

Abstract: One of the central themes of CalTeach is “we learn better together.” Before COVID and the shift to remote instruction, the “together” was typically restricted to partners in our local communities, but during COVID, the use of video platforms provided us with an opportunity to think and engage more expansively with communities around the country and the world. Few of us expected a partnership with Korean pre-service teachers at Seoul National University (SNU) with faculty member [Hosun Kang](#) facilitating the interactions.

An International Partnership of Aspiring Science Teachers

By Doron Zinger

One of the central themes of CalTeach is “we learn better together.” Before COVID and the shift to remote instruction, the “together” was typically restricted to partners in our local communities, but during COVID, the use of video platforms provided us with an opportunity to think and engage more expansively with communities around the country and the world. Few of us expected a partnership with Korean pre-service teachers at Seoul National University (SNU) with faculty member [Hosun Kang](#) facilitating the interactions.

In an effort to expand the vision of what good science teaching looks like for students at UCI and SNU, Dr. Kang and I facilitated two meetings of our respective methods courses in the fall. We wanted to provide our students with an opportunity to build community, see what instruction looks like in another country, and share and refine lesson plan ideas with feedback from new perspectives. It took a little coordination to come up with a time, just in time for breakfast in Korea and dinner on the west coast of the US.

In our first meeting, we focused on building community together, and thinking about how we build community and create safe spaces with our own K-12 students. We used a book called *HeartSpace* and we engaged in a number of community builders in small groups composed of UCI and SNU students. One such activity was “the peacetime plan” where students were asked to reflect on a time when conflict arose, and things became better after it was resolved, as a way to learn how to navigate conflicts in the classroom. Students shared ideas and came up with plans of when and how they might use this activity with their own students to address conflict and complex issues that may arise in the classroom (the image below reflects some thoughts from the students).

Processing a HeartSpace

Group 2

The peacetime plan (p.164)



In Jamboard groups :

1. Read/scan the HS practice
2. Clarify understanding
3. When might you use it
4. Share impressions

Conflicts will always appear in a classroom, and this activity normalizes conflicts. It lets students become used to conflict and it is not always a bad thing

It can be used a safe space to help students discuss these topics without creating a hostile environment or making people angry at each other.

When to use: This activity is definitely something you should not do on the first day. Once a sense of community is established and students feel safe.

Some negatives, it's really complex and students might be unmotivated to participate. We can use to discuss current or controversial events (ex. George Floyd).

We can use this to actually discuss those current events. The activity gives students various different perspectives and shows how they can affect people in different ways.

The activity will work a lot better if the students are more comfortable around each other.

For the second meeting, having gotten to know each other a little better, we wanted to focus on science instruction, and students from each institution had an opportunity to teach a small lesson segment they had planned to their partners from the other institution. The students really enjoyed this activity, and had great feedback to each other. Importantly, through trying to learn and teach across cultures and languages, the UCI students became more aware of challenges many of their own multilingual students face in classrooms, where English may not be their first language. The CalTeach students gained a deeper appreciation of being in a classroom where the teacher may not speak your primary language, and the value of having many representations of information and student interactions and supports to facilitate student learning. The SNU students appreciated the phenomenon focused approach of the CalTeach students, that was grounded in helping their own students make sense of the science in the world around them (Below are some of the questions and wonderings of the SNU students after the meeting). This cross-cultural learning activities reaffirms the power of diversity in facilitating deep learning by providing opportunities for students in both countries to notice, wonder, and challenge what they have taken for granted as norms. On the whole this was an amazing learning experience which the students really appreciated.

