

Kansai University, Osaka, Japan

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2014 Project Start

Since Kansai University joined the SUNY Global Partner Network in 2014, we have offered approximately 30 COIL-enhanced courses. It all started with just one instructor who considered it to be of great potential in promoting internationalization of the curriculum. As of the 2016 academic year the KU-COIL Network extends to universities from seven countries within Asia and others in North America, South America, Africa, the Middle East and Europe. Many of these COIL partnerships have evolved to be our university partners, and, we can say that the COIL endeavor has proven to be a highly effective internationalization strategy for the university.

Implementation

It was fortunate that COIL activities on campus have been well supported by the President's Office during the early stages of implementation. After the promising results of the first three COIL courses in 2014, two SIOs from the university were sent to the SUNY COIL conference in New York to learn more about COIL. This visit confirmed their decision and the COIL initiative ("KU-COIL") was integrated into the university's ten-year internationalization strategic plan.

Organization

Two annual international symposia and workshops were held on campus in 2014 and 2015, respectively to which we invited our overseas partners and local neighboring institutions within Japan to disseminate the concept. In 2015, the KU-COIL team was established, consisting of one staff member (who has knowledge of ICT enhanced classroom design and commits 70% of her time to COIL) and three assistant/associate professors who each commit 15-30% of their time.

Application of COIL Courses

At Kansai, COIL activities are embedded in EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction) curriculum and in advanced ESL courses. Many of these courses have a mixed student population incorporating international students and local Japanese students. Promoting interactive learning experiences in class activities is emphasized in these courses, and is expected by the participating students. For non-EMI courses, we promote KU-COIL to our instructors; particularly what we call "pre-COIL," a short trial version of COIL for a few weeks. Although it is still a small stream, there are several non-English mediated COIL projects. In Japanese as a foreign language teacher training courses, the COIL experience enables the students to interact with overseas learners of Japanese language, which would otherwise be difficult.

Support

To date, we have not implemented any system of monetary support or incentives for the participating instructors. Instead, the KU-COIL team offers practical assistance—providing necessary equipment (e.g., web camera, PC), a special classroom for small group work, and trained student staff who are bilingual and able to facilitate collaboration work with an overseas partner. We also offer various on-line tutorials

for instructors who are new to COIL practice and regularly offer consulting hours for COIL teachers at the Office of International Education Support. These COIL-based services are made available to those who are launching their COIL course for the first time as well as those who are continuing.

Outcomes and Objectives

The most significant learning outcomes we have identified among KU students (mostly local undergraduates) who participate in KU-COIL are significant improvements in their English oral communication performance and in their intercultural sensitivity. Our 20-year internationalization plan proposes promoting COIL courses to as many incoming undergraduate students as possible. Kansai is a comprehensive university with 30,000 students, and we hope to eventually reach 6500 students a year through COIL. As the number of EMI courses will also increase rapidly over the next 20 years, COIL is likely to play an especially important role in this regard. As a more immediate task, KU's next mission for the COIL project is to generate increased data to validate the apparent positive effects. We also want to engage more overseas partners and to bring aboard more Kansai instructors.

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