

## COIL

## Collaborative Online International Learning

**COIL** is a teaching and learning approach that connects students and teaching staff from different countries through virtual collaboration embedded in existing courses.

## Learning objectives / benefits

**Complexity :** 

**Group size:** medium

**Format:** online

- Develop **intercultural competence** and global awareness
- Promote **active learning** through international peer collaboration
- Enhance **communication, teamwork, and digital collaboration skills**
- Encourage **critical thinking** by exposing students to diverse perspectives
- Increase **student engagement and motivation** in online learning environments

## Implementation

**Design internationally relevant tasks:**

Create collaborative tasks that benefit from diverse cultural or disciplinary perspectives (e.g. global case studies, comparative analyses, joint projects).

**Choose accessible tools:**

Use widely available and easy-to-use online tools that support collaboration across countries and institutions.

**Set clear structure and expectations:**

Clarify goals, roles, timelines, communication rules, and assessment criteria from the start.

**Support intercultural collaboration:**

Provide guidelines for respectful communication and encourage reflection on cultural differences.

**Facilitate and monitor collaboration:**

Actively support group processes, provide feedback, and help resolve challenges related to communication or coordination.

## Further reading

Jon Rubin, Sarah Guth, *The Guide to COIL Virtual Exchange Implementing, Growing, and Sustaining Collaborative Online International Learning* (2022)

## Recommendations

**Cultural and communication differences:**

Address expectations explicitly and encourage openness and respect.

**Time zones and scheduling:**

Combine asynchronous activities with carefully planned synchronous meetings.

**Unequal participation:**

Use clear roles, milestones, and peer feedback to support balanced engagement.

**Technological barriers:**

Choose reliable tools and provide alternatives when possible.

**Alignment with learning outcomes:**

Ensure international collaboration clearly supports course learning objectives.

**More information:** Anneli Kalm, TalTech  
anneli.kalm@taltech.ee