

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL): Preparation

Quick Checklist and Guiding Questions for Instructors Preparing a COIL Project

This handout helps instructors prepare for a collaborative phase in a COIL project. Additional handouts are available to assist with implementation and evaluation.

Working with this handout: Key coordination requirements are listed under the heading “Before the Start of the COIL Phase” and it is strongly recommended that these be clarified. This is followed by thematic guiding questions, which are intended to provide in-depth guidance from which appropriate focal points can be selected depending on the collaboration, subject areas, and timeframe.

Before the Start of the COIL Phase – Key Coordination Steps

- ☐ Set **common learning objectives** (see 3: Clarify Learning Objectives)
 - ☐ Detailed planning of **student collaboration** (see 4: Collaboration Phase)
 - ☐ clear **roles and responsibilities** (see 5: Design, Roles, Organization)
 - ☐ Agreed-upon **project results** and **exam evaluation** (see 6: Evaluation)
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1. Common Starting Point

Key Questions

- ☐ What is the reason behind our COIL collaboration?
- ☐ What added value should this collaboration provide for our students?
- ☐ What prior experience do we have with international, digital or collaborative teaching?
- ☐ What expectations do we have of one another as teachers?

Practical Tip

Early consultation not only on content, but also on work methods, communication, and commitment.

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2. Professional Fit

Key Questions

- ☐ Where do our courses overlap in terms of subject matter?
- ☐ What differences exist in the learning and academic cultures of universities and how do these shape our students' expectations and study habits?
- ☐ Which perspectives complement each other effectively?
- ☐ What prior knowledge do our students bring to the table?

Practical Tip

There is no need for maximum overlap in content. What matters is a common point of connection where different perspectives can be brought together.

3. Define Learning Objectives

Key Questions

- ☐ What subject-specific learning objectives should be addressed during the COIL phase?
- ☐ What cross-curricular competencies should be demonstrated, such as communication, teamwork, or the ability to see things from different perspectives?
- ☐ What role do intercultural learning objectives play?
- ☐ How would we know that the COIL phase was successful?

Practical Tip

Lernziele können sowohl fachlicher als auch interaktionaler Art sein.

4. Organizing the Students' Collaboration Phase

Key Questions

- ☐ What exactly are the students supposed to do together?
- ☐ Which task requires genuine interaction rather than just a division of labor?
- ☐ What kind of joint product or interim result is appropriate for this collaboration?
- ☐ How do we make it clear to the students what constitutes good collaboration during this phase?

Practical Tip

A good COIL assignment answers the question: What can students accomplish only by working together?

5. Instructional Design, Roles, and Organization

Key Questions

- ☐ To what extent do we want to — or should we — structure the collaboration, and where should students have some flexibility?
- ☐ What milestones or intermediate steps do the groups need?
- ☐ Who will take on which tasks related to planning, introduction, support, and evaluation?
- ☐ Which agreements do we want to document in writing?
- ☐ What language, tools, and time frame work best for both sides?

Practical Tip

Simple written agreements help prevent misunderstandings, such as those regarding responsibilities, response times, and deadlines. In new, unfamiliar formats, it is helpful to provide more structure in order to better address any uncertainties students may have and offer them a solid foundation for their work.

6. Results, Evaluation, and Relevance to the Exam

Key Questions

- ☐ Should the assessment focus on the process, the product, or both?
- ☐ Is the COIL phase part of the course requirements?
- ☐ What assessment criteria apply to both courses?
- ☐ Where do we need common standards, and where do we need transparency regarding differences?

Practical Tip

The final product, collaboration, and reflection should all be taken into account for the evaluation.