

# Enhancing Intercultural Competence and Language Skills Through Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL): A Decade of Insights from Japanese Students

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) experiences on undergraduate students in Japan over a period spanning from 2010 to 2024. Using survey data from 1222 students across various English and pedagogy-focused courses, the research provides a detailed analysis of how COIL programs affect language acquisition, intercultural competence, global awareness, and professional preparedness. The findings suggest that COIL significantly enhances students' English language skills, with improvements in both proficiency and presentation abilities. Furthermore, students reported increased intercultural understanding and broader global perspectives, supporting the notion that COIL fosters intercultural competence by enabling students to engage with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds. Although the academic and cultural outcomes were positive, the study also found that COIL had a more modest influence on career motivation, highlighting a potential area for improvement. These results are consistent with existing literature on virtual exchange programs, which emphasize the role of technology in bridging geographical and cultural divides. The paper also discusses the challenges and limitations of COIL programs, particularly regarding the alignment of virtual exchange experiences with students' professional aspirations. Based on these findings, the paper offers recommendations for enhancing COIL's effectiveness, particularly by integrating career-oriented tasks and leveraging innovative technological tools, such as immersive technologies and virtual reality, to better connect academic experiences with professional development.

**Keywords:** E-learning; Language Education; Global Competence; Collaboration; Projects