

# COIL Institute for Globally Networked Learning in the Humanities

## Course Development and Implementation Case Study

### 3. Australia - USA: Theater & Voice

#### Abstract

The international collaboration between The Actors College of Theatre and Television Training in Sydney, Australia and Corning Community College in Corning, New York has been an innovative project to create a partnership between theatre students in the area of voice and movement training. Instructors in both locations have had experience with similar approaches to voice training, however, our student populations were enrolled in their respective institutions for disparate reasons. The application of our pedagogy was therefore necessarily slightly different at each school, and the level of engagement of the students with one another tended to reflect these differences in intensity and immersion in the work.

Our narrative is an overview of the weeks of collaborative assignments between our two classes, and an assessment of their relative successes and challenges. Technology, timing, facilities issues, and time for assessment were major factors that sometimes hampered the process, and in the specific case of the latter assessment piece, have left the process in many ways to be continued.

Our conclusion about the value of our collaboration as faculty, artists, and course designer is unanimously positive, and we share a belief in the great potential of such academic/artistic international collaborations for enriching the educational experience of young artists in training and providing opportunities for students in less-privileged circumstances to avail themselves of international partnerships. The broadening of the artistic experience of students in separate cultures by sharing a class in a performance-specific discipline via online technology is a positive and desirable outcome of our project.

Our caveats about the undertaking include a recognition of the importance of keeping assignments simple and manageable, and a recognition of the significant additional time needed for planning, implementation, and assessment of an online, international collaborative course. Administrative leadership and support, and access to adequate instructional resources, including proper facilities, audio-visual media technology, and funding are key to the success of these projects. Unexpected challenges as well as triumphs will emerge in the implementation of the coursework, and in order to properly manage and assess these, the proper time and respect for the discipline and its unique requirements is necessary to develop the process.

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## Section 1: General Course Information

### 1. Courses

Course Title	Institution(s)	Discipline	Academic Level
International Voice and Movement	Actors College of Theatre and TV, Australia; Corning Community College	Theatre and Voice	Freshmen and Sophomore

### 2. The team

<b>Team Member #1</b>	
Name:	Mary Guzzy
Role on Team:	Faculty
Institution:	Corning Community College
Position at Institution:	Associate Professor
Department and/or Program:	Communications and Humanities-Theatre
<b>Team Member #2</b>	
Name:	Jayne Peaslee
Role on Team:	Instructional Designer
Institution:	Corning Community College
Position at Institution:	Director of the Center for Teaching Innovation & Excellence
Department and/or Program:	Learning Resources Department
<b>Team Member #3</b>	
Name:	Linda Nicholls-Gidley
Role on Team:	Faculty
Institution:	Actors College of Theatre and Television
Position at Institution:	Voice and Dialect Teacher
Department and/or Program:	Voice Department

### 3. When?

Spring 2012

### 4. Number of students enrolled from each institution

Corning Community College - 15 students

Actors College of Theatre and Television - 20 students

### 5. Is this typical for classes of this type?

For Corning Community College, this was a typical size class for performance courses.

For Actors College of Theatre and Television, this class is slightly smaller than in previous years. In the past the class size has been around 24 students for this course.

At CCC, this was a slightly larger class than usual. Two students who had taken the course before, asked to re-enroll and take the course again because of the global network opportunity.

## Section 2: Issues of Language

<b>6. Language(s) of instruction at each institution</b>
Corning Community College - English Actors College of Theatre and Television - English.
<b>7. Primary language of most students in each class</b>
Corning Community College - English Actors College of Theatre and Television - English. However, we had a French student and an Italian student as well as a number of second language speakers in the class. The Actors College of Theatre and Television has in the past enrolled at least one international student per year.
<b>8. Language of course collaboration</b>
English
<b>9. Language fluency</b>
The student participants were fluent in English.
<b>10. Language proficiency difference</b>
<p>At Corning Community College, I observe that many students are not as adept at articulating their experience in writing, although they can verbally express their insights when they feel comfortable. Two students expressed to me that they sometimes felt intimidated by the level of articulation the Actor's College Students exhibited in talking and writing about the course work. While this is not specifically a basic language skills issue, it does speak to an issue that I find particularly critical at our college: our students are very sensitive to appearing "stupid" or "foolish" in front of other people, and so they often tend not to speak at all or to share their thoughts freely with people they don't know well. I observed, both in the audio posts and the written posts in Blackboard and on Facebook, that CCC students tended to limit a lot of their comments to "Great job!" They were more articulate in early audio posts. As technology difficulties and schedule differences began to weigh in on the course work, I found that on our students' side, the engagement tapered off even more, although they remained engaged in our face-to-face class.</p> <p>In the past I have always asked my students to write their observations in a more traditional format, either essay style or journal style. I was aware that the students seemed to discuss their experiences in more detail in the audio/video posts and was often surprised by the links and parallels that they drew in discussion. Their final assessment task, which involved a written reflection of the vocal techniques covered and their overall understanding of the work lacked the same depth. In terms of overall communication the language barrier was absent, but as Mary points out there was a divide evident in the responses from CCC and ACTT.</p>

### Section 3: Curricular Information

<b>11. Online or blended?</b>
Each course was offered in a blended format using the Blackboard CE version 8 learning management system.
<b>12. Duration</b>
Our classes collaborated about nine weeks. We also attempted to keep the students in contact with each other beyond that period by creating a class Group page on Facebook.
<b>13. Class work or discussion related to their collaboration before and/or after the actual collaboration period</b>
<p>After the actual collaboration period students continued to communicate for a limited time using a Facebook group page.</p> <p>Initially I think the students were quite excited to be connecting through a more friendly user interface. It provided an easy forum for both Mary and I to post final performance 'product' and it allowed for each class group to observe where the other took the voice work. The facebook interaction last until the end of the ACTT semester, and aside from the video posts by Mary and myself there was very little posted or commented on by the student.</p>

## Section 4: Asynchronous Technologies Used

### 14. Tools

Both classes used Blackboard CE version 8, YouTube, a Facebook Group page and Windows Audio Recorder. Students used smart phones, laptops, desktops, iPad, Tablet for communication and recording movement and voice. The instructors and the instructional designer met frequently, as many times as once a week, via Skype.

Email was the main source of communication between instructors and the instructional designer due to time differences. Australian students mainly used smart phones to communicate with the American students via Blackboard and Facebook. The American students used primarily laptops and desktops.

The highest percentage was with the Blackboard LMS, as they were required to post on the LMS once a fortnight. Approximately 80 percent of engagement would have been via blackboard.

### 15. Server location

Blackboard was provided by Corning Community College.

### 16. Technical problems

CCC students and I encountered varying levels of difficulty ranging from moderate to extreme. The Blackboard version we used made posting audio and video links somewhat complicated. As students were relying on whatever personal computers, smart phones, tablet hardware and software they owned or had access to, the differences in these technologies often led to great difficulty for some students to complete assignments.

As an instructor, I attempted to video students' final assignments using my personal Samsung Galaxy tablet, and found when reviewing what I had captured that the sound quality was so poor on most of the videos, that I couldn't post them. The acoustics in the room where the class had to be held are very poor, and added to the mediocre sound recording quality of my equipment, made most of what I recorded unusable.

An additional problem that I felt strongly was the tension between trying to deliver the course content, and also be a video and audio technician in class in order to try to capture adequate images and sound to share. One of the most important aspects of beginning Voice and Movement training, particularly in our environment at CCC, is to help students let go of self-conscious, self-monitoring behavior, and to allow the voice and body to become free and uninhibited. I wanted to keep the camera or recorder in the background, so that students would not focus on the fact that they were being recorded, which can often lead to further inhibition in people who are already locked or blocked vocally and physically. For that reason, the technical quality of what I was able to record of our class work suffered. When it came to a choice between the students' educational experience of the Voice and Movement work and doing a professional video of the work, I had to choose the former.

In any future collaboration of this nature, I feel it would be very important to have a videographer working with the instructor, and time for an editing process after the class work is done, in order to be able to share students' actual process and progress in the class, and provide an adequate visual record for discussion and feedback. That is NOT to say that "failures" would be edited out, but rather that the technical quality of the images and sound would be sufficient for actual educational benefit to both

instructors and students in both locations. A good videographer becomes like part of the furniture in the classroom, so that students and instructor forget about him/her and the camera and mics, and can go about their work unselfconsciously.

I recognize that this requires more resources, more personnel, and more time to adequately support the delivery of this type of online learning. But, I firmly believe that in order for online education to be in any way as effective as face-to-face classroom instruction, this is what it takes.

The main technical difficulty for the ACTT students was accessing the Blackboard LMS. Initially we had difficulty with enrolling the students and then when they were enrolled the passwords (based on date of birth) that we were provided with were incorrect, so it took some time to work out which passwords were valid and which weren't and how to rectify the problem easily from Australia without having to wait for CCC to come on-line. Many of the students found the blackboard system difficult to navigate and often stated that they weren't sure if they had posted in the right folder, or indeed if they had posted at all.

We had some difficulty with the age and processing power of the ACTT computers, the speed of the internet connection was fairly low, making uploads of audio and video files an arduous task. And as the school is housed in an old church building even the 3G network did not work as well as I had hoped, so streaming video/audio files posted by CCC students was difficult. I was also operating solo as ACTT has no technical staff and there was little understanding of our collaboration.

The students did not find recording via their smart phones and tablets difficult and I was able to overcome the difficulties regarding videoing the students by asking that the students take charge of the recording equipment.

### **17. Frequency of use**

As a class, reference was given to Blackboard web links and file postings. Students were expected to login weekly and use the asynchronous tools outside of class with Discussion postings.

### **18. Informal communication**

Both instructors encouraged "chats" and additional discussion threads on an informal level.

Cultural differences in communication contributed to the frequency with which students in both locations used these tools. As instructor, I posted several times to spur discussion and in response to some students' comments.

The blackboard LMS was a little foreign to the students at ACTT, where no LMS is used. I think that if the facebook page had been introduced earlier greater informal engagement would have presented itself. I also think that the students would have checked in more regularly.

### **19. Re-use**

Corning Community College now has Blackboard Learn 9.1 which is easier to incorporate video and audio files. Plus CCC has a new blade server that can handle these types of files without using a separate media server.

As instructor in the course at CCC, I would use the tools if I had adequate time to train and become proficient with them. As it currently stands, there is limited support for faculty to obtain release time for

trainings and for projects such as the COIL project. As our project was admittedly one of the more ambitious undertakings, it would follow that we needed more support in the areas I reference. I did not get that support at the institutional administrative level. My contention is, and will be throughout this exercise, that at the administrative level of our institution, there must be an awakening of consciousness about the value of these kinds of projects for our students' success in the emerging workforce and the workforce of the future, and that this awakening must lead to a change in the way we implement the projects we undertake. This means that the technology and the means to utilize it properly must be made available, and that the proper time and material and human resources be brought to bear upon these projects in the planning stages as well as the implementation of the course.

For a college like ACTT I would have to think more closely about whether the Blackboard LMS is a useful avenue to engage students in the kind of free-flowing and personal communication that performance work encourages. In the future I would lean towards a greater percentage of social media posting, such as a closed group page on Facebook, where the students already have a presence and feel more at ease.

## Section 5: Synchronous Technologies Used

<b>20. Tools</b>
We did not use synchronous tools, because of the time difference between our countries. The instructors used SKYPE regularly (weekly when possible) to chat and check in about the progress of our courses.
<b>21. Server location</b>
We provided our own technology and software. CCC's instructor used her home system, as she is not provided with SKYPE at the institution.
<b>22. Technical problems</b>
The satellite connection was often very sketchy. In upstate NY, I had recently moved to a new house that had problems with telephone wiring and the DSL connection. Severe weather would often cause my SKYPE connection to be wiped out. This situation seems to have improved after repeated complaints and visits from Verizon. In my experience last year, however, I often had to resort to texting during our regular SKYPE meetings, because we could not maintain the satellite connection and lost audio and video.
<b>23. Frequency of use</b>
See above. We did not use synchronous technology due to time differences.
<b>24. Informal communication</b>
The most effective thing we did was post our syllabus in Blackboard, and to finally set up a FaceBook group page.
<b>25. Re-use</b>
<p>As instructor at CCC, I would use Facebook in a heartbeat. It is user-friendly, very easy to set up, and does not require multiple secret handshakes to access. Posting is very simple. The biggest drawback is the time it can take to upload videos. As someone whose workload requires her to run from class to meeting to rehearsal, often with five to ten minutes in between, five days a week, plus rehearsals on Saturday, I need my technology to be easy and fast and very user-friendly. Otherwise, I don't have time to wrestle with it, and I won't use it.</p> <p>Mary and I agree on this one, I would use Facebook again quite readily. I understand that the new Blackboard LMS is more user friendly, but this doesn't over-ride the fact that ACTT has no technical support and any support from CCC is a-synchronous, so a day away. Despite our instructional designers fantastic assistance with training on the system and the screen shots that allowed me to 'train' my class on the system, I still think that working on a social networking site, where being user-friendly is paramount, would suit my classes better.</p>



## Section 6: Assessment Information

### 26. How?

Students at CCC were assessed with a typical A-F grade at the conclusion of the course. Disciplinary assessment criteria used include on-time completion of assignments, attendance and level of engagement in the classroom, successful application or demonstrated progress in the application of breathing and alignment work, imaging, connecting vibration to breath, understanding and application of exercises to free the neck, the spine, the jaw, and other parts of the vocal instrument in order to allow free, expressive sound connected to a free, expressive body. We also did rudimentary work with the International Phonetic Alphabet, and explored British, Australian (specifically because of our collaboration with the Actors College), and Southern dialects. I did not have a graded assignment on IPA or specific dialect.

Assessment of the development of intercultural awareness has been informal. Our performance students at CCC, two of whom participated in last year's Voice and Movement COIL class, asked for the first time in my experience at CCC to do a play that required a dialect in the Fall of 2012. This indicates to me that the students became more interested in exploring cultures different from their own. We produced Noel Coward's BLITHE SPIRIT, and worked extensively with British Received Pronunciation and style in rehearsals. The students in the cast understood the importance of doing historical and cultural research in order to develop their characters. The two students who participated in the COIL class were leaders in encouraging this type of immersion into their roles.

Students at ACTT were graded as 'competent' or 'not-yet-competent'. As with the students at CCC the ACTT students were assessed on timely completion of tasks, exploration and application of breathing and alignment techniques, demonstrated progress release of tension in the jaw, neck and shoulders, demonstrated understanding of phonation and demonstrated connection between the voice and body in a performance context.

### 27. Common assessment rubric

We did not create a common assessment rubric. CCC students take our course for different reasons from those of the students at the Actors College, and the two groups need different assessment criteria and tools.

FROM CCC FACULTY: At the outset of the course, I intended to create a rubric for the course with little boxes of words of the sort that we are asked to create for SUNY, and frankly, I just ran out of time, and have not created such a document for the Voice and Movement course yet. The form is still attached to the syllabus that Linda and I created together. As an acting and voice teacher, and as a director of my students' performance projects, I am constantly assessing and feeding back to them my observations of their work. This real time feedback/critique is based on the training and assessment I have received both in the academy and in professional workshops that I have taken throughout my life as an artist and educator, in addition to my own artistic experience. Assessment of performance work requires that the instructor be constantly present in the moment that the student's work is occurring, and very aware of where the student is coming from as well as how proficiently he or she is executing the current exercise or performing in today's rehearsal. Providing feedback in a performing arts setting is different from grading an essay. The assessment tools and the process are different. They include an assessment of a student's emotional and physical availability as well as intellectual acumen, and indeed their physical and emotional ability to rise to the demands of the work on a given day. I always take notes on specific

aspects of students' individual performance and also on their ability to connect to others in specific exercises in the work. From time to time, I have flights of fancy about writing up these observations and compiling them into a kind of Assessment Journal for the Voice and Movement, Acting, and even Production classes I have taught during the past seven years. Given that my course load is so varied, and so intense, and never lets up, this is a fancy that remains a fancy. It's the thing that tends to fall through the cracks, because adequate time for reflection on the work we've just done in any given semester is not something that we have at our institution. We are on to the next round of committee meetings, and advising weeks, and textbook requisitions and course schedules and requests for what we'll be doing next year before the current semester is even half over. Real recorded assessment in my particular situation remains a worthy goal, although I have created and completed assessment rubrics in other courses: Introduction to Theatre and Introduction to Acting. Prior to my arrival at CCC, no formal course assessment documents existed in theatre courses, so I am slowly creating them from scratch.

### **28. Assessment outcomes**

N/A

### **29. Peer assessment**

At CCC, I spoke to students informally about their experience in the COIL parts of the course, and their feelings about the process. We did not ask our students in the two different colleges to assess each other, although they often offered each other informal encouragement and feedback in audio or Facebook posts. I observed that the Actors' College students were very generous in posting self-assessments on the Facebook page regarding their Voice and Movement work. Our students were less forthcoming with those self-assessments, although in class they often offered each other feedback. In hindsight, a formal student peer assessment might have been useful to help students focus and reflect on specifics of their International Collaboration, as well as on their experience of the class work.

I utilize peer assessment in a classroom setting during almost every class. At the beginning the assessment is about observation, what can they see in someone else, so that they can develop an understanding of what might be happening in their own voice/body. Towards the end of the semester students are asked to informally assess the work of others with a view to increasing their voice and movement vocabulary/lexicon (how they speak about the voice and its connection to the body), to demonstrate development in their awareness of performative tasks and develop their critical/analytical skills.

### **30. Charter or guidelines for student interaction**

N/A

### **31. Attrition**

My recollection is that one student dropped the CCC class, or failed to complete the class and received a failing grade.

All enrolled students at ACTT completed the course.

### **32. Is this typical for similar classes at your institution?**

Attrition and drop rates in performance classes are low compared to the drop rates in other types of classes, in my experience. (I also teach a traditional lecture style survey class in Humanities, so I see how students relate to both types of classes.) I do not think the globally networked nature of this course had any bearing on the drop rate. Students were as engaged as they usually are, and perhaps slightly more so because of the opportunity to connect to a class in another country. I believe that the technical problems we experienced and the schedule differences (especially college breaks) caused some CCC students to become slightly discouraged with the collaboration at the end of the course.

If dropouts are to occur they usually happen at the end of the year rather than at the mid-point, so the collaboration, which was completed by the end of semester 1, would have had no bearing on any drop rates.

**33. Please post anonymous comments from your students' course evaluations if these are available. Group them by institution and include both positive and negative evaluations.**

N/A

## Section 7: Institutional Support

### 34. Type of support

FROM CCC FACULTY: I have alluded to some of the issues with institutional support above. At CCC, we did not apply for this grant as a team. An administrator who is no longer with CCC generated the grant, and invited faculty to participate. I was one of two faculty who responded to his invitation. This individual did a very thorough job of writing the grant, I believe. He was very helpful to me in reaching out to international partners. I directed him to the Voice and Speech Trainers Association (VASTA) for possible partners, and he helped very much in crafting language to describe the collaborative project I hoped to evolve. At the time the invitation went out to participate in COIL, I was -- as usual -- immersed in directing a big show. I did not have much input into writing the grant, but did communicate with the international voice faculty who responded, one of whom was Linda. Up until the Institute Workshops were on our calendars, we did not understand that our International partners' travel to the workshops wasn't funded by the grant. Our Communications and Humanities Division did come up with the funds to bring our partners from Australia and Mexico to participate in the first Institute workshops. I feel that this was exemplary support on the part of the Communications and Humanities Associate Dean of Instruction.

In getting all of the students from both institutions enrolled in the COIL course, there were some administrative hiccups in the beginning. CCC IT administration balked at first at allowing Actors' College students into the course through our Blackboard, but eventually this was worked out, thanks to the efforts primarily of our technical partner, Jayne Peaslee, and members of the IT staff.

I am a one and a half-person theatre faculty within the Communications and Humanities division. There was no one to provide any pedagogical support in Voice and Movement at my institution. Linda and I developed the bulk of our course at the Institute workshop and then via email in the three months following, before our courses began in January/February 2012. I feel that our similar backgrounds in Voice and Movement training and the Intercultural awareness that was honed at the Institute workshops helped us to come up with a viable course outline, although our different schedules and the time zone differences made implementation of the work challenging from the outset. The technology issues added to the challenge. However, I can say unequivocally that the opportunity to connect with and work with Linda has been for me the very best experience. I learned a lot from observing the work she did with her class, and from the exchanges we had about the voice and body, our challenges as teachers of voice, and the exchanges I was able to have with both CCC and Actors' College students on Facebook and in my classroom. This was not my first experience working with artists from other cultures, so that aspect of the collaboration was not new to me, though it was for my students. For me to have a colleague in the discipline, however, even one who was on the other side of the world, was worth any of the challenges of trying to make it happen. I hope one day that Linda will come and do a master residency in voice at CCC, or dialect coach a production that I direct. Those are the outcomes I hoped might happen when I volunteered to participate in the COIL grant at CCC.

The unflagging professionalism and support of Jayne Peaslee as our instructional designer was invaluable to our course having the success that it enjoyed. Jayne helped me to navigate the vagaries of Blackboard, set up our ways of connecting audio links and video links to YouTube posts by students.

Administratively, our strongest support came from our Communications and Humanities ADI, Byron Shaw, and technically from Jayne. It is my assessment that Linda and I performed well at delivering our course content and encouraging the intercultural exchange as well as the disciplinary exchange between

our students. I am unsatisfied with my own ability to record final performances of the CCC students, and I did not do an adequate job of formal assessment. I also think CCC students did not communicate as generously about their experiences with the Voice work as the Actors' College students did, although they were continually encouraged to do so. However, I observed a definite positive influence on the CCC students from their contact with students of another culture. Their horizons were broadened. They now know students who are pursuing training and careers in the arts in another country, should they choose to maintain those contacts. They have broadened their facility with dialects. Most importantly, they have had another exposure to the level of commitment and training necessary to maintain a life in art.

Overall, the great success of our project for me lies in having made a relationship with another teaching artist in the world.

The greatest weakness lies in the lack of administrative support for COIL, and the seeming lack of interest of the institution at large for fostering international collaboration; or any collaboration. The person who generated the grant at CCC did not support the faculty as a team. We did not have regular meetings, unless we begged for them, and even then, we had one meeting of Ryan Hersha, Jayne Peaslee, James Jansen, and myself. Faculty were unable to secure any release time to give the attention and time needed to support a new (to me) initiative in our work, nor were any additional resources offered to us.

I do not mind expressing that I feel anger and a sense of betrayal. I wanted to reach out and broaden my students' and my own artistic and educational experience in this particular area of performance training. I feel that I was not fully supported, and even punished for having taken the initiative to do something different. I took a great deal of extra work on -- certainly financially uncompensated -- to an already overstretched load. There has been no acknowledgement of this to date, and I do not expect any, nor that my initiative will be in any way encouraged or rewarded.

At ACTT I had no financial support, my trip to the COIL workshop was funded by myself and CCC, and then only organized (about a week and a half out from the workshop) and cemented when I offered to utilise my frequent flyer miles to pay for the bulk of the flight. My colleagues and the Director of ACTT believed that the initial introduction and planning was part of a greater scam that I was getting involved in. I had no administrative support, the Director of ACTT was concerned that there might be some ownership of material issues between the campuses and was also concerned for the student's intellectual property rights, how long the Blackboard system would hold their posts etc, but other than that I had no conversations about how I was planning to administer the course or whether I needed any support from the college. Just getting a final class list from our administration team at ACTT to send to our Instructional Designer at CCC was an effort as they had other priorities. Pedagogical support came from my weekly Skype meeting with Mary and Jayne as did my technical support. As stated before, my director was interested only in the intellectual property of the students and was not sure that there was any gain for the college as a whole.

### **35. Engagement with international programs office**

We have no international programs office at CCC.

We have no international programs office at ACTT

### **36. Importance given to globally networked learning**

N/A
<b>37. Commitment</b>
See Above. From the ACTT perspective, my director was happy for me to participate in the COIL project as long as she did not see any negative effects on the level of teaching or engagement of the students. To this end I embarked on this journey as a singular commitment, though I hope to remain connected with both Mary, Jayne and COIL in the future.
<b>38. Future iterations</b>
No. There have been changes in my international partner's employment. She has moved to a more advanced performance training program, and that institution would not be a good fit with our beginning performance students.
<b>39. New globally networked courses</b>
I think that there might be other COIL courses in other disciplines. I do not know about the performing arts. I would love to be able to engage in ongoing international collaborations. However, the conditions have to change at CCC. Currently, there are no plans under discussion.
<b>40. Response of chairs, deans, provosts or other administrators to the possibility of expanding this pilot course(s) into a broader program of globally networked courses</b>
To date, there has been no response, since we no longer have a full-time media specialist and Jayne Peaslee has taken on the role of COIL Nodal Network Coordinator due to James Jansen's resignation. CCC does not have an instructional designer nor a technical assistant to train faculty with online pedagogy.
<b>41. Institutional commitment to further developing globally networked courses</b>
After I learned that we had been awarded the grant to pursue these online international collaborations, I found out that a colleague in the Sociology department had already done a COIL project years ago. I would say, based on the fact that her project went institutionally unsupported, and the lack of interest I have felt for my initiative, that our institution is presently not ready to commit to further developing my work.  I think it highly unlikely that ACTT would be involved in such a collaboration again.
<b>42. How to nurture the development of globally networked learning</b>
(FROM CCC FACULTY): Probably an independently wealthy person appearing and offering to bankroll it. Barring that, some kind of ongoing attempt to educate our institution's financial and mid-level administrators (i.e., advising staff, accounting staff, dean support staff) about the importance of developing online technologies to support international collaborations. Certainly, funding is a huge stumbling block. Declining state support of its public educational institutions of higher education has placed many colleges in the position of instituting extreme austerity measures. We're about to start

cutting into the bone, so perhaps a COIL project in performing arts is viewed as a luxury by those who do not have an appreciation of the value of performing arts as a discipline.

In addition to Mary's comments I think that there needs to be a shift in the idea that performing arts courses cannot be globally networked. Since embarking on this journey I have discovered many new avenues of eliciting responses to learning outcome, particularly in the posting of audio responses. I have also found that being globally networked is an important strategy for the new institution that I am working for. Colleagues are finding ways to post content on-line and I have a friend who is working on a project to enable holographic technology in the classroom, so that institutional partners could literally be 'virtually' in the room with the international partner - that's exciting stuff for people teaching about presence! However, before any of that happens there needs to be an open discussion about what is possible and a willingness to let go of traditional learning systems in favour of more user friendly systems.

## Section 8: Reflections

<b>43. Goals set</b>
(CCC) (a.) To explore the feasibility of online artistic/educational collaboration in an area of performance pedagogy.
<b>44. Goals achieved</b>
(CCC) Point (a.) was very satisfactorily achieved from my point of view. As an educator in performing arts, I gained new perspectives from my international partner from the outset, as well as confidence in my own approach toward my students at our institution. I am more convinced than ever that, with proper institutional and technical support, these collaborations are invaluable for students and instructors around the world. Particularly for students with limited opportunities to travel abroad, the opportunity to share an educational experience with students from other cultures and countries is very important.
<b>45. Most unique aspect for students</b>
(CCC) The opportunity to speak via audio file with the Australian students, and to share information about their countries, regions, backgrounds, and aspirations in the field of performing arts.
<b>46. Most successful aspect(s) from a pedagogical perspective</b>
(CCC) First were the cultural “icebreaker” exchanges via audio file. Second was the introduction of dialect work for our students, which resulted in students asking for a production at CCC in which they could use dialect.
<b>47. Most problematic aspect(s) from a pedagogical perspective</b>
(CCC) Most problematic for me were the video posts, as the acoustics in our classroom and the poor audio quality of my equipment prevented us from sharing much of our final work in class.
<b>48. Changes for future iterations</b>
(CCC) I would insist upon release time to allow for the additional time necessary to adequately assess and share insights with my partner on the assignments as they were being completed by 40 students. I might also pare down the number of assignments we tried to implement. Very important: I would work with a videographer/audio engineer to ensure high quality audio and video to post. In a voice class, the quality of the visual and audio information is critical to the process.
<b>49. Technical support</b>
Jayne Peaslee, Director of Professional Development, was asked to be the instructional designer for this project since she coordinates and facilitates Blackboard course development for faculty. Unlike other courses offered at CCC, Jayne needed to consider the least common denominator for recording audio & video among the Australian students and the American students. Since the Australian students used smartphones primarily for audio and video recording then the American students were recommended to do the same. Linda was unable to access the Blackboard server to post audio and video files so

YouTube and Windows Audio Recorder were used to post video and audio files in Blackboard. In 2011-12 CCC faculty used professional video and audio recording and editing equipment. Files were stored on a Blackboard server which were linked to the Blackboard course. Collaboration with the Australian students required like-for-like equipment so we opted for less technical equipment such as the smart phones.

**50. International programs person**

N/A

**51. Time commitment**

(CCC) I spent as much time developing this one globally networked course as I spend developing a full theatre production, which is the equivalent of two or three courses, though it isn't compensated that way. I would normally put about 100 to 140 hours into developing a completely new traditional course, and with the Institute, the emails and SKYPE meetings, and time spent on creation of the syllabus and course calendar, we far exceeded that number. I still believe that the time I expended was not enough time. Given the lack of adequate technology (video and audio), I could not have given much more productive time to that aspect. At the end of the semester, the workload was so intense that I did not have adequate time to give to the final assessment piece of the project. I also had a professional opportunity for the summer that developed unexpectedly, and I had to give time in the summer that I previously might have donated to the COIL project to that job.

**52. Was it worth it?**

(CCC) To work with Linda Nicholls-Gidley was definitely worth it. To do it again, I believe would require paid faculty release time, higher quality media resources, and some additional staff (specifically a videographer). As much as I would like to have multiple international partners in the arts and relationships with other institutions internationally, both for the benefit of our students and my own professional development, I personally cannot see it happening again at present at CCC.

## Section 9: Course Collaboration Narrative

(CCC) Actors College students had quite a bit to say about working with the IPA and how it shifted their perception about how to create the vowel and consonant sounds of dialect, how the different musicality and rhythms of various dialects are produced. Some observed that learning to transcribe text in IP was like learning another language. By this time we had created a Facebook Group, and both Linda and I had some interesting exchanges with the Actors College students about the challenges of IPA.

CCC students and I visited the website that Linda had shared in-class, and I showed our students how to use the site to research different dialects. We also looked at the vowel quadrangle and the different consonant symbols, and listened to examples of British RP and Australian dialects to note the differences between them, and between American speech.

As I mentioned, in the Fall of 2012, CCC students were inspired to do a play in British dialect.

What seems not to have worked was a sharing of experience between the two classes of students. The CCC students were more reluctant to post about their work in this and other areas of the course. They also did not all participate in the video posts. I attribute this to the lack of space in which to record their exercises, and in many cases lack of equipment. It is here that a media technician who would have been available to our class to record videos at specifically scheduled times would have been very helpful. We have problems having access to adequate space at CCC, as everything is fairly rigidly scheduled, and access to cameras and rooms with adequate acoustics is also highly problematic.

Also, at this point, CCC went on Spring Break, and we went into tech week for our big Spring production. The focus and energy of many of the students in the class, as well as my own focus as director of the production, went into that, and we lost some focus on the class.

### **What worked and what did not?**

(CCC) The initial icebreaker exercises worked extremely well. The students enjoyed each other, and had a great time meeting and talking about their different countries, and talking about their images of their voices.

The Facebook Group page worked well, and would have worked better had we decided to do it at the very outset. Facebook is super-user friendly, compatible with a wide range of computers, smartphones and software, and very simply set up to accept video and audio as well as written posts. Given that we have complex teaching and professional lives, as instructors we don't have large blocks of time to devote to navigating a learning management system like Blackboard or Moodle, which still depends on a number of "secret handshakes" to master all of its different components. For instructors who function primarily in an LMS environment, and assignments are primarily written, and written response or discussion-based, I know that Blackboard and similar programs work very well. For a course such as ours, and for instructors in performance pedagogy, simple visual and audio technology and software that can be easily taught, shared, and monitored, and access to adequate instructional facilities are key to the success of a collaborative course such as this.

Less successful were the assignments asking students to post videos. The audio posts via Blackboard went better, although grading them was ghastly: time consuming, and Blackboard's graphic format at the time was annoying.

I also think that there was a slight mismatch in student populations, in that CCC students are not enrolled in a dedicated performance program or conservatory, but are pursuing a general Associate's degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences, perhaps with a Humanities concentration. CCC students tended to

have less to articulate about the voice and movement work in specific, though it was clear to me that those deeply involved in theatre were trying to use the work in their other performance activities. They seemed less willing to share their thoughts and insights with the international collaboration.

Our disparate time zones and academic calendars also posed a challenge that I don't think we anticipated. As faculty, we made extra efforts to communicate and connect, however, from the CCC students' perspective at least, the course was only a part of the larger fabric of their lives, which included many other kinds of classwork, fulltime jobs in some cases, and production work, in others, as well as personal life issues.

A cultural difference I perceive in the CCC student population from other U.S. student populations, or perhaps students from past decades, is that college is not the top priority, even for fulltime students in this area. These students have not yet made a serious commitment to a path of study, career, or art necessarily. Many are still in an exploratory phase. Many place family or work commitments above their educational goals. This had a significant impact on those students' visible contributions to the collaboration. The impact that the collaboration had upon a number of them, I think, was definite, albeit delayed.

**What prompts or activities took the class in unexpected but interesting directions?**

(CCC) Our class was motivated especially by the enhanced dialect work we did, working with the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), listening to samples of dialect from various nationalities, and from visiting the website that Linda Nicholls-Gidley shared from Sydney. In the following semester, students in the drama club requested that we do a show which required the use of British Received Pronunciation, and we produced the style piece, *Blithe Spirit* by Noel Coward in the Fall of 2012.

**How well did the technologies selected support the pedagogical goals of the course?**

(CCC) We were primarily using Blackboard 8.0, and to my mind it was fine for reading traditional written posts, but much less successful in accommodating audio and video posts from students' varied personal equipment. Much better would have been more access to quality sound and video recording equipment that could have been in use during more of our classroom work, so we could have shared our classrooms asynchronously. Having students rely on personal smartphones and laptops for assignments was tricky, as some students had more trouble than others accessing their partners' posts and uploading their own. Some of our students had to try to do their audio recordings in computer labs on campus, where lab supervisors were not knowledgeable or sympathetic to performance-oriented work on the computers. When I (CCC instructor) attempted to record final performances on my personal tablet video camera, the extremely poor acoustics of the classroom in which we had to work, and the difficulty of being my own cameraperson while still trying to assess the final work and not generate self-consciousness in the students made it very difficult to capture anything usable to share with our partners.

**What seemed to cause problems either for the students or for the faculty?**

(CCC) See discussion of technologies and LMS above. Additionally, the large number of students in our two classes (nearly 40 students between us) created a great backlog of Blackboard posts to read and try to assess. Finding time to thoroughly read and monitor the posts and responses of our students in the midst of a packed semester, with a major production to direct became more and more difficult as we drew closer to the opening of our show in late April, and the end of the semester and Finals Week two weeks later. Once again, release time for undertaking a major new course initiative would have been very helpful to this faculty member.

Further, there was not a strong sense of cohesiveness in our CCC group of faculty and designers. Only one meeting was held between the four of us at CCC, and that had to be requested by faculty. The opportunity to raise difficulties, discuss both positives and negatives of the way the project was evolving, and a place to ask for help was not there. As we were attempting something relatively innovative for our institutions in Media Arts and Culture, we needed a stronger foundation of support to promote successful completion of the initiative.

**Did working through these problems lead to recognizable learning experiences or to defensiveness by some students or teachers?**

(CCC) I felt that our students adapted quite well to the challenges of the course structure. The difference between levels of immersion and participation in theatre arts at our two institutions may have led to some feelings of inadequacy among CCC students, however, especially in the initial icebreaker exercises, most of the student groups were communicating in a timely manner, and having a good experience with each other. As the calendar unfolded, and our breaks began to occur, some of the momentum of the communication was lost. Additionally, some students had difficulty with the technology, as their personal equipment was incompatible with Blackboard. Establishing the FaceBook Group helped to get some of the momentum again.

Jayne, Linda, and I communicated regularly via Skype and email, and our collaboration and communication was very strong. Our goals and our work were clear on behalf of our students. I observed that our students got from the international collaborative aspect of the course what they invested in it. I know that I gained insights from communicating with the Actors College students via the Facebook page, and learned from my discussions with my colleague about the day to day process of working with students on freeing their voices.

A new resource that I gained from Linda was the website that focuses on dialect. I would have liked to see the CCC students post more in-depth comments about their own work on their voices and physical instruments as young performers in training. While they would share with their classmates and me in-class, and to some extent in the breath journals we assigned, they were less forthcoming in either Blackboard or on the FaceBook site. Whether I would define this as defensiveness or not, I suppose, depends on whether one sees 'fearfulness of expression' as synonymous with defensiveness. In the case of the voice work, I probably would not express the idea quite that way to these particular students, as the very suggestion that they are defensive is apt to make them more defensive.

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