

Exploring personal experiences of COIL/VE

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What is COIL/Virtual Exchange?



Collaborative Online International Learning

Also known as:

- **Virtual Exchange**
- Tele-collaboration
- E-tandem
- Online Intercultural Exchange/Learning
- Globally Networked Learning
- Global Virtual Teams
- *Virtual Mobility*

COIL includes:

- Cross-border collaboration
- Group learning
- Multiple Online interactions
(Synchronous and/or Asynchronous)



Semantic concerns

What is **virtual exchange**?



Some argue that we shouldn't confuse:

Virtual **Mobility** (studying for a qualification/part of qualification abroad virtually) with
Virtual **Exchange** (an in-course virtual international learning activity)

(O'Dowd, 2018)

However, many of the terms previously mentioned are used interchangeably to describe a COIL-like activity and O'Dowd's definitions/concerns are not shared by all. Indeed some are keen to use the latest technology like (VR) to promote the idea of an alternative to travel.

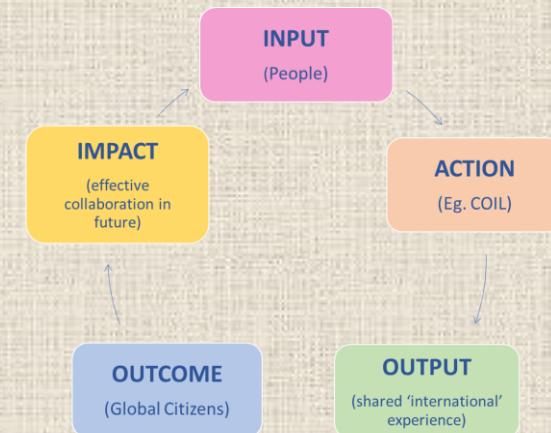
(Liu & Shirley, 2021)

Why COIL?

- Internationalisation drive (promoting UN SDGs, market-need for transversal skills, Global values)
- Pedagogically sound – social/experiential learning theory (Vygotsky, Kolb etc.)
- Inclusive & sustainable
- Generally popular with students (though not without challenge)
- Potential for ‘Third Mission’ goals like Civic engagement & Transdisciplinarity

What is a global citizen?

- Can work effectively with diverse others
- Have an online/collaborative skillset
- Know how to learn/develop
- Engaged with world issues



COIL Research: What we know...

There are frequently issues with:

- technology/use of technology (*Critilli et al. 2017*)
- Student engagement/resistance (*Skagen, et al., 2018; Harrison, 2012*)
- Student readiness (*De Castro, et al. 2019*)
- Staff capacity (*Zwerg-Villegas & Hiller, 2020*)
- Language issues (*Custer & Tuominen, 2017*)

And concerns that:

- COIL doesn't actually shift opinions (*Boehm et al., 2010*)
- or increases negative perceptions (*Lenkaitis & Loranc-Paszlk, 2021*)
- groupwork is stressful and unpopular (*Velez-Calle, 2020*)

COIL Research: What we know (continued)

However ...

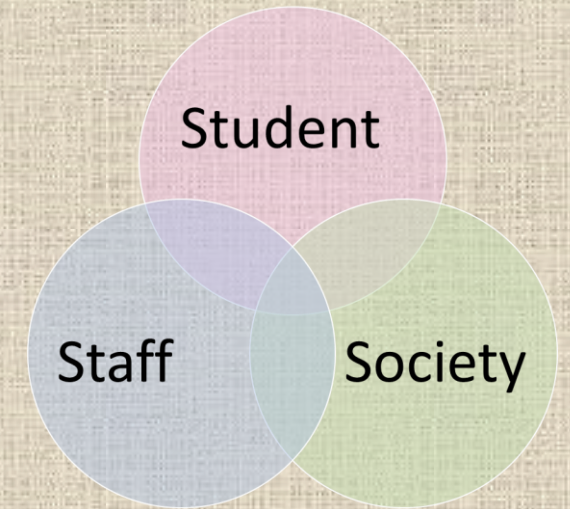
- Many report that COIL is popular (*Peterka-Benton & Benton, 2019; Uzum, et al., 2020; Dorroll & Dorroll, 2020 etc.*)
- That students report changed perspectives (*Limoges et al. 2019; Durko & Martens, 2021*)

And that successful COIL can happen with:

- Educators who are mindful of ‘teaching presence’ and practice active facilitation (*Kurek & Muller-Hartmann, 2019*)
- Careful task planning (*Ferreira-Lopes & Van Rompey-Bartels, 2020*)
- By fostering respectful ‘Thirdspace’ online environments (*Trape, 2019*)
- Comprehensive student preparation (*Minei, 2021*)

What issues/concerns are we still learning about?

- Power dynamics in international relationships
 - (effects of realpolitik, language)
- What/who is internationalisation for?
 - Global workers or Global citizens?
- Does COIL/VE work?
 - Quantitative Vs Qualitative evaluation
 - Short Vs Long term change in perspectives/attitudes
- How can COIL/VE be improved?
 - Orientation (Technology, Groupwork, Culture etc.)
 - Structure
 - Staff support



Some questions that interest me...



- *How do different stakeholders (on each side of a collaboration) make sense of their COIL experience?*
- *What is the worldview of COIL participants? How might this influence engagement with COIL activity?*
- *What might a comprehensive orientation for COIL include (for students and staff) to maximise student engagement and benefit?*

Research phase A – Student Focus groups

Case 1 – Coventry (Scarborough) – Spain

Case 2 – Coventry (Int) – France – Spain

Case 3 – Coventry – Singapore

Case 4 – Aarhus – Germany

Case 5 tbc – iKudu?

Phase B – Interviews (staff & students)



Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

- Qualitative approach from Psychology developed by Prof. Jonathan Smith
- Draws on: Phenomenology, Hermeneutics & Idiography
- There is a focus on the interpretation of an interpretation
(The focus is on how an individual makes sense of something and I as the researcher interpret that!)
- A collection of interpretations can build towards a rich, deeper understanding of a phenomenon (COIL).

(Smith et al., 2006)



Questions?

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