

A Language-Aware COIL: How to build on language diversity in virtual exchanges

A CUNY COIL Working Group Faculty Series Workshop

Thursday, March 18th from 9-10:15 am

Presenters: Lucy McNair & Leigh Garrison-Fletcher, LaGuardia CC

[RSVP](#)



How do COIL partners and students decide which language or languages to use? What are our beliefs and attitudes towards these languages, and towards how we and our students acquire them or move between them? How do faculty regard their own linguistic skills, whether language experts or experts in other fields? Ideologically, do we unpack the complex connections between named, hegemonic languages and identity positions, or explicitly address the impact of unequal status between languages and language variations on communication between faculty or between students? Even as we offer our students new experiences through virtual exchange, which messages are we sending about language, especially the continuing impact of language hierarchy and the power structures it enables?

In an effort to ensure equitable opportunities for all students in COIL projects, this workshop will focus on how we might move from a “language blind” to a “language aware” approach and engage our students’ language resources, no matter the nature of the virtual exchange. We invite participants to place language at the center of their pedagogy and brainstorm ways to shift to a multilingual, translanguaging approach in COIL projects. The presenters will introduce the rationale and applications they have developed as co-leaders of Language Across the Curriculum (LAC), a professional development (PD) seminar at LaGuardia’s CTL that offers a cross-disciplinary, theoretically grounded approach to language diversity as an essential element of identity formation, social and cultural diversity, and academic success. We hope this workshop will be both informative and fun as we explore together how we approach language diversity in our teaching in general and how we might envisage an innovative, language-aware COIL pedagogy at CUNY.

Lucy McNair is an Associate Professor in the English Department at LaGuardia Community College where she teaches academic and creative writing from a multilingual perspective. She is a member of the LaGuardia COIL Task Force and co-leads the Language Across the Curriculum seminar for the LaGuardia Center for Teaching and Learning.

Leigh Garrison-Fletcher is an Associate Professor in the Education and Language Acquisition Department at LaGuardia Community College where she teaches linguistics and academic ESL. Her research focuses on the development of literacy in emergent bilinguals and the application of translanguaging pedagogy in the community college setting.

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