Building Global Relationships:
OER and Collaborative Online International Learning Courses

Mary Jo Orzech¹, Jie Zhang¹, Jennifer Kegler¹, Ann Pearlman², Victoria Greenfield³

¹ SUNY Brockport
² University of Rochester
³ Syracuse University

Address: Mary Jo Orzech
SUNY Brockport, Drake Memorial Library, 350 New Campus Drive, Brockport, NY 14420
morzech@brockport.edu

Global Relationships: Open Educational Resources and Collaborative Online International

Open Access accepted version available at: https://soar.suny.edu/handle/20.500.12648/1923
Building Global Relationships:
OER and Collaborative Online International Learning Courses

Abstract

Using Open Educational Resources (OER) in Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) courses provides students and faculty the opportunity to share content, enhance knowledge, and develop intercultural competence across geopolitical and other boundaries. Faculty perceptions at the research site regarding benefits and challenges of using OER are consistent with positive findings of other OER research that validate its potential. This case study describes experiences of two college courses taught with different international partners. It shares the journey of co-planning, implementing, and revising assignments highlighting OER instructional materials. Technology and accessibility considerations influence the curricular decisions for each course. They demonstrate how the timely availability of relevant OER content can be particularly impactful for international learning environments like COIL. The article underscores the faculty-librarian-instructional designer collaboration throughout the project and offers suggestions for future study.

**Keywords:** Open educational resources, OER, collaborative online international learning, COIL, virtual exchange
Introduction

With an increasing demand for college graduates who possess intercultural competence, the use of international virtual exchange courses delivers a valuable yet often overlooked option for global engagement. Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) courses employ virtual exchange practices that connect students and professors in different countries for shared projects and discussions as part of their coursework (Rubin & Guth, 2022). Using Open Educational Resources (OER) in classes simultaneously taught in several countries moves beyond focusing on student affordability to also highlight more easily sharing activities in a variety of subjects and disciplines. Using OER with learners from other countries can both enhance and broaden global perspectives about culture, class, race, ability and more.

This article describes the experiences of faculty, librarians and instructional design partners who used OER to develop online classes taught in Journalism (Advertising) and Education (Special Education) at a public comprehensive university research site in the United States. These faculty worked with international colleagues from around the world (e.g., Brazil, Mexico, Netherlands, and Sweden) over several semesters to provide virtual cross-cultural study opportunities for learners.

Literature Review

COIL Courses

Virtual exchange courses connect students across borders, linking students from two or more higher education institutions that are usually located in different countries and cultures. The faculty work together to provide a variety of learning experiences for their students. These can range from shared projects to guest lectures to class-to-class interaction among students, through technology use and the internet.
The acronym COIL and associated courses were introduced in the early 2000s by the SUNY COIL Center. Its goal is to ensure that “all students have access to educational opportunities that allow them to engage with other people and perspectives, develop greater understanding of differences, and build important 21st century skills, such as teamwork, reflection, and communication” (Rubin & Guth, 2022; SUNY, 2023). COIL courses provide the opportunity for students to develop intercultural competencies and cultural humility, as they interact with students and faculty in their classes (Anderson & Or, 2023; Hackett et al., 2023).

Students also develop digital and technology skills that can be translated to other courses and areas of their lives. Students participate in an alternative international academic experience to virtually study abroad that may be more cost-effective than requiring physical travel, while still being able to learn from experts around the world (Zhang et al., 2022). OER instructional materials in these classes also contributes to affordability, although use of OER in COIL courses has only been mentioned briefly in the literature (Ullom, 2017; Mathieu et al., 2019). This article provides additional evidence describing advantages of embedding OER in COIL courses to benefit students and faculty.

It can be mutually beneficial to use open resources in virtual exchange courses (Intro to This Resource – OER COIL Starter Kit, n.d.). On a foundational level, OER resolves many of the concerns about equitable access to learning materials among partner institutions. Moreover, many open resources allow for adapting the content to suit course requirements thus in turn, creating an enhanced pipeline of in demand OER material for future COIL courses. It thereby facilitates a smoother process for the exchange of content and ideas.
OER in Online International Learning

OER is defined as “teaching, learning and research materials in any medium—digital or otherwise—that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions” (UNESCO, 2019). ‘Open’, as it relates to OER, enables the 5Rs, allowing users to retain, revise, remix, reuse and redistribute content (Wiley, 2014). OER can include text, images, videos, assignments, quiz banks, simulations, full courses, supplemental ancillaries and more (Bliss & Smith, 2017). OER enhances access and ensures students are able to use materials from the first day of class through the final project and beyond.

Leveraging OER in COIL courses can be a powerful combination and logical evolution for 21st century learning that increases instructional effectiveness. OER’s potential global reach across both literal and figurative boundaries highlights the impact its use can make in strengthening cultural understanding in international education courses. Using technology to engage students with OER in COIL courses is a practical application of ‘thinking globally and acting locally’. Moreover, OER aligns with elements of the ‘Global Citizen Movement’ echoing social justice voices in the quest to ‘defeat poverty, demand equity, and defend the planet’.

The symbiotic relationship between OER and COIL complement both and amplify their effects. Some of the main reasons to consider OER in COIL courses are that it:

- Saves students money
- Provides round-the-world, around-the-clock availability
- Simplifies course logistics
- Adds value and convenience for students and instructors
• Allows flexibility to adapt as needed
• Enables timely inclusion of current events, trends, norms
• Can impact learning outcomes and retention
• Promotes social justice and equity
• Incorporates sustainability practices
• Supports open pedagogy practices

OER deserves serious consideration for online international teaching because it removes a financial as well as physical barrier to content access for students. Teaching in an online international collaboration can pose complex logistical challenges, yet the availability of course content should not be one of them. Students as well as instructors may struggle with impediments such as non-existent or intermittent network availability, limited or shared device access, compatibility concerns, printing issues, etc. Using OER is one element of instructional planning that helps level the playing field and eases a potential barrier for students with complicated living situations wherever they are located. Access to various technology platforms can vary depending on infrastructure, geopolitical policies and other constraints. Working through these complexities requires a flexible and adaptable teaching and learning style.

Learning from these challenges can broaden understanding, build empathy and offer teachable moments for both students and faculty. Value is added by introducing international faculty colleagues to new or unfamiliar OER sources. It allows instructors to share different perspectives, insights, and opinions about the perceived quality and relevance of available open material. This exchange of ideas often identifies areas where the creation of OER material is needed and can inspire further development.
In addressing a broader cohort of students, COIL courses using OER may also cover more territory around the edges of lessons. Using open pedagogical practices and active learning with an international audience can highlight the value of important interpersonal skills. It facilitates peer-to-peer learning about teamwork, leadership, documentation, presentation and overall communication at multiple levels. Commitment to shared materials can increase participation and engagement at all levels.

**Preliminary Perspectives on OER at the Research Site**

OER was piloted in a limited number of courses at the research site during 2015-2016. Statewide funding with faculty incentives spiked a significant uptick in using OER from 2017-2021. This initiative was supported through workshops, consultation and advocacy. OER use increased to courses taught by over 50 faculty encompassing nearly a dozen subject areas including Education, Math, Earth Sciences, Physics, Biology, Theater, English, Nursing and more.

To demonstrate impact, the OER librarian invited faculty using OER at the research site to participate in focus groups at the end of each semester to gauge faculty satisfaction as well as the perception of students’ satisfaction with OER. These descriptive data provided exploratory indicators of usefulness. Although limited in size and scope, the data provide insight regarding OER use in impacting learning outcomes. Focus group data from 2019-2021 suggests overall positive outcomes using OER, consistent with other studies (Hilton, 2020). The most recent data collection, completed in Fall 2022 following the ease of COVID restrictions, continues to show high satisfaction levels of both faculty and students. There were no responses of being ‘dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’. See Figure 1.
The initial results provide only a partial snapshot of what respondents thought and may have done since that time. Faculty feedback often generated more questions than answers. The data offered a foundation for further dialogue. It paved the way for discussion of possible future inquiry, investigation and insight, as well as subsequent sharing of best practices. For example, respondents suggested that additional data collection might investigate OER use considering student demographics (e.g., year in school, age, country, language); instructor experience (e.g., years taught, tenure, teaching style); or environment (e.g., institutional profile, frequency and length of course of course meetings, student course expectations, use of open pedagogy practice).

Although using OER can be beneficial, it isn’t a perfect answer for all situations. Faculty reported that employing OER can present challenges regardless of discipline or modality. While several faculty had no concerns using OER, others mentioned the difficulty of finding quality materials, as well as the additional time needed for discovery and adapting OER material. See Table 1. These challenges have typically been addressed through a combination of instructional design, course management, and instructor and student adaptability. Instructor experience and willingness to adjust, consider alternatives, fail forward, and take appropriate risk make a critical difference. Since moving to OER, few research site courses returned to using commercial textbooks, although individual instructors may change due to retirement, new responsibilities, or teaching schedules.

The data reveal potential areas for follow-up. For example, challenges in finding material for COIL classes might benefit from building more focused strategies for content discovery.
Further development and sharing of keywords, definitions and controlled vocabulary search terms used by partner schools could be useful. Increased awareness of varying cultural norms, jargon and idioms is important. COIL courses require more upfront commitment regarding the initial choice of OER that needs to be balanced with flexibility during cross-cultural activities.

Faculty comments regarding time constraints in finding OER materials were addressed by the COIL instructors in this study by building a steady review of appropriate OER into their courses over time. This requires diligence in replacing broken or missing webpage links, and considering updated or alternative open content as it becomes available. Being proactive in scheduling sufficient time is critical for success.

COIL instructors have proven to be resilient, flexible, and willing to make changes as needed. The inclusion of an active experiential learning component in COIL classes as described in the case studies that follow make them especially well-aligned to adapt or create new content. This provides a natural entry point for consideration of more open pedagogical practices as well.

**Collaboration with Faculty, Librarians and Instructional Designers**

An educational technology component used was the LibGuides platform that allows librarians to create subject-specific research guides to help students find reliable and research-based information (Springshare, 2023). When the journalism professor was searching the library website, she discovered that the library did not have a LibGuide with information about countries and cultures, so she contacted the COIL librarian who designed the “Country and Culture Information” LibGuide (Kegler, 2023). For one of the assignments in the COIL classes, students needed to find background information about their country and then do more in-depth research on one of the particular aspects of that country’s culture. The research guide provided
information about the assignment and links to resources to help students complete their assignment more successfully. The classroom professors found that students were using incorrect information from sources that were not accurate, so they also recruited the COIL librarian to teach a classroom session about finding and evaluating resources appropriate for their projects.

The initial LibGuide was designed for use by students in the university’s programs and contained both links to websites and databases accessible only to students in the research site university (using an authentication process). The librarian taught them how to find culture information and guided them toward these more appropriate resources. The students’ research papers improved, and the professors shared the LibGuides with their international partners. The partners loved the idea of the LibGuide, but their students were unable to access all of the resources.

During the design of the second version of the LibGuide, OER were added so that students from any university could access the information. The COIL librarian collaborated with a librarian at another university to identify more OER to add to the guide and to discuss overall layout and sharing. The guide was also embedded into the online learning management system, so that students could access it from within their course shells. When the pandemic occurred and all classes became remote, the COIL librarian created tutorial videos that could also be embedded online. The OER videos were shareable across courses and provided a way to reach more students in a timely manner.

Two Case Studies

In this section, two faculty at the research site shared their experiences of how they offered COIL with their international partner professors in different countries using OER during
ongoing semesters for students to learn content and develop intercultural competence. More specifically, they shared how they developed joint student learning outcomes (SLOs), selected OER aligned with the SLOs, and identified no-cost online platforms and technology tools for student choice to support student learning through interdisciplinary collaboration in COIL. In addition, they also discussed how the implementation of COIL impacted their selection and adoption of OER, how their COIL courses with OER led naturally to the adoption of open pedagogy, as well as how open pedagogy in COIL promoted student engagement in creating OER and thus enhanced student learning.

**Case Study 1: Journalism Course**

A journalism professor offered a COIL Advertising and Consumer Culture course in the Department of Journalism, Broadcasting, and Public Relations at the research site. She is also the campus COIL Coordinator Emeritus, Chair of the COIL Standing Committee, and Senior Instructional Designer. Over several semesters, the journalism professor partnered with a professor who taught a Presentation Skills course in Business at a university in the Netherlands. Also, for one semester the research site partnered with two professors teaching Business courses at a university in Brazil. They sought to find open resources that would address the joint student learning outcomes designated for both collaborations:

1. Develop awareness and understanding of consumer cultural and advertising strategies.
2. Design marketing materials.
3. Demonstrate oral presentation competence.

Having taught for over 25 years, the journalism instructor started seeing issues with the relevant life span of information presented in textbooks and manuals that included technical
aspects of video production. Textbooks and other sources that can be used to teach the creative concepts of storytelling remained applicable. The basic elements of storytelling, including image framing, lighting and sound are universal across classic art, film, photography and video.

Presently, video recording and computer-based editing technology can change or update every few months. So, textbooks that include classic creative concepts can be used for a number of years, but technical aspects are frequently outdated as soon as they are printed. The professor felt strongly that open resources would be able to provide up-to-date information just-in-time for student access and also save students from spending on materials that would quickly become irrelevant or obsolete (Luo et al., 2020).

Along with working with the COIL librarian on the Country and Culture library guide, the journalism instructor turned to the OER librarian for assistance in researching and adopting open educational materials. Initially, the library developed a method where students could borrow an electronic copy of a video production textbook from the college library, to read chapters dedicated to storytelling. However, this was problematic, as only one student could have the book at a time and they would have to electronically return it before others could access it. Also, the international students did not have access to the research site library services to read the material. Thus began the process of the OER librarian and the journalism professor working together to search for OER tailored to the course.

The nature of the COIL collaboration in this course supported adopting OERs, to create parity in learning platforms across international campuses. Students could access the same materials, including text-based literature, YouTube videos, and also create open-sourced documents for peer assignments. Generally, course materials adopted are in the native language of the University. In this COIL course, as both instructors added course materials,
students had the opportunity to read, view, and create OER materials from an international language and cultural perspective. For the final assignments students used a storytelling methodology that included non-verbal international communication techniques. These projects depended upon visual imagery and music without narration to tell the story. Students found the nuances of non-verbal communication to be universal.

**Developing Joint Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Selecting OER**

Simultaneously while working with the OER librarian, the journalism faculty attended a two-day OER workshop. In the workshop, participants reviewed one of their courses using the process of the Backwards Design Model of course development (McTighe & Wiggins, 2004) to hone course student learning outcomes (SLO), search numerous OER resources for materials, and work with workshop leaders to find OER that aligned with the course SLOs. From the workshop, the journalism faculty was able to designate a textbook and website to use for the COIL course. With the assistance of library services, these materials changed over time primarily to keep up with new techniques and trends.

**Identifying Online Platforms and Technology Tools for COIL**

Along with online text and interactive tools, the COIL collaboration between the journalism and business courses used a variety of openly available information on YouTube, and used applications like Sheets, Docs, Forms, Slides and WhatsApp. Students were required to create commercials and/or public service announcements (PSA) designed to reach international audiences. Examples and models of international advertising were found on YouTube, product company links and non-profit websites. Advertising topics included products sold in each of the
two countries and/or sustainability issues of international concern in both countries for public service announcements.

To address the student learning outcome “Demonstrate oral presentation competence” for students at the research and Netherlands universities, the faculty adopted select chapters from the open educational resource, “Lumen Learning Principles of Public Speaking” (Lumen, 2021). Students were required to interact with materials in select modules and were also encouraged to read through others of interest.

As a means to work collaboratively across countries, the joint class syllabus and required course materials information were shared via a website. Students used spreadsheets to join teams and share methods of communicating information. After a research assignment co-written and co-taught by the journalism professor and the COIL librarian was completed, students used the information to survey international team members. The surveys focused on gathering additional information on their respective country and culture as it relates to the chosen project topics. For example, the Climate, Land and Water Team surveyed their international partners on transportation and recycling methods and cultural beliefs systems to ultimately create an international public service announcement on reducing carbon footprints.

To meet the presentation and oral communication learning outcome, students created team Google Slides with researched marketing material and links to their commercial or PSA on YouTube. Some of the semester collaborations students met synchronously class-to-class to present their slides. During and after COVID, students recorded their oral presentations to share. They also were required to review their international teams Slides and provide written feedback.

The COIL courses were not cross-registered or credited between the partner universities, and grading was done by the respective faculty member at each university. As a means of
assessment, the international faculty created joint rubrics for presentation skills and storytelling methods. As each faculty member was an expert in one of the areas, they were able to provide students with feedback and assessment for professional growth.

**Case Study 2: Special Education Course**

A Professor of Special Education in the Department of Education and Human Development at the research site has been offering the Introduction to Special Education course with 100% OER since the semester of spring 2016. Since no open textbook was found for the course, with the support from librarians, the special education professor sought instructional materials from a variety of sources, including websites and documents from the federal and state Department of Education, organizations, universities and schools, The IRIS Center (© Peabody College Vanderbilt University), TED Talks (© TED Conferences), and YouTube videos, to name a few.

The professor made the selected OER available in modules on the university’s Learning Management System (LMS), previously Blackboard and currently Brightspace. Since switching from a commercial textbook to the adoption of OER in spring 2016, a total of 618 U.S. students enrolled in the course have saved about $61,800 in textbook purchase costs. In addition to saving students money, the use of OER also made the instructional materials available and accessible to all students enrolled in the course from the first day of the semester, thereby reducing potential inequity.

In 2017, the special education professor was introduced to COIL and has been embedding COIL in the Introduction to Special Education course since spring 2018. Depending on the availability of the COIL partner professors in a certain semester, the special education professor and the students enrolled in the Introduction to Special Education course worked with peers from
three countries (i.e., Sweden, Brazil, and Mexico) in the past years. Table 2 lists the disciplines and countries of the special education course’s international partners as well as the semester and year in which the COIL was offered. To make collaboration across disciplines, cultures, languages, and countries happen, it is essential for the COIL participating faculty to work closely together to plan and deliver the instruction and assessments for students to maximize their learning experience through COIL.

Insert Table 2 here.

**Developing Joint Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Selecting OER**

The special education professor used backward design to co-plan the COIL project with each of her partner professors, starting with the student learning outcomes (SLOs). Due to its interdisciplinary nature, it was critical for the COIL faculty to identify joint student learning outcomes and adjust their original course materials to make the experience relevant and meaningful for COIL participants across disciplines. For example, to benefit the American students who were learning special education, and the Mexican students who were learning business writing in English, the joint SLOs for the COIL project between Mexico and the United States were for students (a) to gain cross-cultural, cross-linguistic, and cross-disciplinary diverse experiences, (b) to develop knowledge and skills on education practices, including inclusive education/special education practices, across the U.S. and Mexico through a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, (c) to demonstrate communication skills across cultures and disciplines using technology, and (d) to improve intercultural competence (Zhang & García, 2022). When comparing the COIL projects across Sweden-U.S., Brazil-U.S., and Mexico-U.S., some joint SLOs and selected OER remained the same while the others were adjusted to be tailored to the participants’ academic foci.
Accordingly, the special education professor collaborated with each of her international partner professors to seek appropriate OER, which were aligned with the SLOs to support student learning. For example, all the COIL participants in the past years received the same OER, including the websites and documents from the federal and state Department of Education, organizations, universities and schools, as well as the YouTube video on the Cultural Iceberg (Intercultural English, 2018) and the LibGuide on Cultures and Countries (Kegler, 2023).

Therefore, the implementation of COIL enriched the selection, adoption, and creation of OER. As a result of co-planning and co-teaching of the COIL courses of the special education professor and her international partner professors across disciplines and countries, their OER came from repositories such as the IRIS Center, the LibGuide on culture and country, and various websites from the federal and state Department of Education, organizations, universities and schools across countries; multimedia such as TED Talks and YouTube videos; and journal articles on the topics their COIL courses focused on. More importantly, the selection of the OER was more diverse and international.

Due to collaboration, courses were more student-centered, project-based, and process-focused. Thus, the assessments were tailored to the local course learning objectives, and the selection and adoption of specific OER changed from course to course to support student learning. For example, the Sweden-U.S. COIL participants reflected on films and news featuring people with disabilities to develop knowledge on the representation of special education and people with disabilities in media across Sweden and the U.S.; the Brazil-U.S. participants conducted research and presented on the historical context, the development of special education, and its educational practices across Brazil and the U.S.; while the Mexico-U.S. participants reviewed a video on using interviews as an assessment tool, interviewed educators working with
students with disabilities, and conducted a SWOT analysis to develop knowledge and skills regarding education practices, including inclusive education/special education practices, across Mexico and the United States.

Accordingly, the COIL courses with OER led naturally to the adoption of open pedagogy, which promoted active student engagement in not only consuming the materials provided by their professors but also in creating OER. As a result, OER in the COIL courses helped enhance student learning from diverse and international lenses, and helped strengthen community building in a global context.

In the process of co-planning and course delivery, the special education professor collaborated with her COIL partner professors to identify appropriate OER, and guide students to locate OER to ensure they fit their academic foci, met their learning needs, and achieved the predetermined SLOs. Therefore, each COIL-embedded course had its own instructional guidelines, some OER remained for consistency, and some unique OER were included. For instance, the faculty and students watched films and read news articles featuring people with disabilities in the Sweden-U.S. project, studied journal articles and watched documentary videos on people with disabilities in the Brazil-U.S. project, while used a video on how to structure and conduct interviews as an assessment tool to guide the team interviews with educators working with students with disabilities in the Mexico-U.S. project. Table 3 compared the joint SLOs across three different COIL projects and the OER selected by the professors or co-created by the faculty and students, which were aligned with the joint SLOs.

Insert Table 3 here.

**Identifying Online Platforms and Technology Tools for COIL**
Because of the physical distance among the COIL participants in different countries, faculty and students rely heavily on online platforms and technology tools for communication and community building. The special education professor worked collaboratively with each of her COIL partner professors to identify online platforms and technology tools, which were free to the public or purchased by the university and freely accessed by students from all participating institutions. To overcome the challenges caused by different locations and time zones, faculty reserved time and dates for all students to meet synchronously via Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate. In addition, students were highly encouraged to meet with their teammates outside of their scheduled class time.

Students used online platforms of their choice for synchronous meetings, including but not limited to Zoom, FaceTime, Google Hangouts, Skype, Blackboard Collaborate, or other platforms jointly agreed upon within their team. They also used WhatsApp, email, Facebook, Instagram, or other technology tools for messaging and communication purposes. To complete teamwork, students negotiated with their teammates and decided the tools they would use, such as a PowerPoint with voiceover, VoiceThread, Google Slides with voiceover, YouTube video, or Zoom video for team presentations, while Google Docs and Microsoft OneDrive documents were used for collaborative papers.

Moreover, faculty created common online platforms, such as a closed Facebook group, Google Classroom, and Padlet, for students to display their work, review peers’ work, provide feedback, and exchange ideas so they could learn from each other within a global learning community. Table 4 discusses the list of online platforms and technology tools for students to choose from.

Insert Table 4.
A variety of online platforms and technology tool options provided students with higher level of autonomy and allowed them to overcome barriers and challenges to learn together. Through COIL, the students engaged in high impact practices. They built an international learning community, immersed themselves in diversity and global learning, shared common intellectual experiences, conducted research, and worked on collaborative assignments and projects (Kuh, 2008). Additionally, the Mexico-U.S. COIL participants were involved in community-based learning by interviewing professionals and discussing education related policies and practices. The use of OER in the COIL projects allowed the participants to access the same materials and technology at no cost from the first day of class, which made their learning experience more diverse, equitable, and inclusive in a global context.

Discussion

The use of OER saves students money and enables them to access materials from the first day of class. The reuse, retain, revise, remix, and redistribute features of OER (UNESCO, 2019) allow flexibility for faculty and students to adapt the materials as needed. In addition, using OER in COIL courses makes instructional materials available round-the-world, which promotes inclusivity, supports social justice and equity, and leads to positive student learning outcomes (Orzech et al., 2023).

The participants in the focus groups at the research site from 2019 to 2022 suggested an overall satisfaction with OER and a trend of continuous use of OER. For example, 88% of the respondents chose “I used OER in the past year and intend to continue with OER.” Aligning with their ratings, when describing their satisfaction with the use of OER, one person commented, “I’m very happy to break away from traditional textbooks”, which was a common thread
repeated by others. The majority described their experiences with OER as “very satisfied” or “very pleased”.

Despite the overall satisfaction and determination to continue using OER in their courses, the participating faculty also shared some challenges they encountered. They mentioned the difficulty in finding appropriate quality materials and how time-consuming locating materials as well as implementing OER courses could be. The participants offered solutions on how they overcame the challenges, such as by “creating the materials” and “planning early and working ahead to get the materials ready”.

The case studies from the journalism professor and special education professor reinforced the benefits of COIL, including allowing learning to take place anytime, anywhere, with anyone, as well as across cultures, languages, countries, and disciplines (Zhang & Pearlman, 2021). Furthermore, COIL promotes diversity, inclusivity, community building, and student engagement (Olson et al., 2007; Kahn & Agnew, 2017; Zhang et al., 2022). The case studies demonstrated how the implementation of COIL impacted the selection, adoption, and creation of OER; how the COIL courses with OER promoted open pedagogy; and how open pedagogy in COIL encouraged student engagement in creating OER. This approach enhanced student learning regarding content areas, diversity, and intercultural competence.

The professors did encounter some challenges in the process of co-planning and co-teaching courses using OER. In addition to the regular COIL related challenges (such as different locations, time zones, languages, cultures, disciplines, countries, technology preferences, and academic foci), the COIL professors spent a great amount of time collaborating with each other, librarians, information technology support staff, and working closely with their students.
For instance, it was time-consuming to identify joint SLOs, find or develop appropriate materials, remain open-minded and flexible when choosing or suggesting technology and online platforms, provide clear guidance, and monitor student progress. However, the time and efforts were worthwhile when COIL with OER led to positive impacts on student learning and better prepared the students to be thoughtful global citizens.

Additionally, the collaboration among the faculty and librarians enriched the OER used in the COIL courses. The faculty worked closely with librarians to find high quality materials, which were aligned with the joint SLOs to meet the learning needs of students from the COIL partner universities. Moreover, the librarian who was the COIL liaison worked with faculty to develop the new LibGuide on Culture and Country (Kegler, 2023), which provided a research database for students to build a more solid foundation to interact with their international partner peers. This LibGuide was also shared with the COIL partner professors, who were interested in using this module as an example to collaborate with their librarians to build similar LibGuides in their primary languages.

**Conclusion**

This paper reported preliminary findings on faculty insights into offering OER courses through focus groups from 2019 to 2022. Two case studies are also described in which two faculty members (one in journalism and another in education) shared their journeys of how to develop the joint SLOs, select OER, and identify online platforms and technology tools for COIL courses. In addition it emphasized the importance of collaboration among faculty, librarians, and instructional designers, as well as collaboration among faculty and students across different institutions globally.
The authors discussed the benefits and challenges of offering COIL using OER. It is suggested that future partnerships include OER in other languages (e.g., Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish). Views of international partners’ experiences with OER materials can be included in end-of-semester surveys. Moving forward, additional research would benefit from a larger number of participants, and more student perspectives on using OER in COIL. A worthy goal is for more OER to be created, and more existing OER materials be modified and adapted for future COIL courses.
References


https://doi.org/10.1177/10451595231182447


https://youtu.be/a9Z83I_g4Hw

Intro to This Resource – OER COIL Starter Kit. (n.d.). Retrieved September 3, 2023, from

https://opencoil.commons.gc.cuny.edu/intro-to-this-resource/


Mathieu, L., Murphy-Judy, K., Godwin-Jones, R., Middlebrooks, L., & Boykova, N. (2019). Learning in the open: integrating language and culture through student curation, virtual exchange, and OER. In A. Comas-Quinn, A. Beaven & B. Sawhill (Eds), *New case studies of openness in and beyond the language classroom* (pp. 65-82). Research-publishing.net. [https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2019.37.967](https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2019.37.967)


Wiley, D. (2014). Defining the ‘Open’ in Open Content and Open Educational Resources. En Introduction to Open Education. https://edtechbooks.org/open_education/defining_the_open


Figure 1

Reported Faculty and Perceived Student Satisfaction with OER

![Reported Faculty Satisfaction Levels Fall 2022](image1)

![Perceived Student Satisfaction Fall 2022](image2)
Table 1

*OER Challenges Mentioned by Faculty*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology Concerns</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Curve</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Tone</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping Current</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Engagement</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding Materials</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modifying Resources</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Consuming</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of/Poor Materials</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2

*The Semester/Year, COIL Partners’ Discipline, and Country*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester/Year</th>
<th>COIL Partners’ Discipline</th>
<th>COIL Partners’ Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advertising &amp; Consumer Culture Course</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2018—Fall 2022</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Education Course</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
<td>Culture, Languages and Media</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2018—Fall 2020</td>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2021—Present</td>
<td>Business Writing in English</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3

**COIL Student Learning Outcomes in the Special Education Course: Similarities and Differences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COIL Partners</th>
<th>Different SLOs</th>
<th>Different OERs</th>
<th>Same SLOs</th>
<th>Same OERs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden-U.S.</td>
<td>To develop knowledge on the representation of special education and people with disabilities in media across Sweden and the U.S.</td>
<td>Films and news featuring people with disabilities</td>
<td>- To gain cross-cultural, cross-linguistic, and cross-disciplinary diverse experiences</td>
<td>- Websites and documents from the federal and state Department of Education, organizations, universities and schools, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil-U.S.</td>
<td>To develop knowledge and skills on the historical context/development of special education and its educational practices across Brazil and the U.S.</td>
<td>Journal articles and documentary videos on people with disabilities</td>
<td>- To demonstrate communication skills across cultures and disciplines using technology</td>
<td>- Cultural Iceberg Video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico-U.S.</td>
<td>To develop knowledge and skills on education practices, including inclusive education/special education practices, across the U.S. and Mexico through a SWOT analysis</td>
<td>- Video: Interviews as an Assessment Tool</td>
<td>- To improve intercultural competence</td>
<td>- LibGuide on Cultures and Countries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4

*The List of Online Platforms and Technology Tools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synchronous Meeting</td>
<td>Zoom, FaceTime, Google Hangouts, Skype, <em>Blackboard Collaborate</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messaging and Communication</td>
<td>WhatsApp, Email, Facebook, Instagram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>PowerPoint with voiceover, VoiceThread, Google Slides with voiceover, YouTube video, Google Docs, Microsoft OneDrive documents, Forms, Sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COIL Course Online Platforms</td>
<td>Padlet, <strong>Closed Facebook group</strong>, <em><strong>Google Classroom</strong></em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. *Blackboard Collaborate was used when the University used Blackboard as the course Learning Management System.*

**Closed Facebook groups were used for the Sweden-U.S. & Brazil-U.S. COIL projects.**

***Google Classroom was used for the Mexico-U.S. COIL project.*
Dr. Mary Jo Orzech is the Scholarly Communications Librarian at Drake Memorial Library, SUNY Brockport. She is the coordinator of the campus OER program where she has supported faculty open access and open pedagogy initiatives since 2016. Her academic interests include digital publishing and scholarship, planning and assessment.

Dr. Jie Zhang is a Professor of Special Education in the Department of Education and Human Development at SUNY Brockport. She is also Interim Chair, Department of Educational Administration and Founder, International Faculty and Staff Association. She has been using OER in COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) and other courses since 2016.

Jennifer Little Kegler is a Reference and Instruction Librarian at the Drake Memorial Library, SUNY Brockport. She assists students and faculty with information needs, whether through informal one-on-one interactions, formal class instruction, or in learning management systems. Her research interests include effective information literacy instruction practices, as they relate to in-person and online learning environments.

Ann Giralico Pearlman is a Senior Instructional Design Specialist Emeritus and adjunct faculty member of the Department of Journalism, Broadcasting, and Public Relations at SUNY Brockport. She also served as COIL Coordinator in the Center for Global Education and Engagement at SUNY Brockport. She is currently an Instructional Designer at University of Rochester.

Victoria Greenfield is a doctoral student in the history program at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. As an MA student at Brockport, they assisted with OER outreach and data collection. With professional goals in academia, they maintain an interest in OER, open pedagogy, and student-centered learning.