



## Intellectual Output 2:

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# Online Dialogue Guide

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## 1. Online Dialogue Guide Overview

This Online Dialogue Guide is a practical tool to support teachers and educators in facilitating meaningful online exchanges between their students and peers. It aims to address the challenge of ensuring lasting, active and collaborative online interaction and participation between students over time despite availability of many online tools.

It will provide guidance on how to plan and facilitate online exchanges and use tools most effectively to achieve rich interaction and dialogue between children and young people online, especially within an international dimension.

From our experience of working with schools across Europe<sup>1</sup>, we have identified that the lack of a meaningful voice from children and young people within their school and community lives acts as a barrier to inclusion and leadership potential and personal progression. Giving children and youth a voice is a crucial and yet often marginal aspect of their learning. This does not only mean allowing them to express their needs, ideas and wishes but also to be able to have meaningful conversations both on- and offline. Teachers and educators have an important role as facilitators of these conversations and we have learnt from them that they often need guidance for facilitating online dialogues. This guide will aim at providing support to teachers in this respect and ultimately enhancing children and young people's capacity of taking action and influencing change in their schools and wider communities.

This Online Dialogue Guide, can be used separately or as part of the overall CEPNET approach for primary schools which aims at introducing them to new approaches in relation to promoting empowerment and self-activation within the classroom. Please look up the CEPNET website for more info <https://cepnet.eu/>.

By speaking with primary school teachers in four different countries regarding their online experience and needs as well as those of their students we discovered that both are in need of developing good ICT skills, having good and reliable internet connection, updated equipment and lots of time to be able to work well online. Covid 19 pushed many children in Europe to spend more time online and they are subsequently now more familiar with communication tools in addition to the online games, which they were playing before. They are generally more confident in using devices and have developed more skills to be online, although these skills are not always used appropriately and need guidance. Teachers have also pointed out the need to improve language skills, especially English, which is often the language chosen in exchanges. They all recognise online exchanges and the possibility of creating and/or accessing a broad network of deepened and well structured knowledge as an immense resource for children's learning.

What lessons have we learnt and are we learning from Covid 19?

The way schools use the online world dramatically changed due to the pandemic and has demonstrated the need to accelerate a process of digital transition, particularly in our education systems. Schools were forced to quickly make use of online and blended learning approaches and many of our teachers pointed to challenges in providing sufficient levels of support.[1] The

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<sup>1</sup> The partners involved in this guide were part of a prior project called WYRED <https://wyredproject.eu/>, where over 2000 young people from across Europe worked together to develop and refine a means of advocating and communicating their concerns and voices about issues that were affecting them.

pandemic massively reinforced pre-existing educational differences and inequalities. Children and young peoples' mental health have been affected, feelings of anxiety, fear and isolation have become common. As the crisis unwinds and the impact of the forced digital transition is becoming better understood, students and teachers are telling us that they need more empowering and effective approaches in order to engage with digital platforms and tools. Such methods require a commitment to inclusivity to ensure that young people with fewer opportunities are not further excluded. The pandemic has also had significant effects on families - especially mothers who were often left unsupported to reconcile schooling, work and family life.

The digital transition will also have stronger outcomes where the approach is working to promote meaningful and active participation in democratic life. Our initial needs analysis work with teachers emphasised these key issues:

- Dealing with the Covid-19 crisis opened the potential for new behaviours and new digital ways of working within and outside of the classroom. Children thrive by learning from each other.
- Teachers and students both need to be fully engaged in a meaningful and inclusive manner in order that this potential can be maximised.
- Students and teachers need to be supported and empowered to have a voice in shaping this digital transition in their school communities.

This Online Dialogue Guide will take on these indications and lessons learnt in order to provide teachers with the support and preparation needed to facilitate meaningful online exchanges.

## 2. Preparing Online Dialogue

### 2.1 Know Yourself and Know Your Groups

As a teacher, facilitating online moments, whether they are classes, debates, exchanges or other activities is NOT the same as being in the classroom. Recognising this as well as knowing that you are a good teacher/educator, who can make the transition to teach/facilitate online are the very first steps needed to prepare for an online dialogue/exchange. As a teacher you will need to assess your skills (including the gaps) in order to integrate meaningful online moments in your teaching. A useful starting point to address your skills is the European Digital Competence Framework <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/digcompedu> which brings together several international and national frameworks, [self-assessment tools](#) and training programmes for educators. By browsing through the website and framework you can explore 22 different competences organised in six areas. The focus is not so much on technical skills but aims to detail how digital technologies can be used to enhance and innovate education and training. The teacher self assessment tool will, however, also allow you to identify your training needs and offer targeted training. Below is a synthesis of the DIGCOMPEDU Framework, which clearly illustrates the six areas under three target group headings: 1) Educators' professional competences 2) Educators' pedagogic competences and 3) Learners' competences. In order for teachers and educators to facilitate effective online dialogues and exchanges they should mainly focus on the middle circle which focuses on strengthening Teaching and Learning, Empowering Learners, Assessment and Digital Resources.

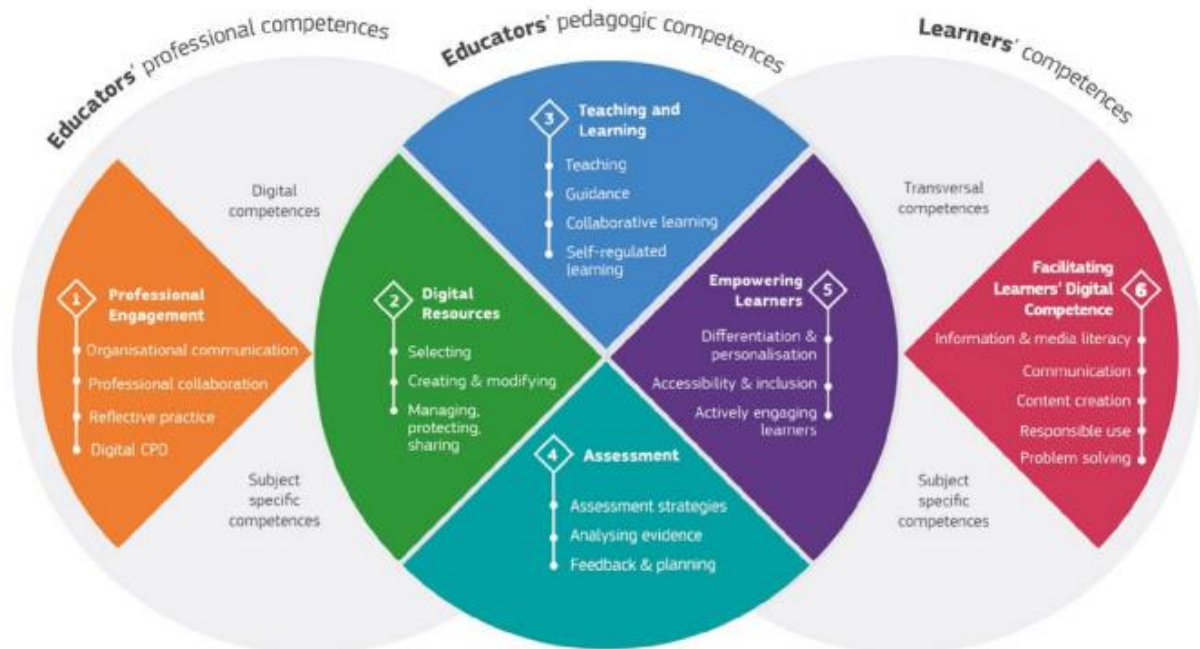


Figure 1 Synthesis of the DIGCOMPEDU Framework

Reflecting on the above mentioned digital competences could mark the start of the teachers' self-evaluation and pinpoint which skills need reinforcing. The European School Education Platform<sup>2</sup> is a useful place for teachers and educators to visit in order to further their professional development with online and on-site courses, webinars and teaching materials. It could be helpful to participate in one of the many courses available to strengthen any digital competences, which you feel less confident about.

As a teacher you DO know your class and being aware of your students' learning needs and styles will help structure creative engagement online just as it supports you in class. Not all students learn in the same way both offline and online. According to Howard Gardner, we have multiple intelligences and these affect the ways we learn. Gardner's analysis took place in a pre-digital society and recent studies show that his theory is even more pertinent when applied to digital learning. With the tremendous options and continual transformations available, educators must appraise instructional techniques, specifically the use of technology, with consideration to various learning styles and intelligences in order to engage students in their learning and also to reinforce learning in various ways (Statti, Torres, 2020)<sup>3</sup>

Learning online is very different from being online, which young people and the adults around them sometimes struggle to differentiate. Your students may need information and media literacy before moving on to other online activities and it is important that this knowledge and relevant skills are known by the teacher. You may find different ways of assessing your students, such as through a baseline survey or quiz, by setting an assignment to be done online in class, by discussing these skills in groups. Having said this, your learners are probably digital learners as they have been born in a constantly changing digital society and may have other, complimentary digital skills that can be shared amongst the learning group(s). Giving value to the diversity of the class will enrich everyone's learning.

It is equally important for you, as a teacher, to know the characteristics of the group your students will be interacting with online. As co-facilitating teachers, you will need to exchange info about your groups before they meet up online. **Do not underestimate** this as there are many factors which influence your learners as a class: number of students, gender mix, special learning needs, significant personal backgrounds, socio-cultural contexts (if relevant), behaviour and attitudes, etc. Plan to speak together as teachers before bringing your groups together to share all the relevant information and discuss any specific issues.

Covid 19 has taught us some important lessons about children and young people having been forced to learn online including the need to honour students' emotional states when being and exchanging online. Your online exchanges may occur with you being together with your class or with your students being at home/elsewhere. There are some activities that can help you manage your students' emotions wherever they may be such as:

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<sup>2</sup> <https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/en>

<sup>3</sup> Examining Multiple Intelligences and Digital Technologies for Enhanced Learning Opportunities. Aubrey L. C. Statti, Kelly M. Torres. 2020

- The need to create space for learners to acknowledge their emotions before starting the online exchange, during the activity or at the end if necessary. This can be done by asking students to show and share how they feel in different ways such as: using a symbolic image, using an emoji, expressing a number between 1 and 10 that represents whether they feel sad (1) or happy (10) and then asking for feedback, using music or other stimulus, which can represent a feeling and then asking for feedback. (see chapters 3 and 6 for further ideas)
- Becoming familiar with checking in. This is an important habit for the teacher to establish as it helps you to welcome everyone, recognise their presence and any significant issues as well as creating a safe and comfortable online space. It can be done by asking simple questions to each student, playing calm or upbeat background music, sharing an image or video, asking the group how they feel (see previous point) etc.
- Model grace and patience. The digital world is a fast one but digital learning needs time just as all learning processes. As previously mentioned, not all students learn in the same ways and this needs to be respected. Do not rush your students and support them at all times.
- Keep all engaged. There may be moments when some students are not directly contributing to a conversation or activity, as they require a limited number of students. Plan for this and create activities and/or alternatives for those who are not in the front line.
- Use frequent breaks. Time in front of the screen should be limited to approx. 30/40 min depending on the age of the learners and activities being done. Students can be asked to move away from their screens and preferably avoid other devices for 5 minutes, to move around physically if they can, they can also be asked to simply close their eyes (with videos off) and breathe deeply, listening to a guiding voice or music. Teachers can also use one of these breaks to check their learners' emotional states if needed (see above). If you are together with your class, break from the screen together.
- Be aware of gaps. There may be learners in your group or the group you're interacting with who have learning, technological, social and or emotional difficulties or indeed a number of other challenges. Again, model patience, discretion and understanding offering support at all times. If you see that one of your students is in difficulty, try talking to them if you are with them or sending him/her a neutral message via chat.

## **2.2 Prepare and Test the Technology**

We have become familiar with many platforms and apps, especially due to the Covid pandemic. Whatever platform is chosen for the exchange, you and your groups may be learning the technology for the first time. Despite there being many similarities between platforms, each has its own characteristics and its weak points. Never leave the online exchange session to the last minute before having tested the technology first. A test run can ideally be done with the teacher/group you'll be engaging with. Here are some simple recommendations:

- Set up your video (and encourage your learners to keep their videos on if they're in remote).

- Make sure your face can be seen. If you're on a phone, find a place to put it down so it's stable.
- Make sure you don't have strong light coming from behind you and consider the background with minimal distractions.
- Ideally be in a quiet place as this reduces background noise and distraction.
- Try out the system. Make sure you can log-in. If you're using headphones (strongly recommended!) or external monitors, test them.

If you're going to do live sessions a lot, having two computer screens can help you keep an eye on all the different tools at once. Keeping your session outline and notes on paper in front of you can also help you manage your screen space.

If your learners are in remote, they may need to practise if they are unfamiliar with the platform chosen. Plan to share and teach the technology before the online dialogue. Invest your time developing your learners' skills regarding the technology if needed as the lack of skill will hamper your exchanges. If it's an ongoing group, this is even more true. Start with the simplest tools. For example, in video conferencing, beginning activities might have people share out loud or in the chat box. In a learning management system, start with a discussion forum. Start with the tools that are most straightforward and helpful. Explain new tools carefully and check for understanding. The first time you use a tool, explain how it will look to them on screen, what they have to do, and how to get help. Before starting the tool, ask for a thumbs up on camera or an "I'm ready" in the chat box. Try to catch early if some students are having trouble — encourage them in every way possible to speak up if something is not clear. Offer learners a way to get help. Whenever possible, invite an IT colleague to co-facilitate with you in case you/your group needs their technical support. Add new tools slowly. Both for yourself and for your learners use your basic tools in a variety of ways and only slowly add to your toolbox. Adding a new tool often adds energy and interest. Just balance that with the mental energy of learning new technology versus focus on your content or the main goals of the exchange. It can help the group if you acknowledge it's an experiment. Learners can also show a lot of compassion when we explain that we're going to try an experiment so we suggest for you to be transparent. It is, however, always good to have a plan B when carrying out activities or using tools.

There are, of course, several common technological issues, which we have become familiar with. Some of these have been addressed in a guide called *Leading Groups Online*<sup>4</sup>, published as a response to Covid 19 (see Appendix 2).

The speed of technologies changing our school landscapes will probably increase in the future and teachers and educators will most likely need regular professional development courses to remain up to date. Try to find out what courses are available and/or talk with your leadership colleagues to address these digital needs if necessary.

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<sup>4</sup> *Leading Groups Online: a down-and-dirty guide to leading online courses, meetings, trainings and events during the coronavirus pandemic (2020)* Jeanne Rewa, Daniel Hunter



### 2.3 Time Management

This aspect becomes even more important when moved online. When planning online dialogues, exchanges etc., it's fundamental to plan and manage the activities considering their preparation and follow up. In this sense, being online sometimes takes up even more time than being in class.

For students who are still getting familiar with online learning, like those affected by school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic transitioning to online or blended learning can take some getting used to. Give your students the time needed to get to know the different online environments that you'll be using, especially if they are in remote. Let them experiment and above all have fun.

For you, the teacher/educator, we suggest these three simple ideas to help you manage your online time better:

#### **1. Plan ahead.**

Planning ahead may be the most important tip as it will help you avoid stress and limit risks and challenges when facilitating online dialogues. (See 2.4 Summary of Planning Steps below)

*Step 1: What are the aims of the online dialogue/exchange?*

*Step 2: Schedule your online dialogues*

*Step 3: Plan what you need*

*Step 4: Prepare the online moment*

*Step 5: Set up your session technology*

*Step 6: Plan your reflection/evaluation*

#### **2. Set a schedule.**

Coordinate in advance with your colleagues and the teachers you will be exchanging with. Agree on the dates and times for your online dialogues (conscious of different time zones) and then prepare the steps you need to take, as a teacher and as a class to be ready to take part. Be sure to match the age groups and class sizes of your class.

#### **3. Concentrate on the moment and avoid multitasking.**

Facilitating online requires a lot of preparation and energy and you need concentration. Block out the time you need to focus on all the stages of the online dialogues. To maximise productivity, create to-do lists and take each task one by one.

As mentioned above (see Chapter 2.1) it's important to limit the length of sessions online for students including frequent breaks.

## **2.4 Summary of Key Planning Steps**

The preparation for setting up and facilitating online dialogue will involve several steps:

### **Step 1: What are the aims of the online dialogue/exchange?**

Start by looking at the most essential outcomes. These will need to be co-created between the teachers who will be facilitating their classes in the online dialogues.

### **Step 2: Schedule your online dialogues**

There are many factors to consider when choosing the dates and times of your online dialogues such as different school hours and lesson times, different time zones, coordinating with colleagues to have their support and availability and to avoid curriculum clashes such as important assignments, school trips, etc.

### **Step 3: Plan what you need**

This planning should help you address what you'll need to do in order for you and your class to be ready for the online setting. This will include:

a) a schedule that you need to establish with the counterpart teacher(s) that covers the online dialogue aims, contents, dates, length, etc.

b) constant communication between the co-facilitating teachers to discuss the needs of the class, dynamics, language skills etc.

c) the technical skills and equipment needed

d) check your ergonomics, especially if you will be there for a long time. Gather things that will support you physically and mentally to be relaxed and present. For example, water, stimuli, something that makes you and/or your class smile.

### **Step 4: Prepare the online moment**

Co-draft your session flow and activities with colleagues, co-facilitating teacher(s) and your class whenever possible. Many tools that you use in class can be adapted to an online context whether it means being online together with your class or having all your students online as well as the other group. There are many suitable activities that you can use to facilitate stimulating online dialogues and we will look at some in Chapter 6.

Be aware of time. You'll probably need to streamline the number of activities planned. Some activities, such as working in pairs/groups can be organised but need careful planning. If you think you may lose time between each activity, plan an alternative one. Instead, streamline it into something like sharing in the chat and then making a list.

For those of you who can, we suggest you prepare visuals to accompany any tool you may be using. If you're presenting a session live, you can screen share and students both see the task and hear the task. This becomes especially useful as it engages students with multiple learning channels and increases the accessibility of your sessions.

**Step 5: Set up your session technology**

This may be scheduling a video chat (like on Classroom or Zoom) or it may be setting up the whole thing in a learning management system. If possible, find someone to support you by sharing the mental load involved in leading online. If there isn't anyone who can work with you during your session, find out what other help you have available (software help lines, on-demand resources, etc.) and have that information handy in case you need it.

**Step 6: Plan your reflection/evaluation**

Think about how you will reflect on the online dialogue with your class and plan this in advance, perhaps also with your co facilitator. You may wish to have a formal and informal evaluation. What will you do with the feedback you receive? How will it help you learn and improve your future online exchanges? See Chapter 3.3

### 3. Facilitating Online Dialogue

With younger age groups, online exchanges cannot be easily student-led although students can and should be involved in the preparation and co-planning. As a teacher/educator you will need to facilitate the online moments and can do this by offering activities that can help guide the conversation between two partner classrooms engaging in a virtual exchange. By keeping the content and format of an exchange relatively short and informal (approximately 1-2 hours, including preparation and reflection for a video interaction which should not be longer than 40 minutes) and easy to integrate into the curriculum, your class will be able to participate in a meaningful online exchange.

#### 3.1 Facilitating Online Exchange

Ideally, if your activities are co-designed to be student-led it will be your students who are the drivers of conversation, knowledge sharing, understanding, and learning. This encourages a truly meaningful virtual exchange experience. This, however, cannot always happen as the students involved may be too young or have special needs that prevent them from being totally independent. Both sides should share personal experiences and engage in dialogue using a combination of live interactions and video/photo sharing to create lasting relationships rather than a quick transaction. As teachers/educators you know that students learn best when their curiosity has been piqued, even if the content might otherwise be considered boring or difficult to them. It is also known that contextualising and/or personalising a topic relating it to students' interests makes learning more fun and understandable.

There are many aspects to consider and techniques that can be used to facilitate the moment groups of learners come together online. Let's explore them.

#### 3.2 Participation, Energy and Motivation

All students need to be engaged throughout the online exchange and motivation is key. Having student-led activities usually guarantees active participation, so activities such as those adapted from flipped classrooms, presenting, journaling, drawing on paper, embodiment activities or reflection activities can be incorporated into the session. It is, however, also important to monitor and support students at all times making sure that **all and not just some are included**. When planning an online learning experience, always remember to prepare students for it. Despite becoming more familiar with online learning due to Covid 19, not all students feel comfortable or easily adjust to being and learning online in school. Always spend time at the beginning of an online exchange introducing the online environment and any additional tools, resources, etc.

Learners can be engaged frequently and in varied ways. Here's a helpful checklist:

- Are your learning materials organized and presented clearly?
- Can your students easily see and/or find everything they need during the online exchange?
- Are you engaging the group some way every 3-5 minutes? (This is especially relevant if your students are in remote learning)
- Are your participation, communication and engagement methods varied?

- Do you have enough breaks built in – for you and for the participants?
- Are your activities bite-sized?
- Have you built in ways to give feedback, which helps students feel a sense of progress and rescues them from isolation?
- Are you able to track the group and know where they are?

Another useful way to enhance students' participation and learning is to invite them to take action on what they've learned. The sooner students act on the new information they've digested, the more likely it will stick in their long-term memory. Follow up actions could include:

- Rating the online exchange through an online tool and or through a class discussion.
- Solving a problem or asking a question (depending on what happened during the online exchange).
- Writing a short paragraph, poem or diary log.
- Having a conversation (online or offline) with another student or in small groups.
- Answering a set of questions. It's usually more stimulating if the questions are open ended ones which require a higher level of reflection and thinking. Ask students to refer back to the content in their answers.
- Revisit and/or review the materials which were used during the online exchange. Discuss how students can apply what they've learned.

Energy levels can be kept high through different strategies and tools. It's good, for example, to have energizers and many face-to-face ones can be adapted online. Team building activities can also keep those energy levels peaking whereas at times it may be more useful to stop and regain focus and/or energy and have quieter or more passive activities that allow students to "recharge their batteries". This can be done through a break from the screen, inviting students to stretch, breathe, meditate, do some yoga etc or by sharing a song, video, images etc which is somehow connected to the theme but doesn't require active engagement.

Online engagement requires bite-sized, spaced learning, which does not cause students to switch off or become unmotivated. Jeff Hurt<sup>5</sup> refers to the science that backs up the chunking principle:

"Neuroscience has proven that our attention span is 10 minutes. After that, our attention starts to wane. Chunking content into ten-minute segments and then allowing learners 10 minutes to digest is the best way to learn."

Always be mindful to make time for fun! If the online dialogue is enjoyable then it's likely that your students will remember it and talk about it with others. They will probably learn more along the way as well.

A final consideration regards how "comfortable" learners feel when participating in online dialogues. Covid 19 forced many students into isolation (from their close family, friends, peers,

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<sup>5</sup> [10 Brain-Based Learning Laws That Trump Traditional Education \(velvetchainsaw.com\)](https://www.velvetchainsaw.com/10-brain-based-learning-laws-that-trump-traditional-education/)

society) and to learn remotely, causing many to feel different and often negative emotions. The long-term effects of this unique period of time on children’s mental and social wellbeing as well as on their learning will probably be slowly harvested in future years. Being online in class time may well be associated with a negative experience students had during lockdown and preparing the class for any online dialogues becomes particularly important. This may, of course, also not be the case and you may have a group of students who are excited and willing to spend more class time online. A teacher is often a very important and stable figure in a child’s life outside their home and will know their students well enough to detect if there are small or significant problems or issues. Not all teachers feel well equipped to handle strong emotions, but it is important to be aware that they may surface online as well as in class.

An opening self-reflection question to help you as a teacher/educator to focus on students’ state of well-being is: are you opening, closing, and pacing in a way that is honouring people’s emotional state?

- If possible, try to create space for students to acknowledge emotions they have;
- Create a culture of checking in;
- Be patient despite time constraints;
- Avoid challenging questions to single students (opt for open questions for all);
- Don’t work up feelings of anxiety, disappointment, etc.
- Facilitate and or support activities where students feel grounded and not disorientated.

There are different methods and tools that can be used to create an enjoyable and calm atmosphere during online exchanges. They may of course need adapting to your class whether you’re together with your class or not:

- Start the online session with a “fun” activity such as a dance party (throw on music and have everyone move around!), going to find an object which they can show and share with others, etc
- Lead students gently into the session by playing some calm music, doing some meditation, yoga, stretches and/or mindfulness in their chairs
- Ask everyone to check-in and share how they’re feeling with a scale of 1-10, or thumbs up, down, sideways or by showing, drawing or imitating an emoji, etc.
- Try to avoid cramming in too many activities.
- Close the session with a moment of silence and reflection and/or by asking students to share a thought, word, sketch etc to say how they feel or how the session was.

See chapter 6 for more ideas.

### 3.3 Evaluating the Experience

The online dialogues, including their preparation and follow up should be evaluated not only to understand what worked and didn't work during the online exchange but also and mainly to assess ways to improve them for the future, especially as the feedback will come from the students.

Evaluation isn't specific to online learning as it applies to all forms of learning but as these exchanges are still quite rare in everyday classrooms and need to take into consideration many of the aspects shared in this guide, they require specific attention. New tools and new approaches to learning and exchanging online are constantly becoming available. They provide the opportunity to experiment a little to see if the results are better, and if we do that, we need to evaluate the impact of using a new tool, resource, etc. The most effective way to improve what we do is through a systematic analysis of past experience.

It will be important for both teacher co-facilitators to plan their evaluation. A group of European teachers<sup>6</sup> were asked to evaluate their experience of virtual exchanges and suggested the following as key reasons for success (see Figure 2).

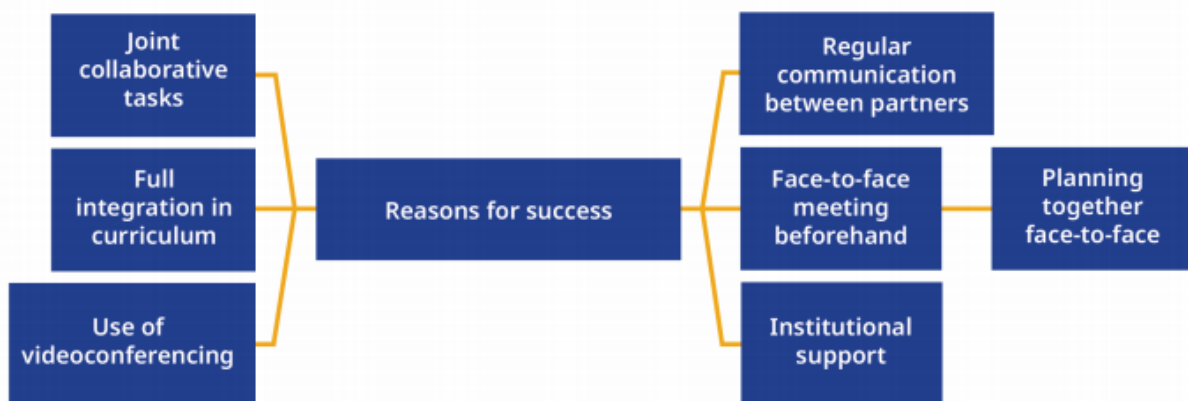


Figure 2 Reasons for success

Just as co-planning the online dialogues makes a significant difference to a meaningful exchange, so is co-planning the evaluation.

#### What should we evaluate?

What is evaluated is up to you as a teacher but it will be helpful for you to assess learning outcomes such as foreign language competences as well as other transversal competences, such as intercultural competences, digital competences and social and civil competences, (see CEPNET competence framework in Appendix 1). Your students' wellbeing and enjoyment should also be captured in some way and this will mean evaluating whether the students felt engaged and included at all times during the online exchange.

<sup>6</sup> Evaluating the impact of virtual exchange on initial teacher education: a European policy experiment March 2019. Project: Evaluating and Upscaling Telecollaborative Teacher Education (EVALUATE)

### **How can we evaluate?**

There are many formal and informal evaluation methods and tools, which can help you, as a teacher/educator, to evaluate the online dialogue.

Some informal methods have already been mentioned above such as asking students to rate the session as it ends and/or how they are feeling. Positive emotions will usually indicate a students' enjoyment and/or satisfaction. You can also leave time for a class discussion about how the session went, encouraging all students to voice their opinions.

Formal evaluations could be in the form of a test or questionnaire to measure students' learning or the development of certain skills pre, during and post the online exchange. There are a number of online tools available, which allow for simple, online surveys to be created and shared. These will help you collect your results automatically.

Set up a learning/debriefing moment with your co-facilitator and/or colleagues to look at and learn from the inputs provided by your students. Try to evaluate your own experience of the online facilitation.



## 4. Considering Intercultural Issues

According to UNESCO<sup>7</sup> interculturality refers to the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect.

There are many issues that need to be considered when facilitating online dialogues that value and promote cultural diversity. This is also the case for offline classroom time and should always be given appropriate thought and planning, especially if there is a predominantly diverse group of students. The main intercultural issues cover a broad range of topics and identities including gender, religion, ethnicity, culture, socio-economic backgrounds, sexual orientation, disability as well as different epistemologies/ways of knowing and different learning approaches as mentioned in Chapter 2.1.

An online exchange or dialogue can help improve students' communication skills, especially in multilingual and multicultural settings as well as helping students with their social and relationship-building skills. Your students will also gain a better awareness of their own values and culture while they are exposed to and learn about the experiences of peers from a different background. Preparation is, once again, key. As a teacher you will have to plan and exchange relevant information with your co-facilitator regarding the intercultural "make up" of your students as well as try to address if there may be some difficulties or doubts to discuss prior to the students meeting up. Through preparation exercises, such as asking students to work in groups and to research and present interesting facts about the partner country or to create a quiz for the other groups, students can also build more interpersonal skills that reinforce trust and respect within their own classroom.

Some evaluations of virtual exchange programs<sup>8</sup> have already demonstrated that "virtual exchange programs can increase participants' empathy for other cultures and perspectives, develop their willingness to engage constructively with peers of diverse backgrounds and views, and provide participants with the experience of being heard and respected".

Some aspects to consider when communicating the students' intercultural characteristics:

- What are the relevant aspects of my students' background?
- How do my students learn?
- What's the ratio between boys and girls?
- Are there/have there ever been conflicts and/or difficulties/competition between students due to their identity?
- Are there/have there ever been any significant positive moments of cooperation and/or inclusion between students due to their different identities?
- Where do the students live? (Rural, urban settings)

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<sup>7</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/convention/about/glossary>

<sup>8</sup> See <http://virtualexchangecoalition.org/>

- What languages does the group know? (Can any of these be used sensitively during the exchange?)
- Could there be any language barrier issues?
- Are my students used to speaking with people from other backgrounds?
- What non-verbal behaviour do my students use that could be understood or misunderstood?

Having a diverse group means that you, as a teacher or educator, will need to manage diversity. Respecting and giving value to diversity is one significant way to foster inclusion. Talk with your co-facilitator about these issues and plan together how you can:

- Get to know the students in both groups
- Maintain consistent communication
- Acknowledge and respect every student
- Practice cultural sensitivity
- Incorporate diversity in the exchange, ensuring nobody is excluded
- Give students freedom and flexibility

## 5. Promoting an Inclusive Approach

This chapter focuses on making sure that all students — no matter their differences, technology or backgrounds — can participate fully in the online exchange. Try to always provide alternative options for participation. If someone cannot be on video, make sure there's a way to call-in. If students are calling in, give dedicated space for them to participate during activities and make sure the chat is read aloud. This may be the same for students who have impaired vision for example. Facilitating groups online offers some new challenges but also many benefits for access and engagement of students with disabilities. The choices you make can help maximise those possible benefits. Become familiar with the accessibility features of the software you are using and share that information with your co-facilitators and group.

Students may be or feel excluded from an online exchange for a number of reasons. It is important for you as a teacher/educator to know whether there may be students at risk of being excluded in the groups so openly discuss this aspect with your co-facilitator(s) together with the needs they may have. Someone who is deaf, for example, may or may not be able to effectively read lips. Each situation requires different levels of adaptation. Give students choice about the ways they share information. For example, in a live plenary session, give students the option to share out loud or in the chat box. Then make sure to read everything from the chat aloud. When recording videos use closed captioning or offer a transcript.

Many online exchanges will be carried out between groups coming from different countries, which is simultaneously stimulating and challenging. Overcoming linguistic barriers needs careful planning. Non-simultaneous translated sessions can be done, but require twice the time and cause almost immediate disengagement after the novelty has worn off. Furthermore, it's hard to keep up a flow of conversation if the conversation starts and stops continuously.

If the group doesn't have to interact frequently, you can have students work in separate breakout rooms or channels and then come together occasionally. But then students will not benefit from each other's knowledge.

Most technology platforms now offer more options. Zoom, for example, offers a way for meetings to have simultaneous translation ([bit.ly/lgo-zoom](https://bit.ly/lgo-zoom)), where you can select a preferred language. This requires one or two dedicated interpreters and it would be ideal to involve colleagues who teach a foreign language. Similar options exist on other platforms.

There are apps that claim to provide automated simultaneous translations but none have yet managed to gain a high standard or accuracy.

There are, however, some practical solutions, which can help soften the linguistic difficulties during your online facilitation:

1. Share materials with students in advance, sharing the agenda and any materials in all your official languages at the same time.
2. Include in your pre-meeting information what the dominant language of the exchange will be (if applicable), and any additional language support that will be included, such as interpretation.
3. Include software connection instructions in all needed languages. If the help guide for the software is available in multiple languages, make that clear and share a link.
4. Prepare slides to share during your online session that include simple instructions for all activities in your official languages.
5. Make sure any visuals or other resources you are using for the session include all present languages, if possible.
6. Be clear about how interpretation will happen, for example one person speaking at a time, creating signals to ask for tech help/interpretation assistance.
7. Lastly, hear from everyone. Use a participation format that ensures each student contributes, and no one's silence is assumed to mean they understand or agree. Some options are: do a go-around, have one student share and they pass to the next student and so on until everyone has shared, ask everyone to share in chat or out loud and track that each student has responded, or use a polling tool.

## 6. Resources


### 6.1 Online Session Activities

This section will explore different types of activities that can be used to facilitate online engagement and dialogue. First of all, here's a simple checklist to help you structure your online sessions:

1. Remember to include checking in and out activities
2. Spend time establishing ground rules
3. Find ways to spark curiosity
4. Foster a non-bias environment
5. Include student led and student-centred activities
6. Respect all diversities and perspectives

The following are some 12 examples of ideas and options for engaging students within your online space, including examples and tips where useful. Many of these online activities are taken and partly adapted from Leading Groups Online.

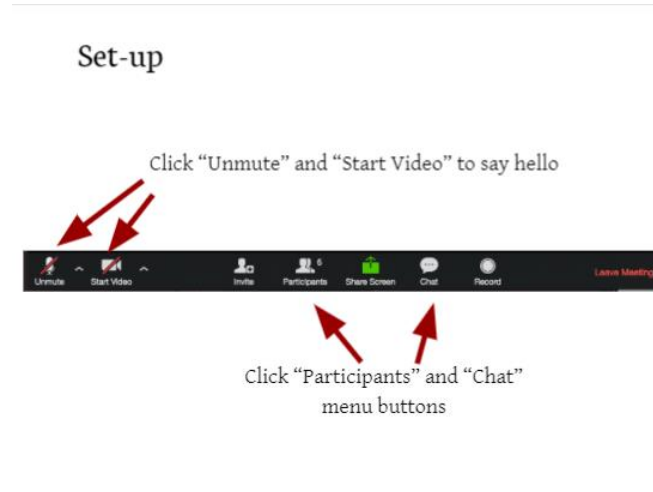
1. Checking In
2. Write in the chat
3. Asking open questions
4. Poll
5. Group list-building
6. Story-telling
7. Go-around
8. Breakouts
9. Spectrum
10. Fishbowl
11. Discussion forum
12. Survey/ Quiz

1. Checking In	
<b>Why use?</b>	Having a check in exercise at the start of a session allows the teacher to assess the mood of the students and the level of energy in the virtual space.
<b>Tips</b>	<p>If the energy levels are high, it is possible to have an ambitious aim for the session. On the corollary, if the mood is low (maybe it is the end of the day or the group have just been studying a challenging school subject), it might be an idea to tailor the aims of the session to match how your students are feeling.</p> <p>Remember to keep energy levels and engagement high, stop often and change the activities you're doing.</p>
<b>Examples</b>	<p>"How are the online dialogues going for you so far?"</p> <p>You can use such a scale to rate engagement levels:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. They're boring, I switched off</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3. About right</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5. I'm totally loving them and can't wait for the next session.</li> </ol> <p>Here are a number of online adaptable energizers<sup>9</sup> for you to use while doing an online check in with your group<sup>10</sup>:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Which image most represents how you feel now?</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><small>Type your number(s) and why in the chat.</small></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>

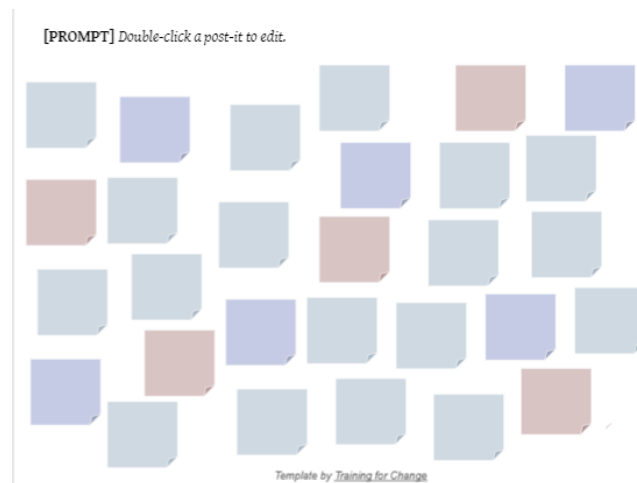
<sup>9</sup> <https://www.mural.co/blog/online-warm-ups-energizers>

<sup>10</sup> The authors of Leading Groups Online have kindly shared resources used here, which can be adapted to your online dialogue sessions. They clearly set up a number of important steps to consider when facilitating moments online such as checking in.

As part of the check in, make sure that everyone is familiar with the technical basics:



It is also important during the check in to make sure if everyone is aware and comfortable in how to share ideas<sup>11</sup>:



Here are all the slides for you to adapt to your online dialogues:  
<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1laL3MG0Ghaq5LUOq7RqIrDsydyHpx-cj-1YN8rVA9wk/edit#slide=id.g7f45d07eaa01597>

<sup>11</sup> This template comes from Training for Change:  
<https://www.trainingforchange.org/tools/?topic%5B2%5D=2&searchbox>

2. Write in the chat	
<b>Why use?</b>	Almost all video platforms have a method for writing in a chat. This is a simple way to ask a short question, and keep engagement lively.
<b>Tips</b>	<p>These are good for questions that can be answered with a short phrase or sentence.</p> <p>Reading aloud what is being written helps affirm participation. You can even notice if a student needs help or more time.</p> <p><i>“Paolo, I haven’t seen you writing in the chat. Let us know if you need more time...”</i></p>
<b>Examples</b>	<p>In the chat box, you might add:</p> <p><i>“What’s one thing you’re doing to keep yourself grounded during this challenging time? Please share in the chat box.”</i></p> <p><i>“What’s still unclear from the first session? Share in the chat box.”</i></p> <p>Remember to give live feedback whenever possible:</p> <p><i>“I’ll clarify those things after the break.”</i></p>

3. Asking open questions	
<b>Why use?</b>	Invite everyone/anyone to share, explaining the various options they have: type in chat, come off mute, or raise their hand to be called on.
<b>Tips</b>	<p>Be prepared for some uncomfortable silence after asking the question — it can take a while for students to unmute (or they may try to talk but forget to unmute).</p> <p>Because quieter students can often become even quieter online, it is possible to encourage participation by asking a question to an individual student.</p> <p><i>“Anna, what do you think?”</i></p> <p>It may take people a moment to get off mute. Therefore, rather than springing someone’s name at the end of the prompt, better to say:</p> <p><i>“Anna, in a minute I’m going to ask you to answer the next question. The question is...”</i></p> <p>This is a great way to support listening and connection by getting</p>

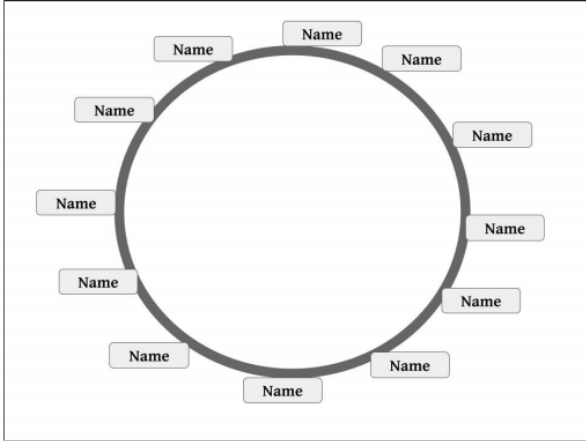



	students to track who has shared.
<b>Examples</b>	<p>During an online dialogue that is looking at: How can the digital world help and/or hinder people in a time of social distancing?</p> <p><i>"Share in the chat box or raise your hand to share out loud."</i></p> <p>Reflect on reading:</p> <p><i>"What stood out to you about what we read?"</i></p> <p>After you share, you choose who shares next.</p>

4. Poll	
<b>Why use?</b>	Polls can be done through different tools such as Mentimeter or on the platform in the chat.
<b>Tips</b>	<p>Ask everyone the same question with simple answers (1, 2, 3 / A, B, C / yes, no / etc.) and invite them to type their answer in chat, or if they can't use chat, share out loud.</p> <p>Summarise out loud what you are seeing in chat. When possible, write the results.</p>
<b>Examples</b>	<p>You can use the poll in different ways:</p> <p><i>"What topic do you want to learn about next week?"</i></p> <p>A. Gender Equality</p> <p>B. What's going on in Ireland</p> <p>C. Doing Research</p> <p>Ask them to type in the chat box or share out loud.</p> <p><i>"Should we take a break?"</i></p> <p>Show me thumbs up / thumbs down or shrug.</p>

5. Group list-building	
<b>Why use?</b>	Add everyone's answers to a document on screen share, like you might scribe on a whiteboard if you were in person.
<b>Tips</b>	Using a shared document like Google Classroom or Miro, you can invite students to type their own ideas into the document, or type in chat or share out loud. Otherwise, you can share your own screen and students can see you write up their answers. (Most tech platforms provide a whiteboard tool.)
<b>Examples</b>	<p>Chat about the lessons learned:</p> <p><i>"What are key lessons you heard from the story we heard? Share aloud or type in the chat and I'll add to the list."</i></p> <p>Try a Mutual aid exercise:</p> <p>Get the group to add their needs and offerings to a shared list. Ask them to include their name. A list should include the following two headings:</p> <p>Things you need:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol> <p>Things you can offer:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>

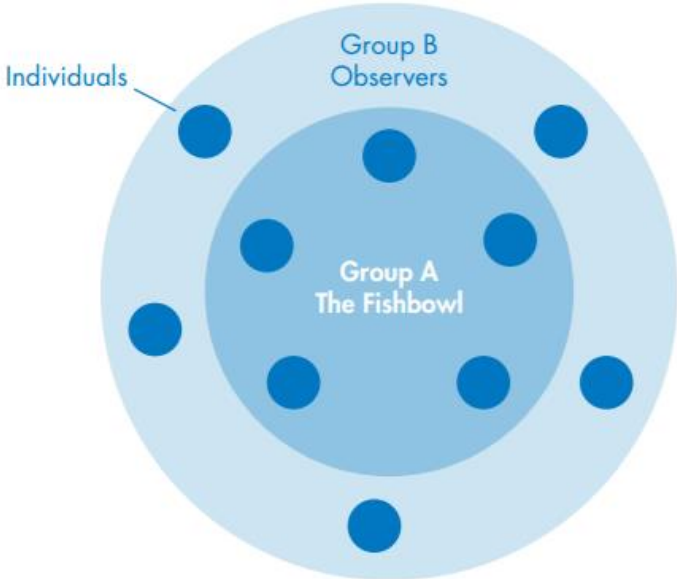
6. Story-telling	
<b>Why use?</b>	Story-telling works very well and needs very little adapting. Stories work when they are personal, specific, and passionate.
<b>Tips</b>	You can add pictures related to your story for visual interest

7. Go-around	
<b>Why use?</b>	When you want to hear from everyone in a group, the facilitator calls on each student to come off mute and share out loud until everyone has shared. You need some way to track the order, for example going down the participant list or using a slide on screen share with everyone around a circle.
<b>Tips</b>	Don't do this with very large groups (over 20) or students will tune out. Instead use chat to get many responses at one time.
<b>Examples</b>	<p>With all student seeing themselves as sitting in a circle, a question can be asked such as</p> <p><i>“What’s your hypothesis about how the story ends?”</i></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;">  </div> <p>In order to test for agreement: each student says yes, no, or maybe to the current proposal.</p> <p>Here’s an order for our go-around:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name</li> <li>2. Name</li> <li>3. Name</li> <li>4. Name</li> </ol>

8. Breakouts	
<b>Why use?</b>	You can do many of the same things you would do in an in-person breakout online once you've determined how to do it with your software. Your software might have a built-in breakout tool. If not, you can give students separate web conferencing rooms/links.
<b>Tips</b>	<p>It is much harder to check in on your breakout groups online. Therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep your breakout prompts simple</li> <li>- Be extremely clear about how much time the students have and how they will know when to come back.</li> <li>- Make sure everyone is clear about the task — pause before sending students away to see if anyone has a question (make it a long pause).</li> <li>- Put co-facilitators/teachers in small groups if the topic is complex or you are particularly concerned about an issue.</li> <li>- Make sure students are clear about how they can get help during the breakout (press call for help button).</li> <li>- Unless your group is unusually reliable, don't have your breakouts be too long, or you risk losing students to multitasking. 15 minutes is a good maximum unless you have facilitators in the small groups.</li> </ul>
<b>Examples</b>	<p><i>"In small groups, come up with the 5 best tips to learn a new language. You'll get 10 minutes. Prepare to report back. If you have any tech problems, press the "ask for assistance" button."</i></p> <p>Pair-Share</p> <p><i>"Soon we'll decide on our new joint research topics. Discuss your thoughts so far with your partner by chatting to each other directly in the chat box."</i></p> <p>Explain how students can do this if necessary:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Private Chat</b></p>  <p style="font-size: small;">Click to choose who to send your chat to: Everyone or one person.</p> <p style="font-size: small;">To: <span style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">Everyone</span> <span style="font-size: x-small;">More &gt;</span></p> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin-left: 20px;">Type message here...</p> </div>

	<p><i>“Go on mute. Return in 5 minutes, that’s 9:46. Come off mute if you need help and watch for me waving when it’s time to come back. If you’re ready, type “ready” in the chat box to all participants.”</i></p> <p>Once 5 minutes up, students can come back together to share with other breakout groups</p>
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9. Spectrum	
<b>Why use?</b>	Useful in getting students to answer along a scale with numbers at either end, like: 1.....5.
<b>Tips</b>	Summarise out loud for those on the phone what you are seeing in chat. Describe clearly for accessibility (e.g. people on the phone). Repeat as needed what numbers equal what.
<b>Examples</b>	<p>A spectrum can be used to help with the check-in on energy levels</p> <p><i>How is your energy level today?</i></p> <p>Type in the chat box.</p> <p>1=Falling asleep</p> <p>5=Can’t sit still!</p>

10. Fishbowl	
<b>Why use?</b>	A tool to have a small group discuss a topic in front of everyone else.
<b>Tips</b>	<p>Those who are listening/watching can add questions via the chat or respond at the end (such as through a poll).</p> <p>Make it clear what those on the outside of the bowl should be thinking about or paying attention to, in order to keep them engaged.</p> <p>Keep the fishbowl rounds short - follow the same guidelines of engaging the full group every few minutes.</p>
<b>Examples</b>	<p><b>Report-back step</b></p> <p><i>“When your group is in the fishbowl, come off mute and tell us about your book.”</i></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><b>Going deeper step</b></p> <p><i>“On the last spectrum we were fairly evenly split into two extremes. Let’s hear out loud from two students on each side of the spectrum. They’ll have a dialogue about why they put themselves there. The rest of us will listen for underlying areas of agreement.”</i></p>

11. Discussion forum	
<b>Why use?</b>	In a self-paced learning tool like a learning management system, invite students to share their answers to a prompt by a deadline.
<b>Tips</b>	Build social connection by including reading and responding to other students as part of the activity expectations. To engage more learning and communication styles, provide the option of posting a video or audio recording instead of text.
<b>Examples</b>	<p>Taking a discussion topic and encouraging practice:</p> <p><i>“Think back to the image we saw last week. What’s one experience in your own life that this reminded you of?”</i></p> <p>Post by April 1st. Read and ask follow-up questions to at least two of your classmates by April 7th.</p> <p>&gt; Reply</p> <p>The practice step</p> <p><i>“Now try out the question technique we just studied in a conversation with a friend or family member. You can do this in person, by phone, or by text. Share, how did it go? What did you notice?”</i></p> <p>Post by April 7th. Read and reply to at least two others by April 14th.</p> <p>&gt; Reply</p>

12. Survey/Quiz	
<b>Why use?</b>	Send questions for people to answer by a deadline. This can be done using a number of different online tools such as Google forms or survey monkey.
<b>Tips</b>	Be clear who will be able to see their answers. Will the whole group see an anonymized summary? Will only the teacher see the answers?
<b>Examples</b>	<p><i>“Which of these factors do you think is the most important for us to consider as we decide how to reach all 17 SDGs by 2030?”</i></p> <p>Set a date for completion</p>

## 6.2 Learning Apps

There are many learning apps and tools, which can facilitate learning exchanges and student engagement. Mentimeter, Padlet, Canva, Miro are just some of the endless tools that can provide your students with new ways of working together and creatively online, especially if the learners are in remote. These can also be compensated with many apps that allow you, as the teacher/educator, or your students to plan and “design” their own learning.

There are currently different models of online learning which you can try out with your students and with other groups:

1. Instructor centred: you as a teacher together with your co-facilitating teacher and other colleagues design and share materials with your students with the main aim of sharing knowledge about a series of different issues.
2. Learner centred: A learner or student centred model has the students’ interests, knowledge and skills at heart and aims to enhance these aspects during the learning experience.
3. Learning-team centred: learning team centred, is based on a collective process of learning, sharing, exchanging and co-creating in which the teachers’ role is to facilitate what is happening between students.

Creating materials to be used in learning contexts is technically called instruction design but as each model suggests, can be structured differently and by different people. This, however, goes beyond simply creating teaching materials, as it carefully considers how students learn and what materials and methods will most effectively help them achieve their goals.

It is possible to mix these models during an online exchange depending on the online dialogue objectives as well as on the groups’ needs. The above-mentioned learning apps and other platforms can offer you a new way of addressing different learning approaches, integrating stimulating activities into the online exchanges both in the preparation before and follow up afterwards. As with most aspects of the online facilitation, the learning apps used become even more effective when managed by the students themselves (learning team centred). It is always helpful to share and test these tools with your students before using them during the online exchange.



## 7. Supporting the European School Education Platform

This guide has intended to provide teachers and educators with ideas, practical support and tools in organising, preparing and running online dialogues between groups of students. Suggestions have been made throughout to help make these learning moments effective, motivating as well as fun for all.

The European School Education Platform (which previously hosted eTwinning programme)<sup>12</sup> offers schools across Europe the opportunity to meet and work together in a learning community and this guide should be seen as an extra tool, which can enhance these exchanges. It can provide teachers with some insights to strengthen their collaboration and hopefully to overcome some of the difficulties that they have faced. Technical, linguistic and cultural barriers are just some of the common issues, which inhibit teachers and their students from gaining the most from meeting with others from another country. Many aspects of the potential learning and skills developed are weakened as a result. This guide sets out to turn this around and strengthen teachers' readiness to co-facilitate online exchanges that are meaningful, inclusive and enjoyable.

The The European School Education Platform(which previously hosted the School Education Gateway)<sup>13</sup> is also an online platform for schools as well as for researchers, policymakers and other professionals working in school education where it is possible to find information, resources and courses for those working in education. This guide will be shared as much as possible with different members of the wider education community, including on the European School Education Platform as a resource for schools and other education professionals. It can also be used as an additional support in relevant online courses.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/en>

<sup>13</sup> <https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/en>

## **Appendix 1: Background to CEPNET Project**

This Online Dialogue Guide is part of the Erasmus + CEPNET Project, which works with children and teachers in primary school settings with the aim of introducing them to new approaches in relation to promoting empowerment and self-activation within the classroom.

As part of this project, the students get a chance to carry out self-directed project-based activities, looking at issues in their lives that connect them to the UN's sustainable development goals. They discuss and debate these issues and then carry out action research projects on topics that motivate them. They then present their findings to a wide range of different audiences. This may include members of the school community, as well as members of the wider community.

The methodology used during CEPNET is based on a prior project<sup>14</sup>, where over 2000 young people from across Europe worked together to develop and refine a means of advocating and communicating their concerns and voices about issues that were affecting them. Through this WYRED project, these children and young people influenced change in their schools and colleges, set up activist groups and became leaders within their communities. They also discovered innovative ways of taking a stand and expressing their opinions.

This new project takes the research team and the learning from WYRED and transfers it to the specific environment of the primary school. Throughout the CEPNET project, the primary level students share experiences and interact with their peers from schools in Ireland, Italy, Austria and the north of Ireland. The teachers also get to work with teachers from these schools, as they share their tips and techniques in making children and young people into the leaders and active citizens of tomorrow. In the background, research teams in each country provide support to the teachers and document the results.

The project is driven by the students who form a student council with their peers from the other schools. The project makes use of online tools and techniques and in the current climate and looks at how to make the most of blended learning opportunities. The 2 year project's long-term aim is to develop resources that can be used by teachers across Europe.

The methodology used in each school is outlined in the CEPNET handbook (add link).

### **1.1 CEPNET Competence Framework**

There are a wide range of competence frameworks being applied in all of our primary education systems, focusing on how best our children and young people can develop transversal competences and skills while in the latter stages of their primary education career. These national frameworks tend to make use of international indicators, including those developed

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<sup>14</sup> More information can be found here about the WYRED Project: <https://wyredproject.eu/>

through the UN and EU. This section looks at the common elements of these developments and how we can make use of this learning within our project.

Rather than re-inventing a new framework, the CEPNET model makes use of these overarching approaches and is designed to help our teachers and educators to examine the stimulus of the Sustainable Development Goals to allow for our students to further progress their attainment of transversal competences. The aim of our framework is that it can be used at a very practical level in the classroom, allowing students to clearly understand where they are at and where they would like to get.

As we work more on this framework, we will be adding specific supports, tools, activities and resources that have been tested within the classroom.

Through participation in CEPNET, we seek to provide a parallel support to our teachers as they work to equip their students with a set of core competencies as articulated by each national framework. By core competencies, we are referring to the essential knowledge, skills, concepts, dispositions, attitudes and values which enable the children to adapt and deal with a range of situations, challenges and contexts. Our SDG focus will mean that the children will be supported to navigate a wide variety of contexts and situations, to be able to interact and engage with the world around them and come to an appreciation of its value and their responsibilities as custodians of it.

The following figure highlights the key elements of the CEPNET competence framework. It is clear as we look at the breakdown of the competences as they are defined and articulated in each country, that there is strong common ground. It is within this overlapping set of skills, attitudes and knowledge, where we seek to develop and test our methodology. It is through this sharing of perspectives that we are able to examine new approaches and reflect on how we can embed these in our own practices.

**Figure 1: CEPNET Competence Framework**



These 6 core competences support and underpin the project vision.

- Navigating- media and information literacy
- Interpreting- critical thinking
- Interacting with others- interpersonal skills
- Interacting with self- intrapersonal skills
- Creativity and agency- innovative thinking
- Taking responsibility-global citizenship

These key competences present an overlap between skills, attitudes and knowledge. For example, the emphasis is on locating, critiquing and using knowledge as well as appreciating knowledge for its own sake. In this way, our competences enable and foster deep learning while also contributing to holistic development.

## Appendix 2: Overcoming technical problems

<b>Challenge: Background Noise</b>	
<b>Prevention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set a norm that everyone should be muted when they are not talking (including facilitators), unless your group is very small</li> <li>- Encourage everyone to connect from a quiet space and wear headphones</li> </ul>
<b>In the moment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Say you are hearing background noise and ask everyone to mute themselves. This often doesn't work, though, so you may have to use your host control in your platform to mute specific students or everyone (this is especially helpful if you don't want to interrupt someone who is talking in order to ask others to mute)</li> </ul>

<b>Challenge: Audio Feedback</b>	
<b>Prevention</b>	<p>When you hear that awful screeching caused by a microphone picking up what is coming out of the speakers, you need to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask everyone to use headphones or headset (including facilitators!) if you are all remote.</li> <li>- Set a norm that everyone should be muted when they are not talking (including facilitators), unless your group is very small.</li> </ul>
<b>In the moment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First stop the screeching by using your host power to mute everyone (including yourself). Then selectively un-mute. If it starts again you've identified the student who is the problem. Make sure they are wearing headphones or a headset. If that is not possible, make sure that everyone else is muted whenever this participant talks (including the facilitator).</li> </ul>

<b>Challenge: Trouble turning on microphone or video</b>	
<b>Prevention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask everyone to connect 10 minutes before the session. Use this time to ask students to come on camera and off-mute so you can troubleshoot now.</li> <li>- Include help slides about turning on microphone and video and the audio/video settings.</li> </ul>
<b>In the moment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Confirm all the students actually have a microphone or camera on the device they are using. Then, make sure they know how to turn on</li> </ul>

	<p>the microphone and video and that they are trying that. If that doesn't work, they should go into their audio/video settings to make sure the right microphone or webcam is selected. If yes, but it's still not working, try restarting the software or restarting their computer.</p>
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<b>Challenge: Trouble connecting</b>	
<b>Prevention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make sure instructions are sent well in advance as well as just before the session.</li> <li>- Include instructions on where to download the software for those who haven't used it before.</li> <li>- Encourage people to connect from a location with the highest speed internet they have access to.</li> </ul>
<b>In the moment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ideally have one co-facilitator/teacher support this student while the other holds the online exchange. This could mean talking with them through email or text, or getting on the phone with them.</li> <li>- Resend connection information.</li> <li>- Make sure they are connecting from somewhere with internet access or phone signal (as applicable) and that they have the software installed.</li> <li>- Restart their device and try again.</li> <li>- If the trouble continues, connect them to the help guide/staff for the software you are using.</li> </ul>

<b>Challenge: Poor connection / Getting disconnected</b>	
<b>Prevention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage everyone to connect from the strongest internet connection they have access to. Ideally wired/ethernet, rather than wireless.</li> <li>- Have phone connection information available as a backup or for those without internet access.</li> <li>- Encourage everyone to limit bandwidth usage by restarting their computer before the call and closing any applications they will not be using during the training</li> </ul>
<b>In the moment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Check internet access/strength. Move to a location with stronger connection (for example move closer to a wifi router) if needed.</li> <li>- Try restarting your device or connecting with a different device.</li> <li>- Try not using web cameras and/or having everyone turn off their web cameras to reduce the bandwidth used in the call.</li> <li>- Connect by phone instead (note that sometimes phone/mobile</li> </ul>

	<p>signal is weaker than internet bandwidth, so this is not always the best solution).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Consider who is getting disconnected and how often; be prepared to move to a plan B (like to reschedule your call)</li></ul>
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