get to know each other before they start working together. They will work together better if they have been given time for this.
- 3 Practise empathy and curiosity at all times and pass these soft-skills onto your students as it will serve them well when they have to collaborate and work with people from different backgrounds and cultures.
- 4 Expect the unexpected and accept that things won't be perfect the first time round. That is all part of the learning. Keep a record of what worked and what did not work so well so you can make changes for the next time.
- 5 Be prepared to deal with conflict when working with people from different cultures, and prepare for this before the VE begins by trying to anticipate the challenges you and your partner may encounter.
- 6 It is important that the teams/groups are made up of students from different nationalities and backgrounds to ensure an intercultural communicative experience can take place.
- 7 Be flexible about which language(s) are used during the exchange. Don't focus on the language aspect if this is not the point of the exchange. Make sure the students understand that they are not being judged or assessed on their language ability.
- 8 Be aware of the different time zones of your partner institutions when planning synchronous meetings. Make sure meetings are as convenient as possible for all participants to give them ample opportunity to attend.
- 9 Be mindful of semester dates, festivals and other public holidays which may impact attendance.
- 10 When dealing with wicked problems, make sure you analyse the problem not only on a general level, but also in relation to the targets for the specific SDG you are dealing with. The course objectives should relate to the targets.