



Leaders in International Higher Education

## 2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

*Leading Internationalization in  
a New Era: Collaborating for  
Global Solutions*

# We can still make our classes diverse and interactive: Development of online intercultural collaborative learning classes

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This session is sponsored by JAFSA- Japan Network for International Education.

<https://www.jafsa.org/en/>

12:15pm ~ 1:00pm Feb. 17, 2021 (Eastern Time, USA) 🌐

2:15am ~ 3:00am Feb. 18, 2021 (Japan) 🌐

# Outline of the session

- Introduction of the session
- Case of Tohoku University
- Benefits of online intercultural collaborative learning
- Challenges of online intercultural collaborative learning
- Group work

# Introduction of this session

Audience will be able to:

- get an overview of the online intercultural collaborative learning (ICL) classes in response to the COVID-19 campus shutdown.
- go through a quick training to design and facilitate online ICL classes/activities by learning from actual cases.
- understand the benefits and challenges of online ICL.
- discuss ways to overcome these challenges.

# Case of Tohoku University

## Development of Intercultural Collaborative Learning Classes with International Partners

Subjects: International Education

1. Connecting to the World through Intercultural Communication

Language(s) of Instruction: Japanese & English

2. International Project

Language of Instruction: English



# Connecting to the World through Intercultural Communication

## Class description :

This class provides both international and domestic students with opportunities to learn from each other through thematic discussions and collaborative projects. Interactions among students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds are built into the learner-centered lessons where different ways of thinking, values, and working-styles are respected.

The class will be conducted in Japanese, but English will be used as supplement.

- ☐ Usually, the class deals with controversial SDGs topics such as poverty, discrimination, inequality in education and gender, etc. This semester's class, however, is built around the theme of COVID-19.
- ☐ Students discuss the impact and influence COVID-19 has had on daily life.

# International Project

## Class description :

Collaborative projects by students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds are built into the learner-centered lessons where different ways of thinking, values, and working-styles are respected. The intensive interactions across cultures enable students to gain deeper insights into their differences and similarities, reflect on their own cultures and identities, and reconstruct themselves. Leadership and teamwork development is also an important component of this class.

### **Collaborating with industry, local community & overseas institution**

- ex) ▪ Holding a business competition with a theme provided by Toyota sales company. Students are requested to propose a tour plan to bring back customers to Japan after COVID-19.
- A university in Canada has asked us to develop an online conversation practice platform for their students who were unable to study abroad in Japan due to COVID-19.

## Demographic of students by majors

- From almost every department
- Majority are first or second year students
- Pre-study abroad third years as well

### Intercultural Communication

- Arts & Letters 3
- Economics 3
- Law 1
- Science 3
- Medicine 2
- Engineering 7
- Agriculture 2

Already diverse  
in terms of  
academic  
interests

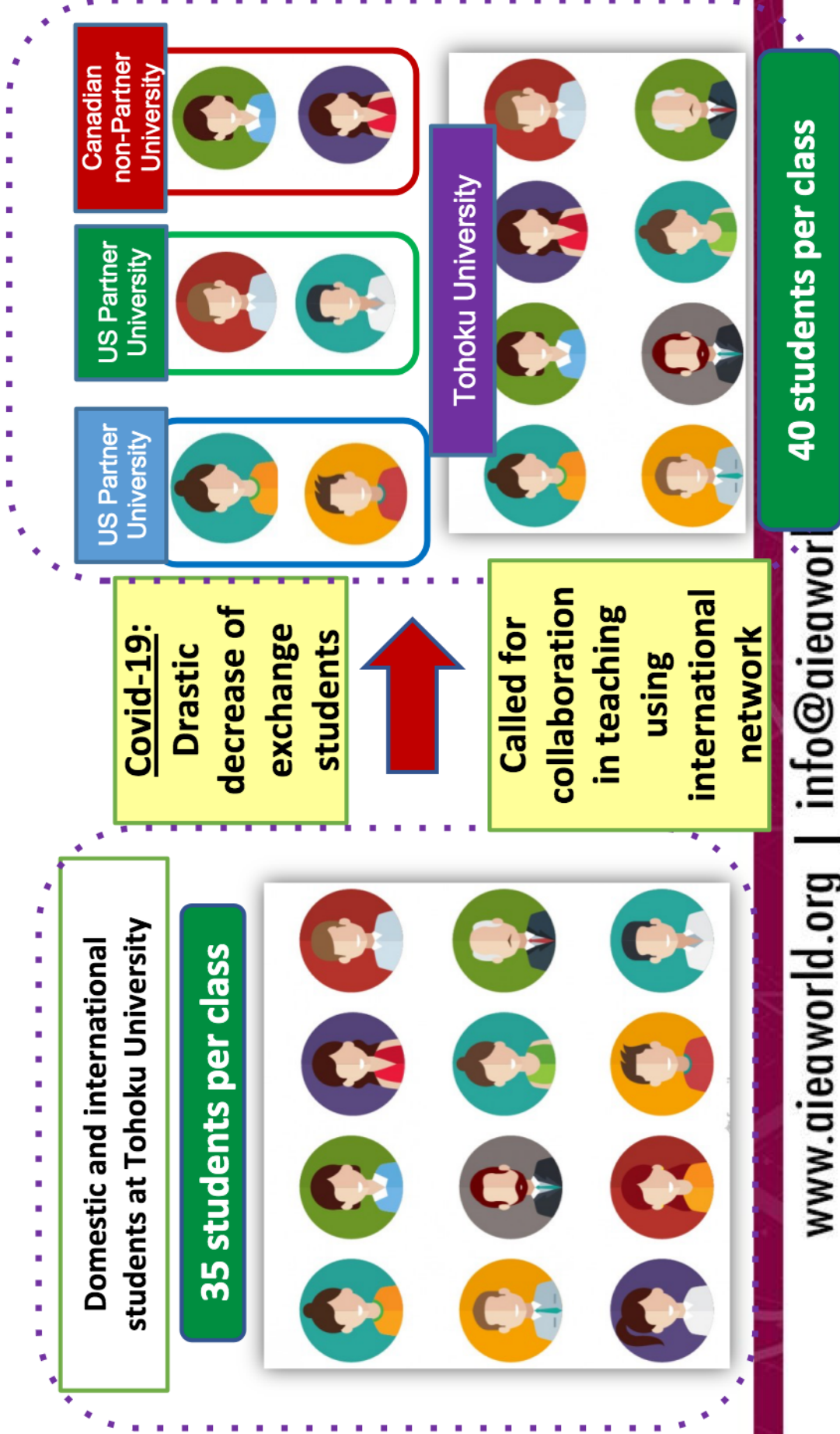
### International Project

- Arts & Letters 1
- Education 3
- Economics 2
- Science 1
- Medicine 1
- Dentistry 1
- Engineering 5

# Class design: Students

This academic year  
(2020/21)

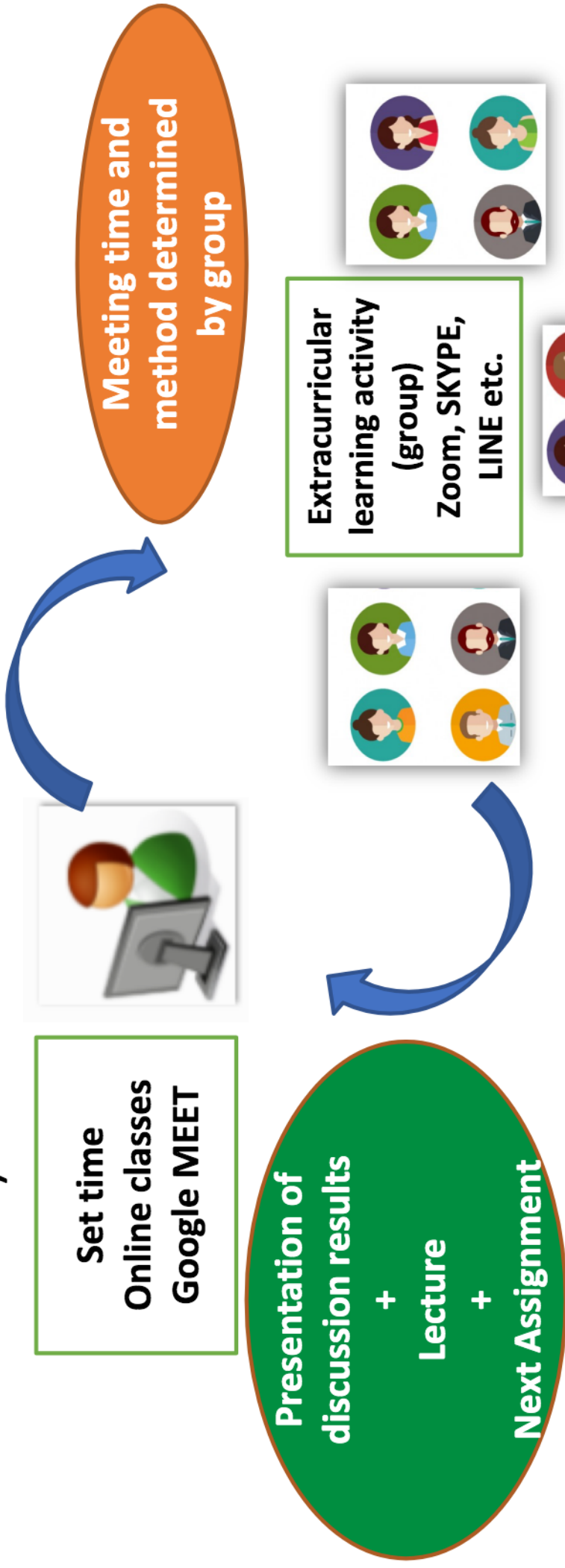
Previous years





# Class design

Class constitutes classroom activity at set times (online) and learning activity to take place outside of class (self-learning, group discussion, preparation for presentations etc.)



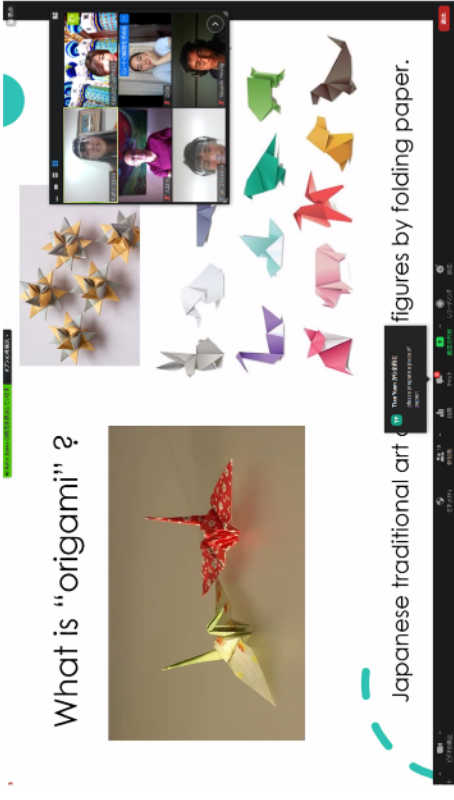
## Feedback from students

### Positive

- "I learned that discussion and collaboration **is possible** with students from all over the world even if it's online."
- "There is much to learn from students who live abroad."
- "It was an interesting experience to get to know people who have never been to Japan."
- "It is like studying abroad, without actually being abroad."
- "I have been motivated to study abroad or travel overseas."

### Negative

- "Learning how to navigate and utilize online platforms has been difficult."
- "Online platforms do not allow spontaneous conversations."
- "My internet has been unstable, and it sometimes affects screen sharing or audio."
- "Time difference is inconvenient when setting meetings outside of class."
- "It would have been nice to grab a meal together after class but now there are no options to befriend students from abroad."



A project to investigate the outcome of online iCL is currently in progress

[www.aieaworld.org](http://www.aieaworld.org) | [info@aieaworld.org](mailto:info@aieaworld.org) | [#AIEA2021](https://twitter.com/AIEA2021)

# What have we learned from our daily practice of online teaching and training sessions?

- Three day online training sessions for online ICL practitioners (summer and winter, 2020)
  - Hosted by JAFSA, Japan Network for International Education
  - Session 1(Lecture and group work), Session 2(midterm report of group project), and Session 3(group presentation)
  - Three sessions spread out over the course of 2 to 3 weeks
  - 21 participants (summer), 12 participants(winter)

**What are the benefits and challenges of online ICL?**



# **Benefits of online intercultural collaborative learning**

## **For students**

- Motivation to learn a target language and culture
- Learning communication strategies in the digital age

## **For teachers**

- Covering a deficit of international students in classrooms
- Improvement of teaching by collaboration

## **For university**

- Exploring possibilities of collaboration with partner institutions
- Internationalizing the curriculum

# Challenges of online intercultural collaborative learning

How to keep students engaged and motivated in online ICL



1. Time difference (like today's session)
2. Academic calendar difference
3. Effective facilitation for online group activities
4. How to promote student interaction outside of online ICL classroom
5. Online tools and their purpose for effective online ICL

## Discuss how to overcome online ICL challenges

- Through small group discussion, let's come up with some solutions to online ICL challenges
- **Group work procedures**
  1. You will be sent to a breakout room (4-5 members each)
  2. One of the challenges from the previous slide is assigned to each group
  3. Short self-introduction (Name, country, and work) in 15 seconds each
  4. Select one facilitator and one recorder
  5. Discuss and come up with several concrete strategies/solutions to tackle your assigned challenge
  6. Recorder writes up discussed ideas on the assigned Padlet page
  7. You have 15 minutes for this discussion

# Padlet Link

Please use the following Padlet page to record your discussion contents ([This Padlet page will be presented at the session.](#))

- 1:
- 2:
- 3:
- 4:
- 5:

# Concluding remarks

## 危機(Crisis)=Risk+Opportunity

We can transform this current challenge into opportunities to:

- improve our teaching skills
- expand international learning available to a greater number of people
- promote mutual understanding in the world



**Thank you !**

**and**

**Good night from Japan !**