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From One Team to Another:
Advice from Past VLS Project Teams

Virtual Learning Strategy

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When the first round of VLS funding ended in March 2022, project teams were asked to provide advice they wish they could give themselves when their projects started. The details below capture major themes from those responses. From outgoing project teams to incoming project teams, we hope you'll consider the advice provided for a smooth and successful project.

Attitudes

Team attitudes can impact projects and project teams.
Some recommendations include:

- Patience leads to more solutions than panic
- Anticipate the unexpected
- Be kind to yourself
- Trust yourself and your team

Personnel & Training

Having the right people is important.
Recommendations from previous VLS project teams include:

- Hiring a project manager
- Hiring experts early in the process
- Bringing on more students as partners
- Ensuring cultural diversity training and having diverse voices
- Ensuring translator availability
- Understanding and ensuring accessibility requirements early on
- Providing greater training for staff, particularly onboarding new staff

Partners

Partners need to be kept engaged in your project.
Previous VLS teams noted that:

- Having collaborators from different sectors and backgrounds is rewarding
- Vendor collaborators may look at things differently than internal or postsecondary collaborators
- Clarify roles for project team members
- Have alignment on project plans and timelines, styling, objectives, and deliverables with collaborators
- Work should not be centralized
- Communication, team meetings, and coordination are key

Project Plans

The most important part of VLS projects is the projects themselves!

Former VLS project teams provided advice regarding budgeting, project planning, timelines, and staying organized:

Budgeting

• Be generous with your budget
• Have a contingency plan in budget
• Separate grants for by deliverables
• Use collaborator's resources

Project Planning

• Have a strong project plan with a breakdown of deliverables
• Engage partners and collaborators earlier to get a head-start
• Start hiring early since it can take time
• Allocate time for project planning, collaboration, and product testing

Timelines

• Plan for unanticipated delays
• Be flexible with timelines
• Watch timeframe and reassess project scope as required

Organization

• Recognize potential influences of outside events (such as COVID)
• Use research to best understand the current sector environment
• Determine and clarify team peer review and editing processes
• Ensure faculty availability and buy-in