

# Collaborative Online International Learning: Language and Cross-Cultural Experiences of University Students\*

*Aprendizaje colaborativo internacional en línea: experiencias  
lingüísticas y crosculturales de estudiantes universitarios*

Frank Ramírez-Marín<sup>a</sup>

*Universidad Veracruzana, Veracruz, Mexico*

Lucero del Carmen Núñez-Figueroa<sup>6</sup>

*Universidad Veracruzana, Boca del Río, Mexico*

Nicole Blair<sup>-</sup>

*University of Washington Tacoma, Tacoma, United States of America*

\* Scientific and technological research article

Received: December 3<sup>th</sup>, 2020–Approved: May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021

<sup>a</sup> Ph.D. in Language and Literacy.

Regional Coordinator for Internationalization and Mobility.

[fraramirez@uv.mx](mailto:fraramirez@uv.mx) – ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3098-1586>

<sup>6</sup> M.Sc. in English Language Teaching.

Lecturer.

[lnunuez@uv.mx](mailto:lnunuez@uv.mx) – ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6146-834X>

<sup>-</sup> Ph.D. in Modern British Literature and Critical Theory.

Lecturer.

[nblair@uw.edu](mailto:nblair@uw.edu) – ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7813-2543>

**How to cite this article:** Ramírez-Marín, F., Núñez-Figueroa, L. C., & Blair, N. (2020). Collaborative Online International Learning: Language and Cross-Cultural Experiences of University Students. *Matices en Lenguas Extranjeras*, 14(1), 118-162. <https://doi.org/10.15446/male.v14n1.92144>

Este trabajo se encuentra bajo la licencia Creative Commons Attribution 4.0.

## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study reports on a collaborative online project between the University of Washington at Tacoma (USA) and the Universidad Veracruzana at Veracruz City (México). The project was implemented as part of the internationalization of higher education policies of the participating universities, which include pedagogical practices oriented toward foreign language learning, the internationalization of the curriculum, and virtual exchange.

The study documents cross-cultural learning experiences between two groups of students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in a Collaborative Online International Learning approach (COIL); and how those experiences related to the development of cross-cultural competence. The language of instruction was English and the students interacted through an online platform and a social network.

The methodological design was qualitative-interpretive. Data was generated using interviews, linguistic samples (writing samples), and the interactions of the participants prompted by the use of an online platform and a social media network. Data analysis was realized through a content approach, which led to the formulation of assertions based on themes that emerged.

Results indicate that the pedagogical approach implemented (COIL) prompted reflexion on issues related to language learning, cultural understanding, and common life experiences, and that it was conducive to the development of aspects of cross-cultural competence.

**Keywords:** *Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), cross-cultural competence, English language learning, internationalization of the curriculum, virtual exchange.*

## RESUMEN

Este estudio de corte cualitativo reporta la implementación de un proyecto educativo en línea entre la Universidad de Washington, campus Tacoma (EUA) y la Universidad Veracruzana región Veracruz (México). Este proyecto fue implementado como parte de las políticas de internacionalización de la educación superior de las universidades participantes, las cuales incluyen prácticas pedagógicas orientadas hacia el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras, la internacionalización del currículo y el intercambio virtual.

Este estudio describe las experiencias de aprendizaje entre dos grupos de estudiantes de diferentes contextos lingüísticos y culturales en un enfoque de Aprendizaje Colaborativo Internacional en Línea (COIL por sus siglas en inglés); y entender la relación de esas experiencias con el desarrollo de la competencia crosultural.

El idioma utilizado en el proyecto fue el inglés y los estudiantes interactuaron mediante el uso de una plataforma en línea y una red social.

El diseño metodológico fue cualitativo-interpretativo. Los datos se generaron utilizando entrevistas, muestras lingüísticas (trabajos escritos), mientras que la interacción de los participantes se llevó a cabo a través de una plataforma en línea y una red social. El análisis de los datos se realizó a través de un enfoque de contenido, lo cual llevó a la formulación de hallazgos basados en temas que emergieron de los datos.

Los resultados indican que el enfoque pedagógico (COIL) promovió la reflexión de los estudiantes sobre temas relacionados con el aprendizaje de idiomas, el entendimiento cultural y las experiencias de vida que identificaron tener en común; los resultados también mostraron que el enfoque fue conducente para el desarrollo de algunos aspectos de la competencia crosultural.

**Palabras clave:** *aprendizaje colaborativo internacional en línea (COIL), aprendizaje del inglés, competencia crosultural, intercambio virtual, internacionalización del currículo.*

**MANY INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION** around the world face the challenge of structuring opportunities for students to have access to international learning experiences, including foreign language learning. Thus, a growing number of universities and institutions are generating innovative instructional approaches, which take advantage of computer and communication technologies, to promote cross-cultural interactions through international collaboration and the internationalization of the curriculum.

An example of these educational dynamics is the emerging field of Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) (also known as Virtual Exchange, Virtual Mobility, or Tele-collaboration). In this vein, The State University of New York's COIL Center (also referred to as The SUNY COIL Center), can be considered as the leading instance of this teaching and learning paradigm.

According to Rubin (2017), «COIL is not a technology or a technology platform but rather a new teaching and learning paradigm that develops cross-cultural awareness across shared multicultural learning environments» (pp. 33-34). Rubin (2017) states that the difference between regular online distance courses and COIL courses is that «...COIL is based upon developing team-taught learning environments where teachers from two cultures work together to develop a shared syllabus, emphasising experiential and collaborative student learning» (p.34). The author indicates that «[COIL] 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» (Rubin, 2017, p.34).

de Wit (2013) points out that

the term «collaborative online international learning» combines the four essential dimensions of real virtual mobility:

it is a collaborative exercise of teachers and students; it makes use of online technology and interaction; it has potential international dimensions; and it is integrated into the learning process. (de Wit, 2013, para. 9)

The following list represents some features of the COIL approach according to The SUNY COIL Center (2019):

- » The fostering of cross-cultural learning experiences.
- » The use of technology through online and blended learning environments.
- » The fostering of collaboration between university professors and students with their peers in different geographical locations and from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
- » The use of innovative online pedagogies.
- » Globally networked learning.
- » Virtual exchange/mobility.
- » Curricular internationalization.
- » Length of course: COIL academic courses can be one or two semesters in length.
- » Language of instruction: English is very often used in COIL courses. However, the language of instruction may be negotiated.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Collaborative Online International Learning (also known as a virtual exchange, virtual Mobility, or Telecollaboration) varies greatly in terms of project design and implementation, as well as in research designs. However, many projects are concerned with aspects of cultural competence (e.g., cross-cultural competence, intercultural competence, global competence, etc.), virtual mobility, internationalization of the curriculum or

internationalization at home. The following studies are examples of those types of pedagogical practices.

Appiah-Kubi and Annan (2020) conducted a study with engineering students from the University of Dayton (UD) in the United States and engineering students from the University of Ghana (UG). The researchers designed an 8-week long online collaboration and used statistical tests to identify differences between the COIL teams and students who did not participate with COIL. Scores in the exams, the project work, and the total class scores were also used to evaluate the students' performance. A post-project survey was given to the student participants of the two colleges. Results showed that

the COIL teams performed significantly better on the project work. In addition, 70% (of the 11 students from the University of Ghana) and 85% (of the 20 students from the University of Dayton) respectively reported that the collaboration was either effective or very effective. (Appiah-Kubi & Annan, 2020, p. 109)

Swartz et al. (2019) implemented a study focusing on the measurement of dimensions of intercultural competency through the implementation of a 6-week virtual collaboration. The collaboration between virtual teams involved classrooms in three different European countries. Through instructional activities, «the students were exposed to the challenges of collaborating internationally as to increase their intercultural competence» (Swartz et al., 2019, p.1). Methodologically, the researchers measured the constructs of intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communication based on surveys. The results suggested contradictory results since students reported «a heightened awareness of the difficulties of intercultural communication. Despite a general appreciation of the project and its outcomes,

negative results, such as an increased dislike of intercultural interaction, emerged» (Swartz et al., 2019, p. 1).

Naicker et al. (2021) used a mixed-methods approach to assess students' preparedness and experiences of a COIL course among South African students. The course focused on «generating understanding and appreciation of cultural differences in nutritional habits and food patterns between the Netherlands and South Africa» (Naicker et al., 2021, pp. 2-3).

The authors utilized a global competency questionnaire to assess students' preparedness for internationalization and used focus groups to determine barriers and enablers of students' experiences during the COIL course. According to the results, the study showed that

Pre-COIL, students expressed difficulty in adapting to new situations ( $p < 0,001$ ). However, post-COIL, students were more open to learning about other cultures different religions and traditions ( $p < 0,00$ ). Key barriers of student experiences included technological challenges, language, and partner dynamics while key enablers were a structured course outline, student's openness to COIL and increased academic self-efficacy. (Naicker et al., 2021, p. 1)

Concluding the statements by the researchers suggested that «keeping the focus on the student central to COIL, an effective learning system can be intentionally developed, giving students a study abroad experience without leaving home» (Naicker et al., 2021, p.10).

de Castro et al. (2018) investigated aspects of the development of intercultural competence through the implementation of a COIL project for undergraduate nursing students at universities in the United States and the Philippines. The project was designed for students «to gain appreciation for working in

multicultural environments in the future» (de Castro et al., 2018, p. 2). Students completed assignments and interacted within their learning groups using discussion boards within an online environment to complete 2 sets of assignments. Data was generated through reflective essays, visual representations (an infographic and video recording), and an intercultural competence self-evaluation instrument given at the beginning and conclusion of the COIL project.

The researchers found that there was a change in the students' intercultural competence («difference in the scores from the start of the course to the end was +7,4 points» (de Castro et al., 2018, p.4)). To achieve this, «students completed an intercultural competence self-evaluation at the beginning and conclusion of the COIL experience. Students rated their self-perceived ability... interacting with persons from other cultures according to 15 areas» (de Castro et al., 2018, p.4).

The researchers concluded that «students from both countries improved their skills in intercultural interaction, as they expressed valuing shared learning with peers in another country and reported gains in intercultural competence» (de Castro et al., 2018, p. 4).

Nava-Aguirre et al. (2019) reported on the approach to internationalize the curriculum of the Business School at the Universidad de Monterrey, Mexico. The researchers indicate that the purpose of the project was «to increase students' knowledge in business and to develop intercultural competences through virtual interactions» (Nava-Aguirre et al., 2019, p. 732) through the integration of a COIL project under an experiential learning approach.

The specific COIL project of the business school consisted in redesigning the curriculum of four undergraduate courses in Global Business. These four courses included international



activities that fostered experiential learning among students from Mexico, Europe (one group, and the United States (three groups). (Nava-Aguirre et al., 2019, p. 724)

The COIL project lasted 4 weeks out of the 16 total weeks per semester and included writing assignments, debates and presentations. The researchers concluded that the internationalization strategies were conducive to the development and increase of aspects of intercultural competence. In addition, «those strategies could represent opportunities for international learning for students who do not have opportunities to study abroad, interact, and collaborate through experiential activities with an international component» (Nava-Aguirre et al., 2019, p. 740).

### Online International Collaborations and Foreign Language Learning

In recent years, there have been a number of studies that have investigated international collaborations using online learning environments as it relates to foreign language learning. In this regard it is important to refer to O'Dowd and O'Rourke (2019), who point out that syntheses of research, as well as articles, edited collections, and specialized journals in this particular area are available.

Akiyama and Cunningham (2018) synthesized 55 projects that took place in university foreign-language classes in online collaborations. The analysis sought to identify the arrangements for telecollaboration and how those types of projects changed over the last two decades. The study «identified six commonly adopted arrangements of SCMC-based telecollaboration...[and] also found that, while certain pedagogical practices in telecollaboration have matured, the field is undergoing reconceptualization and expansion with the advancement of technology

and diversification of participants» (Akiyama & Cunningham, 2018, p. 49).

Çiftçi and Savaş (2018), who realized a meta-synthesis of research papers published between 2010 and 2015, present another example of research synthesis. The synthesis included papers focusing on language and intercultural learning within online environments. The study identified research trends under five main themes: «(1) the participants' overall views on their telecollaborative experiences, (2) language learning through telecollaboration, (3) intercultural learning through telecollaboration, (4) the challenges experienced within the telecollaborative projects, and (5) the needs for further effective telecollaboration» (Çiftçi & Savaş, 2018, p. 278).

Similarly, O'Dowd (2016) provided an overview of the most significant emerging trends and tendencies in online collaboration practices. The main trends identified included (1) the diversification of partnerships and networks, (2) the rise of critical and cross-disciplinary approaches, (3) the combination and integration of telecollaboration with other modes of education, and (4) the emergence of videoconferencing as an important tool for online intercultural interaction. In all of those patterns, aspects of foreign language learning played a central role.

Specific research studies on cross-cultural competence and language learning are also available. An instance of that type of research is that published by Casañ-Pitarch et al. (2020), who set out «to determine if a telecollaborative project contributed to enhance students' foreign language skills and cross-cultural competence» (p. 78). The researchers devised a program in which Ukrainian and Spanish students collaborated so that their language competence in English and their cross-cultural competence could be measured. The measurement instruments utilized by the researchers in this study were a standardized

language test and a cross-cultural test, which were administered as pre and post-tests. Results indicated that «the students who participated in this virtual exchange programme enhanced their competence on both foreign language cross-cultural competences by taking an active part in the telecollaborative project work» (Casañ-Pitarch et al., 2020, p. 78).

Lázár (2014) analysed data from a five-month international web-based collaboration project that involved four different English as a foreign language groups (EFL) in four different countries in Europe. The study sought «to explore the participating students' intercultural competence development and their perceptions of the usefulness of their online collaboration in this respect» (Lázár, 2014, para. 1). The data generation and analysis included the learners' written production, teachers' evaluations, observations and group interviews. The conclusion statements suggested that «despite the learners' initial difficulties...the data indicate noticeable development in their intercultural competence throughout the five months of the web collaboration project» (Lázár, 2014, para. 1).

## THE PRESENT STUDY

### Justification

There is a wide variety of research conducted in the area of collaborative online learning with an international scope (Godwin-Jones, 2019); however, researchers have identified the need for studies that include in their design ongoing and experiential reflective opportunities (Çiftçi & Savaş, 2018; Godwin-Jones, 2019). Focusing on reflection and based on a qualitative design, this study is proposed to investigate cross-cultural experiences of university students related to international collaborative online learning, the development

of cross-cultural competence, and foreign language learning in these types of learning environments.

### Objectives

The objectives of the study were:

- » To identify the types of cross-cultural learning experiences that were prompted through a writing project in English; and how those experiences related to the development of cross-cultural competence.
- » To identify the implications for the English language learners group of the cross-cultural learning experiences prompted through the implementation of the COIL project.

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- » What types or cross-cultural experiences as analytical categories emerged from an online international collaboration project?
- » How do those experiences relate to aspects of the development of cross-cultural competence?
- » What are the implications of cross-cultural learning experiences for the English language learners' group?

### Expected Outcomes

It is expected that the implementation of writing activities on topics that promote reflection and collaboration between two groups of students linguistically and culturally different in an online virtual environment be conducive to the development of aspects of cross-cultural competence.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Cultural Competence

Based on the literature on cultural psychology, cultural competence refers to a psychological construct that entails «...a set of attitudes, knowledge, and skills that together form a personal attribute that facilitates smooth and effective communication and interaction with people who are culturally and linguistically different» (Lonner, 2013, p.1).

In order to avoid confusion in the context of the present study (e.g., cross-cultural vs. intercultural), it is important to refer to the literature review by Wilson et al. (2013). The authors point out that «the construct has been examined across and within national boundaries in connection with cross-cultural transition and adaptation, and in terms of intercultural relations within multicultural societies» (Wilson et al., 2013, p. 900). That is, cross-cultural communication relates to interactions among people from the same culture with those from another culture. On the other hand, intercultural communication involves interactions among people from different cultures who may live in a multicultural society.

### Cross-Cultural Competence

This study affiliates with the concepts put forth by Wilson et al. (2013), who have situated cultural competence within a culture learning framework and in the context of cross-cultural transition. In this perspective, cross-cultural competence refers to «culture-specific skills required (a) function effectively within a new cultural context and/or (b) interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds» (Wilson et al., 2013, p. 900).

Additionally, Deardorff (2017) points out that «cross-cultural competence is a complex concept generally defined by a set of attitudes, knowledge, and skills one needs to be successful in engaging with difference» (Deardorff, 2017, para. 1). The researcher adds that

core dimensions of cross-cultural competence include attitudes (respect-valuing other cultures, openness-withholding judgment, curiosity and discovery), knowledge and comprehension (cultural self-awareness, cultural knowledge, sociolinguistic awareness), and skills (to listen, observe and evaluate, to analyze interpret and relate); as well as perspective-taking, empathy, relationship-building, and interconnectedness. (Deardorff, 2017, para. 1)

### Virtual Exchange

In the context of second language education, O'Dowd and O'Rourke (2019) define virtual exchange (or telecollaboration) as «a pedagogical approach to bringing together groups of learners from different cultural contexts for extended periods of online intercultural collaboration and interaction» (p. 1). This approach aims to develop learners' foreign language skills, digital literacies, and intercultural as it is integrated into educational programs (Belz, 2003; O'Dowd, 2016).

Within the virtual exchange, Casañ-Pitarch et al., (2020) indicate that «through project-based and task-based approaches, teachers facilitate students working immersed in concrete situations with specific tools, with which they must communicate with each other, negotiating the meaning of their own language to achieve specific objectives» (p. 79).

## Internationalization of Higher Education

Academic collaborations such as the COIL approach need to be understood within the context of the evolving concept of internationalization of higher education. de Wit (2019) points out that «internationalization of higher education» as a concept and strategy is a recent phenomenon that has emerged over the last thirty years, driven by a dynamic combination of political, economic, socio-cultural and academic rationales and stakeholders» (p.10). Altbach and Knight (2007) explained that globalization relates to the context of economic and academic trends of the 21<sup>st</sup> century while «internationalization included the policies and practices undertaken by academic systems and institutions —and even individuals— to cope with the global academic environment» (p. 290).

In the past two decades, one of the more prevalent definitions of «internationalization» found in the literature is that put forth by Jane Knight (2003), who defines the term as «... the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education» (p.2). That is, internationalization means including the international, intercultural and global dimensions to the substantive functions of higher education institutions: teaching, researching, and outreach.

In this context, de Wit et al. (2015) put forth an updated definition of Internationalization of Higher Education (IHE) as the process of «integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to society» (p. 29).

According to Knight and de Wit (2018) the term «...internationalization has become a very broad and varied concept,

including many new rationales, approaches, and strategies in different and constantly changing contexts» (p.2). In a critical review on internationalization in higher education, de Wit (2019) argues that in recent years, there has been a shift in paradigm since

rapid changes are taking place in international higher education, which only have increased in range and complexity over the past decade. Key changes in higher education globally are its massification, the global knowledge economy, and the emphasis on reputation and rankings. (de Wit, 2019, p. 10)

### Internationalization of the Curriculum

In this study, we subscribe to Leask's (2015) definition of *internationalization of the curriculum*, which refers to «the incorporation of international, intercultural and global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study» (p.9).

Leask (2015) indicates that internationalizing the curriculum should aim «...to facilitate the development in all students of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will equip them, as graduates, professionals, and citizens of the world to live and work effectively in a rapidly changing and increasingly connected global society» (Leask, 2015, p.12).

### METHOD

This study was designed following the qualitative-interpretative research methodology. The term interpretive is useful since

(a) it is more inclusive than many of the others (e.g., ethnography, case study); it avoids the connotation of defining these approaches as essentially nonquantitative (a connotation



that is carried by the term qualitative), since quantification of particular sorts can often be employed in the work; and (c) it points to the key feature of family resemblance among the various approaches- central research interest in human meaning in social life and in its elucidation and exposition by the researcher. (Erickson, 1986, p. 119)

Erickson (1985) indicates that research procedures require (a) intensive, long-term participation in a field setting; (b) careful recording of what happens in the setting by writing field notes and collecting other kinds of documentary evidence (e.g. memos, records, examples of student work, audiotapes, videotapes); (c) subsequent analytic reflection on the documentary record obtained in the field; and (d) reporting by means of detailed description using narrative vignettes and direct quotes from interviews as well as by more general description in the form of analytic charts, summary tables, and descriptive statistics. (Erickson, 1985, p. 6)

### **Project: The COIL English Writing Class Project**

Three professors and forty students of two public state universities members of the COIL Global Partner Network —University of Washington (UW) at Tacoma (USA) and the Universidad Veracruzana (UV) at Veracruz City (México)— collaborated on an online/web-based project that lasted six weeks.

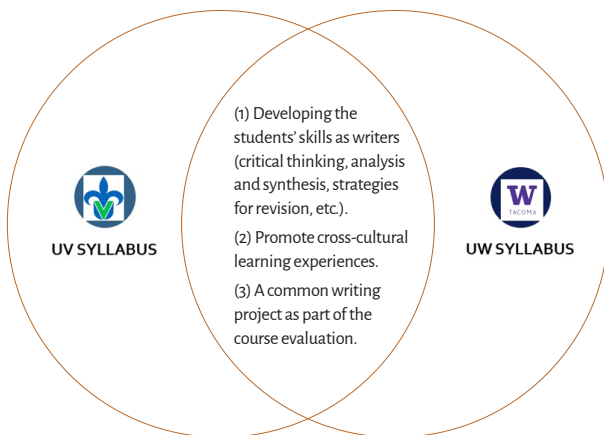
The students were distributed into two courses: one course co-taught by two Mexican instructors to twenty Mexican students enrolled at UV while the other course was taught by an American instructor to twenty students enrolled at UW. The courses differed in some aspects of their content since the Mexican course was an English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

course whereas the US group was a college-level Introduction to Academic English Writing course. However, both courses included the development of writing skills in English, as well as critical thinking and the discussion of social issues through writing. As a result, the Mexican and the American professors each developed their own syllabi but they joined their courses by sharing a common writing project that was part of each of the courses' final grading criteria (see The SUNY COIL Center, 2019) on course development).

The theme of the project was *language, community and social change*. The objectives of the courses were: (1) developing the students' skills as writers (critical thinking, analysis and synthesis, strategies for revision, etc.); and (2) to promoting cross-cultural learning experiences between students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) approach.

The negotiation of the writing project on the part of the professors within the COIL methodology, including the content, scope and evaluation criteria, was successful since the three of them sought to help students find and develop their voice in through their writing. Whether it be a personal, professional, or academic voice, the professors agreed that today students must learn to navigate within various contexts, both local and global and that the COIL approach was one effective way to achieve their pedagogical goals (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1. Two courses linked by common goals and grading criteria.



Source: own elaboration.

Figure 2. Description of the course and themes for the COIL project.

**Brief Course Description:**

This course in **academic writing** focuses on developing your skills as a writer in some key areas through the theme of Stories, Community, and Social Change. Throughout the quarter, you will be putting into practice skills such as: 1) critical thinking; 3) analysis and synthesis of readings; 4) rhetorical awareness; and 5) strategies for revision.

**Course Theme: Stories, Community, and Social Change**

Everyone has a story about who they are and how they relate to the community in which they live. Not everyone has an equal voice, however—some stories remain untold and unheard. **This is a problem.** Our big question this quarter is "How can stories, that aspect of our lives that we all share and yet we take for granted, be used to generate positive and empowering change in our communities?" This question will drive class discussions, and will provide the starting place for your writing. You will be reading a variety of texts around this theme, including a book about creative thinking (see the next paragraph), as well as several real-life stories that illustrate themes of agency, persistence, and compassion and scholarly articles about the phenomenal power that stories have to create empathy and build community.

- **Paper #1, Literacy Narrative: 700 words, 15% (approximately 2 pages typed and double-spaced, 12-point font). See Canvas/Unit 3 for complete guidelines. We will be partnering with a class from Mexico on this assignment.** You will be sharing your stories with these students and they will be sharing their stories with you. Part of this assignment, then, requires you to write a reflective response to your Mexican counterpart. In the revised draft of your paper, you will need to refer to their story, relating it to your own in some way—either as a contrast to your own experience, or as a parallel to your experience.

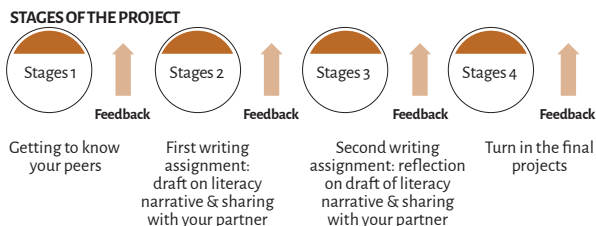
Source: own elaboration.

**The phases of the Project:** The project was comprised by the following stages (see Figure 3):

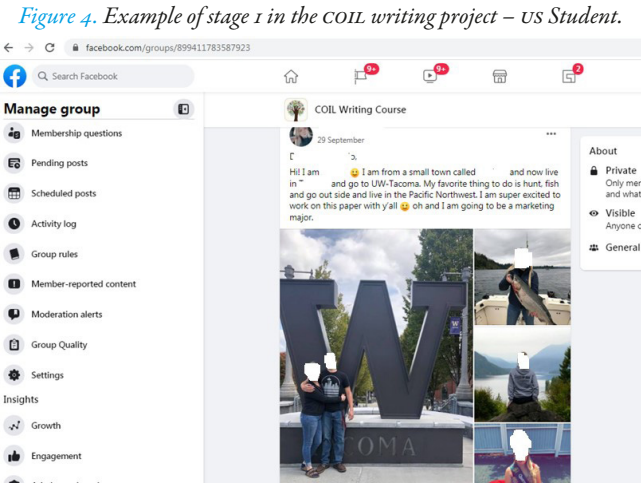
1. Getting to know your peer: the students were randomly paired (one student from UV and one from UW). Then, they were asked to introduce each other in order to get acquainted before they worked on their projects (see Figures 4 and 5 for examples of this stage).
2. First writing assignment: students were given the specifications and instructions to generate a draft on the topic they selected for their literacy narrative. Then, they were instructed to share their stories with their American or Mexican counterparts to receive each other's feedback on their narrative.
3. Second writing assignment: the students exchanged a reflection-writing piece to the literacy narrative life stories shared by their Mexican or American counterpart as a response to the first assignment.
4. Turn in the project: after a revision and feedback phase, the students were asked to turn in their final projects.

The project consisted of four stages each lasting one week but the whole project lasted six weeks since two weeks were added so that students and teachers could provide feedback on the final assignment and about the project itself.

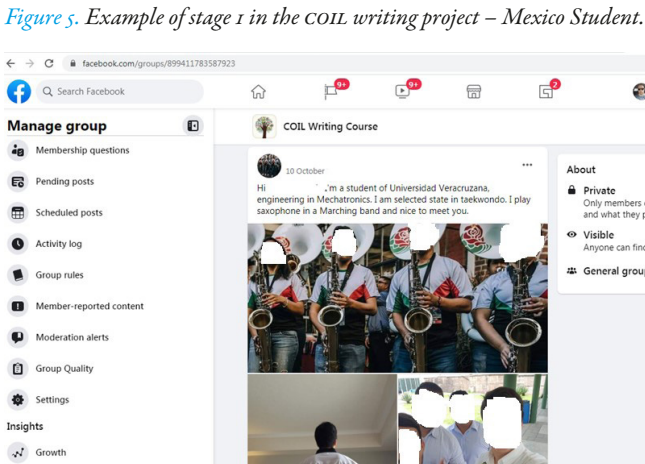
*Figure 3. Stages of the COIL writing project.*



*Source:* own elaboration.



Source: own elaboration.



Source: own elaboration.

**The Medium of Interaction:** The following online tools were used in the project to prompt interaction (see Figures 6 and 7):

**Facebook closed group.** A Facebook group was created for the students to complete stage number one described above. Using a Facebook group allowed the students to interact and get to know their peers. On the other hand, the Facebook group allowed the professors to control the students' interactions by setting rules for the group. It also allowed for the monitoring of the students' participation during the activities.

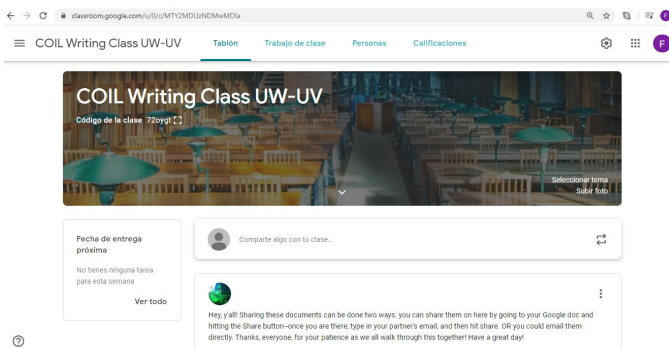
**Google classroom:** This free online platform allowed students to have access to a shared medium of instruction where instructions and assignments were uploaded, as well as uploading their work for sharing and revising. In addition, it allowed the professors to monitor the students' progress, provide feedback and it allowed the students to submit the assignments described in stages two, three and four in the previous section.

*Figure 6. Closed Facebook group as the medium of interaction.*



*Source:* own elaboration.

Figure 7. Free online platform as an instructional tool for the COIL Project.



Source: own elaboration.

## Selection of the Participants in the Study

**The Professors/Facilitators:** The three professors who participated in the study signed up voluntarily for an open invitation by their universities for those instructors who were interested in collaborating under the COIL methodology. The call for participation required potential candidates to be proficient in using technology and be familiar with the COIL approach and online or blended learning modalities. The professors who participated were selected by the COIL coordinators at their universities and then put in contact with each other to establish the collaboration.

The American professor is an English literature and writing professor working on the University of Washington's Writing Program. The professor holds a Ph.D. in Modern British Literature and Critical Theory and works on a number of topics, ranging from pedagogy to interdisciplinary connections between literature and music.

The two professors at the Universidad Veracruzana teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses at the Language Center of the University; both hold graduate degrees; one of them holds a Master's degree in English Language Teaching the other one holds a Ph.D. in Language and Literacy from an American State University.

**The Students:** Twenty students, who were purposefully selected by their professors, comprised the Mexico group. That is, in order to participate in the collaboration with their US partners, the students had to be enrolled in an upper-intermediate or advanced English as a Foreign course so that their English language proficiency be within the B1 threshold level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (350-450 hrs. of instruction approx.). This criterion was established to ensure that the collaboration with their US peers could be realized using the English language as the medium of instruction. The students also had to show a positive attitude for engaging in cross-cultural activities and be familiar with online and blended learning modalities.

The Mexican students' age ranged from 21 to 25 years old, although there were two students over 50 years old. Seventeen of those participants were college students and three participants were enrolled at the language center as external students taking English courses as part of the university's outreach program. In this group, nine students were female and eleven were male.

The US group was comprised of twenty college students, who were also purposefully selected by their professor. In this case, the students had been enrolled in an English course focused on academic writing, be willing to engage in cross-cultural activities with students from a Mexican university, be familiar with online and blended learning modalities. The students' age



ranged from 18 to 25 years old and nine students were female while eleven were male.

### Data Collection

Observations and field notes were implemented throughout the duration of the project (six weeks). Students were observed in-class as well as in some online sessions in which they interacted with their peers. Then, semi-structured in-depth interviews (see Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018) were conducted during and after the implementation of the project. Twelve student participants provided data regarding their perspectives and experiences participating in the COIL project. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed for analysis. Finally, writing samples generated during the writing assignments were purposefully selected for analysis as a triangulation strategy to verify data that emerged during interviews (Erickson, 1986; Gibbs, 2018).

### Data Analysis

The data analysis process was done using a content approach to qualitative data analysis (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Erickson, 1986; Gibbs, 2018). Data generated from interviews, writing samples and observations was coded and categorized. Based on this analytic process, themes were identified, which led to the construction of assertions.

Three assertions emerged from the data, and in order to verify their truth value, they were constantly tested against the data corpus. The data management and analysis were realized with the assistance of a qualitative data analysis software (ATLAS.ti). The use of the software allowed for the systematic organization data for coding, categorizing, and constructing assertions involved in qualitative data analysis.

## RESULTS

This study sought to investigate (1) the types of cross-cultural learning experiences that were prompted through a writing project in English in a COIL learning environment; (2) how those experiences related to the development of cross-cultural competence; and (3) the implications of the cross-cultural learning experiences prompted through the implementation of a COIL project for the English language learners' group. In order to contextualize the results in this study, a display of data is presented in the following section. Then, the results are laid out.

### Data Display

**Types of Cross-Cultural Experiences:** With respect to the types of cross-cultural experiences, three main themes emerged during the students' interactions and reflection activities. Those themes were: experiences related to language, experiences related to cultural understanding, and common life experiences the students shared.

*Experiences related to language.* In terms of experiences related to language, data indicated that students engaged in conversations and reflection on what it means to learn a foreign language. Further, as students reflected, they acknowledged the fact that mastering English may determine real-life opportunities for young people in the US and other countries; and this fact may have an impact in their future. For example, a US *student* provided the following response to his Mexican peer's writing assignment:

Your story made me think a lot about the process that people from other cultures go through to learn English, it's a tricky language to learn since its conventions are very unique compared to Spanish which is similar to a lot of Latin-based languages. For me learning Spanish was difficult and I gave up though recently I have found the passion to try and relearn Spanish

because it's a really important part of my culture and family values. I feel like your essay has helped contribute to that passion, your perseverance with English is something I look up too.

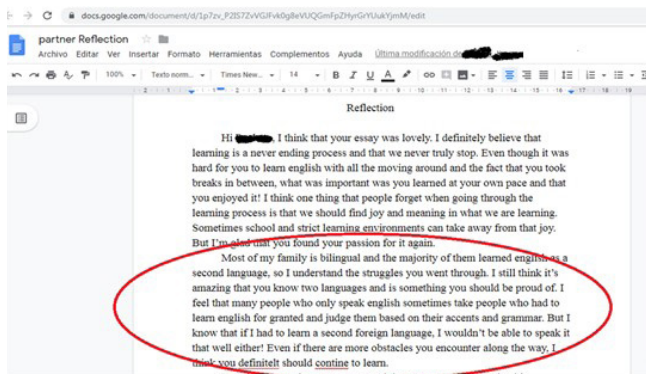
Similarly, another US student provided the following feedback to her Mexican peer's writing piece:

Your story touched me in a sense that I can heavily relate to. I became emotional reading your narrative because I struggle in the opposite way you do with Spanish. I've been studying Spanish for 5 years now and I'm very passionate about it...I understand the language very well but speaking it in the proper grammatical way and writing are my struggles... I think that learning a new language is very difficult and, in your story, you acknowledged this. That was a great way to connect with the reader emotionally and putting the language barrier struggle in perspective.

Another instance of the US students' perspective about language is portrayed in Figure 8. In this particular instance, the US student sympathized with her Mexican peer since most of her family members were born in the US and were English speakers but their first language was not English. Therefore, she perceived them as being English learners who became bilinguals. Furthermore, the US student reflected on and acknowledged the fact that mastering English may determine real-life opportunities for young people. In an interview, she concluded that

Both my partner and I were lucky to have someone to teach us another language since we were little, because in real life there are many families who already know how to speak more than one language...And in conclusion [we] both agree that learning [another] language open[s] new doors to greater opportunities in life.

Figure 8. A sample of a reflection assignment by a UW student.

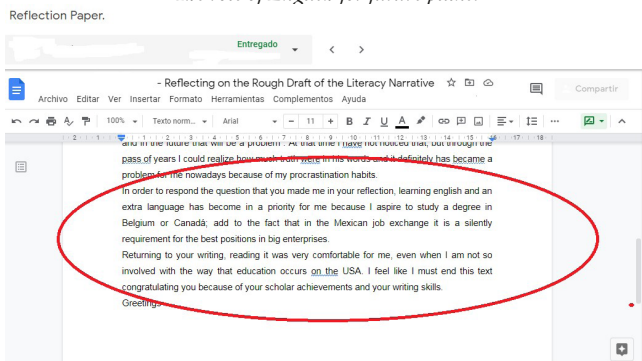


Source: own elaboration.

A student in the Mexico group highlighted the crucial role that learning English as a foreign language has in her future professional goals and aspirations (see Figure 9). This is shown in the following reflecting statement in response to her US peer:

In order to respond the question that you made me in your reflection, learning [E]nglish and an extra language has become in a priority for me because I aspire to study a degree in Belgium or Canadá; add to the fact that in the Mexican job exchange it is a silently requirement for the best positions in big enterprises. Returning to your writing, reading it was very comfortable for me, even when I am not so involved with the way that education occurs [in] the USA. I feel like I must end this text congratulating you because of your scholar achievements and your writing skills.

Figure 9. A reflection assignment by a UV student –  
The role of English for future plans.



Source: own elaboration.

From the perspective of the students of the Mexico group as English language learners, data revealed that the COIL project provided opportunities to practice their English with *a real audience for real communication*. Thus, for the Mexico group, collaborating with their US implied opportunities to communicate in the language they were learning outside what they perceived as *textbook language*. During interviews two students stated the following:

Este proyecto fue una muy buena experiencia para mí. Me ayudo a practicar el idioma, conocer un poco más el estilo de vida de los estudiantes de Washington, perder el miedo a escribir y hablar en inglés, ya que muchas veces es lo que nos impide comunicarnos.

[This project was a good experience for me. It helped me practice the language, know more about the life style of the students from Washington, not to be afraid of writing and talking in English because many times that is what impedes communication].

Este tipo de proyectos son una gran oportunidad para nosotros como estudiantes de interactuar con la realidad y no solo quedarnos con lo que aprendemos en un libro, nos ayuda a saber cuánto potencial tenemos, nuestras debilidades y hasta donde podemos llegar personal y profesionalmente con solo saber un idioma más.

[This type of projects are a great opportunity for us as students to interact with reality and not only learn from the book, it helps us to know our potential, our skills and how far we can get personally and professionally just because we know another language].

Moreover, the students in the Mexico Group considered that the online collaboration provided opportunities for them to have access and interactions with students who they perceived as *native speakers*, which they considered beneficial for language practice. During an interview, a student pointed out:

Yo veía el inglés todo muy técnico, fue de como ver otra perspectiva es el inglés fluido desde la lengua materna de una persona; porque no es lo mismo practicar el inglés pues con una persona que también lo aprendió igual que tú o lo está aprendiendo igual que tú, o sea también la cultura, o sea por ejemplo, sobre cómo hacer preguntas a ciertas cosas, como hablar de ciertos temas que aquí lo vemos pues de una forma muy natural y ellos no, así como que otra perspectiva.

[I used to look at English from a technical point of view, it was like taking a look to a different perspective about [learning] the English language, like fluency of a person whose English is his/her first language; it is not the same to practice English with a person who learned the same way you did or who is learning the same way as you are, that is, the culture as well. For example, [we must think about] how to talk about certain

topics that we consider a natural occurrence but they do not, like having a different perspective].

Another student from the Mexican group emphasized the importance of having access to different discourse types in a foreign language through native speakers. In her reflection assignment the students provided the following statement in response to her US peer:

Reading your text was very interesting. The variety of languages in language is very large, learning how to speak depending on the situation and the people you interact with is complex, especially when the language you speak is not your native language...Speaking and writing differently is very important, it is like compar[ing] the way a lawyer talks to his jury and how a kindergarten teacher talks to his students. The multiple variet[ies] of words that exist in a language is amazing. The way you tell your story since you are a native speaker helped me a lot to understand what you were trying to say, maybe because you did it as if you were telling a friend...

*Experiences related to cultural understanding.* Data suggested that most of the students in both the US and the Mexico groups valued collaborating with one another. As they engaged in communication, most of the students became aware of some cultural aspects that encouraged interaction (and others that could potentially hamper it) between them. Specifically, data revealed attitudes and values that students from both groups considered important (e.g., respect for cultural differences, respect for views and values on certain topics for discussion, the importance of being polite when interacting, etc.). For instance, during an interview a US student mentioned that

in terms of the cultural aspect, we have to be very careful with what we write because there can be a cultural shock if we say something in the wrong way, which can be misunderstood and it is then when problems may arise, but in general, it was a great learning experience.

Likewise, a Mexico group student stated:

Me gustaría volver a trabajar con ellos [con estudiantes de Estados Unidos] porque lo más importante es que debemos aprender a tratar con ellos, porque ante todo el respeto, hay que ser tolerantes y pues tener cierto cuidado, porque si es importante aprender a convivir con otra cultura.

[I would like to work again with them [US students] because the most important thing is that we are able to learn how to treat them because first of all there should be respect, one should be tolerant and be careful to a certain extent because it is important to learn how to live with other culture...].

In a similar fashion, a Mexican student expressed:

...[Es también importante aprender] la cultura, o sea por ejemplo, sobre cómo hacer preguntas a ciertas cosas, como hablar de ciertos temas que aquí lo vemos pues de una forma muy natural y ellos no; así como que tener otra perspectiva.

[...It is also important to learn about the culture, for example, about how to ask questions about certain issues, like talking about certain topics that here [in Mexico] we consider as a very natural occurrence, unlike them; it is just like having a different perspective].



Additionally, data from interviews made evident that students exhibited aspects related to cultural self-awareness, perspective-taking, and empathy as it relates to *other people's realities*. For example, a student from the US group mentioned that

Sharing stories with someone from a different part of the world is essential to global social justice: in order to have a realistic view of the world one needs to learn to be aware of different people's stories. It is absolutely necessary for social change and understanding.

A different US student mentioned

I felt that we were able make a connection, even though we were so far from one another. [My partner's] story enabled me to think about stories on a global scale, and how they should transcend mere languages and borders.

Correspondingly, a student from the Mexico group indicated that she was able to reflect and somewhat challenge the preconceptions she had about her US partner. The student indicated that

...y en cuanto a su cultura, normalmente nosotros tenemos una cierta opinión sobre ellos pero yo pude conocer un poco más al menos de ella, de la ciudad de donde ella es, de sus tradiciones, y algunas otras cosas interesantes...

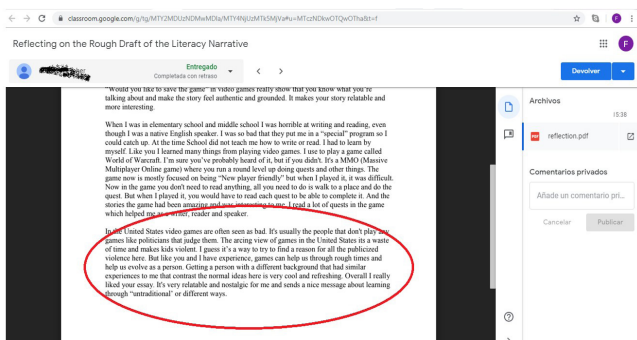
[...about their culture, usually we (Mexican students) have certain opinions about them (US students) but I was able to get to know a little more about her, about her city, about her traditions, and other interesting things ...].

***Common life experiences.*** Data from interviews and writing assignments illustrated that both the US and Mexico groups found some commonalities between them. Some students indicated that they felt a sense of interconnectedness, as they shared some

personal interests. A US student pointed out that «it was cool seeing what my partner’s life [was] like and I learned we have a lot in common». As shown in Figure 10, the student’s writing assignment exemplifies his affirmation as it relates to an interest in videogames:

In the United States, video games are often seen as bad. It’s usually the people that don’t play any games like politicians that judge them. The view of games in the United States «it’s a waste of time and makes kids violent». I guess it’s a way to try to find a reason for all the publicized violence here. But like you and I have experienced, games can help us through rough times and help us evolve as a person. Getting a person with a different background that had similar experiences to me that contrast the normal ideas here is very cool and refreshing. Overall I really liked your essay. It is very relatable and nostalgic for me and sends a nice message about learning through «untraditional» or different ways.

Figure 10. Reflection piece by a UW student on life experience’s theme.



Source: own elaboration.

In a similar manner, a student from the Mexico group revealed that she related to her US peer since they overcame similar personal situations, specifically when it came to public speaking. During an interview, a student from the Mexico group described a personal struggle her US peer experienced:

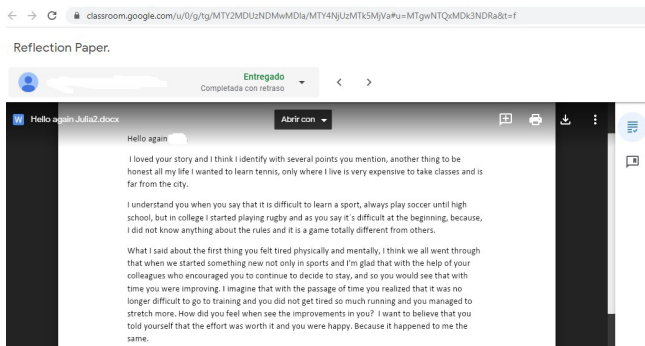
Her main obstacle, so to speak, was public speaking, she was afraid of talking in public; however, she decided to overcome that fear and she would participate and speak in public in each event that took place in her town. She told me that even though she was afraid and all that but she held her fears back and was able to speak. I identify with her because I have had to talk in public and I understand how difficult that is; you get very nervous and all that but you still have to overcome that situation, and that is why I identify with her.<sup>1</sup>

Along the same lines, Figure 11 elucidated the sharing of personal interests by students in US and Mexico groups. The text reveals that in this case, both students shared similar experiences as it relates to practicing sports. The reflection by the Mexican student suggests the importance of discipline, putting effort into what you do, and the importance of one friend's support.

---

1 Own translation. The original says: «Su principal obstáculo por así decirlo era hablar en público, tenía miedo de hablar en público, pero pues ella se planteó a qué tenía que superarlo y en cada evento que había en su ciudad ella subía a hablar en público. Aunque me platica que sí tenía miedo y todo eso, pero que pues sí aguantaba y lograba hablar. Yo me identifico con ella, porque igual muchas veces he tenido que hablar en público y sé lo complicado que es; dan muchos nervios y todo, pero pues igual tenemos que superarlo, por eso me identifico.»

*Figure 11. Reflection piece by a UV student on life experience's theme.*



*Source:* own elaboration.

The COIL pedagogical approach fostered cross-cultural learning experiences typified in three main themes: language learning, cultural understanding, and common life experiences the students shared. The implementation of writing activities on themes that promoted reflection and collaboration between two groups of students linguistically and culturally different in a COIL environment were conducive to the development of aspects of cross-cultural competence, which confirmed the expected outcomes underpinning the study.

The data displayed in the previous section made evident that the students exhibited traits of a set of attitudes, knowledge and skills (such as using a foreign language) that facilitated effective communication with their international peers despite their cultural and linguistic differences; that is what Lonner (2013) defines as cultural competence. In the same way, the analysis of data from interviews and the products derived from the instructional activities that comprised the project (e.g., reflective writing assignments, excerpts, and interaction in the social network) revealed that the participant students displayed traits

of what Deardorff (2006, 2017) identifies as core dimensions of cross-cultural competence. Those dimensions include: respect for others, valuing other cultures, openness, curiosity, cultural self-awareness, as well as perspective-taking, empathy, relationship-building, and interconnectedness.

Regarding the implications for foreign language learning, results indicate that for the language learners' group, collaborating with their US peers allow them to practice using English in a context different from *textbook language* they use in their classes. Further, results indicate that the students experienced some socio-cultural aspects of language learning that are important for language learning and communication. Finally, data suggests that the students in this group viewed the COIL project as a means to have access to people who they perceive as native speakers of English.

Overall, the findings presented in this section align with other studies as they relate to recent research themes and trends found in the literature. Those research trends related to the investigation of the participants' overall views on their telecollaborative experiences, language learning through telecollaboration, intercultural learning through telecollaboration, challenges of telecollaboration, and related studies in which aspects of foreign language learning played a central role (see Akiyama & Cunningham, 2018; Çiftçi and Savaş, 2018; de Castro et al., 2018; O'Dowd, 2016).

## DISCUSSION

Godwin-Jones (2019) points out that in order to advance the field of telecollaboration (also referred to as virtual collaboration, or online collaboration) toward new opportunities, the goal should be to both model and encourage deeper reflection, with both teachers and learners provided with «longitudinal,

ongoing and experiential reflective opportunities» (Çiftçi & Savaş, 2018, p. 291). Godwin-Jones (2019) also explains that constructs such as the development of cultural competence have been measured using standard evaluation criteria through quantitative instruments; he also highlights some criticism on the prevalent model. On the contrary, qualitative measures, which are also widely used, may provide a deeper understanding of the constructs under investigation.

Drawing from these perspectives and from a qualitative stance, this study provided insight into the importance of generating cross-cultural experiences for university students. Through writing and reflection as central elements, the participants had the opportunity to think about the similarities and differences that people from particular social contexts have. In so doing, they challenged their assumptions and perceptions about their international peers. Focusing on reflection, the students exhibited some dimensions of cross-cultural competence (positive attitudes, respect, openness, curiosity, self-awareness, sociolinguistic awareness, perspective-taking, empathy, relationship-building, and interconnectedness), which facilitated effective interactions with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

This study also elucidated that using approaches such as COIL to prompt cross-cultural experiences has implications for foreign language learning. The COIL writing project structured opportunities for the group of English language learners to interact with «a real audience» for «real communication». That is, collaborating with their US peers allowed the students to (1) try a type of language learning different from «textbook language»; (2) communicate meaningfully and express their interests as young people; (3) negotiate new meanings, which entailed learning about the English language itself, as well as some socio-cultural aspects that are crucial for language learning

and communication (see Gibbons, 2009); and (4) have access to people who they perceive as native speakers, which represented opportunities to practice their English language skills.

In terms of the instructional design (writing assignments, tasks, learning outcomes, etc.) implemented by the professors, it proved to be pertinent to achieve the objectives of both the project and the study. These activities align with Belz (2007), who suggests the analysis of student work should include the interpretation of second language texts, events, behaviors, storylines, the use of artifacts and transcripts, and other type of data (even emotional responses) for looking into the development of intercultural competence. In the same fashion, Helm (2015) suggests the use of data from student essays, journals, blog entries, transcripts, or portfolios for assessment.

Concerning Internationalization as a policy for Higher Education, the implementation of this project provided an example of how two public universities structured opportunities for students to have access to international learning experiences. These collaborations are important for students to develop cross-cultural, linguistic and technological competencies they need. In addition, this type of support may provide an alternative for a larger number of students to access international learning experiences when international mobility is not an option (see de Wit & Leask, 2019; Rubin, 2017).

Limitations of the study were also identified, particularly in relation to technology tools used in the project. Few students considered that using a social network (Facebook) and an online platform (Google Classroom) was somewhat original. However, they found that the online platform was somewhat unfriendly and not as easy to navigate. Moreover, few students were not users of the social network used in the project (Facebook), or did not use social networks at all for different reasons. So,

the interaction with their international peers was based only on their writing assignments they shared through the Google classroom platform.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study gave insight into an online international collaboration that was conducive to the development of some aspects of cross-cultural competence, which university students need in a globalized world. It also illustrated how those aspects may be developed based on the implementation of specific writing and reflection activities pairing a group of English as foreign language students, and a group of students whose primary language is English; this arrangement highlighted implications for foreign language learning.

The study aligned with others cited in the literature as it relates to strategies and actions that higher education institutions structure as part of their Internationalization policies, such as virtual exchange, cross-cultural learning, foreign language learning, internationalization of the curriculum, and pedagogical practices that are when face-to-face interaction is not possible.

Limitations associated with the selection of the technological tools (the online platform), assumptions about the participants' technology literacy skills, and assumptions about the students' use of social networks were identified. Finally, we emphasize that further research incorporating longitudinal designs and ongoing and experiential reflective opportunities (Godwin-Jones, 2019) to investigate issues discussed in the present study is needed. With reference to foreign language learning, further studies should focus on the development of specific linguistic features and language skills in collaborative online environments with an international scope.



## References

- Akiyama, Y., & Cunningham, D. J. (2018). Synthesizing the practice of SCMC-based telecollaboration: A scoping review. *Calico Journal*, 35(1), 49–76. <https://doi.org/10.1558/cj.33156>
- Altbach, P. G., & Knight, J. (2007). The internationalization of higher education: Motivations and realities. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11(3-4), 290-305. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315307303542>
- Appiah-Kubi, P., & Annan, E. (2020). A review of a collaborative online international learning. *International Journal of Engineering Pedagogy*, 10(1), 109-124. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijep.v10i1.11678>
- Belz, J. A. (2003). Linguistic perspectives on the development of intercultural competence in telecollaboration. *Language Learning & Technology*, 7(2), 68–117.
- Belz, J. A. (2007). The development of intercultural communicative competence in telecollaborative partnerships. In R. O'Dowd (Coord.), *An Introduction for Foreign Language Teachers*, (pp. 127–166). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847690104-009>
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2018). *Doing interviews* (2nd. ed.) (Qualitative Research Kit). SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529716665>
- Casañ-Pitarch, R., Candel-Mora, M. Á., Carrió-Pastor, M. L., Demydenko, O., & Tikan, I. (2020). Enhancing language and cross-cultural competence through telecollaboration. *Advanced Education*, (16), 78-87. <https://doi.org/10.20535/2410-8286.214539>
- Çiftçi, E., & Savaş, P. (2018). The role of telecollaboration in language and intercultural learning: A synthesis of studies published between 2010 and 2015. *ReCALL*, 30(3), 278-298. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344017000313>
- de Castro, A. B., Dyba, N., Cortez, E. D., & Pe Benito, G. G. (2018). Collaborative online international learning to prepare students

- for multicultural work environments. *Nurse Educator*, 44(4), E1-E5. <https://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/coil-to-prepare-for-multicultural-work-environments.pdf>
- de Wit, H. (2013, June 1). COIL – Virtual mobility without commercialisation. *University World News –The Global Window on Higher Education*. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20130528175741647>
- de Wit, H. (2019). Internationalization in Higher Education, a Critical Review. *SFU Educational Review*, 12(3), 9-17. <https://doi.org/10.21810/sfuer.v12i3.1036>
- de Wit, H., Hunter F., Howard L., & Egron-Polak E. (2015). *Internationalisation of higher education*. European Parliament. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL\\_STU\(2015\)540370\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL_STU(2015)540370_EN.pdf)
- de Wit, H., & Leask, B. (2019, July 28). Towards new ways of becoming and being international. *University World News*. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190722112900397>
- Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241-266. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315306287002>
- Deardorff, D.K. (2017). Cross-Cultural Competence. In Y.Y. Kim (Ed.), *The International Encyclopedia of Intercultural Communication*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118783665.ieiccoo13>
- Erickson, F. (1985). *Qualitative methods in research on teaching*. Michigan State University. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED263203.pdf>
- Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (3rd ed., pp. 119-161). MacMillan.

- Gibbs, G. (2018). *Analyzing qualitative data*. (2nd ed.) (Qualitative Research Kit). SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Gibbons, P. (2009). *English learners, academic literacy, and thinking: Learning in the challenge zone*. Heinemann.
- Godwin-Jones, R. (2019). Telecollaboration as an approach to developing intercultural communication competence. *Language Learning & Technology*, 23(3), 8–28. <http://hdl.handle.net/10125/44691>
- Helm, F. (2015). The practices and challenges of telecollaboration in higher education in Europe. *Language Learning & Technology*, 19(2), 197–217. <https://www.lltjournal.org/item/2910>
- Knight, J. (2003). Updating the definition of internationalization. *International Higher Education*, (33), 2-3. <https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/ihe/article/download/7391/6588>
- Knight, J., & de Wit, H. (2018). Internationalization of higher education: Past and future. *International Higher Education*, (95), 2-4. <https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2018.95.10715>
- Lázár, I. (2014). EFL learners' intercultural competence development in an international web collaboration project. *The Language Learning Journal*, 43(2), 208-221. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2013.869941>
- Leask, B. (2015). *Internationalizing the curriculum*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315716954>
- Lonner, W. J. (2013). Cultural Competence. In K. D. Keith (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Cross-Cultural Psychology*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1002/9781118339893.wbcecp124>
- Naicker, A., Singh, E., & Van Genugten, T. (2021). Collaborative online international learning (COIL): Preparedness and experiences of South African students. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2021.1895867>

- Nava-Aguirre, K. M., Garcia-Portillo, B. I., & Lopez-Morales, J. S. (2019). Collaborative online international learning (COIL): An innovative strategy for experiential learning and internationalization at home. In M. Gonzalez-Perez, K. Lynden, & V. Taras (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Learning and Teaching International Business and Management* (pp. 721-746). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-20415-0\\_34](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-20415-0_34)
- O'Dowd, R. (2016). Emerging trends and new directions in telecollaborative learning. *Calico Journal*, 33, 291-310. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305341392\\_Emerging\\_Trends\\_and\\_New\\_Directions\\_in\\_Telecollaborative\\_Learning#fullTextFileContent](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305341392_Emerging_Trends_and_New_Directions_in_Telecollaborative_Learning#fullTextFileContent)
- O'Dowd, R., & O'Rourke, B. (2019). New developments in virtual exchange for foreign language education. *Language Learning & Technology*, 23(3), 1-7. <http://hdl.handle.net/10125/44690>
- Rubin, J. (2017). Embedding collaborative online international learning (COIL) at higher education institutions: An evolutionary overview with exemplars. *Internationalisation of Higher Education*, 2, 27-44. <http://nebula.wsimg.com/d2cf3c4b5bb-2fe256a722a7b040b7812?AccessKeyId=EC053BA31CBD-FA636F2B&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>
- Swartz, S., Barbosa, B., & Crawford, I. (2019). Building intercultural competence through virtual team collaboration across global classrooms. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 83(1), 57-79. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2329490619878834>
- The State University of New York COIL Center—SUNY COIL Center. (2019). *Faculty guide for collaborative online international learning course development* [PDF file]. [http://www.ufic.ufl.edu/UAP/Forms/COIL\\_guide.pdf](http://www.ufic.ufl.edu/UAP/Forms/COIL_guide.pdf)
- Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. (1992). Locus of control, mood disturbance and social difficulty during cross-cultural transitions.

- International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 16(2), 175-194. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767\(92\)90017-O](https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(92)90017-O)
- Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. (1993a). Psychological and sociocultural adjustment during cross-cultural transitions: A comparison of secondary students at home. *International Journal of Psychology*, 28(2), 129-147. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207599308247181>
- Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. (1993b). Where's the «culture» in cross-cultural transition? Comparative studies of sojourner adjustment. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 24, 221-249. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022193242006>
- Wilson, J., Ward, C., & Fischer, R. (2013). Beyond culture learning theory: What can personality tell us about cultural competence? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 44(6), 900-927. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/0022022113492889>