Planning a COIL – how to start

This worksheet is intended to help you reflect over all the stages of a COIL project: from initial idea to evaluation. Depending on where you are in planning your COIL, various areas may be more or less applicable for you. For this workshop, please spend the time with the questions on the first page. If you already are working on a COIL, you can move on to questions on the next pages. After the workshop, the rest of the workshop can help guide you in your next steps.

Why COIL?

To COIL your course, or an aspect of your course, is to provide a unique learning experience to your students. As our world grows ever more connected, our students should have exposure to other cultures and achieve the intercultural competencies needed to effectively work with those from other cultures. COILing your course may bolster your content or may provide scaffolding for future student experiences such as study abroad. It is a process, a reflection, and an opportunity to grow for both students and instructors.

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| **Reflection Questions:**  In which of your courses, subjects, or fields would it be meaningful to work with COIL?  If you were to tell your students today, why you are COILing their course, what would you say? |

Finding a partner

Draw from your personal and professional network to identify possible instructional partners. This may include former visiting scholars, graduate students, members of professional organizations, your international coordinator, or online professional networks within your field.

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| **Reflection Questions:**  Which networks do you belong to?  Where might you find a potential partner, or someone who could connect you to a potential partner? |

Aligning expectations with your partner

As you begin to work with your partner(s), the communication channels, languages, context and expectations may vary. To keep everything moving smoothly, be sure to discuss the following procedural questions with your partner(s).

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| **Reflection Questions:**  When are you available to collaborate?  How much time do you have to devote to this project?  How does teaching and learning take place in your classroom/institution (philosophy, methods, practices)?  Who will be responsible for which aspects of the course/activity design and development?  What will be the workflow between you and your partner? (e.g., content review, decisions about instructional materials, etc.)  What online platform will you use for coordination and COIL course development?  Is it possible to meet in real life/time during the initial design process? Will such a meeting provide additional value to the development of the COIL?  Is the course a one-time collaboration, or do you intend to repeat the COIL with the same partner? |

Aligning the nitty gritty details

Don’t underestimate the importance of logistical details. Try to discuss as many details as possible in advance in order to make sure that there are as few logistical hurdles as possible.

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| **Reflection Questions:**  What are the semester start and end dates for each institution?  How many students from each institution will participate in the COIL?  How old are the students, and what is their level of education?  When are there vacations or holidays that should be taken into account?  When are there important deadlines for other coursework or other projects for the students?  What will be the language of communication for the COIL? How proficient are the students in each institution with that language?  What is the time difference between your countries?  When and how often do your students have lessons?  How much weight/credits will the COIL have in your course?  What knowledge do the students have about the other countries? What might they need to know before the COIL begins?  Do the students in each institution have experience with COIL projects?  Are the students in each institution used to group work/individual work/online communication/written vs oral communication? |

Codesign the COIL

Remember that the design is a collaboration between the two institutions. It can be a good idea to present an initial draft or idea when first reaching out to a potential partner, but it is equally important that both partners have equitable ownership and involvement in the course.

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| **Reflection Questions:**  What is the objective of the COIL? What should the students know/be able to do once the course is finished? How does this objective relate to other objectives of the overall curriculum? Objectives should be concrete and measurable.  How will the objective be assessed? Assessment should be equitable (not necessarily equal). Will the students be evaluated based on participation? What are the formative or summative assessment criteria? How will the students receive feedback?  Which (inter)cultural competencies will be needed to participate in the COIL? Which might be developed during the COIL?  How will you build the interactions between the students? Asynchronous or synchronous? How many interactions, and how long between the interactions?  Will the students work in pairs, small groups, or large groups?  How will the students be supervised? Will you and your partner be a part of the students’ interactions?  What online platform will be used for the course and the student’s interaction?  Which technological tools will you use for the COIL project? Which challenges might be presented with these technologies? Do the students have equal access and proficiencies to these technologies? Who will provide technical support if needed?  How can you support community-building and open, respectful exchanges among the students?  How can you scaffold the students’ interactions?  What materials will you need to provide the students? Do they need to have the same level of expertise with the subject matter? Do you need to develop or source material for the COIL project?  How will you introduce the COIL to the students and ensure that they approach the project with openness, curiosity, and cultural awareness? |

Student evaluation

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| **Reflection Questions:**  How will you evaluate the COIL?  What are the criteria for success?  What is the plan for incorporating feedback and enhancing the course for the future? |

Next steps

**Reflection Questions:**

What is the next step for your individual COIL project?

What additional resources might you need to help you?

Who can you contact for assistance if needed?

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*This worksheet is intended to help you reflect on the necessary steps to consider when creating a COIL It is adapted from the COIL Workbook from the University of Minnesota. The complete workbook can be found here:* <https://academics.cehd.umn.edu/digital-education/project/collaborative-online-international-learning-coil-workbook/>