

## Episode 6: Michaela Moura-Koçoğlu on Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)

---

[music]

>>STEPHANIE DOSCHER: You are listening to Making Global Learning Universal- conversations about engaging diverse perspectives, collaboration and complex problem solving and higher education on campus, online, in local communities and abroad. I'm your host Stephanie Doscher, Director of Global Learning initiatives at Florida International University and coauthor of *Making Global Learning Universal: Promoting Inclusion and Success for All*.

>>MICHAELA MOURA-KOÇOĞLU: So I went to this COIL workshop and I was fascinated by it at the chance of working with a professor and students from a different cultural context and have us together work on a project. So this is a unique chance, although we have the highly diverse student body, it's still a privilege and a huge benefit for students to interact with students from other cultures.

>>STEPHANIE: Collaborative Online International Learning or COIL is FIU's newest global learning initiative. And Michaela Moura-Koçoğlu is one of FIU's most active COIL faculty. She's an instructor with our Center for Women's and Gender Studies and with COIL, domestic teachers partner with international teachers to have their students work together on a project using communication technology and the Internet. Also known as Virtual Exchange or Telecollaboration, COIL is based on the same principles as global learning: diversity, collaboration, problem solving. And it's a powerful way to link campus based or online global learning to other internationalization strategies like study abroad, student and faculty exchange. Even international research partnerships. In this interview, Michaela talks all about her COIL course, how she found a partner, the COIL project, and even how the course has evolved over time and continues to evolve. I have a feeling that if you're new to COIL, you're really going to want to learn more about it after this episode. So remember to check out the show notes for more resources. But for now, here's my conversation with Michaela.

Michaela, I'm delighted that we have a chance to talk today which you take a little bit of time to just share a little bit about yourself with our listeners.

>>MICHAELA: I'd be happy to. So my name is Michaela Moura-Koçoğlu. I'm an instructor here at FIU's Center for Women's and Gender studies. I teach several courses, an introductory course into global women's and gender studies, an online portion of that, of which has over 340 students as of now from across all disciplines. It's very fascinating, and I teach also feminist theory, a class I really love because I get to interact with the students and make them see how feminist theory is important for our everyday lives. And I do teach another course that is global women's writing. And finally my recently developed COIL course, which is called Gender Violence and the Law: Global Perspectives.

>>STEPHANIE: Fantastic. So I'm particularly interested in talking with you about that final course that you just mentioned because it's a new course that you developed specifically for the global learning initiative. And you mentioned an acronym COIL. So I'll just let everybody know that's Collaborative Online International Learning. And I guess a shorthand way to describe COIL would be that this is a pedagogy that allows faculty in one country to partner with a faculty member in another country. And think about their courses as overlapping or intersecting in some way. Sometimes the courses might be similar content. More often than not, the courses could be completely opposite content. But the idea is to find a spot, maybe a problem or an issue where the courses overlap and in that space to have students work together on some kind of a project, a task, a deliverable. And here at FIU, we have a rapidly expanding COIL initiative that we are trying to expand the number of faculty who are partnering with faculty abroad so that our students are partnering with other students abroad and to support this, we have professional development and workshops, all sorts of things. And I'll connect to those in the show notes. But COIL-- that wasn't initially part of the impetus for creating the course, was it? What initially prompted you to develop this course?

>>MICHAELA: So I started out with questioning, right? So we are inundated in the media every single day with the news about gender violence. And I can give you several examples. Recently, we had the "Me Too" movement. Before that, we had the "Bring Back Our Girls" in Nigeria for the school girls that were kidnapped and sexually enslaved in Nigeria, or we had the freedom for Yazidi, where a Yazidi women in Iraq were also sexually enslaved and these kinds of things, right? So I'm thinking about developing, designing this course where students not only look at different forms of gender violence globally, but also critically interrogate-- where does gender violence come from? What are the root causes and why is this—and that's where the global part comes in. And that's how I became interested in COIL, right? Because if we look at, let's say, domestic violence in a specific country, an exclusive look at simply one country will pathologize this form of gender violence, right? We cannot tie it to one specific culture, but if we take up the example of domestic violence, that is something that's occurring globally. So what are the root causes and are there legal frameworks in place and why or why not do they fail? This is what I wanted students to look at. And for that you need really a global perspective.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah, so you were planning on, if I get you right, at first a comparative course.

>>MICHAELA: Correct.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah. And it was going to be a domestic course, meaning that your students were going to stay put in Miami. It's a face-to-face course. We have a lot of diversity baked into our student body and so maybe students have experienced firsthand or observed issues of gender violence in their home country or the home countries of their families. But then you came to one of our COIL workshops, which was just an introduction. Right?

>>MICHAELA: Yes. It was the very first introduction to COIL workshop here at FIU. And I'm really open to new developments in terms of instruction and teaching. And I had originally by the way designed this course as a fully online course, so not a face-to-face course. So it was

designed from the start as a fully online course, which I think is really necessary. We need to go more fully online in order to serve our student body who is oftentimes working full time. And really appreciative of fully online courses. So this was just as a basis.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah. So you were going to that-- you're open, you're an early adopter.

>>MICHAELA: I truly am. So I went to this COIL workshop, and I was fascinated by it at the chance of working with a professor and students from a different cultural context and have us together work on a project. So this is a unique chance, although we have the highly diverse student body, it's still a privilege and a huge benefit for students to interact with students from other cultures, especially when looking critically at these kinds of questions. So COIL was for me a platform that would offer a unique opportunities for my students. But back then, I did not have a COIL partner.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah, that's right. And before we get to that, do I remember correctly that you have video conferenced in speakers into your courses before?

>>MICHAELA: Oh yes. You really have a good memory. I did that for my Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies class where we had a research project. My students had a research project on sweatshop work. So we had former sweatshop workers call in from the Dominican Republic. So I had used video conferencing and had seen firsthand what the impact was on my students. So my students were able to talk to former sweatshop workers and they really, really enjoyed this experience because it really illustrated what we were learning in theory in class applied to the social reality of these women.

>>STEPHANIE: Right. I remember that because we have this structure in our global learning initiative wherein we from time to time request that faculty will share with us information about what's happening in their courses. We call them assessment matrices. And I will link to these in the show notes, but basically it's a method that we use to stay in touch with faculty, just stay in touch with the courses early on in the evolution of the initiative when we didn't have so many courses, we would collect those every semester. And I read every single one and would respond to faculty. And I remember you reporting that one of the ways that you were gauging your students' global engagement, their willingness to engage with diverse others in problem solving, was by your observation of the kinds of dialogue they were engaging in in that video conference discussion.

>>MICHAELA: Correct. Yes. They had to develop a questionnaire and since, well the sweatshop workers had a translator with them, but the majority of my class was fluent in Spanish so I did not even have to translate for them. They chose a speaker themselves who spoke in Spanish directly with these workers. So it was a great experience all over.

>>STEPHANIE: So you had already taken, I guess, a step towards having your students engage with diverse others using technology. So you came, so I remember, okay, let me see if I can get this story correct. So you came to the workshop, it was one of the first workshops. It

was at the beginning of our initiative and just like -- you were excited but not sure with whom to partner. I will be completely honest and frank, that we were excited but not sure exactly how to get our faculty partnered, so we had a unique opportunity. We were invited to send someone from our COIL team, who happens to be Matt Hagood. He's the director of media technology services and he and I are kind of co-directing or co implementing, facilitating our COIL initiative. He went to FAUBAI, which is the international education symposium or conference in in Brazil, and he brought with him some dating profiles. That's how we like to think of them. [laughter] We just said, all right, everybody who is interested in COILing raise your hand and make just a one pager. A little bit about you, a little bit about the course you teach, a little bit about who you're looking for in a partner and you were looking for someone in the law. The course is gender violence and the law and I remember you were specifically looking for someone to add that legal piece. You are interested in Brazil.

>>MICHAELA: Yes, I thought initially that this would be an excellent complement to my focus because my focus is of course, you know, the root causes of violence and the forms of violence and what can be done against it, et cetera. So to have someone with legal expertise, I thought that might be interesting to have as a complementary factor. Right? So if we work together with students from different university and you know, would be a great match. But then Matt came back from Brazil and told me when he came back he said, Michaela, I have a partner for you and it is from a technical college and the professor teaches gaming.

>>STEPHANIE: I know.

>>MICHAELA: I thought it was brilliant. I know, It was not my premise to get something from that direction. But I thought this is brilliant because now I can integrate. And that actually changed my course because now I integrated also module on online violence. And this also helped me facilitate this project that students from both sides work on because they can both they and I will explain a little bit later exactly how the project looks like. But it was actually a brilliant match, although we didn't know it at that time.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah. You know, I'll be honest, I'll pull back the curtain here. This is like, this is I guess, true confessions time. Matt came back and he said, I don't know what to do because I have this professor and he doesn't teach law. Nothing to do with the legal profession, but he sees a match possible that that faculty member on the other side sees it. And I said, well, I mean, let's just go for it. I think she might say no because this is not what she's looking for. But if this other person sees it, well, who am I to stand in the way? And, and I guess I wanted to express that because it's something that I've learned now through the years, but especially with the COIL project to get out of the way of our faculty creativity in thinking about what their courses can be and what I can do to support that. That sometimes it's like throwing spaghetti at the wall. Right. Here's an idea. It's completely crazy. And then so I get out of the way. And then if you are interested, then my job then is to simply support. I'm simply there to help provide the resources, the cheerleading the third eye or a critical eye, maybe some best practices, sorts of things like that. Then I can kind of enter back into the relationship if I'm needed to help it be successful. So I was so excited when you said that you are interested in this and in that very

first video conference that we had to plan between the two institutions, you and your partner were so excited and then tragedy struck. [laughter]

>>MICHAELA: Yes. That's true. So we were getting all creative and then the professor unfortunately was not able to teach that coming semester, but thankfully one of his colleagues stepped in. So we were able to salvage that. Yes.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah. And so now let's get into the, let's pull back the curtain on what you've done through COIL. So I think you've done it a couple of times.

>>MICHAELA: It's my third semester. Yes.

>>STEPHANIE: And it hasn't been the same each semester. The project has it?

>>MICHAELA: It has evolved. We have as of now, I will tell you the status as of now. So whereas initially, we had students simply look at representations of gender violence in different media forms. Right now, the project is-- so they work on a project for six weeks together online. It's an asynchronous style of collaboration. And we use a tool called Padlet and is a great platform for them to work on. So the project is basically an awareness campaign. So students have to formulate an awareness campaign on online gender violence. They can choose a different focus. So they can focus on either a music videos or commercials or the gaming world, but they have to write a campaign that is geared towards their peers to educate their peers. So this is my project.

>>STEPHANIE: Okay. So the evolution, if I get you correctly, was first it was simply comparative.

>>MICHAELA: Correct. Yes.

>>STEPHANIE: Let's look at these things. Let's talk about them. Let's see what we find. And then you evolved in challenging the students then to create something, which makes me very excited because when we think about global learning, we think about it really as a mechanism to produce new knowledge through collaborations of complementary perspectives. And those can be disciplinary perspectives, cultural perspectives, gender-based perspectives. But by bringing together different perspectives, we are creating something new that we know about the world that neither side knew before and maybe even new products, new ideas. So how does it work throughout the six weeks? Do students just jump right into the project or do you lead them into it? Is there an evolution? What does the six weeks look like? And maybe also a little bit about before the six weeks. So the course as a whole.

>>MICHAELA: Right. The advantage is that I speak Portuguese, so what I do with the Brazilian students and you have to realize that my class is fully online. Their class is face-to-face. So what I usually do is that I have a dial in conference, video conference with the Brazilian students.

>>STEPHANIE: So that's synchronous, that's at the same time.

>>MICHAELA: That is synchronous. While they have their class, I dial in and they can ask me questions and I introduce our project and they can ask me questions about the project and about me and about the work that I do and what I teach, et cetera. This is really helpful for the students because they are face-to-face. So this is a different kind of platform. Right? And for my course, I do offer also a synchronous online session via Adobe, but this is of course recorded. So students can always go back in and watch a recording of that online session. And I use this Adobe session for my students to introduce the project and to explain to them how we will collaborate in the coming six weeks. I usually do that before one week before we start this collaboration. And then when the collaboration starts. And I have to explain just a little bit about Padlet because Padlet is integrated in our LMS.

>>STEPHANIE: LMS is our learning management system, which is now Canvas,

>>MICHAELA: Correct. So we use Canvas here at FIU. And Padlet is integrated is a tool that's integrated into Canvas and students, Canvas is really helpful to be interactive. So students can post videos, students can post images and they can post texts and they can comment on each other. They can rate each other. They can give stars or give hearts you know, the like, we know from Facebook, that kind of thing. Right? So it's a little bit interactive.

>>STEPHANIE: So I have a question about that because a lot of times when we're talking about COIL, the first thing that faculty will think about is, is it a platform? Is COIL or Collaborative Online International Learning-- it's also called Virtual Exchange in Europe-- is it a platform? Or they'll think first, well what's the technology? But we need to correct or like kind of change the thoughts around that in terms of what first think about the tasks that we want our students to do. And then we look for the tool that is the right one to enable our students to do it. And you found Padlet. You mentioned that it's integrated within our learning management system, but the students in Brazil, they're not in our Canvas shell.

>>MICHAELA: That is correct, yes. And they don't need to be because Padlet can be accessed from anywhere. And even if Padlet is integrated in Canvas, students from Brazil will get a link to our Padlet page, but they will not be able to enter our Canvas learning management system.

>>STEPHANIE: Right. Yeah. We can't do that.

>>MICHAELA: No. And that's not possible for them, but they can work/collaborate on this platform together. Even though for our students it's integrated in Canvas. For them it's not.

>>STEPHANIE: Okay. Great. And before we go to the next piece, because this is another really popular question. Okay. So the students aren't in the same learning management system. That begs the question about assessment and grading. So the students are creating something in Padlet or in whatever technology that you're using. Do you grade that separately? Are the

students enrolled in the same class? How do you deal with that as two faculty members with two groups of students and that grading and assessment piece?

>>MICHAELA: Okay. So first of all, what I usually do in my online courses is put students into study groups of a maximum of 10 students, right? However, for this project, for this COIL project, I believe, and that's my conviction, that study groups need to be smaller in order to be more effective. So in this COIL course, my students are in study groups of five maximum. And these five will be joined by about three to four Brazilian students. So that gives you a study group of about eight to 10 students, which I believe is the perfect number to have in a study group. And I create 10 different Padlets. So I have 10 study groups. And these are comprised of Brazilian and FIU students and each gets a separate Padlet platform. So I have 10 different Padlets and I call them group one, group two, et cetera. So I can see for each group I can see what they post each week. And that's how I grade. And at the same time, I give administrative function to Professor Lucieni who was a co-teaching. So who's teaching the gaming and digital design course in Brazil. She has administrative capabilities too. So she can look at the Padlets that the students create and on her end grade her students. And I simply grade my students.

>>STEPHANIE: Great. And that's very important. That's an important point. I wanted to get that out of the way right away because sometimes that's like, okay, faculty will say if they have to be in the same course, if they have to enroll in my course, that's not going to happen. If they have to be in the same, we can't do COIL. We can. Another thing that's implied in what you're talking about has to do with power in the course. So we want, we know in collaboration, in terms of best practices and in collaboration, that we want equal power within the groups and the ways that we can make equal power happen can sometimes be through complementary skillsets, right? We want our students to know, like, you have something to offer to this that I don't have. I have something to offer to this that you don't have. And together we make a much better whole. That's part of global learning. That's part of collaboration. The same thing goes with faculty. So in this case, both faculty maintain the power to evaluate and assess their students. It just so happened that you were the one that set up the Padlet. Right?

>>MICHAELA: That is correct, but she could have done that too.

>>STEPHANIE: Right. But in this situation, you divided and conquered. You cooperated on this, you had the idea, you the tools. She was open and now she's going to use it as an administrator to be able to grade and assess and evaluate and also comment on the students.

>>MICHAELA: Yes. So we both posted introductory videos. I posted it in English. She posted it in Portuguese to address our entire student body because they're a mix now. But I have to point out that these students have a higher level of mastery in English. So for them it is no problem at all to conduct the entire project in English. Right? I want to point out one thing though, that the primary concern from the Brazilian side when we started this whole COIL process was that they had negative experiences before from COILING before where the student interaction was on an unequal level-- that they had the feeling that the Brazilian students lack of mastery of English was a detriment. And that from the part of the American university, they were

collaborating with back then, that was a negative factor. So that was something that burdened their collaboration. I was convinced that this would not be an issue in our case. And I told them this. And they saw it. Now after three semesters, they're more than happy and convinced too. But I know that our student body is very diverse and that's why I told them, you do not have to be concerned because we have a very diverse student body. They will be very willing to be open towards other cultures, towards working with students from a different culture. And they're curious about students from other cultures. I have every confidence in our students and I was right.

>>STEPHANIE: I love that. I love that. And you know, we do happen to have a soup of accents in our institution, but how do you enable students to establish that social presence with one another? Because I mean you had a hunch you are right, but that's not, sometimes our hunches aren't correct. And if we don't give our students the opportunity to be open and to get into a little bit more of that vulnerable space and even share the common challenges that our students have. I mean, our students are also struggling with English as a second language, right? So we have to open up the space to, to uncover those. How do you do that?

>>MICHAELA: So I don't know whether it's what I did, but I believe very much in icebreakers and I have an icebreaker for this COIL course where students are supposed to present to take a picture or screenshot whatnot of something they love about the city they live in and post that on the Padlet and then explain what they love about this and then ask the other students in Brazil a question about the city they live in. So this, and it's really interesting, right, because you get a lot of images from Miami on South Beach, and then you get a lot of images from the students in Brazil who have beaches as well. It's Brazil after all and it's a near Sao Paolo. So and already they see similarities, right? In the lifestyle, in what they do, what they like. And I think that helped them find a common denominator. Oh, we're students and we have similar experiences and we actually, we might like the same things.

>>STEPHANIE: It's so simple. It's so simple. But it does the trick.

>>MICHAELA: It worked for my format. Yeah. It really did work for my format.

>>STEPHANIE: You do have, but it's an online course, our course-- so do we have some students that are not from Miami?

>>MICHAELA: Yes, I do have students from all over. So I had a student from Texas. I have students, not from Miami only but from Jacksonville, from Tampa. So it's from all over the place.

>>STEPHANIE: So it ends up being, it still works.

>>MICHAELA: It's great. It still the works.

>>STEPHANIE: Do you do those icebreakers in your other like non-GL or non-COILing course?



>>MICHAELA: I do similar icebreakers in my non-COILing courses. I do also icebreakers on where students are to post a picture or an image of something that represents them best. Something like that, which they also like. And they always—they find so many commonalities and similarities and so they can really empathize with each other much better.

>>STEPHANIE: Fantastic. That's, I'm glad, I'm really glad that you brought that up. I wasn't planning on asking you about your other courses, but it's not just global learning. These things we can do in any of our courses, but it's something that we will do like to think of as a signature aspect of global learning is that piece of empathy and digging a little bit deeper and dispelling some of the sometimes erroneous assumptions that we have.

>>MICHAELA: Absolutely. Absolutely.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah. So you, you do the icebreaker with the students and then they move-- do they move right into the project or did they do some background readings first? How do you work that?

>>MICHAELA: I can give you a specific examples. So my students, when they learn about one module is called sexual harassment. So they learn about sexual harassment and there's also a movement in Brazil that tries to address these issues locally in Brazil. There is a TED Talk in Portuguese, it's called "She Got the Fiu Fiu," and there is also a movie being produced about that which calls out street harassment. And we, you know, we've had a large and huge discussion here in the US about street harassment. I don't know whether you've seen that short clip of the woman walking in New York. And so this is something that students in Brazil have to watch the TED Talk, which is in Portuguese, but it speaks to the same issues. It speaks to street harassment, whereas my students have to watch that clip from that woman in New York who made this public and opened up this discourse on street harassment. Right? So this is where they get to, they not always read the same text because remember the students in Brazil, they learn digital design, gaming. Correct? But still in order for them to collaborate on online violence, they need to get into these topics. Right? And so I was able to find these examples from the Brazilian culture in order to get students to introduce Brazilian students to these basic concepts. And then they can discuss that in their Padlet with the FIU students.

>>STEPHANIE: Fantastic. Okay. So you brought from your expertise, the content around the issue or the problem at hand. Now does your partner also bring to use and to your students some content about kind of the online space or the technology piece or it, or not so much?

>>MICHAELA: So and this-- well, I have to say, so this is really evolving. This COIL course is something that is evolving because every semester we change and adapt-- that that we started out with us bringing more to the table in terms because it's a project focused on gender issues, right? So online gender violence, but now we're evolving this. So they are thinking and making us think about the way in which games are designed. So you have to write a storyline when you design a game, correct? And this involves also bringing your ingrained bias to the table in which has always represented in every cultural and art production. And this is something that Brazilian

students can share with our students. The way in which this crafting of the storyline is really important. And that is something that they also reconsider after doing this collaboration because it's really important how you deal with the stereotypes that you go away from that and overcome these in creating your digital games. Right? So this is what they can share with my students, especially when they look at, so each week they're supposed to look at something different. One week they're supposed to look at commercials. So Brazilian students introduced commercials from Brazil and FIU students present a screenshot or a YouTube link to a commercial here from the US.

>>STEPHANIE: Okay, so there—you're not providing the content, your students, you say-- Go out and find me.

>>MICHAELA: Correct. That's their assignment, right. For one week. So they each look at their own cultural context and find samples, and then they present that to each other and they have to comment on each other. So they have to critically analyze that even if they don't understand the language simply from the representation of the gender dynamics in these commercials. What can you deduct from that? And so this is one part, another part is music videos. And again, they have to find examples from their own cultural context and analyze them and present them to each other in the Padlet. And another part is digital gaming. And here comes in the expertise from the Brazilian students, right? So they can more expertly talk on the way in which games are designed and how that influences the storyline, et cetera.

>>STEPHANIE: Okay. Now I'm going to get a little technical because I'm thinking about this in terms of global learning and global education at large because many of us come into, are drawn to global education, because we're so excited about learning about the other or about teaching about the other. But what I hear you saying is that in this case the design is more parallel than it is like crosswise, right? Like looking over there. Your students are critically engaging with their own culture. They're seeing their own culture as other or you're inviting them to see their own culture as other and the way that your students, that the students on both sides of this collaboration are effectively able to do that is instead of saying American students take a look at what's happening over there in Brazil, Brazilian students, take a look, look what's happening over there in America, which we generally would think of as the traditional global education or global learning or international education design, you're saying, let's take a look at our own cultures side by side, simultaneously, asynchronously. Let us reflect side by side, engage in this together. And in so doing, we get to see ourselves in a deeper way. We actually do get to see others in a deeper way and we validate this experience.

>>MICHAELA: And I think this is actually a critical point that we, as you rightly said, we tend to other, right? We tend to represent the other as different from our self. And what I want students to do as a country, I want them to reflect on the way in which taking it back to gender violence in which gender violence is prevalent in our society, and then compare that to the findings, the research findings from the resilience and see, oh, we're actually the same and this is happening over there as well. This is not only us. This is pervasive. And which takes us to the next step.

>>STEPHANIE: Uh huh. I'm so excited.

>>MICHAELA: In terms of excited in terms of, because then students have to start thinking about the end project, right, the global, the awareness campaign. So they have to create a campaign for others, for their peers to become aware and to become educated. And here comes the question of what can you do, right? How can you become involved? How can you be engaged in change? And this is something that I think it's a crucial takeaway for students from this collaboration.

>>STEPHANIE: So again, to go back to that power piece, it's, I think it's very, very important. The fact that each, that the students on both sides maintain the power, the expertise, if you will, to examine their own cultures. Right? Rather than inviting. I'm not quite sure how to say this in this particular moment. I'll have to think about this some more, but the critical perspective upon others, right, is very, very different then to invite many people to critically engage with their own culture, their own perspective,

>>MICHAELA: To be self-reflective,

>>STEPHANIE: ...to be self-reflective and the end to do that together in order to create solutions that honor the power and the independence of a different peoples in different places. And their right to self-governance. Right? So in the final project, the students are then creating a single campaign though, is that campaign to-- you said to their peers, is that campaign supposed to then address an audience that is a combined audience or do the students sometimes create kind of different messages for different cultures? How does that look?

>>MICHAELA: So, I think that it's important, first of all did determine who, and I said that this campaign is directed at their peers because that is what all of the students so far have chosen to do. I leave it open to students. I say you have to choose your audience. Do you want to make this a global awareness campaign of the general society in general? So do you want to educate the Brazilian public or in our case, the American public? Or do you want to educate your community, your church, your, you know, your social environment? Or is it your peers, the people who study with you, who are, you know, the future leaders in this country, in this context, in the state? So it's a choice, but so far, all of them have chosen to address this campaign towards their peers. And this actually has led Lucieni and me to think about what we can do further with this collaboration. And this is still in the planning phase. But what we would love to do is to leverage this collaboration to really make a lasting impact by generating data through surveys. So we're thinking about having students-- students develop a survey and have students implement this survey in their own social networks and then look at the results. But this is, you know, future.

>>STEPHANIE: Okay, we're not gonna hold you. We're not going to hold you accountable.

>>MICHAELA: This is just our plan, right? But there's so much that we can do now that we have this platform and that we have the means to get students from different cultures together

working on a project. And what we could gauge from the last two semesters is the student's interest in really digging deeper into asking themselves, well, if I didn't realize that this was going on, how about everybody else? And what can we do against us? Right? So how can we create an even more pervasive awareness of this?

>>STEPHANIE: Beautiful. So, this is the progression that we hope -- we cross our fingers. This is the magic of global learning. So there's the global awareness piece. The understanding that there are these complex issues, that there are interconnected factors that influenced the formation of those problems and interconnected effects. There's the global perspectives. There's the understanding that there are different ways of looking at an understanding of problems and their sources in there and their impacts. And then through that understanding, this impetus, this motivation to do, this willingness, if you will, the global engagement piece. I want to go further and what you're saying is that this is opening up the possibility of engaging in research with your students, primary research, research mentorship that for you as professionals, this is having an impact. Is that enough to convince you that your students have succeeded? That COIL is impactful for your students? Because I hate to go back to the A word, the assessment word, but especially in COIL, this is really a new frontier for the field, for Virtual Exchange. There are a lot of questions that senior leadership have. There are a lot of questions that our colleagues in say, study abroad international exchange have. Here we have students that are staying rooted in their home country. They're not studying abroad, but they're having, or do they have, the question is still out there. Are they having impactful learning experiences that are the same or different, better or worse? There's so many different questions about this than study abroad or other pedagogies. How-- what's your take on this?

>>MICHAELA: I don't think that this would replace study abroad, not at all, but on the contrary, I would say that engaging in such a collaborative project will only increase the appetite for study abroad. So if you can talk to someone from a different country, from a different culture and see similarities and see differences and get really interested in how life works in other countries, and that I think is a much better impetus to pursue study abroad, for example, than just skimming through a catalog and looking at -- oh the Coliseum looks nice. So maybe I do study abroad in Italy. Although mind you, I love Rome.

>>STEPHANIE: No one's criticizing the Coliseum.

>>MICHAELA: Specifically for students, the world is open today, right? They can go anywhere, but if they have already talked to their peers from this country, that will make them much more amenable to maybe choose study abroad in that country or choose to learn the language from that country. So I think it's an add on, it's an add value to that, to those programs.

>>STEPHANIE: And even the ethic of COIL, which is so similar to how we define global learning. There's the collaboration, there's the diversity, there's the problem solving. That design could be the design for a study abroad experience.

>>MICHAELA: Oh, absolutely. Yes.

>>STEPHANIE: Right? So the last piece of COIL, when we think about the icebreaker, when we think about the task and then we think about the reflection. So, and the learning really happens in the reflection and that's in any pedagogy. that's in any course or any experience that we have in life. So how do you invite your students to reflect on their experience and integrate it into their previous conceptualizations about the world or themselves or the topic, the subject matter.

>>MICHAELA: So we have tried several different things. And the very first collaboration we developed a survey, very short five question survey where students had to answer five prompts. That helped us realize that we did not want to use the tool that we used initially, which was not that successful.

>>STEPHANIE: That was the thing before Padlet?

>>MICHAELA: The thing before Padlet. Students did not like it. And for that the survey was great because that way we had excellent feedback and that was across the board. All the students hated that tool. So we said, okay, that's a no go. Then the other semester, we had an additional assignment--a part of the project was the reflection on what you have learned from each other. So students had to discuss in their final project what they learned from each other and what they take—so what is your takeaway? That was basically the assignment, to reflect on what you have learned in this collaboration. I'm not sure what I'll do this semester. I'll just awing it, I guess depending on how this collaboration goes in Padlet, how students interact with each other. And surveys often help you to get a more complex perspective on the collaboration. So to get more individualized answers than in the final project where students know this is the awareness campaign, this is the final product. So I think there are more averse to voicing criticism there and that's why I think I might still go with the survey.

>>STEPHANIE: Again, that's a very interesting design option in thinking about, well, when we think about doing research and we think about student learning assessment where all we often think about validity and reliability, the same sorts of things that we think of in other kinds of methodologies for research. And we think, well, we want to compare year over year, then we need to use the same questions. But what I hear you saying is that this is a complex interaction, a complex phenomenon, and you are observing the nature of the phenomenon in order to decide upon the questions that will best enable students to integrate that phenomenon into their cognition. You need to wait and see a little bit to—it's a little bit therapeutic in a way.

>>MICHAELA: Well, it's adapting to student need, right? What you see from their collaboration, and especially students, if they have questions, they'll email me. I'm their professor. So they want to know, how this fans out and if they have a serious issues or not. You know, this is normal. For the fully online environment, this is normal. You will always have challenging groups, but then it's my job to mitigate these issues and to be helping students along. So you just have to basically adapt it to the student needs.

>>STEPHANIE: And, okay. I was going to repeat that phrase, but you just repeated it. Adapting the reflection, which might be part of your assessment, to student needs, which means that the assessment piece, the reflection piece serves student learning first.

>>MICHAELA: Yes.

>>STEPHANIE: it serves student learning first and that's not always the case. I mean, when I started asking you this question, I was saying, well, we need data for the people who are wielding the power, right? Who are deciding where we're going to spend our resources, who are deciding what kinds of programs we're going to have in our institution. We need data for them. That's assessment that is not serving student learning first. If we begin by thinking about what are the types of questions that we need to help our students learn? My hunch is, and this is just a hunch, there's a lot more to think about here, is that we will learn what we need to know to make those decisions, right?

>>MICHAELA: Yes, I agree. I mean at the end of the day, I want my students to take away something from this. Right? And what better way is there then to really try to understand their needs and observe their willingness to engage and then react to that.

>>STEPHANIE: So that leads me to my next question, which is about you and what you have gained as not just a professor, but as a person. What have you gained from engaging with the global Learning approach with COIL or lost or just how has it influenced you?

>>MICHAELA: I think interestingly enough, it's-- as an instructor in women's and gender studies, you constantly struggle with opening up students to overcome their ingrained stereotypes and inherent biases. Right? And you would say that as an instructor in such a discipline, you are really aware and alert, but we have to realize that we all have ingrained biases. Right? And this collaboration with the Brazilian college helped me also to put myself on the alert that I should always be open-minded because we, through the media, we get a representation of a specific culture and of a specific environment and that is often portrayed in negative terms and you absorb these images, right, subconsciously, you absorb these images. And that is something that I learned in this collaboration and that I will take away sincerely that we cannot allow these images to predispose ourselves to lend ourselves to believe in stereotypes. Right? And I'm not talking about gender alone. I'm talking about the fact that, you know, you hear a lot about violence in general in Brazil, right? So you think this is a really dangerous place and nobody can get out on the street. And is of course not true for all of Brazil. Brazil is such a diverse country with many diverse and different regions. And while this might be true for some contexts, it's not for all contexts, right? So students live normal lives in Brazil and this is something that you subconsciously did not realize and did not accept but this helped me see new facets. Right? So I'm really grateful and plus I have found a great friend in the professor I'm working with Lucieni. She's wonderful and I think we'll have many more projects in the future together.

>>STEPHANIE: Michaela, thank you so much for sharing about your experience with COIL, a little bit about the story of your bravery in engaging in this new pedagogy and I'm just so excited about the follow up interview that we'll have in a couple of years.

>>MICHAELA: Hopefully.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah. To talk about the research that you've done and, or whatever it turns out to be because you're going to respond to the needs of your students.

>>MICHAELA: And thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk about my core course here.

>>STEPHANIE: Sure, absolutely. Thank you. Thanks for listening to this episode of Making Global Learning Universal. This podcast is brought to you by FIU's Office of Global Learning Initiatives, Media Technology Services, and our Disability Resource Center. You can find all our episodes, show notes, transcripts, and discussion guides on our webpage, [globallearningpodcast.fiu.edu](http://globallearningpodcast.fiu.edu). And if this episode was meaningful to you, please share it with colleagues, friends, and students. You can even give it a rating on iTunes. Thanks again for tuning in and for all you do to make global learning universal.

---

“Making Global Learning Universal” is a collection of conversations about engaging diverse perspectives, collaboration, and complex problem solving in higher education—on campus, online, in local communities, and abroad. Episodes are posted seasonally. Guests are from a wide variety of institutions, geographies, and areas of teaching, research, and practice. All episodes are accompanied by show notes, transcripts, and discussion guides to enhance global learning professional development, leadership, and teacher preparation.

The podcast is hosted by [Stephanie Doscher](#), Director of Global Learning Initiatives at Florida International University and co-author of *Making Global Learning Universal: Promoting Inclusion and Success for All*.

The “Making Global Learning Universal” podcast is produced through a partnership between Florida International University’s Office of Global Learning Initiatives, Media Technology Services, and Disability Resource Center.

Episodes, show notes, transcripts, and discussion guides are available at <http://globallearningpodcast.fiu.edu>.

You may subscribe to the “Making Global Learning Universal” [RSS feed](#) or access the podcast via iTunes, Spotify, or [Stitcher](#). “Making Global Learning Universal” is also listed on [MERLOT](#).

### **Listener recommendations**

“Making Global Learning Universal” is always looking for new guests to join the show and interesting topics to cover. [Email us](#) to make a suggestion!

### **Contact**

Office of Global Learning Initiatives  
Florida International University  
11200 SW 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
305-348-4145  
[goglobal@fiu.edu](mailto:goglobal@fiu.edu)