

Creating Projects

For many of us, our first step on this CO[!]IL journey will be reflecting on what it means for us personally to 'walk in a good way.' We'll then explore how we can braid together Indigenous and intercultural ways of being and knowing as they relate to our specific local contexts and communities. In this section, we consider what we need to think about when creating a project, including:

- how to work with local Indigenous communities to identify a project
- how to choose an international partner
- considering the practical implications of CO[!]IL projects



How to work well with local Indigenous communities to identify a project

A guiding principle of the CO[!]IL Pathway is for projects to be co-created with at least one Indigenous instructor who lives in and / or works very closely with the local Indigenous community. For example, a non-Indigenous NIC instructor would choose to do a project with an Indigenous instructor at a partner institution. An Indigenous NIC instructor could decide to do a project with either a non-Indigenous or an Indigenous instructor at a partner institution. Indigenous communities must remain at the heart of the project. ALL instructors would connect with the Indigenous community (ies) connected to their institution.

What 'connection' entails will vary according to:

- our positioning - how we are 'in relation to' the community and our identity (e.g., Are we a community member? Were we born locally and not a member of the local Indigenous community? Are we a newcomer to Canada? etc.)
- the needs of our local Indigenous community(ies)
- Indigenous institutional resources available (e.g. at NIC, the [Elders in Residence](#), the [Indigenous Education Navigators](#), NIC's [Indigenous Education News](#) website, the [Working Together Working Group](#), and the [Indigenous Education Council](#))

It's important we do our research and find out what we can about our local Indigenous community (ies) and their needs and interests. Finding out as much as we can from readily available sources (e.g., the Internet, local organizations, our institutional resources and connections, etc.) ensures that when we do reach out personally, we are doing so respectfully and appropriately.

Choosing an international partner

There are several factors to consider when identifying which international partners might be a good fit for you and your class, including:

- do you already have overseas connections / established relationships that would be suitable for your project? Have you researched a current list of institutional partners?
- do you speak any languages in addition to English (again, not necessary), that could help when communicating with a possible project partner?
- how flexible (e.g. in terms of language, time zones, etc.) are you in how you connect with your partner institution?
- how comfortable are you in navigating cultural differences in a classroom context?
- would you be interested in connecting with a class from a different discipline?

Getting clear on your responses to the above questions will help you narrow down, how best to identify potential international project partners for your CO[*I*]IL project

CO[*I*]IL logistics – getting practical

When planning a CO[*I*]IL project, it's important to consider various logistics. These will influence what can easily be achieved, when, and how. Thinking about the following before starting project design is a good idea.

Language

In international collaborations, not all participants (instructors and students) will likely have English as their first language. It's important to consider what the main language of communication will be during project planning and implementation if translation will be needed, and how you plan to help students navigate any language differences.

Time zones

In addition to class schedules, whether or not students (and instructors) can meet 'live online' during class time will also depend on whether or not project partners share the same or similar time zones (e.g., only a few hours difference).

Technology

Institutions, instructors, and students may use different educational platforms and technological tools. We also need to consider our own and our students' familiarity and comfort level with technology, as well as that of our project partner and students. While we may not know who is using what at the initial project planning stage, reflecting on what tools we'd like to use and being open to learning new ones, is an important part of planning a CO[*I*]IL.

Collaborative Tools

While the list of possible tools is endless, it's okay to choose one or two that will work best for us, bearing in mind:

- availability and experience using the tool
- accessible and inclusion
- privacy concerns (ideally students should not have to provide any personal identifying information to use a tool and if they do, they need to be aware of this and have alternatives if they aren't comfortable providing their information)

Learning Outcomes

While we can't assume other institutions require courses to have learning outcomes (LOs), thinking about how our proposed CO[IL] will help students meet one or more learning outcomes is worth considering at the planning stage, especially if you're looking for project ideas that connect community needs and the course into which you plan to incorporate your CO[IL] project.

Assessment

Assessment requirements, criteria, and practices may vary across partner institutions. It will be important to have a conversation about assessment right at the beginning, especially where a CO[IL] project is included in a course that has externally mandated evaluation criteria.

Project implementation

Every project will be unique. That said, there are two important elements that every CO[IL] project will include.

Connecting through kinship: engaging in the project

This step of the CO[IL] is what people sometimes see as the main part of the project, although in fact, it is a step on a much larger and longer journey.

A project can last one class, one week or several weeks across a term. It involves students across institutions working together in diverse groups to explore a given topic or problem. The traditional COIL 'ice-breaker' is replaced with 'Stories of who I am,' fostering community and connection before students embark on their joint exploration.

Reflecting and reciprocity - moving forward in reflective circles

A key aspect of a CO[IL] is reflection, not only for students but also for instructors. Reflection is important at every stage along the Pathway, and most especially at the end, before embarking on a new project.