

Connecting Carolina Classrooms with the World

COLLABORATIVE ONLINE INTERNATIONAL LEARNING (COIL) A GUIDE FOR INSTRUCTORS

Guiding Principles of COIL

The foundation of COIL is collaboration between you and your faculty partner, and between your students and students at the partner university.

- A successful COIL collaboration mutually benefits students and faculty at both institutions.
- You will need to work closely with your faculty partner to negotiate COIL activities and assignments, class meeting times, classroom culture, language differences, and more.
- You and your faculty partner will model cross-cultural curiosity and respect for the students.

COIL collaboration should be equitable and inclusive.

- You and your faculty partner should attempt to balance disparities of knowledge, skills, resources, or access, so that all students feel equipped to participate and contribute.

The goal of a COIL course is to give students meaningful learning opportunities to connect with each other through shared readings, activities, and discussions.

- COIL involves more than connecting with another class for lectures. Whether throughout the semester or for only a few units, you should incorporate at least three weeks of engagement with the partner university. Ideally, students will have at least 30 hours together, inside or outside of class; this is required for courses to be awarded Experiential Education general education credit (more on that below).
- Consider how you and your partner will allocate time for COIL components across in-class lectures and activities, asynchronous materials, and group work outside of class.

Be sure to inform your students about the purpose and requirements of COIL activities, including how COIL helps facilitate the course's learning objectives.

- Your syllabus should demonstrate which classes and course units are COIL integrated and how much time will be dedicated to COIL activities.
- List specific learning goals for the COIL module that are shared with the partner course.
- Make sure students understand the value of engaging and working with their peers at the partner institution which will help make COIL activities successful.

You are encouraged to incorporate a reflection activity about the COIL activities to help students evaluate what they have learned by working with one another.

- The reflection activity can take the form of a final project or a smaller assignment.
- Students can complete the reflection assignment independently or collaboratively.

Tips for Implementing COIL Activities

Stretch your creativity for COIL activities – think about ways students from varied cultures can learn more by collaborating.

- What kinds of group activities, hybrid lectures or other experimental class formats could benefit both your students and the partner students?
- Also consider what the students from the connected courses can offer each other. What activities could allow students to serve as experts for each other? What assignments lend themselves to co-creation of knowledge?

COIL should be an integrated aspect of your course – activities that engage your students and their partners should advance the course learning objectives.

- Challenge yourself to design creative assignments to help your students engage with peers abroad; don't just offer joint lectures or assign the same group projects as normal.
- Consider the local context and culture of your partner institution and what resources your students will have access to and the types of projects that could enable collaboration. What can they learn about the social, political, or economic circumstances of the partner country, or about the style of education at the partner institution?
- Examples of COIL activities: collaborative research projects requiring students to bring data or resources relevant to their community; small group discussions and writing assignments challenging cultural views by incorporating each other's perspectives; co-creation of artistic work; or students interviewing each other for ethnographic projects.

The technology you and your partner choose for the COIL collaboration should be accessible to all students and should support the shared learning objectives.

- If you are just getting started with COIL, it's best to keep the technology simple.
- Your school's ITS specialists can offer support, and the UNC Libraries also has resources.

Consider assignments a COIL course can facilitate that are challenging in a traditional course format.

- COIL can allow for innovative assignments, such as asynchronous group projects, comparative fieldwork, real-time lab collaboration or interactive live presentations.

Plan time for ice breaker activities to help students from the two institutions get to know each other and feel comfortable communicating.

- This is especially important for helping students at different universities collaborate together effectively.
- If differing schedules or time zones make in-class ice breakers impossible, you can provide activities for students to complete before they begin collaborative work.

Like any course, COIL courses will evolve as you become more accustomed to the format and what works (or doesn't) for you and your faculty partners.

- During the first semester you teach a COIL course, take note of student feedback, consult with faculty partners, and start thinking about what you may do differently the next time you offer the course.

Qualifying for Experiential Education (EE) Credit

COIL courses are eligible to fulfill the Experiential Education (EE) requirement in the Making Ideas General Education curriculum if certain criteria are met.

- The course must incorporate at least 30 hours of engagement with students and faculty at the partner university (hours can take place inside or outside of class).
- A reflection essay or activity is required to help students consider what they have learned through the COIL activities and working with peers at the partner institution.

Additional Resources: global.unc.edu/coil

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