

COIL Explained and Case Studies

1. OVERVIEW

Virtual Exchange (VE) has been a growing trend in pedagogy and international education over the last few years due to the flexibility and benefits it provides, by not limiting intercultural exchange to physical travel. With the current pandemic and surrounding travel restrictions, there are limitations and barriers to physical exchange opportunities, even if borders re-open for non-essential travel. However, the importance of intercultural understanding and collaboration does not diminish; in fact, it's perhaps more important than ever to build on the ability to foster empathetic connections.

Under the umbrella term of VE, various forms of student and faculty mobility have developed internationally, Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) being one them.

VE was previously seen as an accessible and environmentally sustainable form of mobility that ensured international education was not something reserved only for those who could afford it. Now, out of necessity, it may become part of the *new normal*, alongside distance and blended learning. Even post-pandemic, it may be a new mainstay, since VE also supports internationalization at home.

KEY DEFINITIONS:

Virtual exchange is defined as a technology-enabled, sustained, people-to-people education programme.

Technology-enabled:

Using new media, digital or mobile technology.

Sustained:

The programme is conducted through institutional partnerships and sustained over a certain period by a curriculum. This guides educators and or facilitators who apply a specific virtual exchange pedagogical model.

People-to-people:

A virtual exchange is an inclusive and accessible means of facilitating intercultural communication and collaboration, which focuses on dialogue that bridges difference.

Education programme:

Virtual exchanges are integrated into educational programmes and curricula and enable students to develop measurable skills, knowledge and attitudes that foster pro-social behavior.

Source: [Sharing Perspectives Foundation](#)

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) is an approach that brings students and professors together across cultures to learn, discuss and collaborate as part of their class.

Professors partner to design the experience, and students partner to complete the activities designed. COIL becomes part of the class, enabling all students to have a significant intercultural experience within their course of study. Instructors can use any technology tools that serves the learning goals.

2. BENEFITS

- Internationalization at home
- Develop intercultural competencies and provide access to international learning
- KPU as a leader in VE and COIL
- Environmentally sustainable form of mobility
 - Reduce emissions from air travel
- Accessible and cost-effective form of mobility
 - Removes barriers
- Diverse and attractive curriculum offering for prospective KPU students
 - Exchange opportunities have always been a recruitment tool for students, who are now looking for not just a degree but an education that will help them stand out and be equipped with the demands of modern industries.
- Professional development opportunity for faculty members to engage with international colleagues and academics
- Build student's ability to collaborate virtually

3. RESEARCH/CASE STUDIES

We thank generous collaborators at Erasmus+, UDEM, SUNY COIL, Humber College, and CBIE for offering invaluable insight and sharing knowledge through calls, conferences, online resources, and discussions:

- [Infusing a Collaborative International Online Learning Experience into the Curriculum: A United States and Mexico Collaboration](#)
- [Collaborative online exchange in US, Japan](#)
- [Humber-Fontys Pilot Program](#)
- [Erasmus+ Handbook for International Relations](#)
- [Langara COIL-VE program](#)