YES, AND...

A collaboration between

The Fashion Institute of Technology
The Hague University of Applied Sciences

With support from

SUNY COIL CENTER
The first rule of improv is to say

YES, AND...

the second rule of improv
Is to build on the first
Presentation Overview:

We’d like to tell you about our project:

- How our improvisational approach shaped the course
- How we developed a five week course module
- The course content
- Learning what worked
- Improvements we plan to make
- Provide Useful Tips for anyone starting COIL
YES, AND...

Life is an improvisation.
– Vladimir Manenok
YES, AND…

No battle plan survives contact with the enemy.

– Colin Powell
The Instructors:

Dave Van Ginhoven, European Studies
The Hague University of Applied Science
Intercultural Project
2nd year European Studies students

Sean Sullivan, Computer Graphics
Fashion Institute of Technology
Video Editing Class
Third year Photography students
Timeline:

2015 February – COIL Partner Orientation Training, Mirjam Hauk
2015 April – COIL Conference 2015 – Finding a Partner
2015 April – Begin Dialogue about Collaboration
2015 September – Course Content and Google CMS in place
2015 October – COIL Fall Academy, Launch of Course Training
2016 February – Class Launch!

APPROXIMATELY ONE YEAR
Finding a partner can take time
- Cast a wide net and be open-minded
- You don’t have to do/want the same things

Once you find one, consider the golden rule of improvisation
- Just say “Yes, and…”

Putting a successful COIL project together requires patience and a lot of communication
Preparation & Planning:

- Communication with Partner (Hundreds of email exchanges and a dozen online meetings)
- COIL Training and Events (8 weeks online, 3 face-to-face meetings, 2 all-day events over 3 days)
- Build Website - Google Site to act as CMS (Basics in 2 days, develop over 6 months)
- Create and update website content
- Create Course Materials & Lectures
- Determine Joint Schedule
- Test On-line Interface
- Provide Student Access
- Launch Five-week Course Collaboration
Improv TIP #2

• Take the time to get to know your partner
  – Especially if you’re far away

• Find out what they want and see what you can add to it
  – If you have different needs, build on what you have in common
  – Diverge where needed

• Work around obstacles
Obstacles:

Different time zones – (6-7 hours difference, including shifting Daylight Savings)
Different school calendars – (Accommodated their Spring Break)
Different class times – (Only FIT morning class could participate in live meetings)
Different learning needs (outcomes)
Student bodies with different skills and expectations
Some language and cultural barriers
And Now for

The (Main) Course
The Central Question:

What happens when students from 2 cultures, half a world apart, ask controversial questions?
Key Concepts for the Course:

Intercultural Awareness
Research
Communications Skills & Creativity
Cross-Cultural Collaboration
Tools of Engagement:

We encouraged students to:

• Learn about the other culture through research and direct interaction

• Communicate with overseas students via:
  – Video documentaries *(students produced and edited)*
  – Live video classroom and chats
  – Texting / blogging
Course Goals:

- Develop awareness of student’s culture-bound assumptions and perspective
- Develop the ability to reflect on student’s values and to question concepts, ideas and theories
- Develop awareness of and respect for different cultural perspectives
- Develop an understanding of story and story structure
- Work in intercultural teams and collaborate with overseas students
Course Learning Outcomes:

● Produce short video documentaries using the appropriate story structure & technique
● Communicate appropriately for a specific medium and target audience
● Make observations about cultural issues and cultural differences based on research, ICC theory and personal experience
● Reflect on and analyse culture-bound assumptions and stereotypes
● Demonstrate ability to collaborate with overseas students on intercultural teams
Course Site (Centralized Infrastructure)

Google Site used as a CMS (Course Management System)
A free, user-friendly alternative to work around LMS limitations

https://sites.google.com/site/classthehaguefit/home

- All Course Content
- Homework Submission & Exchange (file share)
- Live Video Interface (via Hangout)
- Course Schedule

Google products used: Google Sites, Google Drive, Google Docs, Google Presentation, Google Calendars, Google Hangout, Google Gmail, Google Plus, Google Mobile Apps

ADVANTAGE: Everything students need is in one place – not spread over multiple delivery platforms
Weekly Schedule

Prior to first class, students ask a controversial question about partner country
Week 1 – Schools choose questions from partner school to answer, Begin Research
Week 2 – Professor Lectures, Research, Edit of Question Response Video
Week 3 – Review Question Response Video and revise, Discuss with Partner Team
Week 4 – Continue Discussion between Partner Teams, Create Reflection Video
Week 5 – Review Reflection Video, Discuss Collaboration
Introductory Video & Questions

Before 1st class, each student made a short video introducing themselves.

They also asked three controversial questions about the partner student’s country.

Students uploaded the video and questions to the shared Homework Folder on the Website.

Click Here for Examples:
Stephanie De Groot
Daniel Marcella
Shared Lecture

• 2 lectures were given based on needs & expertise
  
  – Sean lectured THUAS students on Story & Story Structure
  
  – Dave lectured FIT students on Intercultural Communication & Stereotype Survival
Questions - Week 1

Chosen by the students from each other’s full list

FIT’s Questions for THUAS:

- Legalized soft drugs
- Euthanasia policy
- Is Holland affected by terrorism?
- LGBT rights
- Effects of Refugees
- Influence of Dutch art
- Dutch education system

THUAS’s Questions for FIT:

- Donald Trump - really popular?
- Police brutality toward minorities
- Gun laws and shootings
- Social conformity
- US patriotism despite problems
- School life vs media depiction
- War on Terror positive or negative
Response Videos

- Students had 2 weeks to respond
  - Short documentaries answering the controversial questions
  - A mix of found & shot footage
  - Based on research & informed by story structure

- Videos were uploaded, viewed & discussed in class

- [Click Here for Examples:](#)
  - [Dutch Art:](#)
  - [Euthanasia:](#)
  - [Collins Nai:](#)
  - [Patrick Donavan:](#)
Students (in groups of 3) were asked to contact their partner groups to discuss each other’s videos and record these interactions.

- Not everyone managed
- Then they were asked to make a final reflection video
  - Based on videos & contact

Click Here for Examples:
- Juli Teitler
- Stephanie De Groot (again)
What Did They Learn

• Students on both sides saw cultural complexity
  – Not everyone loves guns and/or Donald Trump
  – Not all Dutch smoke weed

• They also noticed differences on the work itself
  – Dutch videos were more informative,
    American videos were more dramatic & indirect

• No matter how you engage the conversation
  Must go on!
What Worked?

- Videos were fun
- Students were enthusiastic
- Lectures were well received
- Some meaningful learning
  - Cultural & Technical
What Could Improve?

- Student interaction wasn’t ideal
  - Not all groups engaged
  - Logistical challenges
    Scheduling & organizing participants
    Chats couldn’t always be recorded
- Some students could use more filmmaking instruction
- A stronger link to intercultural theory would be nice
Next Time... already working on 2.0

- Encourage student direct contact from day 1
- Modify assignment for greater collaboration (i.e. a more collaborative video)
- Include recordable video chat capacity (accessible from site if possible)
- Add “production tips and pointers” for video production to lecture / website
Improv TIP # 3 - Don’t Overthink It

● You don’t need bells & whistles

● Keep the curriculum simple & instructions clear

● Don’t get lost in technology
  or try to reinvent the wheel

  – All you really need is a laptop
  – There are dozens of free, user-friendly tools
    at your disposal
TIP # 4 - Keep in Mind

- No project is perfect the first time
  - Monitor & adjust when needed
  - Be honest with yourself & your students

- If you run into uncertainty, listen
  - To your students
  - To your partner
  - To the COIL Center

- And remember to say “Yes”
Questions?

Controversial or otherwise, feel free to contact us:

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