



**Cross-Disciplinary Organisation for Telecollaboration
and Virtual Exchange in Higher Education**

<https://www.unicollaboration.org/>

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Dear colleagues,

This is the second of what we hope will become a regular quarterly newsletter from our still very young organization. In these first few months of 2018 UNICollaboration as an organization and its members have been extremely busy in many different activities. We would like to take this opportunity just before our bi-annual conference to give you an update on what is going on and what opportunities there are for members to participate more actively.

- The UNICollaboration Board members

PROJECT UPDATES

UNICollaboration representatives Sarah Guth, Vice-President, and Francesca Helm went to Brussels for the kick-off meeting for the new groundbreaking [Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Project](#). UNICollaboration is part of a consortium with several other organisations: Sharing Perspectives Foundation, Soliya, Anna Lind Foundation and UNIMED. [Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange](#) is part of the Erasmus+ programme, providing an accessible, ground-breaking way for young people to engage in intercultural learning. Working with Youth Organisations and Universities, the programme is open to any young person aged 18-30 residing in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean.



Upcoming Events

25-27 April

[3rd UNICollaboration Conference, Krakow Poland](#) and [UNICollaboration Board elections](#)

May 6

Deadline to sign up for UNICollaboration's professional development programs for the [Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Project](#).

October 2018

The Second UNICollaboration Research Methods Workshop will be held at the *Université d'Aix-Marseille*.

Important Announcement

As part of the [Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Project](#), UNICollaboration is recruiting universities, professors and youth organizations to set up TEPs, or Transnational Exchange Projects for the autumn semester 2018. We are providing training in May-June 2018. Find out more by clicking [here](#).

The goal is to expand the reach and scope of the Erasmus+ programme via Virtual Exchange (telecollaboration), that is: technology-enabled, sustained, people-to-people dialogues which use new media platforms – involving young people from Europe and the South Mediterranean. UNICollaboration is involved in many ways, such as:



- disseminating information about all opportunities to our members
- providing free online training courses for professors and youth workers interested in integrating virtual exchange into their programmes
- carrying out monitoring and evaluation for all of the activities

Follow (and disseminate) the [Facebook](#) and Twitter accounts (using the hashtag #erasmusvirtual)!



[The EVALUATE project](#) aims to evaluate the impact of Virtual Exchange on student-teachers involved in Initial Teacher Education in the participating European countries and regions. The project is now running the second round of exchanges with classes of students in Initial Teacher Education. We currently have 9 virtual exchanges underway. At the same time, we are also busy analysing the data from the first round of exchanges. The initial results have been very positive and it is our intention to present the results from the first round of exchanges at our project meeting in Budapest in July. In the autumn, we will then update and supplement those findings and results with the results from the second round of exchanges and have the final results ready for presentation in December 2018.

In an effort to further promote the project, we have created [a 'success story' link](#) on our website where examples of successful exchanges are being presented. We will be updating this regularly over the coming months.



The [EVOLVE \(Evidence-Validated Online Learning through Virtual Exchange\)](#) project aims to mainstream Virtual Exchange (VE) as an innovative form of collaborative international learning across disciplines in Higher Education (HE) institutions in Europe and beyond. It is specifically focused on promoting VE through the Coimbra Group and SGroup University Networks. The first meeting was held at Groningen in early February. A first milestone was reached by the team, which includes HE institutions and NGOs (Sharing Perspectives Foundation and Soliya), a comprehensive definition of Virtual Exchange which can be found [here](#).

UPDATES FROM THE TRAINING TEAM

We are very pleased to inform you that so far we have been invited to deliver the following training sessions:

- IALIC Conference, Barcelona, 25th November 2016 (for the [KONECT](#) project)
- [ICCAGE Conference](#), Prague, June 2017
- University of Groningen, February, 2018 (for the [ENVOIE](#) project)



Participants at the UNICollaboration Training for the ENVOIE project in Groningen.

Members of UNICollaboration who are also [EVALUATE](#) project members ran two training events for trainee teachers involved in Initial Teacher Education in Europe and beyond.

- The first took place at the [University of Padova, Italy, on 5-6 July 2017](#). It was a 2-day workshop with a group of teacher trainers who subsequently ran telecollaborative exchanges with their students during the winter semester '17. The participants received an introduction to telecollaboration and also had a chance to collaborate online with their partner-teachers (those who could not attend in person).
- The second took place at the [University of León, Spain, on 11-12 January 2018](#) with teacher trainers who are currently running their telecollaborative exchanges.

UNICollaboration has also taken on responsibility for Training to develop Transnational Exchange Projects (TEPs) in the context of [Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange](#). The first edition of the Basic Training: An Introduction to TEPs and VE took place in March 2018. Below is a schedule for the upcoming trainings in May-June 2018.

Activity	Basic Training	Collaborative TEP Design	Advanced Training for Experienced Practitioners
Proposal Due	NA	May 6	May 6
Notice of Acceptance	NA	May 13	May 13
Online Training	May 20 – June 16 (2-3 hours per week)	May 20 – July 14 (2-3 hours per week)	May 20 – June 16 (2-3 hours per week)
TEP Implementation	NA	6-10 weeks where semesters overlap some time between August and December 2018	
Badges awarded to students and professors	Upon completion of Training	January 2018	

For more information on TEP Training within Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange, click [here](#).

More opportunities for training will also be offered within the recently granted **EVOLVE project** (see above). It will provide training is for educators across various disciplines in Higher Education. They can join online training together with educators from the partner institution with which they want to set up the online exchanges. Stakeholders involved in developing the exchanges: teaching assistants, pedagogical advisors, internationalisation officers, and education managers are invited too. EVOLVE will offer **online training in two iterations: in autumn 2018 and in spring 2019**. To sign up please visit the project website: <https://evolve-erasmus.eu/>



If your institution is interested in having a training tailored specifically to the needs of the local faculty, please get in touch with the training team at: training@unicollaboration.org.

COLLABORATIONS

International Virtual Exchange Conference (IVEC): The Virtual Exchange field is growing. More institutions, organizations and individuals are interested in offering new internationalisation-at-home opportunities through telecollaboration and other types of virtual exchange. In recognition of this, UNICollaboration is joining with colleagues from the SUNY Center for Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), De-Paul University, the University of Washington-Bothell, East Carolina University, and Drexel University to launch the International Virtual Exchange Conference. In just the past few months there have been virtual exchange conferences in Chicago (US), New York (US) and our upcoming conference in Krakow (Poland). We hope that coming together with other experts in the field will enrich the experience and learning for all.



International
VIRTUAL EXCHANGE
Conference

The conference will move locations every year. The first International Virtual Exchange Conference will be held in Seattle (US) in October 2019 and then return to Europe for the UNICollaboration Conference in 2020. Stay tuned for more information.

CONAHEC - COIL International Faculty Collaboration for Teaching Climate Resilience: Our partners at the SUNY COIL Center are offering opportunities for UNICollaboration members interested in the climate and its impact on our planet and civilization. Higher education institutions have a great deal of power to shape how humanity responds. Educational institutions have the ability to teach students across disciplines and professions how to build systems of human resilience to ensure that decisions are made for responsible stewardship of our ecosystems. The Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC) and the State University of New York's Center for Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) have created of the **International Faculty Collaboration for Teaching Climate Resilience** to help higher education institutions share knowledge and impart solutions by building and strengthening international higher education partnerships.

For more information, see their website at <http://coil.suny.edu/coil-conahec-climateresilience>

UPDATES FROM THE RESEARCH TEAM

The Second UNICollaboration Research Methods Workshop will be held at the *Université d'Aix-Marseille* in early October 2018. The workshop will focus on three theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of online exchanges: Conversation Analysis; Multimodality and Multiliteracies; Design-Based Research.

Speakers & workshop leaders include Professor Anthony Liddicoat (University of Warwick).

Local organizer: Dr. Marco Cappellini.

Further details available soon.

UPDATES FROM THE PUBLICATIONS TEAM

JOURNAL OF VIRTUAL EXCHANGE

The publications team has been working hard on the new journal, which will be called the Journal of Virtual Exchange – JVE. The journal will be online-only, open-access, and continuously published, ensuring rapid turnaround of submissions. It will publish research articles, practice reports with responses, and keynote contributions. The finishing touches are currently being put to the journal, including two exciting inaugural contributions. The Call for Papers will be circulated before the Krakow conference, where it will be officially launched.

Review: In the journal *Alsic*, Shona Whyte wrote a review of *Online intercultural exchange: policy, pedagogy and practice* edited by UNICollaboration Board members Robert O'Dowd and Tim Lewis, announced in the last newsletter. The review can be found by clicking [here](#).

Privacy Policy

UNICollaboration have been developing a comprehensive privacy policy and taking measures to ensure that we are compliant with the [GDPR](#), the new EU regulations on data protection. Our privacy policy can be found on the Home page of our website or by clicking [here](#).

Furthermore, in order to comply with the GDPR, you will have to sign up for future newsletters using the form on the [UNICollaboration website](#) (see picture at right). The newsletter will be distributed through MailChimp, which allows you to unsubscribe at any time.

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Join us! Are you interested in these initiatives and projects? Would you like to bring your expertise to our growing community? Go to <https://www.unicollaboration.org/> and click on "Join".