

EXAMPLES AND OUTCOMES OF EMBEDDING COLLABORATIVE ONLINE INTERNATIONAL LEARNING (COIL) IN THE CURRICULUM

MA EVA HAUG
COORDINATOR INTERNATIONALISATION, COIL COORDINATOR &
LECTURER INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
AMSTERDAM UAS



OUTLINE

- ❖ Introduction to COIL
- ❖ What are students learning in a COIL?
- ❖ Phases and challenges in virtual collaboration
- ❖ How do you encourage learning?
- ❖ What do students get out of it? Employability skills





COIL RMIT SAIGON & AMSTERDAM UAS SPRING 2017



COIL RMIT SAIGON AUAS

WHAT IS COIL?



- **C**ollaborative > focus on teamwork and collaboration
 - **O**ne > using virtual tools, working at a distance
 - **I**nternational > cross cultural, cross borders
 - **L**earning > experience, student driven and student based
-
- State University New York (SUNY COIL Centre, NYC)
 - SUNY Network
 - Global Partner Network

COIL IN AMSTERDAM UAS:

- Faculty of Business and Economics
- COILing since 2014, virtual collaboration since 2008
- GPN partner
- Total nr of COIL projects in 2016-2017: **25**
- Nr of students participating in COIL in 2016-2017: **+/- 700**
- Partners include: SUNY (Ulster, Oswego & Buffalo), RMIT (Melbourne & Saigon), Tecnológico de Monterrey (Campus Chihuahua), UDEM (Monterrey), Haaga-Helia Finland, FH Wien Austria, PSB France, FH Dortmund Germany, University of Tanger (Morocco).



WHAT ARE STUDENTS LEARNING?

(SURVEY 115 STUDENTS 2016-2017)

Skills most improved by participating in a COIL?

- Cross cultural skills & communicating (rank 1)
- Collaborating across borders (2)
- Empathy and openness to other points of view (3)

Skills most developed in COIL project:

- Cultural awareness and sensitivity (65%)
- Team learning skills (56%)
- Team problem solving and conflict management (51%)

What is virtual teamwork like?

Student responses:

- “To work with people and teams with different nationalities is a challenge most of the time. **To work with them only virtually is much more difficult.**”
- “It was nice that **each group had their own set of skills** and that we could combine this during the project.”
- “We had several skype meetings. But still you don’t know each other really well. I found out that due to this lack of relationship the project was harder than we thought in the beginning. **So making a good relationship is really important when working in an (virtual) international group.**”
- “I learned a lot because of all these problems. **At the time I found it a bit stressful but now I’m thankful for all these problems.** Now I know that making appointments and deadlines are very important and to verify them; sometimes you think the other team understood you, but they didn’t.”

PHASES & CHALLENGES IN VIRTUAL COLLABORATION

PHASES

- **Getting to know each other**
(*honeymoon phase*)
- **Organising the work:** tasks, deadlines, communication & collaboration tools
- **Doing the work:**
communication, communication, communication
- **Overcoming problems:**
problem solving
- Finishing up, meeting deadlines and **presenting end results**

CHALLENGES FOR STUDENTS

- Trust and relationship building
- Time management & time orientation
- Communication styles
- Leadership styles
- Managing uncertainty

HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE LEARNING?



START BY BUILDING TRUST

- ❖ Meeting and discovering about each other's cultures
- ❖ Cultural differences: task oriented cultures vs relationship oriented cultures, trust from the head vs trust from the heart



HOW? SOCIALISING ONLINE

- ❖ Make an introduction video
- ❖ Make an introduction picture collage
- ❖ Make a class video or picture collage (introduce your university/team)
- ❖ Create a Facebook group to share the videos/collages and fun facts about the countries
- ❖ Selfie a Day assignment (FB)
- ❖ Organise a skype Q&A session (students prepare by learning about other culture)
- ❖ Do a virtual team simulation with your class to prepare them for online team work
- ❖ Create a team brand: who are we, as a team?
- ❖ Buddy system: create duo's within the teams and give them interview assignment
- ❖

BY ENCOURAGING COLLABORATION



Scaffolding the assignment to create a collaborative effort

- Create in-between milestones: opportunity for feedback, create short term planning and sense of urgency.
- Create assignments and research where the students actually need each other to solve the problem.
- Break down the final deliverable in smaller assignments with short deadlines.



Challenges in the collaboration process

- Trust?
- Time: how on time is on time?
- Team size? Too large/small?
- Communication fall out?
- Different interpretations of the assignment?
- Failure to see complementary contributions?

Do you help? Intervene? Coach?

Is it a learning opportunity?

How comfortable are you with ambiguity?



Overcoming challenges:

STUDENTS

- Trying out different strategies and solutions
- Invest time in communication: more listening than talking!
- Work in sub-teams for faster and more personal communication
- Invest in understanding the “other” culture and practice an open mind

LECTURERS

- Take sufficient time to design, plan and organise
- Build trust with your virtual colleague
- Align expectations, learning outcomes, criteria
- Match schedules, plan regular meetings
- Exchange cultural and other expertise with E-lectures
- Find support!



BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR THE STUDENTS?

Based on survey (nr respondents: 115)

- ❖ Time (time difference, time orientation and scheduling) (rank 1)
- ❖ Communication & language (2)
- ❖ Cultural differences (3)



STUDENT PERSPECTIVE



Recommendations students made:

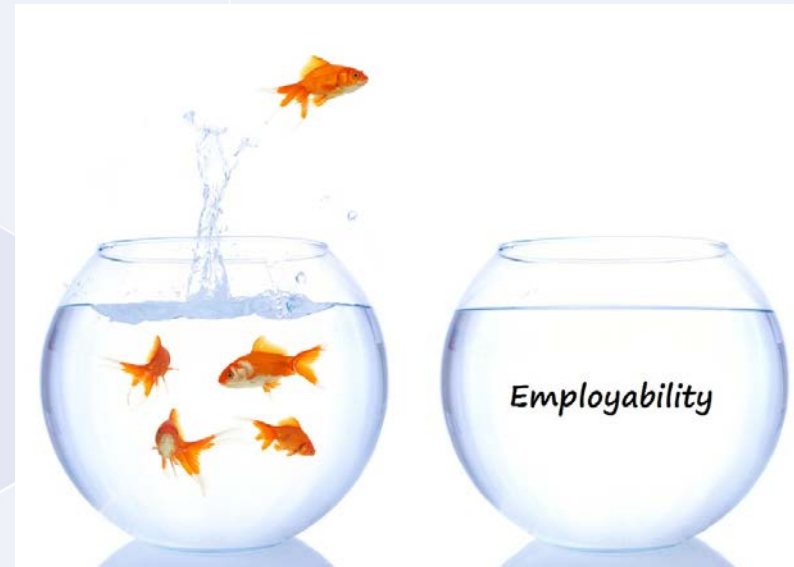
- ❖ Communication (face2face, Skype etc)
- ❖ Project management (organisation, tools, deadlines, scheduling etc)
- ❖ Express and share expectations
- ❖ Understand cultural differences
- ❖ Start on time, tempo, avoid procrastination
- ❖ Practice open mind about ideas and culture
- ❖ Be patient
- ❖ Be flexible

WHAT DO STUDENTS GET OUT OF IT?

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

What would you mention in a job interview or application letter?

- Leadership skills and international team management
- Communication and language skills
- Cultural awareness and/or sensitivity, working with different cultures
- Flexibility and patience
- Experience working in a remote team



What do students enjoy most?

- Meeting new people and networking
- Working with & learning about different cultures
- Flexibility to organise the work (working from home)
- Looking at things differently, learning new perspectives



To sum up:

- COIL: AUAS strategy for I@H and IoC
- Students learn intercultural-, communicating- and collaborating skills as well as team management and problem solving skills
- Challenges: time, trust, communication & collaboration
- Solutions: project and assignment design, lecturer training, soft skills training (incl. cultural sensitivity)
- What do students learn: see above! They learn from overcoming the challenges.
- COIL as a way to prepare students for 21st Century workplace



THANK YOU!

For more information about Amsterdam UAS
and our COIL experiences:

e.m.haug@hva.nl

AMSTERDAMUAS.COM

