

Proposal for global and intercultural learning integrative practice and inclusion of COIL

Executive Summary

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) experiences and virtual exchange programs created a new way for engaging in global and intercultural learning for students in the US and around the world and have expanded significantly in higher education institutions during the COVID-19 global pandemic. However, current description of education abroad/away integrative practice in the new GE is not inclusive of COIL and other types of virtual intercultural learning experiences. COIL can be embedded in any GE courses with intentional design, intensive intercultural collaboration, and reflective learning. COIL courses target the same set of ELOs intended for high impact education abroad/away experiences. We recommend that the Education Abroad/Away Integrative Practice be renamed as **Global and Intercultural Learning Integrative Practice** to include COIL and virtual exchange experiences, if they explicitly meet the HIP criteria. The ELOs and the Integrative Practices Inventory for the category will remain the same.

What is COIL?

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) uses technology and intentional curricular design to connect students and faculty at Ohio State with peers around the world for impactful collaborative experiential learning. Pioneered by [SUNY](#) and [FIU](#), and adopted by many higher education institutions (e.g. [UM](#), [Purdue](#), [Penn State](#)), COIL has become a powerful global learning experience that leads to essential learning outcomes such as global citizenship, intercultural competence and lifelong learning.

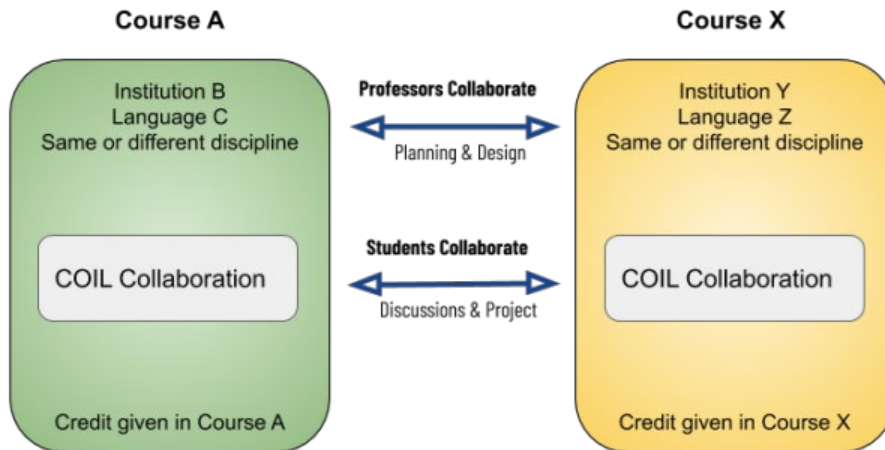
How does COIL work?

COIL typically involves two classrooms from two institutions across cultures. Ohio State instructors collaborate with international partners to design the experience with the goal of engaging students from both classes to collaborate on a project as a team and have a significant intercultural experience within their course of study.

COIL can be embedded in any discipline at any level and is conducive to interdisciplinary collaborations. COIL can be created in general education courses and discipline-based courses that promote global knowledge and intercultural learning. As part of a regular coursework, a COIL module can take up several weeks during the course or the entire course. [SUNY COIL Center](#) recommends that the minimum length for a COIL module to be effective is 5 weeks. Instructors can use any technology tools, often easily accessible and commonly available ones, that serve the learning goals of their courses and COIL experience.

COIL experience typically includes three key components:

- Icebreaker activities for team building and intercultural development
- Collaboration on projects, problem solving and activities in intercultural teams
- Reflection on the project, teamwork and intercultural experience



Source: SUNY COIL Center (<https://online.suny.edu/introtocoil/suny-coil-what-is/>)

Why is COIL a high impact practice?

Kuh and O'Donnell (2013) identified eight quality dimensions that define high-impact practices (p.10). Ohio State expands the list to include promotion of inclusivity and recruitment of diverse student body (9 & 10).

1. Performance expectations set at appropriately high levels;
2. Significant investment of time and effort by students over an extended period of time;
3. Interactions with faculty and peers about substantive matters;
4. Experiences with diversity, wherein students are exposed to and must contend with people and circumstances that differ from those with which students are familiar;
5. Frequent, timely and constructive feedback;
6. Periodic, structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning;
7. Opportunities to discover relevance of learning through real-world applications; and
8. Public demonstration of competence.
9. Explicit and intentional efforts to promote inclusivity and a sense of belonging and safety for students -- e.g., use of universal design principles, culturally responsive pedagogy, structured development of cultural self-awareness.
10. Clear plans to promote this course to a diverse student body and increase enrollment of typically underserved populations of students.

COIL, when intentionally designed and implemented can incorporate all of these pedagogical strategies that define high impact practices. COIL allows students to explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own and reflect on diversity at home and around world. The collaborative project provides a means to meaningful intercultural interactions and discussions with peers and faculty from diverse backgrounds on global issues.

How does COIL fit into the new GE model?

The new GE model allows students to take a single, 4+ credit course to satisfy a particular GE Theme requirement if that course includes key practices that are recognized as integrative and high impact

(employing three main principles of intentionality, interaction, and reflection). Practices currently qualifying for designation as 4+ credit, integrative courses are: Service Learning; Education Away; Research & Creative Inquiry, Interdisciplinary Team-Taught courses, and courses with Instruction in a Foreign Language.

Current definition of education away is descriptive of study abroad and domestic education away programs (see below). But it does not provide a clear language for inclusion of COIL experience.

The Forum on Education Abroad defines education abroad as “education that occurs outside the participant’s home country.” In addition to engagement in academic courses, this can include credit-bearing international experiences, such as internships, volunteering, and directed travel, as long as these programs are driven to a significant degree by learning goals. “Education Away” expands this definition to include experiences in areas of the US that are culturally different from what they could experience on their home campus of The Ohio State University.

What is global and intercultural learning?

AAC&U defines global learning as a critical analysis of and an engagement with complex, interdependent global systems and legacies (such as natural, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political) and their implications for people’s lives and the earth’s sustainability.

Through global learning, students should 1) become informed, open-minded, and responsible people who are attentive to diversity across the spectrum of differences, 2) seek to understand how their actions affect both local and global communities, and 3) address the world’s most pressing and enduring issues collaboratively and equitably. As such, global learning involves students’ engagement with, rather than their exposure to differences (Landorf, Doscher & Hardrick, 2018).

This expanded definition of global learning aligns well with the GE theme course goals and encompasses education abroad, education away, COIL and other types of virtual intercultural experiences with similar goals and outcomes.

How to integrate COIL into a new or existing course?

Currently, expectations for workload and credit-hours for Education Abroad & Away courses are outlined by the Office of International Affairs and described in the Arts and Sciences Curriculum and Operations Manual. COIL courses will have the same expectations as other GE courses since COIL experiences does not involve international travel and occur within the same timeframe of the regular course. The Integrative Practices Inventory developed for 4+ credit education away courses works well for COIL courses.

Ohio State has historically offered a wide selection of courses and study abroad programs that support global learning and intercultural development. A small number of programs have been adapted to the virtual modality during the pandemic. These virtual programs vary in many ways from length, design, learning outcomes to credits offered. Compared to other virtual offerings, COIL is a distinctive virtual experiential learning that embraces high impact practices. It requires instructors to have substantial knowledge of and experiences with collaborative learning, reflective pedagogy and intercultural learning facilitation. The COIL learning community jointly offered by the Office of International Affairs and the Michael V. Drake Institute for Teaching and Learning has provided instructor training and intercultural development since 2021. Each cohort admits ten instructors to integrate COIL experience in current or new courses and provides funding support for course design and redesign. Course development grants available at OIA and other units across campus can also provide incentives for creating COIL courses.

Another potential incentive for instructors could be facilitated through the teaching endorsement model at the Drake Institute. In alignment with the strategic plan for comprehensive internationalization, a full-time position should be created in OIA to support curricular initiatives and sustain growth of GE courses with global and intercultural learning components.

References

Kuh, G. D., & O'Donnell, K. (2013). Ensuring quality and taking high-impact practices to scale. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Landorf, H., Dorscher, S., & Hardrick, J. (2018). *Making global learning universal*. Sterling, V.A.: Stylus.