Creating and evaluating collaborative online international learning (COIL) projects.

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#LTC19RGU Learning Without Borders

Creating and Evaluating Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) Projects

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Workshop Overview

1. Share findings and experience from a current RGU COIL project

2. Provide a model/key elements required for a COIL project

3. Consider challenges and opportunities in your own subject area

Intercultural competency shortfall?

- Theory vs competency
- Intra-university projects, UK based clients
- Mismatched student and employer perceptions
- Need for more intercultural, experiential student projects

Activity 1: Identifying Intercultural Challenges

What are the intercultural challenges in your subject area?

How does this impact on pedagogy?

How does this impact on employability?

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)

- Globally Networked Learning (GNL)
- Experiential Learning
- Heterogenous Groups
- Problem solving and innovation
- Emerging communication and learning technologies
- Cost effective and inter-disciplinary

COIL Project Learning Outcome

The ability to demonstrate intercultural communication knowledge, sensitivity, understanding and competency.

Project Aims

- Improve English language skills
- Improve the ability to work with non-native English language speakers
- Promote the use of digital channels in cross-border communication
- Cultivate team project management skills
- Develop an understanding of the communication challenges facing companies operating in a global context
- Improve collaborative writing and speaking skills

Activity 2: Developing Learning Outcomes

Develop three learning outcomes for a COIL project in your subject area.

International, virtual collaboration

- Four countries: Scotland, Germany, USA, Portugal
- October to November 2017 and 2018 – six week project
- Over 100 students in virtual teams
- Global industry clients / brands

COIL Collaborators
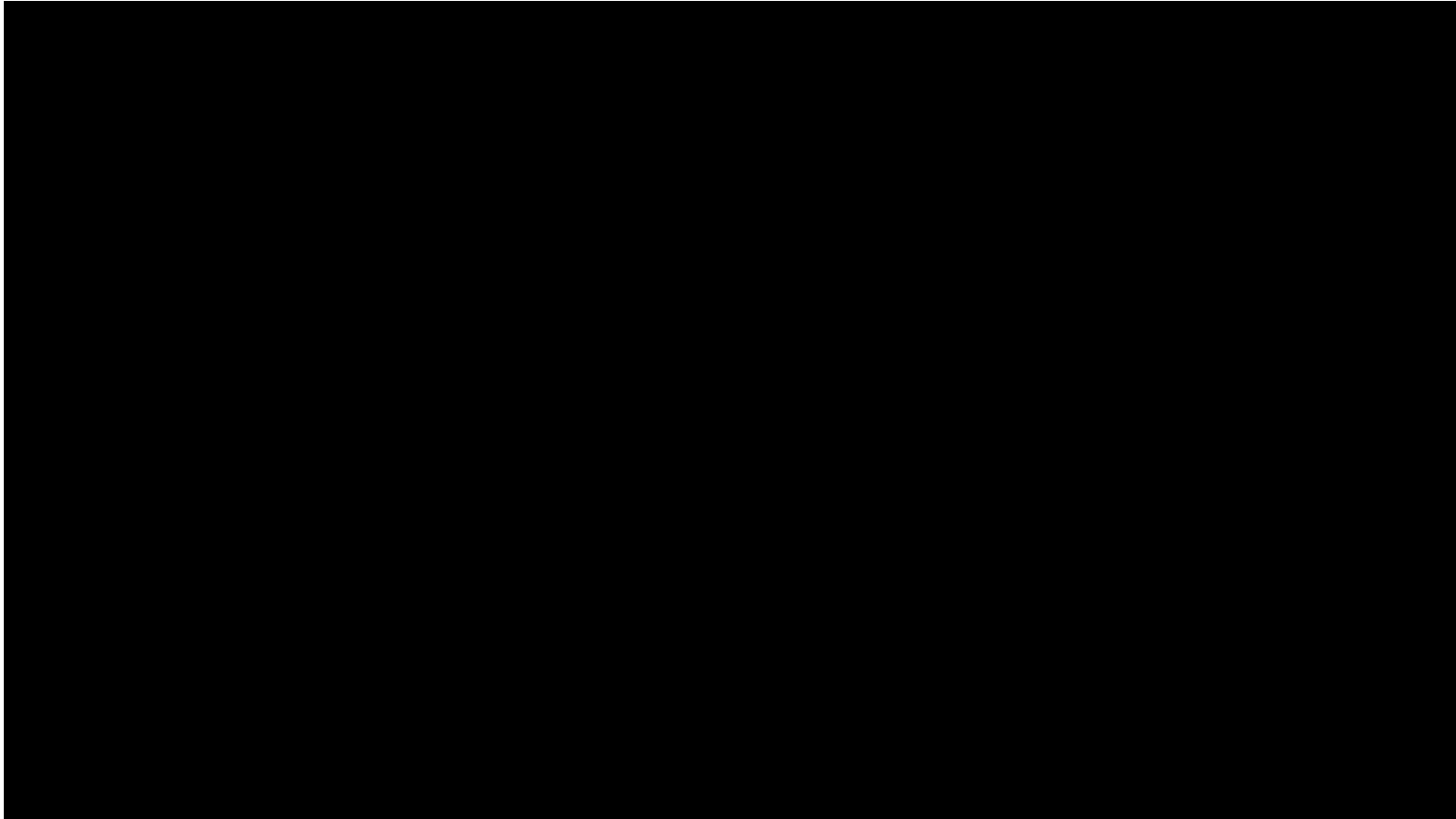
Activity 3: Creating a Collaborative Team

How would you establish your own collaborative team for a COIL project?

What kind of people would you want to have in your team and why?

The Student Brief:

In virtual teams:

- Research a named company operating in more than one country
- Identify corporate communication issues and solutions
- Prepare team presentation
- Submit individual reflective summary

The Process

The project involved three main phases:

- **Initial team building and role allocation**

- **Secondary research into the client**

- **Information sharing among the team and creating the combined presentation**

Activity 4: Building a Student Brief

What kind of student activities would be appropriate for a COIL project in your subject area?

How would you use technology to facilitate these activities?

Project Challenges

- Different university schedules

- Varying course requirements

- Built-in project vs. add-on activity

- Diverse student backgrounds

- Various UG/PG and online/offline disciplines

- Different evaluation needs

Activity 5: Project Challenges

What are the main challenges and barriers to implementation for a COIL project in your subject area?

How would you overcome these challenges?

COIL Project Evaluation and Research

Do experiential international classroom projects using virtual team collaborations increase intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communication competence in students?

Literature Review

Intercultural Sensitivity (Chen and Starosta, 2000)

Intercultural Communication Competence (Arasaratnam, 2009)

Mixed Methods Approach

- Online survey based on IS and ICC scales taken before and after project

- Post-project qualitative questions to ascertain feelings towards the project and identify areas for improvement

Measurement Criteria

1. increased awareness of verbal, non-verbal and para-verbal communication;

2. increased appreciation of cultural differences;

3. reduction of ethnocentristic tendencies and stereotypes;

4. reduction of fears and increase in confidence in dealing with other cultures;

5. increased awareness of difficulties in dealing with other cultures.

Activity 6: Measuring Success

Identify 3 criteria for measuring the success of your COIL project.

What methods would you use to evaluate these criteria?

Survey Results

- Increased awareness of verbal, non-verbal and para-verbal communication
- Increased appreciation of cultural differences
- Reduction of ethnocentristic tendencies and stereotypes
- Reduction of fears and increase in confidence in dealing with other cultures
- Increased awareness of difficulties in dealing with other cultures

Qualitative Responses - Positives

- new experience and opportunity to work with people from another culture

- friendly and inviting atmosphere

- real life scenario, finding solutions and solving problems

- 'forced' to work outside comfort zone

- experiential 'learning through doing'

- meeting new people, discussing cultural differences, engaging with another culture and hearing other points of view

- meaningful changes in their own approach to other cultures

Qualitative Responses - Negatives

- coordinating appointments due to different time zones and schedules
- language barriers
- coordinating tasks through social media
- technological issues (different levels of internet savviness)
- differing expectations and deadlines and difficulty agreeing what to do
- varying degrees of engagement and reliability between teams
- working remotely instead of face-to-face
- lack of communication and/or organisation in and between the teams

Qualitative Responses – Future Learning

- more effort in managing time, assigning roles and delegating tasks

- plan better, engage members more, set up more frequent meetings and prioritise the project

- value the experience more highly

- learn more about the other cultures and enjoy the opportunity of working with foreign students more

Conclusion

- Virtual team collaboration can develop intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communication competence

- Valuable contribution to experiential learning pedagogy

- Significant potential for enhanced employability and graduate preparedness for the workplace.

Future Projects and Research

- Improve timing, composition, task distribution and support for student teams
- Strengthen communication platforms and preparation
- Develop more consistent, integrated assessment criteria
- Include more frequent multi-way tutor communication
- Evolve and refine evaluation methods

Relevant Literature

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