

**Title:**                    **A Window to the World: Embedding Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) in the Taught Curriculum**

**Presenter:**            **Sabine McKinnon**  
Glasgow Caledonian University

### **Session Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- reflect on the merits of a pedagogic approach that can raise the international and intercultural awareness of *all* students and staff irrespective of their geographical location
- recognize the value of virtual mobility as an additional tool in the internationalisation process
- explore the opportunities for integrating a COIL element in their own subject specific teaching

### **Session Outline**

The discourse about internationalising higher education has often been dominated by discussions about the needs of international students in a UK classroom (Carroll and Ryan, 2005). These students have already taken the first step towards improving their international awareness and are still a minority in our classrooms. What about the vast majority of our home students who are often local and have not had the opportunity to study abroad? How can we support them in widening their horizons and understanding different cultures? Data from the UK and the EU reveals that the uptake of physical mobility schemes such as ERASMUS is poor. Only 10% of EU students take part. In the UK the numbers are even lower. We can, therefore, not rely on physical mobility alone to give students an international learning experience.

Based on the idea of 'virtual mobility' or 'internationalisation at home (De Wit,2013) the COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) model of networked learning enables students and staff to learn with and from their international peers using technology. Integrated into the subject specific curriculum at module level, collaborative tasks are designed jointly in two countries but often assessed separately in different institutional contexts. Students work in international groups communicating online.

This session presents Glasgow Caledonian University's (GCU) approach to embedding COIL in different subject disciplines. It explores the benefits and challenges involved when students and staff collaborate across national borders using internet based tools.

## **Session Activities and Approximate Timings**

### **Phase 1 (10 minutes):**

An introductory presentation will set out the aims of the COIL approach and present the results of a small research project designed to evaluate its success at GCU.

**Phase 2 (5 minutes):** Questions and answers on the presentation

### **Phase 3 (20 minutes):**

Participants discuss in small groups how their own teaching might be enhanced through the integration of a COIL element and what steps need to be taken to trial it. They will be guided in their discussions by reflective questions which will enable them to scrutinize their own practice and identify opportunities for change.

Examples of questions:

- What international knowledge, skills and attributes would you like your students to acquire through a COIL collaboration?
- Which learning outcomes and learning and teaching activities could be enhanced if students could discuss the subject with their peers in a different country?
- Which elements of a module you currently teach could be adapted to integrate an interactive, international approach?
- Which tasks or projects would be suitable for a COIL collaboration?

**Phase 4 (10 minutes):** Short plenary to present selection of key issues from group discussions

## **References**

Carroll, J. and Ryan, J. (eds) 2005. *Teaching International Students: Improving Learning for All*. London and New York: Routledge.

De Wit, H. 2013. COIL–Virtual mobility without commercialisation, *University World News*, Issue No. 274, 1 June 2013