

Connecting Classrooms: Setting Up Successful Virtual Exchanges with Young Learners

While most virtual exchange (VE) projects connect older learners, young language learners also stand to benefit greatly from authentic intercultural interaction, however, the experience must be carefully designed and supported. This hands-on workshop invites teachers and teacher educators to explore how to set up and sustain meaningful VE for primary-age learners that integrate innovative technologies, for example, multimodal storytelling, augmented or virtual reality, and AI-assisted communication tools.

Participants will examine key design principles for age-appropriate VE: setting realistic linguistic and cognitive goals, scaffolding both language and digital literacies, and fostering curiosity, empathy, and collaboration across cultures. Through guided examples and collaborative tasks, participants will learn how to align pedagogy, technology, and content to ensure that technology enhances rather than overwhelms interaction.

The workshop will also address practical and ethical considerations, such as safeguarding, accessibility, parental consent, safety with digital devices and partnership building. By the end of the workshop, attendees will have a clearer understanding of what makes virtual exchanges with young learners successful, sustainable, and truly engaging in the spirit of CALL for All.