

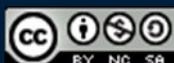


FACULTY GUIDE FOR GLOBAL COURSE CONNECTIONS



*Sponsored by the Global Liberal Arts Alliance
and the Great Lakes Colleges Association*

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INTRODUCTION

The Global Liberal Arts Alliance

The [Global Liberal Arts Alliance](#) (GLAA) is a multilateral partnership of equals that seeks to be a beacon for educational leaders, faculty members, and administrators through the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and experience among institutions committed to education in the tradition of the liberal arts. The Alliance presently has 26 institutional members located in 14 nations. It was founded and is administered by [The Great Lakes Colleges Association](#) (GLCA) with support from the Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation and Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.



Purpose of This Guide

If you are reading this guide, you have probably decided to collaborate with a faculty member at a Global Liberal Arts Alliance institution in another country to offer a globally connected course. You are about to embark on a teaching and learning experience that may challenge your ideas about conventional course delivery and the value of untried student assignments. This endeavor will take you and your students on an intellectual journey rich in cross-cultural experiences, helping your students attain a deeper, more enriched understanding of the course goals and content. This guide is intended to help you gather the tools and information needed to get started and has been organized around a set of key questions that you and your faculty partner should consider as you develop your connected course.

The guide begins with background information about the Global Course Connections (GCC) program. The sections that follow take you through how to identify courses that will benefit from a global course connection; how to design course connections; how to locate a faculty partner; how to gather institutional support; and, how to negotiate course content with your partner. In the *Working Together* section, four sets of questions are presented that you and your faculty partner will use to gather information about each other as you begin developing your course together. The information gathered from the answers to these questions can be entered in a Course Information Table, which is available as an Excel Spreadsheet and included as a figure in this guide. The Guide concludes with a series of GCC Suggested Practices identified by the experiences of Alliance faculty members who have taught a globally connected course.

Background on the Global Course Connections Program

Global Course Connections is an effort of the Global Liberal Arts Alliance. The immediate goal of this program is to support the connection of two college classes, one from a U.S.-based Alliance campus with one from a non-U.S. Alliance campus in a way that enriches both courses with an international perspective. The larger goal of this effort is to deepen the educational, social, and intellectual connections among the member institutions in an effort to create a globally inclusive community of Liberal Arts educators.

Connected courses need not be nearly identical or even from the same discipline, but must have overlapping topics that can be enhanced with an international perspective. The nature and extent of the course connections are determined by the instructors. The courses can be tightly coupled, working from a common syllabus with common readings and assignments, or they can be loosely coupled connecting at a smaller set of strategic points in the course where an international perspective would provide the greatest impact. Courses can use synchronous communication (e.g., shared class sessions, student-student Skype sessions) and/or asynchronous communication (e.g., through email, course management systems, forums, or other web-based repositories).

GETTING STARTED

Below are four steps you should follow to ensure that you and your partner have the basics covered and have all required information to support your communication as you negotiate and develop your connected course.

Step 1: Identifying Potential Courses and Locating Institutional Resources

Your first step is to identify candidate courses and to determine what institutional resources are available.

What aspects of your course make it a good candidate for a globally connected course?

There are very few courses that cannot be adapted to the GCC model; however, it may not be obvious what specific qualities within the course make it a good candidate. Here are a few reflective questions to help determine how a global connection will enhance your course goals and your students' learning experience.

- Broadly, in what ways would your course benefit from an international perspective?
- What components of your course would be enhanced if students could discuss it with peers in another country?
- In what ways would having multiple cultural perspectives enhance your students' understanding of the course content?
- How could the direct involvement of international students energize your classroom?
- Might an international engagement in your classroom lead some of your students to consider studying abroad?

Are you ready to teach your course in a technologically enhanced way?

Working with a class offered in another country necessarily involves the use of technology. Which technologies you use is entirely up to you and your course partner, and will be influenced by the kinds of course interactions you expect to create. If you are only comfortable with one or two technologies, such as email and Skype™, then design your course within those boundaries. If you or your partner's university has a course management system (CMS) such as WebCT/Blackboard or Moodle, with which you are familiar and access can be shared, then you can build your course upon that platform. What is important is that you should be comfortable with the technologies that you choose; those technologies should be supported by your Information Technology (IT) department; and, the choice of technology should enhance your courses by enabling your connected course goals.

If you and the partner you choose have been teaching in a traditional classroom setting, you have a few options. You can overlay your usual face-to-face sessions with the online collaborative component you are developing, or you can replace some of the usual classroom meetings with online sessions. This type of combined class format is called a blended or hybrid learning model, and when well-executed combines the best of the online and traditional classroom environments. If blended learning is not commonly used at either institution you may want to speak with the registrars of your respective institutions to be sure that reducing "seat-time" by adding online sessions is acceptable. In practice, adding a blended component usually moves the location of that seat time from the classroom to a student's computer desk or a 'smart' classroom for the connected sessions.

Do you have the support of your institution?

While there is some flexibility regarding course content, there also may be boundaries which limit curricular changes. If the collaboration is limited to a short module of 2-4 weeks, you may not need to submit your changes to a curriculum committee. Fortunately, globally networked courses can be considered a means to 'internationalize' your curriculum, which can be used to gather support from your dean, provost, or department chair to accommodate course alterations. The course content is not likely to change significantly, but will be enhanced by an international component.

Keep in mind that administrative support can be vital to receiving technology and teaching resources, as well as providing faculty time to design, develop, and deliver the course, so every effort should be made to get an institutional commitment to the developmental process. The program officer at the GLCA who coordinates these partnerships would be pleased to discuss the positive implications of GCC participation with your administrators and colleagues.

Step 2: Selecting a GCC Faculty Partner

Once you know which of your courses you would like to connect, you need to find a course partner. As in developing any type of close working relationship, you need to find a good fit where there is an alignment of goals and a sense of trust, but in this case you are adding the complexity of crossing cultures, which may demand real sensitivity from both sides.

How do you locate a faculty partner for your connected course?

The Presidents and Chief Academic Officers at Global Liberal Arts Alliance member institutions are very enthusiastic about this program. Begin by letting your department chair and Chief Academic Officer (Dean or Provost) know of your interest in offering a globally connected course. Your administrators may know about ongoing calls for participation in this and other programs for faculty members and can make a recommendation on your behalf to the GLCA program officer (Joyce Budai; budai@glca.org) about your interest. You are encouraged to contact the GLCA staff directly with your interests, as long as that is an accepted practice on your campus.

GCC international faculty partners may be drawn from any member institution of the GLAA. Most often, your partner will be a faculty member working in your discipline, or a related one, whom you have never met before. If you don't have someone immediately in mind, here are some key questions that you can ask to get started on your search:

- What geographic global perspective(s) would best suit your course content?
- Do you or any of your colleagues have GLAA colleagues in that part (or those parts) of the world?
- If not, the GLCA program officer who coordinates GCC for the Alliance can assist you in identifying a potential institution and possible faculty partners.

What are some of the key criteria for selecting a connected course partner?

Both you and your faculty partner need to be equally engaged, committed, and responsive to negotiating the course content and teaching load that you will be sharing. Without equal input the course can become unbalanced and will only reflect one international perspective. This can undermine the most valuable aspect of the connection as you and your partner should ideally be modeling productive cross-border collaboration for your students. Understandably, this can be challenging because most initial partnered relationships, especially across international borders, are not completely equitable. Nevertheless, this should be a goal.

Step 3: Understanding Institutional Cultures and Academic Standards

Once you have a course partner, recognizing the underlying institutional teaching cultures upon which each of you practice is vital. The specifics of these practices may not be immediately obvious to either party. Developing an understanding of the accepted institutional practices at each school requires an exploration of what normally takes place in each classroom and how this might be affected by the dynamics of the course connections you will create.

Below are some questions that may help you and your faculty partner determine the range and scope of institutional cultural differences and the level of administrative support that each school can provide. You are encouraged to generate additional questions better suited to your specific institutional setting:

- How comfortable is each teacher with working in a student-centered classroom?
- How much reading or other out-of-class work do students in each class expect to

accomplish each week? How are deadlines viewed?

- Are students in both groups comfortable editing their classmates' work or commenting in an open forum? Is there need for interventions to facilitate this form of exchange?
- How are student-initiated discussions perceived by each instructor? Do they add valuable, substantive content, or are they seen as distracting from predetermined content?

Step 4: Begin Negotiation

Once you have identified your faculty partner and have determined that you both have the commitment and institutional support needed to embark on the development of a connected course, the next step is to begin your negotiation. The starting point is often discussion of an existing course syllabus, but it can be useful to step back from this foundational document to discuss each instructor's goals for his or her course and for the cross-cultural exchange. This shared developmental process can lead to deeper revisions of both courses. It is fine to start with one faculty member of the collaborative team as the "lead," but the full benefits—both for the instructors and the students—will be more fully realized to the extent that the conceptualization and development of the class are truly shared.

You should agree on a level of collaboration you are both confident you can sustain throughout the course. Issues to consider include your course goals, the time needed for collaboration, student comfort, and available technology and technology support.

In thinking about the number, kinds, and intensity of connections you want to create, consider what would be sufficient to give your students an international perspective without being overwhelming for you or for them. The connections need to be manageable, especially the first time you teach a connected course. Flexibility in course planning and student project format will be important. Keeping it simple will still yield valuable educational outcomes.

Check your calendar for changes in time that would affect scheduling synchronous activities. For example, not all countries observe daylight savings time and it can begin on different dates! Your paired courses could easily be off by two to three weeks in starting dates. Knowing about such calendar constraints as you are planning your connected modules will minimize confusion later.

This type of detailed discussion may best be accomplished with the help of a template in which key topics are identified. In the following section (*Working Together with a Course Information Table*), an example of such a template is provided along with questions that can be used by collaborating faculty to retrieve key information that can be used as a tool to gauge the items that will require negotiation. We recommend that you and your partner complete this table at the onset of your partnership and then discuss each item until you have a shared vision about how you will proceed.

One of the best ways to begin this stage of planning between faculty partners is the opportunity to meet each other in person. The experiences of faculty members participating in the pilot year of the GCC indicate that a face-to-face work session can make a significant difference in the effectiveness and quality of your future work together as partners. To support this, the GLCA

has planned a summer workshop specifically for faculty members who have just completed teaching or will be teaching a connected course. Faculty partners benefit from meeting each other and will also learn from faculty with experience teaching a connected course previously. The group of GCC participants will discuss the liberal arts in an international context, work on their individual course connections, and benefit from learning how other participants in the GCC plan to connect a diverse suite of courses.

If circumstances do not allow your participation in this meeting, there are alternative arrangements that some faculty have employed to good effect. You and your partner may both be attending the same conference and can meet there. In some cases one partner might arrange to visit the other partner's home campus. Even a research trip or personal vacation travel might afford the opportunity to spend a day working with your faculty partner. The GLCA program officer will work with you in trying to identify such opportunities.

Working Together with a Course Information Table

Developing a connected course requires collaboration and negotiation between partners. The following section provides comments on the six basic areas covered by the GCC Information Table in Figure 1: Contact Information, Course Content, Issues of Time, Issues of Language, Internet Based Communication, and Assessment.

The GCC Information Table is adapted from a similar table designed by the Center for Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) Group at the State University of New York (SUNY), adapted from Clarke Shah-Nelson's COIL Cross Cultural Course Collaborations Template under a Creative Commons licensing agreement. Global Course Connections faculty members complete this table as the first step in planning the specifics of their course connections. Request a digital copy of this table by emailing budai@glca.org.

Figure 1: GCC Information Table

Provide answers to the following items to the best of your ability. Skip those for which you do not have ready answers. The goal is to have you begin thinking about topics that will be relevant to planning your connected course. When done, please email your responses to your course connection partner and to budai@glca.org.

	Contact Information	Faculty 1	Faculty 2
1.1	Name		
1.2	Institution		
1.3	Email address		
1.4	Skype name (if available)		
1.5	Instant messaging names (e.g., AIM, Yahoo, MSN, G-Chat)		
1.6	Mobile phone number (for calls and texts)		
1.7	Website (URL)		
	Course Content		
2.1	Name of your course		
2.2	Course level (1st year, 2nd year, ...)		
2.3	Expected enrollment		
2.4	Course website (URL)		
2.5	List the course topics that lend themselves to global critical reflection by students.		
2.6	Do you have learning objectives (module goals) for each of these topics?		
2.7	Do you have readings associated with these topics?		
2.8	Do you have an assignment and/or activity associated with these aspects? Which of these involve group work?		
2.9	At what point in the course (e.g., 2nd week, 5th week) do the modules associated with these topics occur in the course and how many class sessions do you devote to them?		
2.10	Are there departmental or institutional restrictions or expectations for your course that must be met in order that it can be part of the Global Course Connection project?		
	Issues of Time		
3.1	During which term will your course be taught?		
3.2	When does your term start and end (dates)?		
3.3	What is your likely class time?		
3.4	What days of the week does your campus normally hold classes?		
3.5	Dates of holiday breaks within the semester.		
3.6	What time zone are you in? (in relation to GMT)		

3.7	What are the best office hours to contact you?		
3.8	Are there specific institutional expectations regarding the time students are expected to put into the course (outside of class time)?		
	Issues of Language		
4.1	What language is used for this course (delivery, assignments, etc.)?		
4.2	Especially, within a language course, would a bilingual approach be useful and viable for this course? If so, what is the second language?		
4.3	How will you deal with language and translation issues when (or if) they arise?		
	Internet-Based Communication		
5.1	What technology is available in your classrooms that would allow you to communicate (synchronously or asynchronously) with your partner class? Would you need to go to a special facility to do this?		
5.2	Do your students have Internet access outside of campus labs (e.g., in their residence halls, family homes)		
5.3	During the collaboration, do you wish to engage in synchronous activities (real-time) such as live chat, videoconference, etc.?		
5.4	What asynchronous (delayed-time) activities do you wish to use, such as email, discussion forums, etc.?		
5.5	What course management system (e.g., Blackboard, Moodle) does your campus use?		
	Assessment		
6.1	What would you describe as success for your participation in this project?		
6.2	What would you describe as success for your students' participation in this project?		
6.3	How will student work be evaluated (tests, quizzes, papers, presentations)?		
6.4	If there is a common graded assignment, do you think there should be a common grading scale or will each instructor grade his/her own students separately?		
	Other (Please put here any questions you would like your partner to answer)		

Acknowledgment: This table is adapted from a table prepared by the Center for Collaborative Online Learning (COIL) at the SUNY Global Center (coilcenter.purchase.edu)

Contact Information (1.1 to 1.7)

Provide contact information for communication throughout planning and implementation of the connected course. The GLCA program officer working with you and your partner will need this information to arrange phone and Skype conference sessions before, during, and following the active period of your connected course.

Course Content (2.1 to 2.10)

Negotiating the course content is critical to ensure that the connected course makes sense for both sets of students and fits with the learning objectives of each course. Describing the what, who, and when of the shared content will simplify collaborative teaching during the semester. Aspects of this table can also be helpful in the exploratory stages as you determine whether a potential partner is a 'good fit' for your course.

The paired courses should be offered at a comparable student level with similar prerequisites.

Take enrollment into consideration. How would classes of different sizes affect the kinds of connections you hope to create? This will be important if you want to create teams or have cross-course pairings.

Issues of Time (3.1 to 3.8)

One major consideration when collaborating across distant international borders is time. Schools often have different academic semesters and have different time zones. Coordinate your two course calendars with respect to the beginning of classes, holidays, and end of semester exam periods.

Note the date of onset of daylight savings time in each country. This can be a major factor to accommodate during the course, so it is important to outline these up front and then negotiate how you want to proceed with your faculty partner e.g., would real-time (synchronous) shared virtual classes be possible? If so, at what times would this be possible? Asynchronous tools, which accommodate delayed time communication and collaboration (such as email and blogs) allow teachers and students to contribute when they are available. This can be especially important if using synchronous tools across time zones becomes daunting.

Issues of Language (4.1 to 4.3)

While English tends to be the dominant language for teaching at Alliance schools, it will not be the native language for many Alliance students. You may be teaching a language course or the primary language of the students in your faculty partner's class may not be English. This can provide great cross-language communication opportunities, but may also create inequities in the communication flow putting one set of students at an advantage. It is important to address these differences at the onset so that collaborative exercises and assessments address differences in language competency. If you want to have common texts, be mindful of the language difficulty for students for whom English is a second language.

Internet Based Communication (5.1 to 5.5)

You will both need to agree on how you want to proceed and which technologies you want to use for communication and collaboration purposes. Issues of access to the technology for both sets of students and support for those technologies may vary by campus. It is *strongly* recommended that you engage your educational information technology (IT) staff early in the planning to see what resources are available on your campuses and what assistance they can provide.

Not all colleges use a proprietary Course Management System (CMS) such as Blackboard™, and if one is being used, faculty may have different levels of comfort using it. If both partners use different course management systems, which one will be used?

Synchronous communication can be supported through a video conferencing system or via Skype or Google Hangout. Find out what equipment is available to support these options. The quality of the video and audio has a significant impact on the quality of classroom experience.

Asynchronous communication can be supported through email, Facebook, and forums.

Assessment (6.1 to 6.4)

Assessment is an important component of a college course that should be made transparent to students. A first step is to consider what would constitute a successful experience for you and for your students.

The assignments you adopt as part of your connection will be tied to the goals you identify for the connected part of your course. How will you determine if those goals have been met? Be clear in your modified class syllabus that the connected assignments are required, not optional, and be clear about how they will be graded. If you have built in extra, outside of class meetings to accommodate synchronous sessions with your partner class, determine how you will accommodate student participation. Some faculty members provide extra credit for such events. The most important thing is to be clear with your students from the beginning of the semester so that there is time to manage schedule conflicts and find alternative solutions.

It will be helpful for your future class planning to include a section in your student course evaluations that provides an opportunity for the students to assess the value of the connected aspects of your course. Some faculty partners have chosen to use the same set of questions for each course to allow comparison later. Collecting this kind of information is most helpful to the future directions Global Course Connections.

Global Course Connections Suggested Practices

1. Communication between Faculty Partners

Due to the cross-cultural and technological nature of this work, many issues will likely arise the first time you co-teach. Having open communication about the challenges that you face will help you to help each other. Be clear in communicating your expectations and needs to your faculty

partner. Unexplained assumptions can lead to misunderstanding and frustration. Talk with your course partner about the social and cultural construction of education, coursework, assignments, attendance, attention to deadlines, test taking and the like on your campuses. What expectations does your culture or your campus have for your students? How might that impact your course connections?

Don't assume your counterpart knows your time constraints or work conventions (weekends, evenings, holidays, etc.). What days are you usually in your office? What dates will you be away from the course? What other obligations do you have during the semester that may impact the collaboration?

Be clear about how the workload will be shared – course preparation, making technology available, lecture preparation and presentation, creating assignments, grading, answering student questions, and so on.

You should plan on frequent, regular communication with your course partner. Be willing to make adjustments. Some faculty members find it useful to have an agreed-upon time and day of the week that is dedicated to e-mail exchange or phone conversation about the paired course work. Having a predictable schedule is reassuring when communication is challenging due to time zone differences.

2. Communication with Students

Help your students understand why the course connections are important, how they will work (what they will look like), and how to get the most out of them.

Students will pick up on the enthusiasm the instructor has for the course connection. If the students sense that the instructor doesn't see value in it, they won't either and participation will be poor.

An exchange of campus promotional video clips would help set the stage for each class with some background exploration of the history of the partner institution as well as its geopolitical place in the world.

Your students will likely be as new to this form of learning as you may be, and they may approach the course with some false expectations and apprehensions. Supporting student-to-student connections is essential early on and throughout the term in order for the students to feel there is another class working in tandem with them. It is very helpful to introduce the students to each other at the beginning of the course using simple icebreakers. Students will value and benefit from the experience of an international connection more than the details of the exercise, so allow such connections to happen, even around topics that may be less rigorous than you wish.

You might create a Facebook "group" for the two classes. This will allow students to connect immediately and follow up with discussions and assignments. It also provides a way for faculty members to monitor activities and group discussions. Later synchronous class sessions will be more productive if the students have interacted previously.

3. Using Technology

Faculty members have found that including the IT staffs from both campuses early in the planning leads to smoother course connections. Furthermore, it extends the degree of campus-to-campus connection, engaging more colleagues on each campus.

Holding synchronous class meetings can be challenging because of the time differences and the technology demands. Equipment that works well for a one-on-one Skype call won't work as well for a class-to-class meeting. You will need a good web camera, monitor, and multiple microphones. Ask your IT staff about using Skype. If the bandwidth traffic is limited on the local network, ask if your Skype calls can receive preferential treatment.

If embarking on a synchronous activity, go online at least 30 minutes ahead of schedule to make sure things are working as they should, and if possible, ask an IT staff member to be on call during your planned real time connections. Have a contingency plan in case the technology fails. This is especially important if you schedule a synchronous joint class session. Talk with your faculty partner about a back-up way to communicate if your first choice is compromised. If Skype goes down, use e-mail or texting on your phone rather than have two classes hanging in suspense and frustrated about what might be happening “over there”.

Consider using a variety of technologies, as each has a unique strength. Some instructors encourage students to communicate informally using tools such as Skype and Facebook.

If you are planning to use a Course Management System, activate it by the beginning of the course with all students registered and able to login. Delays and glitches can be discouraging for students who are understandably apprehensive about how the course connection will affect their experience and their grade. Students will find alternatives, and may be less willing to switch back to the CMS.

If you will be using solely asynchronous communication, check that your assignments, if posted in a CMS for example, are accessible. Check and double-check! Encourage students to point out problems (e.g., via e-mail to you, for example) and reward them with praise when they do. Think of this as one important collaborative aspect of your course connection. Everybody—teachers and students—are doing innovative, challenging work in a connected course.

4. Cross-Border Assignments

If students are expected to collaborate or to communicate, put a grade to the effort involved. Absent that, students need an internal motivation to put in the effort, which may be difficult if they perceive little value in the collaboration in relation to the effort required.

Helping students learn to work with other students is always challenging, and having them do so with students in a different country will be even more challenging. If we consider that part of our role as college educators is to help prepare our students to be ready for global work, this sort of activity can provide an invaluable experience for students from all participating institutions. For that reason, be certain to engage students in at least one reflective, collaborative assignment. A common practice is to put students into groups. Cross-course collaboration might occur *between*

groups that are set up within each course or *within* groups that are composed of students from both courses.

When you have joint assignments, be sure that the students in both courses know what is expected of them, particularly with regard to how they are to interact with their partners in the other course. Provide some recourse if students from the other course are not responsive. Encourage ongoing student feedback about the cross-institutional student-to-student work groups.

Be clear with students about who will grade their work and the criteria to be used. This is especially important if the assignment involves cross-course teams.

If pairing students to communicate, consider using email between students or a forum. A listserv generates a lot of email, which can clutter the inbox. A forum and a listserv are public, so anything a student sends will be public. Students might find comfort and inspiration in seeing what others have written, but might also be shy about having their messages read (potentially) by everyone in both classes.

Examples of student assignments for connections:

- Shared readings, videos, or films – consider best choices for students for whom English is a second language
- Shared class sessions
- Student teams, paired students, and paired student teams responding to prompts provided by the instructors
- Presentations (shared/collaborative PowerPoint files)
- Papers with international content and significance for both classes
- Q & A sessions between your faculty partner and your students, between you and your faculty partner's class

This document is a derivative of the [Faculty Guide for Collaborative Online International Learning Course Development](#) created by The Center for Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) at The State University of New York Global Center available under Creative Commons license. It has been modified to address the specific needs of faculty members participating in the Global Liberal Arts Alliance program, the Global Course Connections Project, 2012-2014.



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