

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL): Connecting Elmhurst Students to Global Students

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What is COIL?

- A new approach to teaching and learning that brings together geographically distant instructors and students from different lingua-cultural backgrounds to communicate and collaborate using online communication tools (Guth 2013: 2)

Why COIL?

- A novel way for students to engage the course material
- Allows students an opportunity to meet and interact with other students from a different cultural background and country
- Strongly fits our recent shift to online learning
- It gives students a study abroad experience without leaving home (Naicker et al. 2021)
- A rewarding experience for both instructors and students

Summary of My COIL Project

22 Elmhurst University students from
POL 301 (Politics of the Global North)



17 Comenius University students (Bratislava,
Slovakia) in a European Politics course

All students were given 2 shared readings and 8 discussion questions to consider

Met on Zoom

Students were divided into groups with equal proportions of Elmhurst and Comenius students. There were pre-selected moderators to lead each group.

Elmhurst students were required to write a reflection paper. The Comenius students received extra credit from their instructor.

What Did the Elmhurst Students Think?

Excerpts from their Reflections

”Ultimately, this was one of the most fascinating things I have ever partaken in throughout my college years. It is not every day you get the opportunity to sit down with people your age in a different country and get to talk with them about a wide range of contemporary issues”

“It’s activities like this that make me want to travel the world and go to various countries in Europe someday soon”

“It was definitely the highlight of this course and it helped me conceptualize all the concepts we learned in class and apply them to an actual country with people I could see and talk to.”

“The Comenius University collaboration was one of the best academic experience I have had at Elmhurst. Personally, I have never had an in-depth conversation with a foreign person on politics.”

What Can You Do To Incorporate a COIL Project in Your Classes?

Identify a course and topic to link to another institution

Identify a partner institution

- Begin with your own networks: your colleagues, networks within your discipline, contacts from professional associations/conferences, etc.
- Institutions with pre-existing relationships with Elmhurst
- Seek external organizations that link universities together (The SUNY System has a robust COIL Center with numerous resources)

Resources and References

Naicker, Ashika, Evonne Singh, and Tonnie van Genugten. (2021). “Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL): Preparedness and experiences of South African students.” *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, DOI: 10.1080/14703297.2021.1895867

Rubin, J. (2015). *Faculty Guide for collaborative online international learning course development*. SUNY COIL Center.
http://www.ufic.ufl.edu/UAP/Forms/COIL_guide.pdf

SUNY COIL: <https://coil.suny.edu/>