

COIL Institute for Globally Networked Learning in the Humanities

Course Development and Implementation Case Study

19. Russia – USA: Women and Gender Studies & Linguistics

Abstract

During the fall of 2012 The College at Brockport (SUNY), and Novgorod State University, conducted a collaborative COIL course, titled Gender Roles Across Cultures. The course explored the similarities and differences of gender and human sexuality between the different cultures with an emphasis on feminist perspective within the interplay of biological, psychological, and cultural factors in the patterning of sex and gender identity. Course subject matter included feminist perspectives; sex and gender identity; violence against women; abortion and reproductive freedoms; sex as capital, women and family; and changing patterns of gender and sexual behavior in the U.S and Russia.

The course was designed to be a blended experience that included planned videoconference collaborative classes between Brockport and Novgorod, joint online interactions and assignments, and regularly scheduled face-to-face campus classes between each university’s faculty and students.

The online component utilized Google tools for the class Learning Management System (LMS), course blogging, and YouTube for viewing select videos and as a conduit for presenting final Public Service Announcement assignments. The class website, blog, and YouTube channel were strategically placed in an open access site outside the confines of either network to support the collaborative nature of the course.

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Section 1: General Course Information

1. Courses

Course Title	Institution(s)	Discipline	Academic Level
Gender Across Cultures: Brockport/Novgorod	The College at Brockport (SUNY) Novgorod State University, Russia	Women and Gender Studies Linguistics	3rd level undergraduate

2. Teams

Team Member #1	
Name:	Barbara LeSavoy, PhD
Role on Team:	Faculty
Institution:	The College at Brockport (SUNY)
Position at Institution:	Director, Women and Gender Studies
Department and/or Program:	Director, Women and Gender Studies
Team Member #2	
Name:	Ann Giralico-Pearlman
Role on Team:	Instructional Design Specialist
Institution:	The College at Brockport (SUNY)
Position at Institution:	Instructional Design Specialist
Department and/or Program:	Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CELT)
Team Member #3	
Name:	Elena Lukovitskaya, PhD
Role on Team :	Faculty, International Program
Institution:	Novgorod State University, Novgorod Russia
Position at Institution:	Faculty
Department and/or Program:	Sociology, Gender Institute
3. When?	
Fall 2012	

4. Number of students enrolled from each institution

20 students in Brockport; 11 students in Novgorod

5. Is this typical for classes of this type?

This is typical enrollment for an Honors Section at Brockport.

Russian enrollment was typical for students which studying linguistics.

Section 2: Issues of Language

6. Language(s) of instruction at each institution
English at Brockport Russian at Novgorod, but for this COIL course, Russian students were studying linguistics and using English as a communication/learning tool.
7. Primary language of most students in each class
English, Brockport Russian, Novgorod
8. Language of the course collaboration
Entirely in English.
9. Language fluency
Russian students were proficient in English, but this is their second language, although Russian students were working to perfect their English literacy skills. We provided Brockport students with some basic Russian greetings to use in communication, but Brockport students were 100 percent reliant on English.
10. Language proficiency difference
Because the Russian students were seeking to perfect their English literacy skills, and because these same students were quite proficient in English, there were little difficulties to communication. Still, for synchronous class meetings, American students' English pronunciation, non formal or slang usage, and talking speed were important variables to Russian students' understanding. If Brockport students spoke too quickly, or used informal vocabulary, Russian students had some interpretation challenges. Communication via written text using the class blog was very clear and sophisticated in language and meaning. This appeared true for students in both counties.

Section 3: Curricular Information

11. Online or blended?
Blended format
12. Duration
15 weeks
13. Class work or discussion related to their collaboration before and/or after the actual collaboration period
None.

Section 4: Asynchronous Technologies Used

14. Tools
LMS used was Google Sites and Google Blogger (75%), YouTube and Lecture Capture (25 %) for asynchronous instruction. All course learning resources were also made available on the Brockport Angel LMS.
15. Server location
Cloud-based
16. Technical problems
<p>In the beginning of the semester, it was important to make sure all students had full access to the cloud tools used for the course. Making sure all students had gmail accounts separate from college email enabled wider access. There was a small learning curve here for Brockport students who were reliant on the college email and Angel system.</p> <p>In Russia: our students seldom use University accounts, but not all my students had gmail accounts. So in the beginning of the course we spent time for creating new gmail accounts</p>
17. Frequency of use
Students were asked to interact on the course blog weekly, and sometimes two or three time a week. Course topics and synchronous class meetings prompted these dialogues. Additionally, the Google course website housed all instructional materials including course notes, powerpoints, lecture captures, and video which students accessed multiple times. Students did exchange email addresses and were encouraged to email each other outside of class time.
18. Informal communication
Email and Skype in assigned across countries teams were encouraged although students were not very active here.
19. Re-use
Yes, we would use these tools again because they proved accessible and enabled egalitarian learning platforms across institutions.

Section 5: Synchronous Technologies Used

20. Tools
We used video conferencing (polycom system) for 7 synchronous class meetings.
21. Server location
The video-conferencing system was provided/supported by both campuses.
22. Technical problems
<p>No real problems emerged. Each campus provided the necessary technical support to realize the video-conferencing and all video-conferences went off without any hitches even the final two sessions devoted to students' PSA presentations. But some key considerations to course logistics on the Brockport side did present in ways we did not anticipate.</p> <p>Because these face-to-face meetings were high stakes, there was some anxiety waiting for the call-in to start for each synchronous class. This anxiety appeared more American based and reflects real-time logistical boundaries around course scheduling blocks. American students and faculty having to move to the next class session were variables that made the video-conferencing tight time-wise. While negotiating a time block and meeting frequency for the COIL course that would accommodate frequent synchronous instruction with an 8/9 hour time difference, we overlooked the limitations of 50 minute class sessions. The frequency of 3 meetings a week seemed desirable because it offered some built in flexibility in synchronous scheduling throughout the semester. This did prove useful as we bumped around a few of our class meetings together. But if we were to repeat the course, we would move it to a 75 minute, 2X a week time-block.</p>
23. Frequency of use
The classes met seven times over a fifteen week period.
24. Informal communication
Email and Skype in assigned teams across countries were encouraged although students were not very active here.
25. Re-use
<p>Yes, we would. The video-conferencing added important human dimension to the course. We were able to see gestures and hear voice and emotional tone which brought more familiarity and intimacy to the online exchange. Students reported this as very helpful and identified this as one of the variables that they liked most about the course.</p> <p>Interestingly, most students were more forthcoming in the blog spaces of the course compared to our synchronous class meetings, but the in-person meetings helped establish ground for these blog discussions and often served as prompts for further discussion. Given the wide range of learning styles and cultural diversity of the students enrolled, compounded with sometimes sensitive course topics on sex and gender identity, the face-to-face meetings filled an important real-time instructional need for</p>

students and faculty. The real-time meetings were opportunities to further develop topical electronic exchanges and often opened the doors of communication in meaningful ways that might have otherwise gone unspoken. The class discussions on abortion and reproductive freedoms and on maternity capital as understood in both the US and Russia as examples were fruitful dialogues that engaged complex ideology. Learning became organic to discussion and many key questions emerged as a consequence to the video-conferences.

Even with this, the video-conference itself sometimes emerged as a barrier to fluency in dialogue because students were uncertain to the boundaries around back and forth communication. Who speaks when and at what point was sometimes awkward even with explicit guidelines, strategy, protocol, and expectations for participation on both sides. And Russian students were often more outspoken in our face-to-face-meetings compared to American students who sometimes were shy and reserved, despite preparedness and pre/post openness in classes independent of cross-country video connections.

Physicality is likely at play here. The projection screen, while enabling real-time exchange, brings some distancing limitations, although this may be more constructed perception vs. true obstacle. And frequency in practice may be the simple solution here. Using a video chat tool more frequently could perfect skills that best enable organic dialogue in a real-time setting. Everyone in the course seemed to become more comfortable and forthcoming as the semester progressed with the physicality of the screen and video equipment fading into the background vs. the foci to course exchange. And as is the case with in-person course learning formats, as students become more familiar with each other, dialogue increases. This proved true for student interaction in our synchronous class meetings.

Section 6: Assessment Information

26. How?
We assessed student learning of disciplinary course topics using our own tools on each campus, although we shared exams and grading rubrics. We are still in process of assessing the intercultural awareness outcomes as we consider and reflect on student learning and interaction across countries.
27. Common assessment rubric
None.
28. Peer assessment
N/A
29. Charter or guidelines for student interaction
N/A
30. Attrition
0 at both schools
31. Is this typical for similar classes at your institution?
Yes.

Section 7: Institutional Support

32. Type of support

Financial: There was institutional contribution to support Elena’s travel to NYC to attend the COIL training in September, 2011. This support was in response to a funding request from COIL Fellow Barb LeSavoy to her Dean, the Office of International Education, and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Brockport. There was no institutional financial support provided for course development and teaching load.

Administrative: Our campuses have been excited about our COIL participation and interested in our collaborative work. Still, administrative support in terms of resources was not available. The fact that this was not in the COIL funding formula is important to note. Not knowing the full extent of our workload, we did not consider requesting administrative or resource support. Since our COIL work began, our Provost at Brockport is supporting travel expenses to Russia for COIL faculty fellow Ann Pearlman for a planned trip in Spring 2013. Coil faculty fellow Barb LeSavoy’s travel to Russia on this same trip is being supported by Linkages, Rochester/Novgorod Sister City Program, in association with LeSavoy’s work chairing the Rochester/Novgorod Linkages Women’s Partnership Committee. The trip is designed to see our COIL work forward.

Pedagogical: The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CELT) and the Department of Learning Instructional Technology Services (LITS) at Brockport provided important teaching support. Faculty fellow Ann Pearlman’s campus role intersects these two departments at Brockport, so there was a built-in support network available throughout the COIL teaching process. The Director of CELT at Brockport, Dr. Christopher Price, is active with the Levin Global Workforce Project, which importantly, helped prompt and realize this COIL project.

Technical: As mentioned above under pedagogical support, both CELT and LITS at Brockport contributed significantly to our COIL success. Technical support for set-up and maintenance for the video conferencing was supplied throughout the course. Also, LITS team members were available to assist in developing cloud communication tools. This is true for both campuses. Having an Instructional Design Specialist (IDS) serving as a COIL faculty fellow on the Brockport side enabled the platform for realizing the COIL partnership. Additionally, the IDS at Brockport participated in classroom instruction and guided students in all electronic applications. This included helping students set-up gmail accounts, instructing on media literacy, and assisting with students’ final PSA projects.

33. Engagement with the international programs office

International Education has been aware of and interested in our COIL work and provided institutional contribution to support COIL faculty Elena Lukovitskaya’s travel and attendance to the COIL training in September, 2011. This support was in response to a request from COIL fellow Barb LeSavoy to the Office of International Education. Given our success to this project, the Office of International Education is interested in future prospects for international collaboration.

34. Importance given to globally networked learning

The COIL opportunity is relevant and the Office of International Education supports these activities. But, the “work” is not done by our office but rather by dedicated faculty members on campus. We consider our office in the role of providing encouragement and support rather than part of our work load.

All parts of a University are interrelated and have an effect on the other parts. Thus the Department of Women' and Gender Studies adds to the atmosphere of enquiry and knowledge in a way that impacts students and researchers in the Department of Sociology and so on. So in a very broad sense , the COIL globally networked learning activities affect the depth and breadth of the academic experience at Brockport.

More specifically, the Office of International Education considers COIL to be an important part of internationalization because it provides a very rich avenue for international learning and exposure to both domestic and foreign students. We do not at present consider this endeavor a part of Study Abroad, International Internships or International Recruitment. We do consider this to be a part of international relations and international research/teaching/learning activities – and thus could be considered a “vector” of international activity. Thus this is a small but important part of Brockport activities at present.

Globally networked learning at Brockport needs to have support from the Office of International Education but should probably be promoted by the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). This office does an outstanding job of helping faculty to try new endeavors and to build new pedagogical approaches into the vast array of learning opportunities on campus.

35. Commitment

The COIL project began as a singular initiative prompted by the Fellows involved. We believe all parties involved are interested in seeing future COIL courses, but resource support is important to see such projects forward. While we have not had the opportunity to discuss future ventures with our administration, we believe our Dean and Provost are interested and supportive of international collaboration at the college. The Dean at Brockport has affirmed this interest.

36. Future iterations

The course is being offered again on the Brockport campus, but COIL collaboration is not currently in place. Given resource support, we are open to the possibility of offering the course in a COIL format.

37. New globally networked courses

COIL Faculty Fellows ran a CELT sponsored brown bag session at Brockport discussing their COIL work. This session included presentations from both Brockport COIL faculty and video-conference presentation from COIL faculty in Novgorod. Brockport faculty in attendance at the brown bag session expressed high level interest in offering this type of collaborative course. Additionally, COIL faculty fellows have proposed workshops to present their COIL course at The National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) Conference in November 2013 and at the SUNY COIL Conference in April 2013. These workshops are designed to inform other institutions about our COIL work, and importantly, to model ways faculty/staff at other institutions can replicate this international, collaborative teaching/learning paradigm.

The Brockport/Novgorod team would love to consider opportunities for future collaboration. Faculty LeSavoy and Pearlman are being supported to travel to Novgorod in March 2013 to further study and sustain their COIL collaboration. Additional possibilities to present and replicate our COIL work are being considered. One area of interest is the International Media Ecology Conference, and also, a scholarly paper on our work is in the conceptualization phase with research and writing planned for

spring/summer 2013.

38. 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

The Brockport School of The Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences (TAHSS) Dean has confirmed her interest in seeing future COIL courses such as ours offered again and developed across other courses and disciplines. The Dean recently indicated that she would entertain any proposals for teaching innovations such as COIL, including potential course releases for such work, and that COIL is aligned with our school and college strategic goals in efforts to foster global citizenship, civic engagement, and cross-cultural competence student learning outcomes.

Brockport's Provost indicated that globalization of the curriculum is a strategic objective for the Division of Academic Affairs. Expansion of this pilot course is met with enthusiasm by the provost.

39. Institutional commitment to further developing globally networked courses

Administrative support for the expansion of the pilot already exists. The key to that expansion will be generating enthusiasm among the faculty.

40. How to nurture the development of globally networked learning

This COIL work is rich in possibility, but demanding in time and resources given other full time work responsibilities. A funding formula to support teaching innovations like COIL would help see such future projects forward in a strategic and sustainable way.

Section 8: Reflections

41. Goals set
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage in cross-cultural dialogue within our Russian/Brockport partnership to see and understand ways gender equality is structured across cultures and to establish cultural competence• Engage in cross-cultural dialogue between Russia and Brockport using insight and sensitivity to difference.• Develop cross-continent teaching collaboration using open access technology• Explore the boundaries of classroom instruction and understand ways students develop media literacy across cultures and gain skills to operate in a global atmosphere
42. Goals achieved
<p>Based on student feedback, the final PSA assignment, and exit interviews, we believe the cross-cultural communication and appreciation of cultural difference goals met and or exceeded our expectations.</p> <p>In areas of media literacy , students were surprisingly less competent or adventurous when engaging with new communication tools. Although prompted to interact independently outside of class time, students often dropped the ball in pushing communication and collaboration forward. Variables that impacted student interaction included time difference, cultural differences in assignment expectations, greater comfort with independent work, and lack of time/initiative to engage in electronic innovation.</p> <p>These conclusions make us want to pilot this COIL course again to assess and study lessons learned and structure course assignments in ways that better facilitate student-to-student interaction outside of synchronous classroom instruction. Understanding campus- to- campus logistics is important in defining faculty and student roles. This is particularly true of team teaching relationships heightened further by the intrinsic complexities that come with cross-continent teaching collaborations.</p>
43. Most unique aspect for students
<p>The most unique COIL outcome for students was the synchronous video conferencing when students were able to see and interact with each other face- to- face. Also significant were students' final PSA projects where students in each country were able to present their work in a global arena for a global audience.</p> <p>An additional variable unique to this experience was the Women and Gender Studies course topics, which largely facilitated student engagement among COIL participants in each country. This topical appeal is true of Women and Gender Studies as an area of knowledge that intersects the human condition, which offers a wonderful hook to bring diverse student groups into the fold of an international course. Because of its multidisciplinary dimension and its contemporary application, the Women and Gender studies discipline lends itself to studying other cultures, and it provides a strategic backdrop to overlay and link in a COIL partnership.</p> <p>A final point significant to this COIL partnership was its discipline duality where students in Russia were studying English in addition to gender. The linguistics goal and bilingual competency of our Russian partners enabled an English language teaching and learning platform, which opened the door for American students to interact and communicate with Russian students in ways that would not have been possible as part and parcel to a Brockport General Education Women and Gender Studies course.</p>

Students on the Brockport side gained significantly here in areas of cultural sensitivity and cultural competence. Equally noteworthy, many Russian students wrote of their linguistic training goals and their appreciation of the opportunity to practice and perfect their English language speaking and writing skills.

44. Most successful aspect(s) from a pedagogical perspective

From a pedagogical perspective, the Google course blog worked well for asynchronous assignments, and as already mentioned, the synchronous video conferencing proved the most effective tool to engage dialogue, discourse, and student learning. The final course PSA projects also worked extremely well in providing students with a platform to research and further learn about a Women and Gender Studies course related topic. It also provided students with an oral presentation opportunity delivered to a global audience, which is a valuable skill-building activity.

Importantly, the opportunity for students to learn from faculty in another country was extraordinary as realized by students in each country.

45. Most problematic aspect(s) from a pedagogical perspective

As already mentioned, logistical time constraints around class and teaching responsibilities were significant. Given more time and flexibility would have facilitated additional opportunities for extended interaction and collaboration. All faculty fellows carried extraordinary full-time teaching and administrative responsibilities in addition to their COIL work. These variables are important to consider when conceptualizing optimal conditions necessary for COIL success.

46. Changes for future iterations

As already mentioned, we would position the COIL course we taught in a longer time block. We would also attempt to balance our other work responsibilities in ways that provide time and space to nurture and develop our COIL work. Also, as already mentioned, if we were to teach this COIL course again, we would try and push students to use technology with more collaborative innovation outside of classroom instruction.

Importantly and on the flip side, the larger part of our COIL course development and implementation was extremely successful, and much of the activities that we did implement in teaching the course we would replicate. It is always helpful to repeat a course preparation and fine-tune content and pedagogy. This seems an almost essential next step to perfecting this COIL work.

47. Technical support

The biggest difference in the IDS's role was the global connection. The IDS had to consider the technology capabilities on the home and Russian campuses. The other aspect that makes IDS' role different was creating the COIL course in an open access site compared to within an on-campus fully supported LMS. This meant creating a course template independent of the college, which brought responsibility to instruct student users across both borders. Trying to integrate ID's instruction into course content also was challenging in the face of time limitations and established curriculum goal for the discipline. There is teaching involved in media ecology and technology literacy that is important to

consider alongside course content in COIL course delivery logistics.

From a Media Ecologist perspective, the ID feels the most impressive outcome of the collaborative course was to see the human interaction that took place between the two campuses. This is something that would not have happened without the COIL course, and it is an extension of the best practice models that we are trying to incorporate in blended and online courses offered by our college. This across country human interaction outcome also supports SUNY-wide global interdependency goals where colleges seek to develop citizens who are able to function effectively in a global society.

48. International programs person

Elena: This course was my first experience in an international online teaching. Before I had just research international experience.

What was new for me in this course:

1. Using of new technical capabilities - carrying out of videoconferences, a hard work in our joint blog, access to electronic articles, lectures, presentations of my international partner, an exchange of opinions, significant assistance from Ann Pearlman in blog creation and support.
2. Bigger debatable potential of the course - a lot of themes were actively discussed in the blog, on videoconferences (our usual reading courses include more lectures)
3. Acquaintance with teaching experience of my international partner - Barbara LeSavoy (PSA, recommended articles, textbooks) and also with education system structure in Brockport College.
4. Acquaintance with cultural teacher/student's experience in the context of the course.

49. Time commitment

Time to develop the COIL course was considerably more than developing a singular course because development demanded collaboration with other faculty and staff, which necessitated time for communication and sharing of course materials. The Brockport/Novgorod team engaged in several Skype planning sessions in addition to our attendance and participation in the COIL training. We also devoted considerable time to electronic communications in the months prior to the offering of our course where we fine tuned course syllabi and assignment logistics. Similarly, we continued this electronic and Skype correspondence throughout the semester that we taught as we coordinated campus to campus instructional delivery components and mediated and directed student participation and learning contributions.

Course development included coordination with other campus departments under IT services. Additionally, to meet our synchronous course teaching and learning outcomes and accommodate Brockport course scheduling blocks, Russian students came back to campus outside of their regularly scheduled class time. Brockport was grateful for this Novgorod attendance gesture which enabled our rich and diverse face-to-face class meetings.

Implementation of our COIL course also required additional faculty time when compared to implementing a singularly taught course. The Brockport course met three times a week in addition to delivering instruction online. The course blog and Brockport's use of lecture capture were time consuming and amplified the teaching workload.

Despite the extraordinary human capital required in developing and implementing our COIL course, time devoted to instruction was extremely fulfilling. Contributions to the course blog for example were substantive and meaningful, which made time dedicated to online instructor responses worthwhile. Similarly, students' final course PSAs were remarkable, an outcome that reflects back to the guided instruction students received in conceptualizing and producing sophisticated final course projects.

50. Was it worth it?

Yes, our COIL work was incredibly worthwhile. There is no question that it would be much easier to run the same course again using lessons learned. However, it is important to recognize that instructional collaboration, even in a repeat preparation, does require additional planning and teaching time.

Developing a new course with a new partner would be very exciting because it offers an extraordinary opportunity to learn about Women and Gender Studies in another culture. The many positive experiences that we pulled from this COIL course underscore this conclusion.

In developing best practices, institutional support and resources should be allocated to COIL course development and implementation. Course release time for faculty engaged in COIL work would prove fruitful in realizing successful and productive collaborations, where faculty fellows are not pulled in competing directions in efforts to meet full time work responsibilities while pioneering a COIL teaching/learning partnership.

Section 9: Course Collaboration Narrative

Introduction:

This narrative documents the fall 2012 COIL *Gender Roles Across Cultures Brockport NY/Novgorod, RU*, a collaboration between The College at Brockport (SUNY), Brockport, NY and Novgorod State University, Novgorod, Russia. The collaboration began on 8/27/12 and concluded on 12/07/12 with final Public Service Announcement (PSA) presentations that students constructed/presented across countries. COIL faculty included Dr. Barbara LeSavoy, Women and Gender Studies Director/Professor, The College at Brockport, teaching 20 honors program students; Dr. Elena Lukovitskaya, Novgorod State University Sociology/Gender Professor, teaching 11 students; Ann Giralico-Pearlman, Instructional Design Specialist, The College at Brockport, delivering teaching and technology support to both classrooms, and Konstantin Krasnoshchekov, providing background technology support in Novgorod.

Course Framework:

We constructed and mounted a course template in Google Sites where we posted course syllabi, class notes, readings, and selected video for student access to online materials. We also set up a class blog using Blogger which we used as a communication/ assignment tool throughout the duration of the course. We designed the course to be a blended experience with face-to-face meetings via video-conferencing, asynchronous blogging, and asynchronous classes held in Brockport and Novgorod. We selected Google Sites strategically, seeking to place our instructional materials in an open access site that sits outside the confines of Brockport's Angel Learning Management System (LMS). This worked fairly well. The blog in particular was very effective in connecting students to each other and in serving as a platform for meaningful discourse and collaboration. Faculty and students from both countries prepared blog questions and the blog provided Russian students time for writing and translation, although translation tasks imposed additional time demands that American students/faculty did not experience. The frequent interaction the blog required also challenged already stretched faculty time. The blog attracted 9 of 11 Novgorod and all Brockport students.

Using Google as the LMS was a new experience that required adjustments throughout the semester. Brockport's contract for student Gmail accounts provides access to Google Sites, Blogger, YouTube and Docs, but these tools do not allow students to add a profile photo or blog imagery. Given this, we created personal Gmail accounts for students, which imposed a learning curve for class members. Barb also posted course materials in Angel as a backup. Elena found Angel helpful to access /send readings to her students, but in Brockport, Angel became a hindrance to Google use vs. a course augment, and subsequently, something we strategically do not recommend in future COIL courses. The Google course site as a LMS met our collaborative instructional needs making Angel, in duplication, a potential Google Sites distraction. Another technology note: in the second part of the semester, Barb added lecture capture to her PowerPoint lecture notes. All Brockport lecture notes were in PowerPoint and posted on the Google course site. Elena also sent her PowerPoint lectures for electronic posting and distribution to students. Lecture capture in voice was piloted to explore its value to students learning at a distance and in a second language. Still, Russian students did not make much use of the lecture capture. It was added midstream, absent of good directives, so extrinsic push to use this tool seemed minimal. Using lecture capture at the start of the semester with questions to report back on lecture content would provide better structure to

assess its use and effectiveness.

Course Content and Delivery:

During Week I, as an ice-breaker activity, we asked all students to post to the course blog in an exercise called, "A Day in Your Life," where we prompted students to introduce themselves to each other and share details about their age, family, living circumstances, hobbies, and interests. Additional question prompts were directed at, "likes, fears, wishes, and challenges," which added texture and dimension to responses, and where several students in each country conversed back and forth on commonalities they discovered in each other. COIL faculty also posted a welcome to the class using the "A Day in The Life" prompt, and we each made a point to comment on each student's individual posting in both Brockport and Novgorod as a way to communicate our interest and encourage student comfort in talking with us in this format. The blog is fascinating to read and shows incredible diversity in person and place.

On 9/14, following the "Day in Your Life" ice-breaker, we held our first of several scheduled synchronous classes. This was an extremely successful class where students had the opportunity to meet face-to-face and ask each other questions about our beginning unit on sex and gender identity. Our learning partners in Russia were very enthusiastic and outgoing – more so than our Brockport students -- who became somewhat reserved in this initial video-conference setting. Our Russian partners displayed perfect command of English, and in cross-cultural gesture, we provided our Brockport students with some basic Russian greetings to use in communication. Our Brockport class met @ 9:05 a.m. That morning, Barb enthusiastically greeted our Novgorod class with a Russian good morning -- Russian students broke out in laughter because of course it was 5:00 p.m. and the start to their evening. It was a lighthearted but humbling moment. This first synchronous class meeting was very exciting and affirmed our semester partnership was fully operational on both human and electronic levels. Ann videotaped this and all subsequent synchronous class sessions.

Our team followed up this first video-conference with faculty emails to check on how we each perceived ways our students received this class, and we each asked students, in designated teams of three (2 Brockport, 1 Novgorod), to email each other as a follow up. Students gradually started to find their way to their Brockport/Novgorod partners – some with more success than others. During this check, Elena stressed the importance of American students speaking slowly and without slang which we reinforced repeatedly on the Brockport side. Also during week I, Elena identified and shared a survey on views of feminists and feminism and we both administered this survey to our students. We referenced this survey at many points throughout the semester as we and students in both countries considered our/their own and others' perceptions of feminists and feminism. While our feminisms span geographies and capture cultural variations across continents, we discovered that negative stereotypes attached to feminism are universal across countries. Despite believing in and desiring gender equality, the majority of students in both class were hesitant to own the feminist label. This stayed relatively true as a post instruction measure although students in both countries did shift ideologies in understanding the social construction of gender roles and ways structural variables in spaces of work and family roles contribute to inequalities among women and men in the US, Russia, and many world cultures.

In a follow up to our synchronous video conference, Barb posted to the course blog to dialogue with students on Brockport instructional progression. The Brockport class watched parts of the film, "Middle Sexes," which Ann linked segments of the film via YouTube on our Google site. The film served as an in to talk about sex and gender identity, and as a lead-in to our next course unit where we discussed women's bodies and also gender-based violence. Questions on the blog prompted students to consider similarities/differences across cultures when we consider incidences of rape, domestic violence, and ways media sources objectify women's bodies. Blog responses were engaging and robust, although not

all Russian students viewed the film. Elena commented that her students would have preferred reading papers on separate themes here which would have better informed their points of view.

We held our second synchronous class meeting on 9/28. The class topic was abortion and reproductive freedoms in the US and in Russia. Prior to this class, the students blogged and responded to faculty posed questions on sex and gender identity, comparing practices in US and Russia. Also, in preparation for the synchronous class meeting, students watched film segments of "If These Walls Can Talk," and also read on this topic and its controversy. As additional backdrop, students read some background readings on sex as capital in modern Russia. Women's bodies as a site of commerce and political scrutiny was a common theme throughout. Once again the face-to-face class meeting was interesting and dynamic. Abortion is very sensitive topic on the US side. Our American students who oppose abortion were less vocal in class despite a transparent teaching goal to see the diverse complexities here and to tolerate differing views where the question intersects personal and public spaces across countries. Comparatively, students in Russia were very open about this topic and were curious about US practices, and during class dialogue, appeared less conflicted in personal standpoint about abortion practices in Russia. Elena and Barb shared PPT lecture notes on their respective country practices. Also, Barb posted follow up blog questions directed to both Russia and Brockport students. Of particular interest here were questions around emergency contraception and its use/availability in Russia and the extent if any that religious ideology intersects abortion practices. American students also questioned whether schools in Russia provide contraception and/or offer education about sex and birth control. Blog dialogue here was substitutive and robust as students wrestled with hard questions around women's bodies and reproductive freedoms as comparatively understood in the US and Russia.

Elena led the third synchronous class meeting as our students began studying a unit on women and family. Elena facilitated a lecture and discussion on maternity capital in Russia and students learned about maternity leave policies in Russia, the US, and around the globe. We followed up this synchronous class with a blog post on behalf of our American class per questions about students' thoughts on maternity capital in Russia. American students were curious about whether Russian students viewed the Russian maternity capital provided to mothers as adequate. American students questioned whether state supported incentives for reproduction assist women and families, or, if such incentives further pigeonhole women as mothers, and thus, potentially restrict women's opportunities for paid employment outside the home. Students thoughtful, purposeful blog responses raised hard questions while also exposed the complexities associated with maternity capital benefits. The need to support women and family emerged as universal to students' points of view. Similarly, expanding maternity capital as a benefit to parents vs. only women carried broad appeal. As students' reflections indicated, the conditions around maternity capital produce a paradox where maternity benefits are necessary and supportive while also potentially problematic and exploited. Students in both countries were stunned to discover that the US is a country with no national maternity policy and with one of the poorest support systems for pregnant women and new mothers in the world. Using the blog, students learned from each other in diverse and remarkable ways.

A fourth and significant video-conference followed by asynchronous blogging was instruction devoted to women and religion with a particular focus on the Russian girl punk rock band Pussy Riot, which intersected course content and lent itself to reading, research, and comparative cross-cultural discussion. Elena emailed several Russian news pieces on Pussy Riot, which we translated using Google translator and posted on our course site. Students dialogued face-to-face on this topic and then turned to our class blog for follow-up discussion. Students were interested in questions around separation of church and state as it relates to Pussy Riot's performance at Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow and also questions around artistic and freedom of expression. Students discussed ways church and state

are legally separated in both countries but that religion still creeps into and influences government decisions, particularly in the US as it relates to marriage equality and women's reproductive health. The nuances here were many where knowledge around feminism, politics, religious ideology and practices, activism, and popular culture were examined across cultures. Blog discourse was lively and generated diverse experience and point of view.

A fifth video-conference was dedicated to the topic of feminisms. This was a particularly textured class where a Brockport graduate student studying for the fall semester at Moscow State University, visited Novgorod and was present in Elena's class. A reporter from a Rochester newspaper working on news story about our COIL work was also present in this class session. Students dialogued back and forth on their understanding of feminists and feminism, and as mentioned previously, students' reluctance to own the feminist label was a common theme throughout. Although there was good back and forth questions and answers, discourse was somewhat stifled on each side. We attributed some of this hesitancy to the reporter's staged presence along with student uncertainty in finding voice and point of view per feminist informed issues.

Final PSA Projects

As the second part of the semester unfolded, we dedicated class instructional time to think forward students' final PSA class projects. We identified and assigned course topics across students and then asked students to collaborate on this in teams. Research on the today's students, considered digital natives, states that they adapt well to new technical tools, but are more likely to use media for social communication versus academics. For the final assignment, students were given choices to create a poster, a PowerPoint or Presenter presentation, or video. Overall, students selected electronic media to craft meaningful PSA messages that supported their research topics. Ann worked with students on technology and collaborations, suggesting media tools students could use for storytelling and message crafting to add dimension to their projects. Ann duplicated the Brockport lessons using lecture capture and added these and PSA instructional materials to the class LMS for the Russian students and also made herself available to assist Russian students via Skype. Students dragged in initiative here and team collaborations were challenging to realize. The largest obstacles seemed to lie in students' difficulty to connect in real-time along with varying levels of Russian students' availability and engagement with the course and their unfamiliarity with PSAs as assignment format. Also, assignment deadlines had slightly more give on the Novgorod side with a one week later start/end date where Brockport students had to meet semester deadline logistics sooner.

Although cross country collaboration on PSAs was not successful, students did work together on topics and did consider cross country perspectives in their research. Three of the Brockport student groups worked with Ann to create video PSAs, coming to her with pre-production material and concepts and imagery for their presentations. And students in both countries did present their PSA in two final video-conference classes dedicated to this effort. Ann placed these projects on the class LMS for access and final presentations. In post reflections, assignment logistics with a template that identified precise contributions for each team member in each country may have better facilitated collaboration. Conversely, the merit of students' singular projects as a course outcome should not be overlooked. Students' final PSA projects were extraordinary in topic and presentation. This shines back on the merits of the COIL course and the many successes of our semester long teaching/learning partnership.

Section 10: Student Feedback

In an end of semester course evaluation in Brockport, students were asked to rank, on a scale of 1 terrible, 2 poor; 3 good; and 4 wonderful, their experiences with the COIL partnership. 9 of 20 students rated this as a 4, and 9 or 20 students rated this as a 3, two students rated this as a 1. Per the COIL exchange, when asked to name one thing they liked most about the course, 18 of 20 students identified the COIL Brockport/Russian partnership. Students responses included:

“I like the partnership of our Russian COIL group. It has been a fun and interesting way to learn of different cultures.”

“I really enjoyed the video-conferences; it was really cool to work with the Russian students.”

“I liked interacting with other students in Russia.”

“The Russian video chats was one thing I liked most about the course.”

“Working with the Russian students.”

“I really enjoyed the COIL Program and communicating with students from Russia.”

“I enjoyed learning a more-cross-cultural perspective than what I already had and learning with Russia was very interesting.”

“The video conferencing with our Russian partners was amazing.”

“I wish we had more time to talk with the Russian students.”

“The Coil Russia interactions – extremely fascinating to view from a different country in real-time and to blog back and forth with them.”

Additional student feedback included:

“For COIL, it would have been nice to have more time in class.”

“I wished the conference classes were better quality and longer.”

“The course as a whole felt worthwhile to spend my time in... can't really say that about all my courses.”

“We should have done more video chats”

“We needed more class time; 50 minutes was too short.”

“Coming into a women's studies class, I was concerned that the professor would force us to become very liberal or feminist. However this was not an issue at all. The professor was very good at accepting different points of view which was amazing.”

“I did not like the participation aspect of this course. Because feminism is a very opinionated topic, it is sometimes hard to speak your mind conformably without feeling like someone else might shove their opinion back at you.”

Novgorod Students:

“It was my first real communication on scientific themes in English. From the first lesson this subject was interesting for me. I felt that I had a lot of common with the American students though our background and culture are different. I think that there should be more conferences under this course and they should be more extended(I.)

“I think we all did great job! Halloween costumes of American students were the most surprised for me :))” (V.)

“I really liked Garret’s lecture about “Soldier mother s” and the fact that he and his friend came to Novgorod to share their experience and thoughts” (I.)

“The most interesting for me were videoconferences with American students, possibility to share our experience with them and to hear their point of view and experience (I.)

“This course was splendid and very necessary. Just continue to teach this very useful subject”(K)

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