

COIL Reflection Fall 2021

EDC 810 Technology Methods in the Early Primary and Elementary Grades

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A description of the COIL activity and its goals

This COIL project utilizes the cross-cultural exchanges of digital photo essays as a driving force for technology-enhanced learning for culturally responsive teaching. Specifically, in this project, students use digital photos as an effective method to assess and expand their understanding of how COVID-19 pandemic transformed the early childhood education (ECE) or elementary (ELEM) education and the role of technology for children's learning and development during the crisis. Additionally, it is designed to help students jump-start their digital narrative writing that focuses on real-life problems.

This international digital photo essay project consists of five parts: a digital photo workshop, digital photo essays, creating collective photo essays, international exchanges, and a final international online discussion. My students and our international partners from Duksung Women's University (DWU) exchanged and commented on each other's digital photo essays. Also, the international partners attended our final online discussion via zoom, allowing all students to discuss current issues related to the use of technology for education in Korea and the U.S., and understand how they used digital photo essays for their professional development.

A summary of what went well and what may be improved

The most positive outcome of this project is that it allowed my students and our international partners to mutually increase cultural awareness through a critical self-examination of one's preconceived notions of best practices in education. Our students were able to challenge their own assumptions of others' practices through the engagement in international conversations and collaborative writing. This project aimed to promote cultural awareness and contextual sensitivity for our student teachers across multicultural contexts through the systemic exchange of digital photo essays. I believe that we achieved this goal as my students were able to learn

about how the concept of best practices can be varied between national cultures. Also, they expanded their ideas of best practices in the use of technology in education through this project.

One of the challenges that I faced in the implementation of the activity was to identify optimal times for the international online discussion. The time zone differences between here and Korea made it difficult to find the right meeting time. To overcome this challenge, my partner instructor and I regularly met in the planning stage and then built our class schedules that maximized the opportunities for the students to meet online. As a result, I scheduled my class as a late evening course (Wednesdays, 6:30-7:45pm), and she scheduled her class as a morning class. This allowed my students and the international students to attend the international meeting. After the meeting, we noticed that a one hour meeting was not enough for the students to get to know each other and learn different cultures. This could be improved by allowing students to reach out to each other in advance (e.g., email or short video message). Also, I had weekly meetings with the partner instructor to identify appropriate digital tools we could use for the international conversations and collaborative writing. We identified that Zoom, Google Forms, Google Slides, and Padlet are effective tools to exchange assignments, online discussions, and an online synchronous meeting. However, they are online tools widely used in the U.S. and owned by the U.S. companies. My goal for next time is giving my students opportunities to experience online tools used in Korea so they can learn how technology is used for education in Korea.