

Description: Only a small percentage of students participate in study abroad programs and many groups are underrepresented. There is little diversity in race, gender and ethnicity nor access for non-traditional, lower socioeconomic groups, those with disabilities and first generation college students (Fischer, 2012). Using synchronous online meeting tools to create globally networked learning experiences can enable all students to have a meaningful international experience, combat a student's sense of isolation in fully online courses, and build community. However, simply calling for all your students to be online at the same time does not create a meaningful experience that will contribute to meeting course objectives. It is important to allow time for thoughtful planning about how you will design the sessions and collaborate with your partner. Here is an approach for planning your collaboration with your partner and setting up your synchronous session around role playing.

If you don't already have an international partner, the SUNY COIL center (<http://coil.suny.edu/>) is a good place to start. Other sources to locate partners are: Virtual Exchange Coalition (<http://virtualexchangecoalition.org/>) and Skype in the Classroom (<https://education.microsoft.com/skypeintheclassroom>).

As a first step share the collaboration document with your partner. We then suggest the following steps for a sample 3 week collaboration:

WEEK 1: An asynchronous "icebreaker" discussion to build excitement and give learners a chance to informally get to know one another and learn about each other's culture. Students voluntarily enroll in the informal communication channel.

WEEK 2: A live session focused on getting to know one another. Ask students to do some research about the other country and come prepared to ask at least one question. As you plan your live session, you can use the synchronous session checklist as a guide. Assign an exercise to be completed in pairs or teams composed of students from both countries. Some sample exercises are shared in Artifacts.

WEEK 3: Another live session to share the results of their joint exercise and their experiences working together across cultures. A concluding asynchronous discussion. An anonymous final evaluation of the experience.

Additional information: As an example of an exercise to integrate students from the two countries, we include a video and instructions for a role play exercise on cross-cultural negotiations. Students were assigned to teams with 2-3 students from each country. They had to organize and meet on their own to plan and record their work. Sharing this task helped to establish relationships that endured beyond the collaboration period. Instead of recording, the students could enact the role plays during a synchronous session, but would still need to meet on their own beforehand to prepare.

This is a checklist that may be used for planning your synchronous sessions and planning your technology needs:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EzPXCC8jr7tvRH3DYD1sADwfK6cd8qID5e7O9IZMaq4/edit?usp=sharing>

The International Cross-Cultural Experiential Learning Evaluation Toolkit has information on developing learning outcomes and activities that lead to meaningful international experiences, as well as a rubric that may be used for assessment: <http://www.crossculturetoolkit.org/>

Presentation of Best practices for Incorporating International Collaboration into your Course  
<http://www.slideshare.net/alexandrapickett/best-practices-for-incorporating-an-international-collaboration-into-your-course>

Video example of a cross cultural negotiation role play exercise between students from two different countries: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KcJ0YM2buLk&feature=youtu.be>

Role play assignment instructions: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KEwZT-3I9d28m\\_5qFQJcF4EJSYdhipjiK7SZUrDIm\\_c/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KEwZT-3I9d28m_5qFQJcF4EJSYdhipjiK7SZUrDIm_c/edit)

Sample shared discussion questions in an LMS (33-week collaboration accompanied with virtual meetings):  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/11KV6UK1tiOarGngG6\\_PpvTgxJXRMMHWFuN-yTXjFLk/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/11KV6UK1tiOarGngG6_PpvTgxJXRMMHWFuN-yTXjFLk/edit)