

Online International Learning

Potsdam's Model for Internationalization through eLearning



Online International Learning - OIL.U.P

OIL.U.P was founded in 2015 as a project to kickoff internationalization through e-Learning. The aim is to develop a framework to support teachers in creating international collaborative classes. OIL.U.P builds upon the developed e-Learning infrastructure at University of Potsdam. Since 2013 University of Potsdam is part of the global SUNY COIL-Network. Following to that, courses within the department of sociology department of teacher education were developed to participate in the network. A collaborative course with SUNY Delhi, New York State provided first hand experiences. Building upon that more collaborations could be realized with universities in Mexico and England, a collaboration with Umeå University in Sweden will be established in the next year. Using the experiences made with online international collaborations, University of Potsdam decided to implement a project on its own to pursue the goal of internationalization and create a European hub at University of Potsdam for international collaborations. Currently OIL.U.P is working on getting global partners together and provides a contact point for international partners to get in contact with University of Potsdam as well as for teachers in Potsdam to find global collaborations. Different workshops and events are organized to inform about the possibilities of Online International Learning.

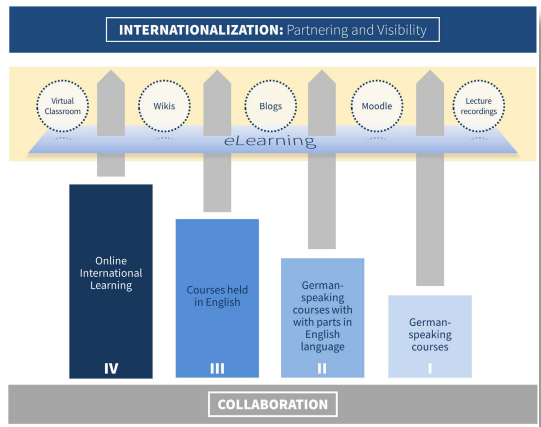
To support internationalization through e-learning OIL.U.P created the 4-Pillar-Model. The graphic explains the different degrees of using e-learning technics for international partnering. The degree of collaborative work is shown on the horizontal axis, the more left a pillar is located the more collaborative work is done within the course. The upper level with the label "e-learning" shows that all courses have to use e-learning tools to take part in collaborations. Examples for tools according to the collaboration degree of the course are given in the circles. With this strategy University of Potsdam tries to involve as much courses as possible to build up and sustain international partnerships. Also it gives teachers the information that with the help of e-learning tools any course could easily become an international collaboration.

eLearning

eLearning became an integral part of teaching and learning at University of Potsdam. The goal of implementing e-Learning technics into teaching is to develop innovative didactical learning scenarios that make use of e-Learning technics. Teachers will be encouraged to make use of digital media within their classes to offer a broad range of classes that are accompanied by e-Learning as a regular teaching technique. In the long run integrating e-Learning techniques and tools should become as normal as regular lectures. To accomplish this goal several tools were introduced at University of Potsdam. These tools help teachers to

bring e-Learning efficiently into their courses and use them as a didactical addition to regular teaching. The purpose of tools is to broaden varieties of teaching and learning styles.

What are tools? - As tools we define solutions to integrate e-learning into daily teaching. Such as producing lecture recordings, videos, podcasts and slideshows for educational purposes, but also Blogs, Newsfeeds, Social Networks and other online applications where students actively participate with own contributions. Using these tools helps lectures and students to organize their work and create custom learning scenarios.



Scenarios

University of Potsdam is following two paths in realizing collaborations. The Pre-Oiling and Full-Oiling model.

Pre-Oiling

A model that aims for short term collaborations. It works as an introduction to online collaborations and gives lectures the opportunity to try out international collaborations for their courses at low expenditures in terms of organization and time. Pre-Oiling is an asynchronous collaboration in which students individually arrange online meetings to work together on assignments. An asynchronous collaboration means that the individual classroom sessions are independent of each other. The tools used in Pre-Oiling consist of blogging, collaborative international writing and organizing work in online social networks. Also a one-time virtual classroom to establish a discussion on a predetermined topic could be used within a Pre-Oiling collaboration.

Full-Oiling

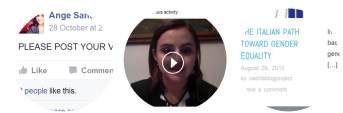
We speak of Full-Oiling as a blended learning solution for online international learning. In this model the synchronous collaborative work plays an essential role throughout the whole course. Students work together on long-term projects and publish their results to the group or an even broader public audience. Within Full-Oiling all e-Learning tools can be used and a variety of settings can be established from session to session. The idea is that students follow similar paths of learning while being in different academic institutions. This helps student to develop their skills of international communication, organization and academic writing while also contributing to a cultural exchange with the partner class.



Virtual Classroom

The virtual classroom is one of University of Potsdam's e-Learning tools to transfer a class session from its physical presence into the realm of digital media. Since a classroom is digitalized it can be globally shared via the internet. To create a virtual classroom a computer, a webcam and a microphone are needed. The virtual classroom is a tool for synchronous Full-Oiling collaborations. Using the possibilities of online videoconferences gives the experience to get in contact with people all over the world. The tool builds a virtual bridge between classrooms all over the world that enables you to see and hear your partners in real-time. With prepared materials and discussion topics students get to experience the exchange between two seminar groups. Students as well as teachers benefit from the virtual classroom that it gives them a glance about how their discipline is taught and learned in other contexts. The intercultural communication skills can be trained and new perspectives are gained.

Best Practice Examples



Pre-Oiling asynchronous collaboration: During the winter term 2015/2016 the course "Contextualizing Gender and Social Change" was offered at University of Potsdam. The course used the Pre-Oiling model as an asynchronous collaboration with partners from Tecnológico De Monterrey, Mexico and Coventry University, England. With three institutions working together a broad range of topics could be included into the collaborations. The students have to organize themselves via social networks and join working groups. Each group deals with a specific topic that should be presented at the end of this short-term collaboration. For the presentation the students have to create a poster with online tools, the focal point is here the collaborative group work in international teams.



Full-Oiling synchronous collaboration: The course "Changing Welfare, Changing States?" was held in the winter term 2014/15 at University of Potsdam. The class was organized as a Full-Oiling synchronous collaboration with SUNY Delhi, New York. This class was special, since many foreign European students attended the class at University of Potsdam. There was rather a European class than a German one that got into discussion with our partners from the United States. Topics discussed ranged from the situation of women in Iran to the role of United States foreign politics. Within the seminar virtual classrooms were created to let the students share their points of view and exchange knowledge that was acquired in advance. To support academic writing skills the students had to upload short articles about various topics related to the course. The articles were published at an academic blogging platform named NewsActivist.com. The articles written by the student were publicly accessible for a broad audience beyond the partner classes. This gave the students additional motivation for assuring the quality of their work and gave them responsibility for their own research projects.

Interested?
Contact us!

For additional information on global partnering with the University of Potsdam, please visit our website and contact Alexander Knoth, OIL.U.P Coordinator.
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We happily await your proposals for collaborations with your institution.

