



## FAQ for Encounter Learning

### **Why should we participate in the project?**

The pandemic and the resulting isolation for several years had a strong impact on the students. Therefore, it is important that they get back into communication with each other and this is especially possible in our "global village" internationally.

### **What is 'Encounter Learning'?**

Encounter Learning refers to a process in which students from different worldviews first attend classes at their local schools on a particular subject and then come together on an 'Encounter Day' and learn about the determined subject.

### **What is an 'Encounter Day'?**

Encounter Day refers to the activity in which students with different worldviews come together virtually or face-to-face settings in small groups under the supervision of teachers and exchange information about a certain subject. On such a day, students are expected to share the posters/presentations they created after their local lessons with students from other worldviews.

### **Which school subjects can be involved?**

Depending on the local situation or international networking, different subjects from several schools can be involved.

It is advisable to clarify which subjects and how many students will be involved so that the division into mixed groups can be organized early on. It is important to ensure that as many different religious groups as possible are represented, as well as the subject of philosophy/ethics, in order to make the encounter and the joint exchange interesting.

### **Which grades can participate?**

Experience has shown that the project can be carried out well at the secondary school and high school levels. The older the students involved, the higher the level of reflection in the mutual exchange.





### **On which topics can the encounter learning be carried out?**

The project can be carried out on many different topics. Suggestions can be found on the platform.

### **How do I find other partner schools for the encounter learning?**

You can use the platform to find partners.

### **What do I have to organize to carry out the Encounter Day?**

For the implementation of the project two preparatory meetings of the participating teachers are necessary.

1. meeting to determine the common topic, which will be treated in the scope of a teaching unit in all subjects.
2. meeting to determine the time and place of a Encounter Day, which can take place in about two double lessons or a whole project day.

### **How should the project be prepared in class?**

The process of the Encounter Learning includes four phases. The first phase is local lessons in the local classrooms. Detailed information can be found under 'Guidance'

### **Which material can I use for the lessons?**

Ready-to-use teaching materials and lesson plans on various topics and for as many subject groups as possible are available on the platform.

### **How does the joint Encounter Day work?**

The Encounter Day includes the 2nd and 3rd phase of the project: there is a presentation of the topic at the joint forum.

### **What will students need to prepare for the Encounter Day?**

Each pair or of students is expected to prepare a poster/presentation answering the main questions of the topic. On the encounter day they will present their to the students of the other





faiths/worldviews within their subgroup. Each presentation should not be longer than 7-10 minutes (=30 minutes presentation time in total per subgroup).

### **What will the lecturers do on the Encounter Day? Do they have to prepare anything?**

The lecturers do not have to prepare anything for the encounter day but they should be prepared to moderate one of the subgroups.

### **How long are the students expected to participate?**

Students are expected to come/connect 15 minutes before the beginning of the encounter day, so that they set up their equipment, and then participate to the encounter day till the end of it. The total duration of the event is approximately 4 hours.

### **How could I take away possible inhibitions of the students from a dialogue in English during an international encounter day?**

Participation encourages both students and teachers to maintain international contacts. The majority of the students are not native English speakers, so they should not be afraid to communicate with each other in English, they will quickly get used to it. In these meetings kindness, tolerance, understanding, patience, and help are more important than the words one uses. On top of that, the students will have received sufficient support from their lecturers during their preparations for the encounter day, and they will have written text available (e.g. presentations) with all the relevant terms they might need.

### **What follows the encounter day in class?**

The encounter day is followed by the 4th phase: there is a reflection phase with the original learning group in their own subject lessons.

### **How can I get my students excited about the encounter day?**

The students come into contact with peers of other worldviews and exchange ideas with them internationally. They can have an open and respectful dialogue with peers with other world views and learn to appreciate diversity.





### **What do the students have to gain from this experience?**

Most students that have attended these encounter days say that they have benefited from the experience itself, that is the opportunity to find students of almost the same level from around the world and discuss their similarities and differences. Furthermore, participation encourages students to cultivate international contacts also as teachers. The students will not only gain valuable teaching experience, but will also be gaining a certificate of participation, which is certainly valuable for their CV.

### **What are the main competences that Encounter Learning focus on?**

The main competences are:

- Change of perspective and ability of multiperspectivity
- Understand the worldview of the ,other‘
- Empathy, respect, tolerance

### **The students are a little nervous about the encounter – what can we tell them to encourage their participation?**

It is reasonable for anyone to feel nervous when speaking in front of people s/he meets for the first time. However, this feeling can usually be overcome when one realises that we are all fallible humans and feel the same way, as well as that all the students are almost at the same level. After all, the lecturers will have prepared the students well on the topic, and each group of students will have more knowledge on their field than their audience. Finally, some students might not wish to look at this like an academic activity, but like a friendly chat with a group of students of a different worldview that you randomly met online and wish to see your similarities and differences on a topic.

### **Can others who are not involved the project join the Encounter Learning Day as an audience?**

Since the program will only be held between the instructors and students, audiences are not accepted.

### **What are the difficulties may teachers get into on the Encounter Day?**

During online encounter day, teachers may encounter technical issues. In such cases, teachers make effort to resolve the problem as quickly as possible and ensure the program continues. If the issue cannot be resolved, the program may be postponed and rescheduled for another date.

Another problem that teachers may encounter is personal disputes arising from students' casual behavior or disagreements among themselves. To prevent or manage such situations, it can be helpful





to appoint a moderator for each group. Selecting moderators from among the teachers would be more effective in this case.

**Who can I contact if I have further questions?**

Further information is provided on the platform and contact addresses are also given.

