International Collaborative Teaching – but how?
A Guide for International Tandem-Teaching

This guide is created for lecturers of Bielefeld University to support the development of digital collaborative teaching and learning formats with international partners. Based on experiences gained within the *We CAN virtuOWL* project, it provides an overview of the main factors and useful tips for initiating this kind of learning format.

Examples at Bielefeld University

Within the *We CAN virtuOWL* project, nine new digital collaborative teaching and learning formats have been developed. It started off with two pilot project courses in summer 2020. Both courses were again offered in the winter term 2020/21 and proved to be a great example for successful transnational tandem-teaching.

Issues in Inclusive and Exclusive practices around the world: Reflections on devolopments in Germany and Canada (Mark Schäffer, Dr. Shiva Zarezadeh Kheibari, Prof. Dr. Anna Kirova)
View this seminar in the ekVV

Cultural and Digital Literacy in Englisch Language Teaching (Eleni Louloudi, Dr. Claudia Eppert)
View this seminar in the ekVV

Teaching Concepts and Tips

At first glance, international tandem-teaching might appear complicated and time-consuming. However, if you pay attention to a few things, this teaching format can be a great opportunity to expand your professional network and knowledge on teaching methods and tools.

Adapting Already Existing Syllabi
Your areas of interest and those of your partner may match so well that you can reuse content from courses you or your partner have already taught. This makes work easier and less time-consuming for you and your partner. Of course, specific contents may have to be adapted. Still, reusing material is, of course, an option.

Synchronous vs. Asynchronous Teaching
Sychronous teaching means that learning takes place at the same time. It allows for face-to-face engagement, yet might be intimidating for students that are non-native speakers. Asynchronous teaching means that students can work through the course materials at their own time, e.g. in group work without synchronous meetings. The advantage is that sutdents have more time to work through and prepare their tasks, but there will be no immediate feedback. The use of digital technologies can facilitate exchange.

Finding a Suitable Group Structure
Small groups are better suited for creating interactions; preferably at least two people from each country are in a team. If necessary, you can arrange the groups according to criteria you have previously observed in plenary (e.g. language skills). Pay attention to the dynamics in advance so that you can take them into account when forming groups. Even though it is usually not up to you, try to ensure that there is a balance between the course participants from each country.

How to Motivate Your Students
Remember that you are setting the space for your students. Get them excited about this extraordinary possibility, e.g. post a video before the course starts, refer to the benefits for future work situations or life outside university, where their knowledge gained through this experience will be useful, encourage some exploration of the other language. Involve your students into the process and plan the seminar together: the more agency the students are given, the more engaged they are. Let them create a product (toolkit, infographic etc.).

We CAN virtuOWL

We CAN virtuOWL is a project between 8 higher education institutions in Edmonton, Canada and OWL, Germany, in which new digital, collaborative teaching and learning formats have been developed successfully . The project is embedded in a fruitful (or: already existing) cooperation between the participating partners. In addition to **deepening the transatlantic network activities**, the new digital formats open up new possibilities for **intercultural exchange** and enable all students to gain valuable international experience. The funding is provided through the "International Virtual Academic Collaboration (IVAC)" program that was initiated by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

Funding Opportunities and Resources

Funding for the international collaborative courses was provided through the "**International Virtual Academic Collaboration (IVAC)**" program that was initiated by the DAAD and BMBF. The funding included **funds for student assistants** to support each course and **covered travel expenses**. These specific funds were only available during the active phase of the *We CAN virtuOWL* project.

There usually are (limited) options for making funds available. It is worth asking the International Office of if and how your project can be supported.

Digital Implementation

Bielefeld University provides access to various digital platforms and applications. There are in-house developments, open-source applications, and external services that you can be used for teaching and learning.

Lernraum and LernraumPlus
As one of the two central learning platforms, the *Lernraum* is available to all lecturers at Bielefeld University and provides basic functions such as document filing, a forum, and a tool for handing in assignments. In addition to the *Lernraum,* the *LernraumPlus* is the second central learning platform of Bielefeld University. It is a university-operated installation of the globally distributed learning management software Moodle and offers additional possibilities.

Panopto
At Bielefeld University, *Panopto* is available to all employees and teachers for creating and distributing video content. Within courses, students can also create their own videos with *Panopto* and manage share them on the platform.

Other Licenses
The *Zoom* campus license is available to employees, faculty and students at Bielefeld University and enables synchronous teaching.

With *Padlet*, teachers can create digital pinboards on which they can collect texts and media content together with students. All lecturers at Bielefeld University have access to a Padlet with an unlimited number of Padlets. It can be used for synchronous and asynchronous lessons.

The **TiL-Team** supports lecturers with questions concerning tools and possibilities for online teaching.

Contact information:
www.uni- bielefeld.de/einrichtungen/bits/elearningmedien/lernplattformen/
E-Mail: til-team@uni-bielefeld.de

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Step by step

FIND A PARTNER

Finding the right partner to enable a collaborative teaching course can be challenging but also valuable and interesting for building a long-term cooperation. If you already have a partner or know someone at another institution, that's great! If you don't, check other institutions' websites for colleagues working in a similar field, especially in a field you would like to teach about. The linked world map illustrates existing collaborations between Bielefeld University and other institutions and provides an initial overview. Please keep in mind that interdisciplinary collaborations are also possible.

Cooperation World Map
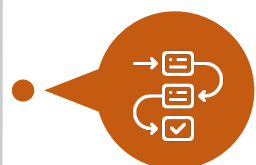
ESTABLISH YOUR TEACHING CONCEPT

Try to define your common field of interest. Ideally, defining a common field of interest should result in a central topic for the seminar. You will need a title, a syllabus and a modality for the seminar. The formalities of the seminar should be considered and discussed thoroughly. Also, establishing channels and defining availability times are crucial. Luckily, the digital age allows many ways to design the seminar. For more information, please see *Teaching Concepts and Tips* on page 1.

Within the seminar *Issues in Inclusive and Exclusive practices around the world: Reflections on devolopments in Germany and Canada*, Mark Schäffer (Bielefeld University), Dr. Shiva Zarezadeh Kheibari (University of Alberta) and Prof. Dr. Anna Kirova (University of Alberta) developed a guide which provides useful tips for designing an international collaborative course from a lecturer's point of view.

Guide for International Tandem-Teaching

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Semester Times May Differ

As semester times may differ between different countries and institutions, it is necessary to check if courses can take place at the same time. If it is not possible, keep in mind that semester dates don't have to match perfectly and the collaborative part does not have to cover the length of a whole semester. Asynchronous teaching is an option for handling different time zones and academic teaching schedules.

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HOLD YOUR COLLABORATIVE TEACHING COURSE

Time to shine! If teaching synchronously, to meet a few minutes before the session can be beneficial for both parties. Depending on how you structure your seminar, sharing the presentation among all parties for each session can make communication easier, so everyone has a general idea of what the session will focus on. It can be helpful to reflect on each session immediately afterwards, so you can discuss what went well and what should be changed for the next session. It is important to establish roles, so everyone knows their tasks and the session runs smoothly.

EVALUATE YOUR COLLABORATION

It is advisable to evaluate your collaborative course. It can be helpful to have an evaluation carried out not only by the participating students, but also by yourself and your teaching partner. What went well? What could be improved? What did we like? What did we not like? Please see this document for ideas and questions for evaluating your seminar.

PLAN YOUR FURTHER COLLABORATION

We are sure your collaborative course has been well received by your and your partner's students. Think about carrying on with your cooperation by offering the collaborative course together with your partner on a regular basis. If your seminar is part of a project, check page 1 for possible funding opportunities.