The SUNY COIL Center is a leader in the emerging field of collaborative online international learning, which is not a technology, but a new teaching and learning paradigm that develops cross-cultural competence across shared multicultural learning environments. COIL fosters meaningful exchanges between faculty and students with peers abroad, through the use of Internet-based tools. The COIL Center is a unit of SUNY Office of Global Affairs at The State University of New York, the largest comprehensive university system in the U.S. with nearly 500,000 students across its 64 campuses.

Students Gain Cross-Cultural Awareness

Our method links a class at a SUNY campus with one at a college or university abroad. The COIL model does not merely promote courses where students from different countries share an online classroom. Rather, we create co-equal team-taught learning environments where faculty from two cultures work together to develop a shared syllabus, emphasizing experiential and collaborative student learning. The courses give new contextual meaning to the ideas and texts they explore, while providing students new venues in which to develop their cross-cultural awareness. Classes may be fully online or, more often, offered in blended formats with traditional face-to-face sessions taking place at both schools, while collaborative student work takes place online.

A Bilateral Internationalization Model

Cooperating instructors work closely with all students, but in most cases these students are enrolled, charged tuition, and awarded grades only at their home institution. This revenue-neutral model reduces the administrative complexity of these bilateral institutional agreements, while linking and enhancing international classrooms through collaborative coursework. These courses do not require high-end technology, and they work effectively as portals to increase student interest in study abroad.

Case Studies from the COIL Institute for Globally Networked Learning in the Humanities

During 2011-13, with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the COIL Center worked with 50 partnered higher education institutions from around the world, supporting teams of faculty and staff as they created pilot collaborative online international learning courses. Through the Institute, the COIL Center developed extensive experience working with a wide range of institutions and has now published 24 case studies available online: http://coil.suny.edu/case-studies.

An Invitation to Work With COIL

The COIL Center has developed a comprehensive program for building campus-based collaborative online international learning initiatives. We welcome inquiries from campuses interested in engaging the COIL Center to work with them in creating such initiatives. We also seek international faculty and institutions interested in partnering with SUNY to develop collaborative courses in all disciplines.

For more information visit coil.suny.edu or email coilinfo@suny.edu.