
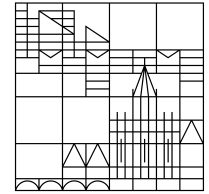


Universität  
Konstanz

A world map composed of a grid of small dots, with the density of dots varying to represent landmasses and oceans.

# Virtual Collaboration and the Modularization of International Exchange Programs

Virtual Erasmus Coordinators' meeting  
Thursday, 9th December 2021, 14.00h

Dr. Johannes Dingler  
International Office  
University of Konstanz

# Current Developments in International Cooperations

1. Digitalization and Virtualization
2. Diversification and Heterogenization of student needs and partner requirements



We have to rethink our international cooperations and adapt our strategy for exchange programs

How does digitalization change our international cooperations?

How to systematically integrate virtual components?

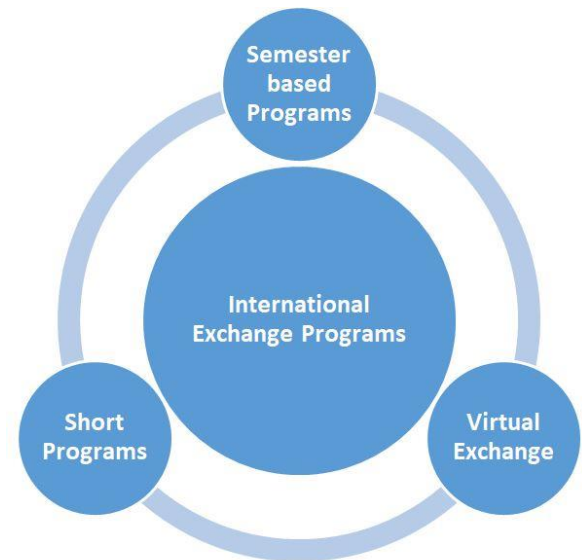
What are the consequences of diversification?

What is a strategy for international cooperations for the future?



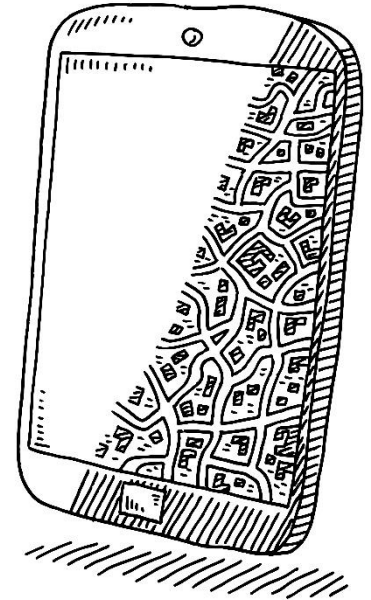
# Three pillars of international exchange programs

1. **Semester-based exchange programs:** full semester or academic year at the host university.
2. **Short programs:** shorter period at the host university. Summer schools, research internships, internships, service learning in community programs, faculty lead excursions, study visits, blended intensive programmes.
3. **Virtual exchange:** no physical stay at the host university: participation in events from anywhere in the world



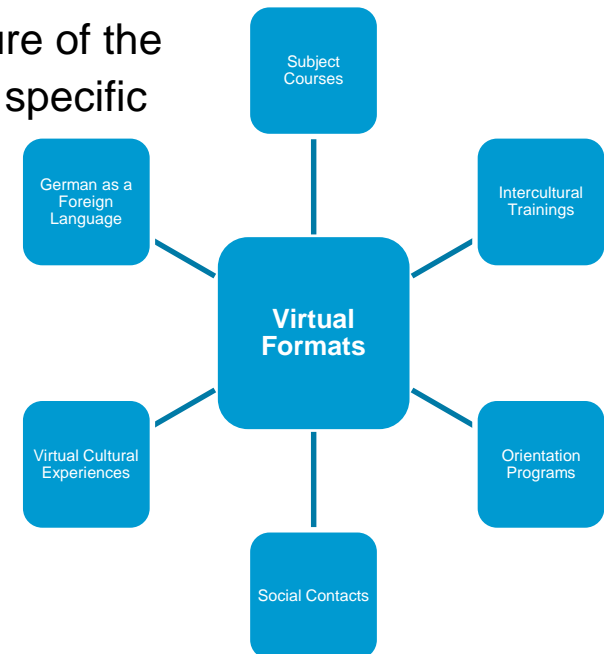
# Reasons for Virtual Formats

1. **„Internationalization at Home“:** diversity of students and lecturers: increasing diversity and internationalization
2. **Transfer from physical to virtual space:** physical borders and international boundaries become irrelevant, physical location of teachers is irrelevant, physical location of students is irrelevant
3. **Low-threshold exchange:** less organizational and preparatory effort
4. **Inclusion:** access for groups of students who are not physically mobile for socioeconomic, personal or health reasons
5. **Balance:** contributes to the balance of cooperation
6. **Sustainability:** less physical mobility, virtual exchange can contribute to sustainability and the fight against climate change
7. **„Teaser“** for other mobility formats
8. **Strengthening** international cooperations



# Virtual Formats

1. **Virtual subject courses:** attending one virtual seminar at the partner institution
2. **Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL),** virtual co-teaching
3. **German as a foreign language,** or courses for learning the local language
4. **Virtual intercultural trainings:** intercultural experiences, intercultural awareness raising
5. **Virtual cultural experience:** insights into the specific culture of the host country, experiencing cities, eating cultures, culturally specific customs, cultural events
6. **Social contacts:** get togethers, virtual discussion groups
7. **Virtual orientation and support:** web seminars, virtual office hours
8. **Virtual pre-arrival** or post-departure formats



# Diversification of International Cooperations

Development in international cooperations: diversification and heterogenization

- Demands of students
- Requirements of cooperation partners



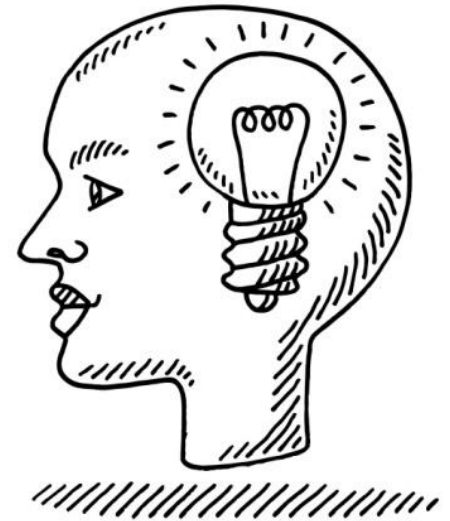
**Individualization** of student needs and partner cooperations:  
**differentiation** of mobility formats: different formats, depending on student interests and partner requirements

**Example:** semester-based exchange University of Cuenca: study program and service learning in community internship



**Modularization:** combination of different forms of mobility, packages according to individual partner or student needs, individual composition of modules

**Hybrid formats:** mixture of physical mobility and virtual mobility, longer and shorter programs



# Modules of International Exchange Programs

Semester-  
Based  
Exchange

Virtual Subject  
Courses

Service  
Learning

Virtual Pre-  
Arrival  
Orientation

Hybrid  
Teaching

Virtual  
Intercultural  
Trainings

Research  
Internships

Internship

Virtual  
Language  
Seminar

Study Visits

Blended-  
Intensive-  
Programmes

Virtual Post-  
Departure  
Program

Virtual  
Orientation  
Programs

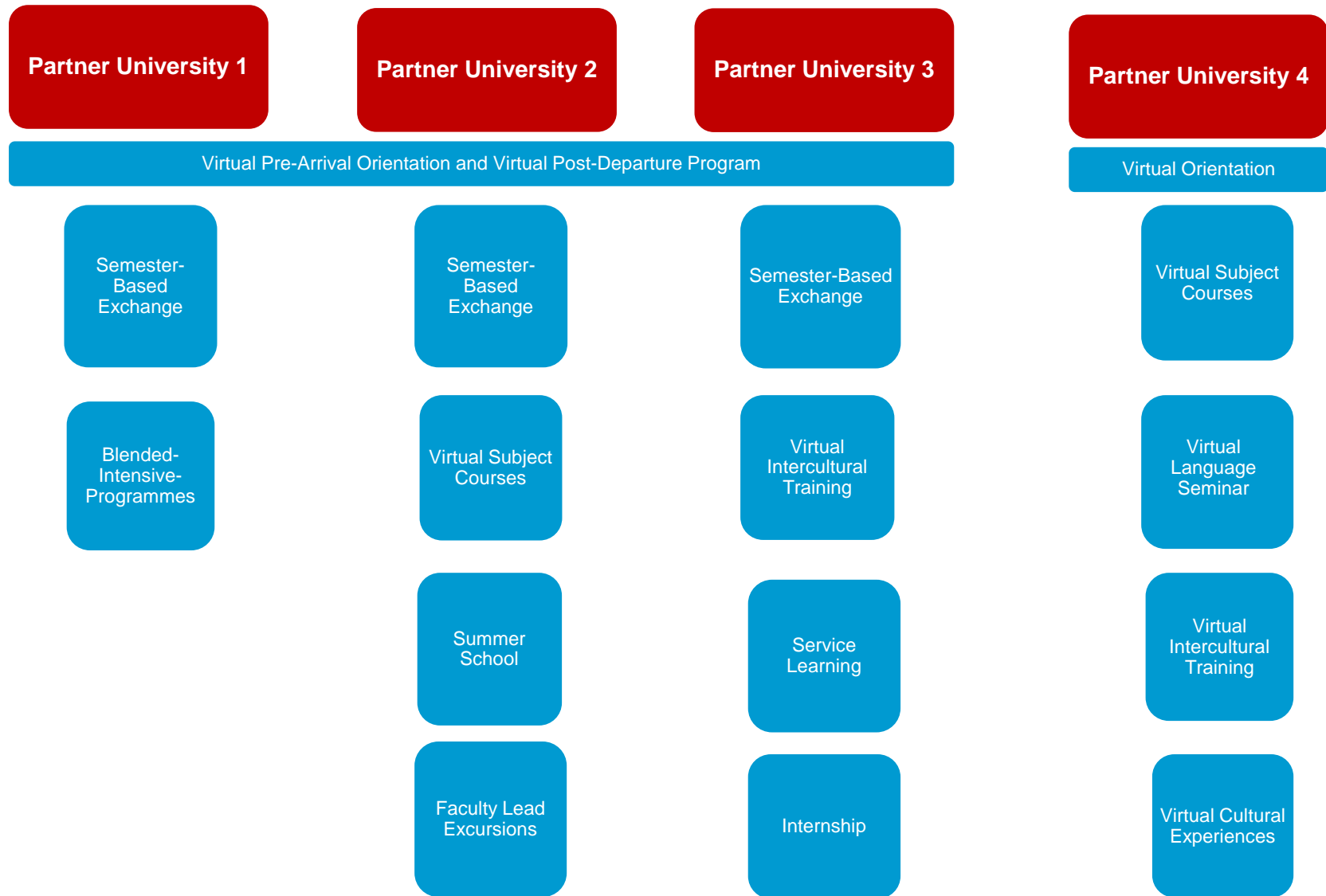
Summer  
Schools

Virtual Social  
Contacts

Faculty Lead  
Excursions

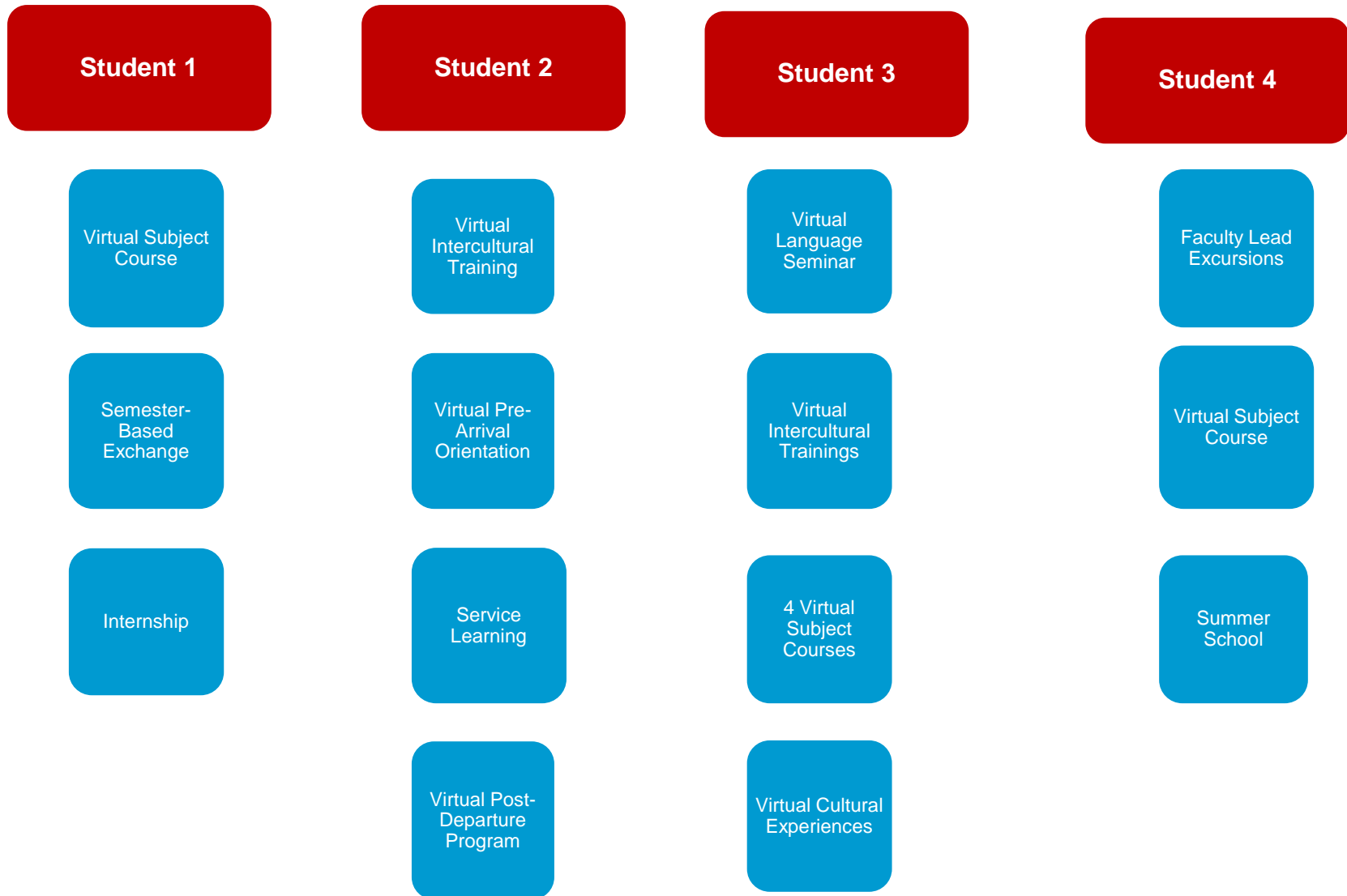
Virtual Cultural  
Experiences

# Packages for International Partner Institutions



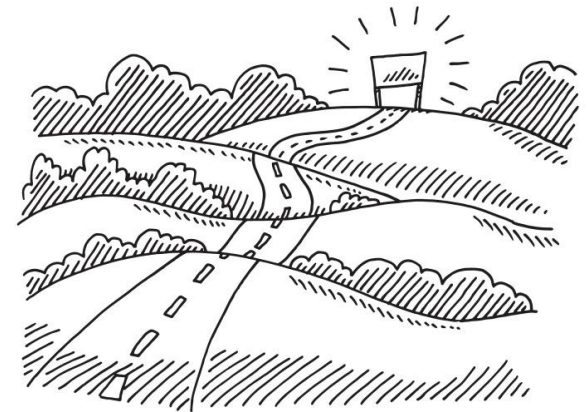


# Individualized Packages for Students



# Challenges for a Strategic Implementation of Modularization and Virtualization

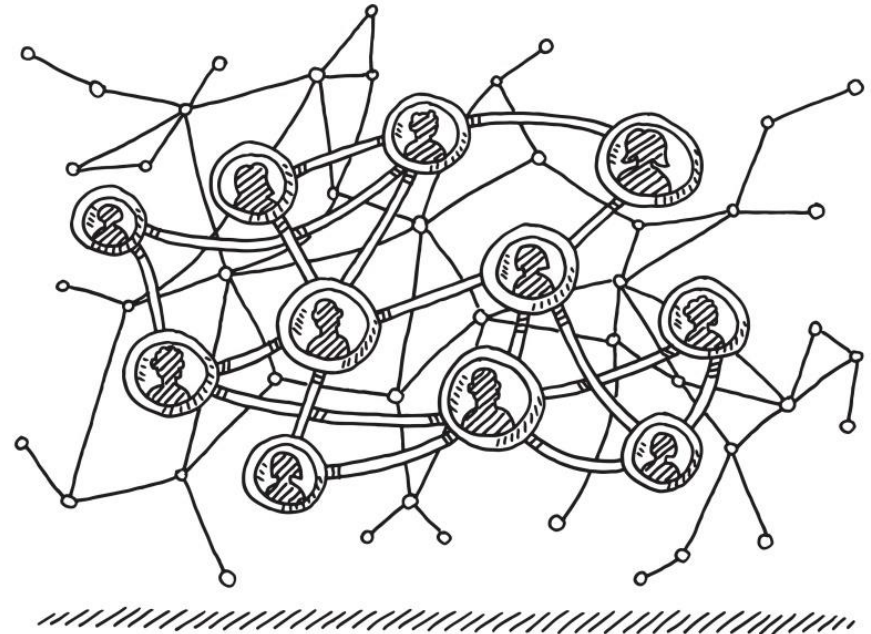
1. **Resources:** diversification is resource intensive
2. **Complexity of cooperations**
3. **Critical mass of courses:** sufficient number of virtual courses:  
*virtual co-teaching* and *pooling*
4. **Formal structure:** off-campus status
5. **Technical equipment** and infrastructure
6. **Support structures:** support for students and teaching staff, trainings for COIL
7. **Scholarships:** are there also scholarships for virtual cooperation?
8. **Subject-specific components:** some subjects are more suitable for virtual formats than others
9. **Inequality structures:** technical equipment, digital competence, privileges
10. **Time difference:** synchronous and asynchronous formats
11. **Reflect on the goals, learning outcomes** and output of the program



# Conclusion

- **Tendencies of virtualization and diversification cannot be neglected**
- **Great potential** for the further development of international cooperations
- **Strategic integration** of virtual formats and modularization in international programs
- **Hybrid formats:** mixture of presence and virtuality (in time and space), longer and shorter formats, complementarity of formats

Higher Education Institutions need to be prepared for the future, have to make an innovative contribution and must face the challenge



**Thank you very much  
for your attention**

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