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FLO Friday: Collaborative Online International Learning

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COLLABORATIVE ONLINE INTERNATIONAL LEARNING (COIL)

FLO FRIDAY
JANUARY 31, 2025
ALISON FOO



FACILITATOR

- Positionality
- Teaching COIL capstone courses
 - McMaster University Continuing Education
 - Seneca College
- Industry experience
 - International remote teams
- Career, Communication, Leadership Coach
- EDIA(D) Advocate



LEARNING GOALS

1

ANALYZE

THE VALUE OF COIL FOR
LEARNERS, FACILITATORS

2

DISCUSS

ASSIGNMENTS FOR CROSS-
CULTURAL COLLABORATION

3

IDENTIFY

CHALLENGES FACED BY
INTERNATIONAL TEAMS

4

PROPOSE

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING
FACILITATION APPROACHES

5

EVALUATE

TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT
REMOTE COLLABORATION

COIL IS... (1)

- Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)
- Term coined by the State University New York in 2006¹
- Educational approach with following characteristics¹:
 - Collaborative syllabus design by educators from different countries
 - Focus on collaborative learning (CL), multicultural remote student teams, group work
 - Teachers facilitate; students learn from each other through social interaction
 - Goal is development of subject knowledge and intercultural competence
- Intercultural competence is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations using intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes²



COIL IS... (2)

Review of 56 COIL studies published between 2010-2022³

- 30 countries from Africa, Australia, Europe, and North- and South-America
- Performed at university or higher education institutions
- 91% used English as language of instruction, 4% used Spanish
- Study disciplines included:

biology and biochemistry (10)	language studies (9)	education (8)
health (8)	business (6)	engineering (3)
design (2)	variety of studies (2)	social studies (1)
commodity science (1)	communication (1)	economy (1)
early childhood education and care (1)	journalism (1)	computer and information and communications technology (ICT) (1)
maritime studies (1)	marketing (1)	media studies (1)



COIL IS... (3)

Examples of COIL student projects

- Nursing clinical simulations, Spain and United Kingdom⁴
- Cultural differences in food and nutrition, Durban, South Africa and Netherlands⁵
- Teaching a motor skill in occupational therapy, Philippines and Spain⁶
- Marketing products in Philippines and/or Brazil⁷
- Media habits and culture, Lithuania, Russia, and US⁸



EXPERIENCE WITH COIL

- Post-graduate, certificate program, McMaster University Continuing Education
- Clinical research capstone course; not developed through international collaboration
 - Online, Canadian (including newcomers) and majority international students
 - 12 weeks, 7 group projects (1 presentation, 1 role-play), self-reflection, team/peer evaluations
 - Projects were technical document development
 - Student teams with 4 or 5 members
 - Synchronous lectures, synchronous and asynchronous team communications



LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1



EXPERIENCE WITH COIL

POLL

Select all that apply. Do you have experience with COIL as a:

- Learner
- Facilitator
- Designer
- Administrator
- Not yet applicable

DISCUSSION

Which course(s) have you had COIL experience with?
What were the students' assignments?



LEARNING OBJECTIVE 2



ADVANTAGES OF COIL (1)

- Improves accessibility of internationalized education
 - Minority of students study abroad^{9,10,11}; 10-13% in Europe and US^{12,13,14,15}
- Majority of participants find COIL to be positive, rewarding experiences
- Many COIL studies demonstrated increased:
 - Intercultural competencies
 - Openness to learning other cultures
 - Confidence and communication skills (by 80%¹⁶)
- One study showed benefits only after the first exposure to international experiences¹
- Significant limitations to research on COIL
 - Majority case-studies, survey and interview data, uncontrolled studies, correlations



LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1



ADVANTAGES OF COIL (2)

For International Students

Learned Canadian culture, language, academic expectations, work process

For Domestic Students

Practiced leadership, team building, problem-solving, conflict management skills

For Facilitators

Diversified perspectives, teaching methods, problem-solving approaches

DISCUSSION

What did you like about your COIL experience?



LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1



CHALLENGES IN COIL

- Majority of intercultural learning outcomes positive (61.8%), but 23.6% had no change, 14.5% negative³
- Significant conflict observed within student teams; much time spent mediating
 - Without facilitator guidance, group conflict can cause long-term negative effects on open-mindedness¹⁶
- Common sources of conflict: uneven workload, meeting attendance, commitment, decision-making input
- Typical team conflict may be exacerbated by geographical, language, and intercultural differences
 - All (n=9) found group work “challenging” and “frustrating” from language, perceived culture differences¹⁶
 - Most international students reported experiencing excluded¹⁶
 - Some local students reported extra work to rewrite, reword, re-reference¹⁶

Technical Difficulties

- Technological proficiency
- Online connectivity issues
- Cameras off inhibited bonding*

Logistical Issues

- Difficulty scheduling meetings
- Time zone differences (≥ 1 hr¹²)
- Other commitments, delays

Intercultural Differences

- Language diversity
- Academic integrity issues*
- Differing conventions of respect*



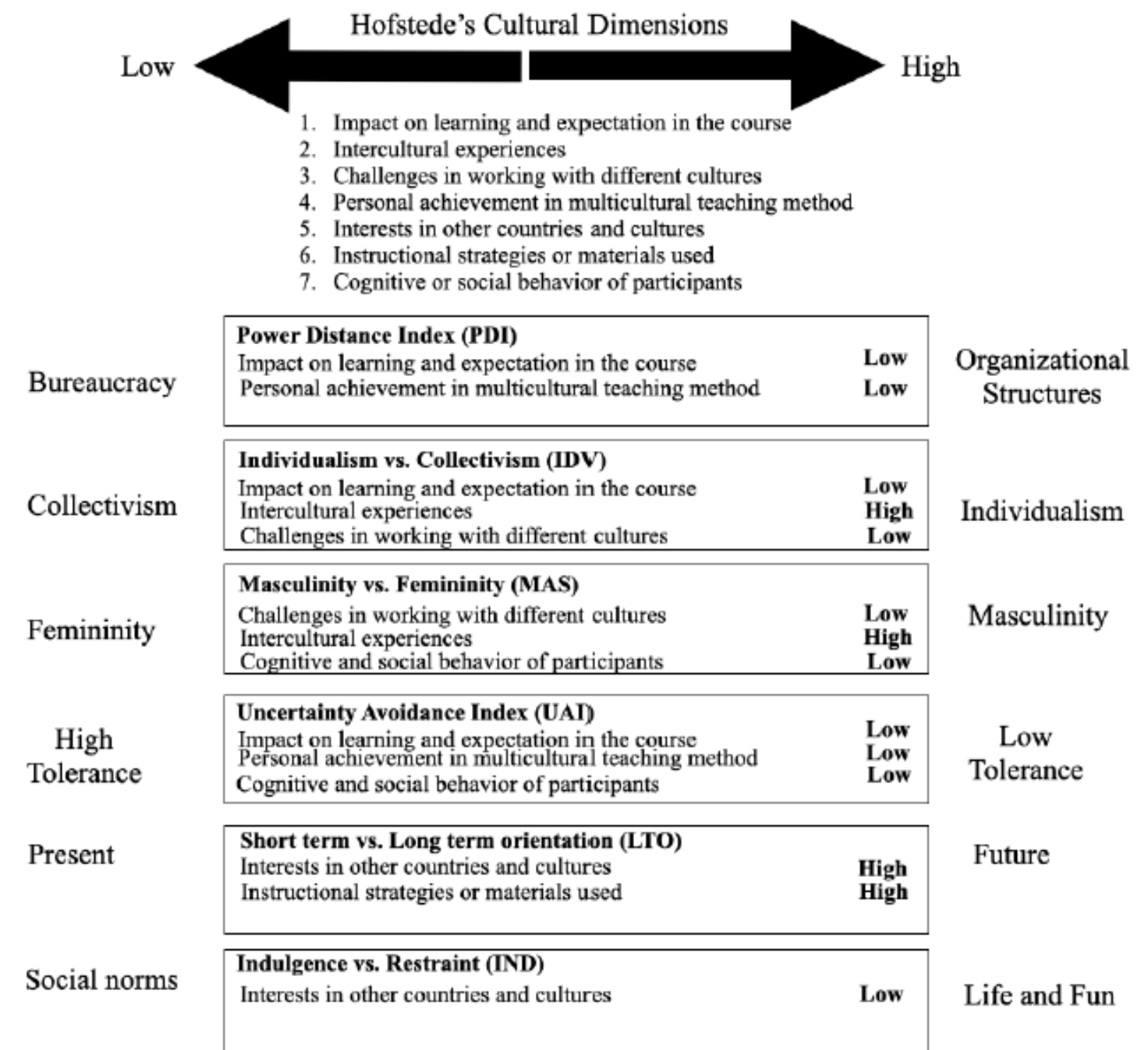
LEARNING OBJECTIVE 3



INTERCULTURAL COIL FACTORS

- Power-Distance Index: Extent to which inequity in power is accepted, expected on a team
- Individualism vs. Collectivism: Individualism prioritizes self-expression; collectivism prioritizes group consensus, harmony
- Masculinity vs. Femininity: Masculine portrays assertiveness, competition, achievement; feminine portrays, cooperation, nurturing, quality of life
- Uncertainty Avoidance Index: Tolerance for uncertainty, ambiguity, change; attempts to minimize the unknown include rules, regulations
- Short- vs. Long-Term Orientation: Short-term focuses on short-term success or gratification; long-term growth emphasizes persistence, perseverance
- Indulgence vs. Restraint: Tendency to achieve desires; restraint suppresses gratification, regulates social norms

Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Framework

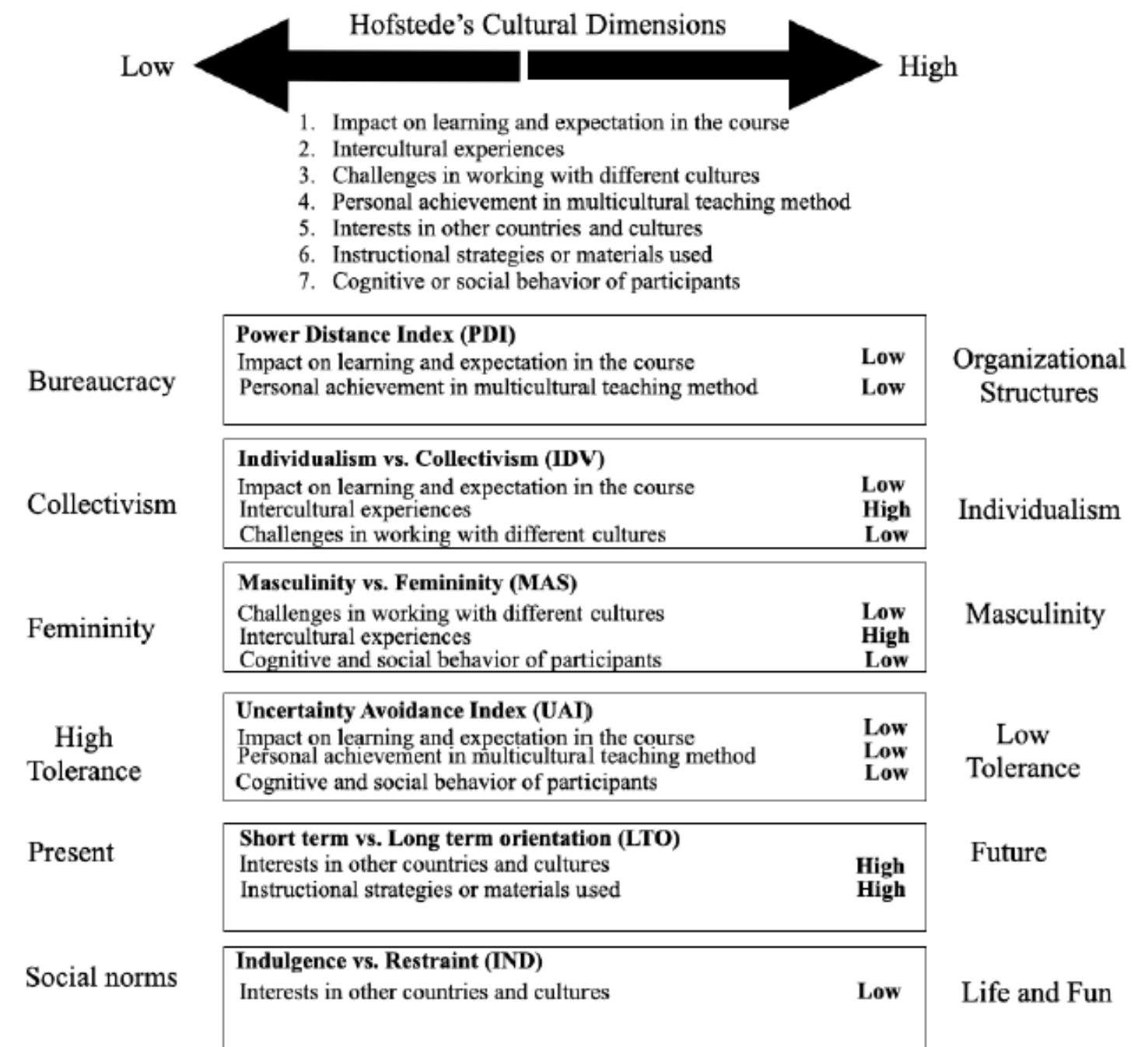


INTERCULTURAL COIL FACTORS

Limitations of Hofstede's

- Oversimplifies cultural complexities
- Comparison across nations
- Doesn't take into account:
 - Regional differences
 - Societal differences
 - Cultural changes over time
 - Individual differences
 - Situational adaptability

Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Framework



What challenges
have you observed
or experienced in
COIL environments?



OPEN DISCUSSION

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COIL DESIGN AND FACILITATION

“Mere exposure to diversity does not ensure the development of intercultural competences, and, in fact, virtual visits may even result in professional ethnocentrism. COILs need to take into consideration the complicated social dynamics between students to support learning in relation to intercultural encounters at all stages of the COIL. Teachers must therefore encourage critical intercultural reflection to ensure that the learning experience becomes meaningful for the students.”

(Fukkink, R., *et al.*, 2024)



COIL DESIGN COMPONENTS

Preparation

- Pair students based on preferences^{17,18}
- Average duration 8.6 weeks³; groups of 3-5 members^{19, 20}
- Teach:
 - **software used**¹⁹
 - in-depth knowledge of countries²¹
 - intercultural awareness^{22, 23}

Execution

- Use social platform for introductions¹⁶; virtual tours²⁴
- Use **photographs** for discussions²⁵
- Use moderated icebreakers, guided reflections to promote intercultural competence²⁶
- Focus on experiential learning; not theoretical learning²⁷

Evaluation

- Use self-reflections, self and peer-evaluations, gamification²⁸, online quizzes/tests, discussion forums, essays, presentations, questionnaires, e-portfolios³



What has
worked well for
you in COIL?



OPEN DISCUSSION

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COIL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Set Students up for Success	Support Self-Understanding	Tackle Unconscious Bias	Use Real-World Scenarios	Focus on Process, Not Grades
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach step-by-step conflict resolution strategies, conflict prevention vs. avoidance, and negotiation vs. compromise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide personality tests; facilitate discussions on impact to teams • Equip them with words needed to communicate needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach unconscious bias, positionality, dignity in EDIA • Teach empathy²¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create situations to question norms and identify diversity²⁹ • Design projects to analyze processes, strengths, reasons for differences, risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may see COIL negatively if graded³⁰; pass/fail? • How to address accreditation, grad school, institutional requirements?



Experience with designing COIL?



OPEN DISCUSSION

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COIL FACILITATION

Overcome Language Diversity	Encourage Remote Participation	Support Academic Integrity	Allow Students to Choose Leaders	Tackle Unconscious Bias
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teach enunciation• Normalize translation, subtitles, pauses, recordings in meeting• Allow participation by email or IM afterwards• Delay group decisions• Video of feedback with thought-process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use microphones, emojis, chat• Encourage return to previous slides• Increase anonymity; polls, hand-raises• Ask students to wait 15 secs before answering again	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use step-by-step videos to teach reference styles, in-text citations• Teach effective use, verification of gen-AI output	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow students to define leader role, choose leaders• If more than one project, change leaders each time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitate group learning• “I don’t understand” vs. “That’s not correct”• Turn deficit-based to asset-based narrative



Which of these
might work for
your courses?

What barriers do
you anticipate?



OPEN DISCUSSION

COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH MODEL



DEFICIT- VS. ASSET-BASED NARRATIVES (1)

Observation	Deficit-Based Narrative	Asset-Based Narrative	Community Cultural Wealth	Educational Practice
Some international students don't participate in class	International students are shy or they aren't engaged during class	International students are listening to understand Canadian classroom etiquette	Navigational Capital	Explain classroom guidelines, tailor facilitation strategies to strengths, needs



DEFICIT- VS. ASSET-BASED NARRATIVES (2)

Observation	Deficit-Based Narrative	Asset-Based Narrative	Community Cultural Wealth	Educational Practice
Some international students submit assignments containing AI-generated text	International students take shortcuts or don't know how to complete the assignments	International students are leveraging new tools to navigate language barriers and meet academic expectations	Linguistic Capital, Navigational Capital	Teach limitations and effective use of gen-AI, how to verify information, find original source, cite AI



ACTIVITY: DEFICIT- VS. ASSET-BASED NARRATIVES

Observation	Deficit-Based Narrative	Asset-Based Narrative	Community Cultural Wealth	Educational Practice
Some international students' assignments are missing in-text citations			Aspirational Capital, Navigational Capital	Use step-by-step videos to teach reference styles, in-text citations



KEEP TOOLS SIMPLE WHEN SUPPORTING COIL

- Blackboard Ultra
- D2L
- Moodle

Learning Management System (LMS)

Collaboration, Social Annotation, Projects

- Google Docs
- Google Sheets
- Trello
- NowComment

- Zoom
- Google Meet
- Padlet

Meetings and Engagement

Instant Messaging

- WhatsApp
- Slack

- Google Sites
- Canva
- Wordpress

E-Portfolios

Translation

- Google Translate
- Hand-held devices

- ChatGPT
- Claude
- DeepSeek

Generative AI

Scheduling Meetings

- Schej
- Doodle

CREATIVITY

Which tools do you recommend?



COMMENTS
THOUGHTS
FEELINGS
QUESTIONS



OPEN DISCUSSION

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