



Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) proposed guidelines

Universitat Rovira i Virgili

WORKING PLAN DOCUMENT

This is a working document. You can use it as a framework for the design phase of a COIL activity. Please contact us if you have any questions or comments. We are here to help! coil@urv.cat

We include here the materials and steps for setting up a given COIL activity divided into four meetings. You may already know what you want to do and be able to discuss it and agree on it in only one or two meetings. That is great! Still, all the points that we include under each meeting can act as a checklist to make sure that you have covered all essential aspects.

- ✓ Previous considerations
 - What is COIL
 - Basic Structure
 - Duration
- ✓ Activity Framework – scheme
- ✓ General tips
- ✓ Checklist (4 preparatory meetings)

PREVIOUS CONSIDERATIONS:

What is COIL and why is it different from other online/distance learning?

Collaborative Online International Learning is a pedagogical methodology created by Jon Rubin at the State University of New York in 2004.

It consists of the development of part of the courses to be undertaken collaboratively, internationally and online.

The **collaborative aspect** involves, on one hand, design and teaching (teachers) and, on the other, teamwork and learning (students)

The International aspect reflects the fact that the teaching and learning take place between two countries, thus allowing **international interaction** and a temporary multicultural classroom (COIL is also called “virtual exchange”)

The **online** aspect reflects, obviously, the fact that it takes place via the internet (synchronous or asynchronous interaction)

COIL creates a first level impact on students and this must be monitored and structured. Good advanced preparation is therefore essential to the activity's success!

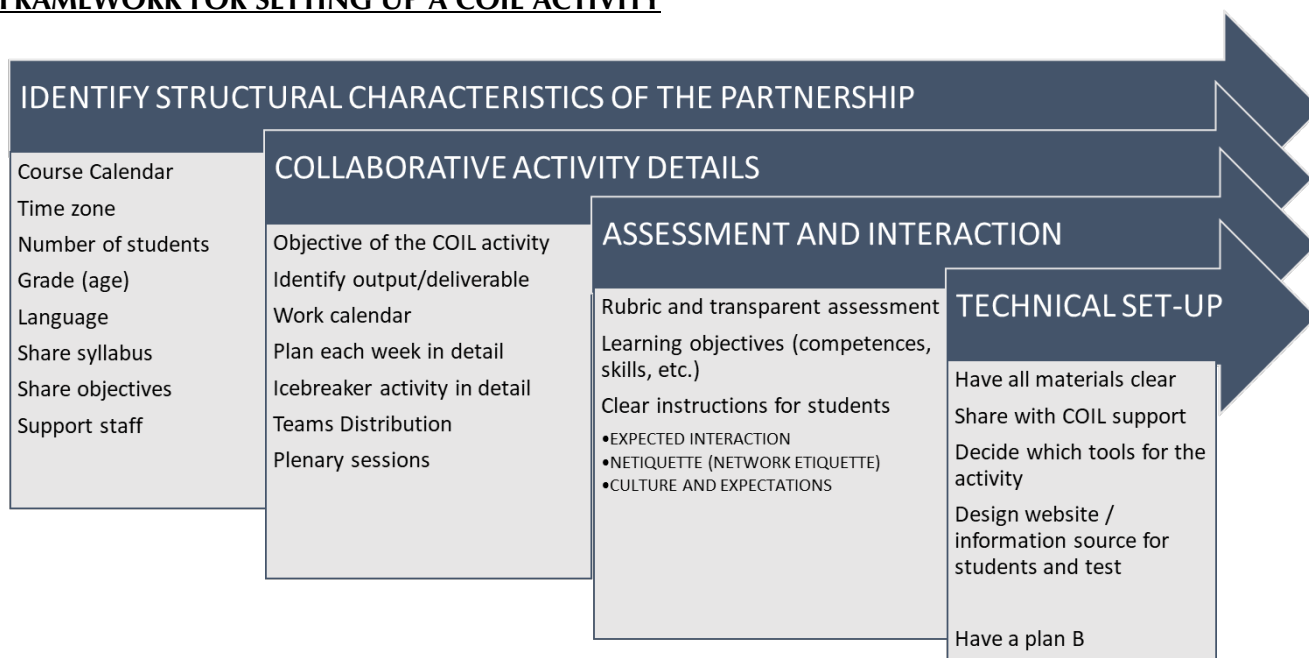
What is the basic structure of a COIL activity?



How long should it last? 4 to 12 weeks

- We suggest a minimum of 4 weeks.
- Allow one week at the beginning for the icebreaker and one at the end for wrapping up and reflection.

FRAMEWORK FOR SETTING UP A COIL ACTIVITY



SOME GENERAL TIPS:

- ➔ Try to ensure that meetings last a maximum of one hour
- ➔ Distribute tasks clearly and set clear objectives for the next meeting.
- ➔ Create shared folders for working together
- ➔ Keep track of any agreements made

CHECKLIST

1st Meeting: Getting to know each other

Identify structural course characteristics:

- Outline your calendar (when does your course begin, when does it finish?)
- When will you be able to start and finish your COIL activity? (it is good if you can factor in an extra week at the end just in case you need it)
- Check time zone differences. Any holidays to take into account?
- How many students do you have?
- Can you create balanced mixed teams? (we suggest groups of 4-6 people)
- Which grade are your students? And how old are they?
- Which language will you use for the collaboration? (If possible, try to design activities where the language gap is not a barrier or language level is not a part of the assessment.)

Identify cooperation potential: content and activities

- Share the syllabus (or explain main features)
- Ask yourselves:
 - o Is there any course content that lends itself to teamwork?
 - o Would it be useful to incorporate any intercultural components?
 - o Is there any area where it would be interesting to compare the different situations and practices between two different countries?
 - o Are UN sustainable development goals relevant to your course? Would it be possible to work on them in your subject?

Institutional resources:

- Do you have institutional support?
(IT services / International office / Digital development service / Resources center, etc?)
If you do, reach out to them! Explain to them what you are planning to do.

Task for next week/meeting:

- If you have not done so yet, think about a COILable-activity to develop and implement together.
- Consider each other's syllabuses, objectives and wishes.

2nd Meeting: Setting up the basis for the collaboration

Both professors have been reflecting on possible activities. Today you can design a joint activity together. Decide on:

- Objective of the team project/research/work
- Output/deliverable (report, video, podcast, interview, research project, comparative project, power point presentation, comic, etc.)
- Work calendar (minimum 4 weeks, including one week at the beginning for the icebreaker) – see icebreaker examples in Moodle. They can be also related to the activity.
- Write the instructions that students will need to follow to develop the joint activity

- Think about the way that students will have to work in teams (distribution of people, assigned roles, etc.)
- Will it be necessary to programme monitoring sessions?
- Is it advisable to schedule plenary sessions? If so, is that restricted by considerations regarding time zones?
- How will the teamwork and the deliverables be assessed?

TIP: Think about the activity first; you can decide which technology/platform to use afterwards!

About assessment:

Professors can assess their students freely within their own subject at their institution. Nevertheless, it is recommended that both professors agree on the marks students will receive for the COIL activity. It is also recommended that professors apply the same % for the final course mark.

You can leave the fine details and the assessment format for “homework” and agree on them at the following meeting.

3rd Meeting: building the COIL activity

- Provide clear instructions and assessment criteria for each step and/or the whole activity
- Plan each week of the activity in detail.
- Formulate common learning objectives for the collaboration with the partner institution: Give details and be specific.
- Consider institutional cultures and expectations:
 - o How do students interact with professors?
 - o What are the expectations regarding *netiquette* for the students involved. For example, would they include replying within two-day time maximum, being polite and respectful, being tolerant and open-minded, etc.
 - o Schedule some preparation for your students for the joint activity (in your class, before the cooperation)
 - o Allow some time for reflection: intercultural exchange is a key component for COIL!

4th Meeting: fine-tuning the details of the COIL activity (and assessment!)

Invite the COIL support to this meeting (coil@urv.cat)

- Be clear about all aspects: materials, instructions, assessment, bibliography, etc.
- Technical issues: which tools will you use for the activity?
- Share this information with URV COIL support, who can provide web design/technology testing and preparation.