How we got started

- ACE-SUNY COIL Center Internationalization Through Technology Awards
- **Category 1:** Leaders in Internationalization Through Technology
- **Category 2:** Advancing Internationalization through Collaborative Online International Learning recognized three institutions for their vision and commitment to developing new COIL courses as part of a broader internationalization strategy; involved 15-month consultation with COIL Center

Sarah Guth, then working at the SUNY COIL Center in Professional Development worked with Xavier and staff from the Center for Teaching Excellence; as of Fall 2014 in Italy as an EFL teacher

Xavier continues to promote the expansion of COIL and put Margaret in touch with Sarah
### Student Cohorts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Xavier U</th>
<th>UniPD</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course</strong></td>
<td>Intensive EFL speaking course for academic purposes</td>
<td>English Conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hours per week in class</strong></td>
<td>5 (20 total a week)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compulsory?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student characteristics</strong></td>
<td>International in the US</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mostly from Saudi Arabia, 1 from Nicaragua</td>
<td>All Italian except 1 with family from Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Different academic backgrounds</td>
<td>Engineering students</td>
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</table>
Established models in the field of foreign language learning and teaching

- Bi-lingual, bi-cultural
  - Cultura MIT
  - Tele-Tandem
- Monolingual, bi-cultural
  - pre-service teachers of the target language with students of the target language, e.g. pre-service teachers of French as a foreign language in France with students of French in Colombia
- Other emerging models
  - Bilingual & bicultural: language students with native speakers studying a subject that can be the focus of a project, such as intercultural studies history, geography
  - Monolingual, multicultural: the Soliya Connect program bringing together students of conflict resolution from the ‘West’ and predominantly Muslim countries

Ours was none of these so we had to pick and choose activities from these models and adapt them to our specific context.
In the Language Lab

Week 1: Introductions
Content for modules

- 6 Skype sessions
- Topics/contents based on the textbook used at Xavier
  - **Leisure Activities**: Factors that affect our choices
  - **Food**: Eating for nutrition and/or pleasure: sharing food as diplomacy and cultural exchange
  - **Regional Identity**: Moving beyond national stereotypes and understanding regional differences
  - **Media**: Where and how we get our news; cultural influence on the presentation and interpretation of information
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content and Language</th>
<th>Pre-session</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Post-session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning vocabulary and communicative strategies</td>
<td>Communicating with international partners (guided and free discussion)</td>
<td>Sharing information from the exchange with local classmates in writing, discussion or presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practicing discussion and presentation skills</td>
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<td>Viewing videos and responding to discussion prompts on Canvas</td>
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<td>Communicating with international partners (guided and free discussion)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Uploading and viewing pictures/videos on Canvas</td>
<td>Using and troubleshooting Skype, Canvas and other platforms used (WhatsApp)</td>
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<td>Reviewing and adjusting tools to better meet needs (e.g. addition of Facebook)</td>
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<td>Preparing Skype contact list</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Considering comfort level with topics that might come up in the discussion</td>
<td>Reflecting on communication and comfort level</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Considering comfort level with topics that might come up in the discussion</td>
<td>Practicing language to ask and respond appropriately</td>
<td>Considering role of culture in differences or perceived differences</td>
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Student-generated content

Modules 1 – 3: Images
Goals
• To add a visual dimension to the materials under study.
• To discover how to communicate their own culture with images.
• To compare their respective cultural realities and reflect about the meaning and impact of visual information.

Module 4-5: Text
• Self-descriptions of region or origin

Module 6: News/Media
• News from both L1 and L2 newspapers
Between sessions:

Leisure Activity Photo Share on Canvas Discussion Board

1. Netflix
2. Sleeping
3. Video Game
4. Guitar
5. Flowers
Teacher role during Skype sessions

- Lots of texting!
to sort groups out

Hiya. For now I've got Haydee's partners (Daniele and Giulia), Yaya's partners (Mirco and Luca), one of Areej's partners (Hussain), one of Ahmed's (Roberto), and for Amani we have Alice (Alessandro will probably be absent). ForAziz, Silvia is absent but Pietro should be here soon.

Ok! Yahya and Ahmed still aren't here - Aziz is switch Alice and Amani is with pietro

Ok. I'll let you know if and when Pietro gets here.

Ok. We can put micro with Alice and Aziz, and Luca with Areej?

We can put Roberto with Amani

Are Yaya and Ahmed not coming?

Go ahead and put Alice with Aziz - that worked well.

Not sure - they didn't contact me :(

I would leave Luca and Mirco together so maybe put them with Areej - would that work?
to observe student interaction

Margaret Xavier
last seen Thursday at 16:26

Ok. They're all talking. Phew! I'm going to walk around for a few minutes to check in on their language. Just so I don't forget, Alice and Roberto actually feel frustrated that they've had to change partners each time so it would be great if we could keep them with the same one for the next few sessions.

15:44

Oh no! I apologize for that. They can definitely keep their partners. If Majaid comes back, we will try something else.

15:49

I feel that Ahmed is communicating more this week

15:50

He's also laughing a lot

15:51

Well at this point I'm going to ask them what the similarities/differences are. I'm curious 😊)

15:51

If Ahmed is doing well with Alice I get why.

15:51

Silvia and Pietro tend to dominate and do a lot of giggling with each other, which might overwhelm a partner. It seems Amani is doing a good job of holding her ground 😊)

15:52

Are yours following the questions from Canvas? Mine are all over the
to monitor task implementation

Margaret Xavier
last seen Thursday at 16:26

That's good - mine have been doing discussions which have been helpful, but they've been somewhat shallow and concrete - I hope this topic helps push them deeper into the how and why

15:45

Yeah, this is the first time they're probing a bit. I think it's a mix of time (they are more comfortable with one another, know one another better) and task type. Maybe leave the first 3 loose-ish but then come up with a more structured, focused task on food and culture to get them a little deeper in the 3rd or 4th session.

15:47

Yes I think that's what we were trying to go for with regional identity - maybe it was like a baby step to this

15:49

And probably the way the activity was structured - a little more prep and discussion in class.

15:49

Yeah I deliberately added "5 responses" to the task since they were moving too quickly off the topic

15:52

Good conversations in all groups

15:55

Yeah, I enjoy listening to them. In an ideal world we would record all the conversations but then, quite honestly, who would have the time to listen to them again.

15:58
Data

- Teacher correspondence before and during project
- Teacher chats during synchronous sessions
- Students’ written reflection posts
- Informal interviews with students during class time – self-assessments
- Project evaluations are currently being completed
- Skype sessions not recorded for technical and ethical reasons
Lessons learned: the good

Students...

- report enjoying working with new people, tasks and tools
- engage in more challenging interactions in English and pay more attention to accuracy and intelligibility.
- negotiate for meaning (making clarification requests, confirmation checks and comprehension checks) during the Skype sessions.
- attend to US academic skills such as preparation, attention to instructions, and punctuality.
- engage in cross-cultural discussion and reflecting on their own cultures and the role of culture in their experiences.
- are more motivated to speak
- become more aware of their own cultural identity
## Lessons learned: the bad

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<td>We are aiming to find a time in the year where we can have at least 8 weeks.</td>
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<td>Too many partner changes</td>
<td>Have group meeting during the first session so that all students have at least seen and been introduced to one another. Make sure all students have already added all of their peers to Skype.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited asynchronous discussion and engagement</td>
<td>Use Facebook alongside Canvas. Integrate the COIL project activities more carefully into the curricula (and grading perhaps)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions remained very superficial</td>
<td>Explore topics that better draw out students’ reflection on their own culture, its origins. Spend more time in class on brainstorming &amp; reflection. Maintain groups as much as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom activities not matched well enough</td>
<td>Share textbook during the exchange. Align more carefully in the design and planning stage.</td>
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Where to go from here?

• Find longer overlap time
• Create tasks that explore culture and cultural identity in a more personal (Why am I the way I am? What influenced this?) as well as general (How can culture be defined? What is intercultural communicative competence?) right from the start
• Find a way to record the sessions (and deal with the ethical/privacy issues beforehand!)
• Have students work on a collaborative project
THANK YOU!

Sarah Guth
Margaret Martin