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Abstract

The research is focused on the benefits and challenges of Collaborative Online International Learning projects for teachers, but also on the institutional support the teachers get, and their opinion on the future of COIL. The method used in the study was the inductive approach of qualitative research. Data for this study were gathered in the English language through semi-structured interviews with teachers from the State University of New York COIL network of universities. The benefits for teachers that were mentioned are learning opportunities, development of pedagogy, professional acknowledgment, and satisfaction from providing students global education experience. The main challenges include time, student motivation, and the amount of engagement of partnering teachers. The study showed that it is mostly teachers who decide to implement this pedagogy in their class rather than the institution. It takes a lot of extra work and motivation on the teacher's side. Together with the hesitant approach to online teaching, it may be the reason why it is not that widespread yet. However, it seems like the pandemic helped this pedagogy to reach more teachers due to the sudden switch to online teaching.

Introduction

In the time of the uprising of digital tools in education and the rise of new online learning systems, education has begun to focus more on student-oriented designs and more human-oriented learning connected to social learning. Online globally-oriented learning, where also Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) belongs, has become an important part of the available educational options for internationalization at home. This makes the international experience more accessible and equally available to students.

This online international learning is connected to making the international learning experience available at home campus without the need to travel. In the past research, it was connected to the development of study abroad program options that were available only to a small number of students. The Collaborative Online International learning method was established by John Rubin at the State University of New York. It was established as a faculty let initiative supported by the COIL Center. Teachers can increase their intercultural and interpersonal skills and exchange experience with colleagues to get inspired for their future work or gain research partners for their university. On the other hand, they have to prepare for some difficulties they can face due to time or

cultural differences or some technical issues. For students, it is an opportunity to gain international learning experience at home which will allow them to get exposed to different cultures and life experiences of students from different backgrounds. They can develop their language, communication, or professional/academic skills related to their major. Especially now, the pandemic taught us that not many universities were ready for online study, and this should change. This research aimed to investigate the experience of teachers with the Collaborative online international learning method to understand the benefits and challenges it brings to the teachers. To explain why institutions and faculty could be interested in exploring the COIL pedagogy and the expected future popularity of this pedagogy. Although there was a lot of research done on the topic of COIL there is not much written about the experience of the teachers and why do they decide to do this type of teaching. That is the reason why this research focused on this area.

This work starts with a literature review where it explains the development of education to the point of COIL, a pedagogical method that has been growing in popularity in past years. This method has been established at the State University of New York in 2002 and is now used by many American universities and their partners to help students become more skilled to live and work in the globalized world. It follows with discussing the teacher's experience, the benefits, and the challenges. The second part of this paper explains the methodology that was used to conduct the research through interviews with the above-mentioned teachers who have years of experience with COIL projects. The next part talks about the research results which include an explanation of the class preparation, the benefits for teachers, the challenges, the institution support and how it could be improved, how did they develop new aspects of COIL, where they see it going in the future and Study Abroad vs COIL. It finishes with the discussion and conclusions of the research including suggestions for further research topics.

Literature Review

Previously in education, the development of curricula was mostly focused on “what” is the student learning, but in the past years, it moved the focus on “how” is the student learning (Zhang and Pearlman, 2018). Due to this shift of focus, learning got more interactive, engaging, international, applicable, and more focused on students learning from each other and working in groups. In a study from 2015, the result (Luo and Jamieson-Drake, 2015) from a private school showed that students who intend to study abroad were positively influenced by wanting to earn an advanced degree, desire to improve their understanding of other countries and cultures, and intend to participate in a student club. On the other hand, what was preventing them from going to study abroad was participation in student government, art or sports club, or additional study outside of school. If they went to study abroad, they would lose touch with their group, which COIL as an online international study could solve.

Studying Abroad is a great opportunity to gain new competencies for future employment and life. However, only a small percentage of students does actually go to study abroad due to various reasons. In the USA only 1.8% of students enrolled in higher education institutions pursued physical study abroad in the 2018-2019 academic year (NAFSA, 2021). Nevertheless, studying Abroad (Guimarães and Finardi, 2021) is no longer the main way of internationalization in university policies worldwide. Internationalization of higher education

became an important part of the transformation. As the first tool, there was internationalization mobility and more recently (De Wit and Altbach, 2020) universities gradually started to internationalize their curricula at home campuses (De Wit, 2020), by offering partially or fully online ways of international collaboration. This kind of experience makes international learning more reachable for diverse groups of students. And in the end, it can motivate some students to take another step toward international education by going to study abroad. However, nowadays the motivation behind the internationalization of universities changed the direction from an exchange of ideas and cooperation to a competitive hunt for revenues and improvement of a brand name. In the past Universities were hesitant to offer online studies to students (Vivolo, 2016). They were concerned about the lack of personal relationships between the student and the teacher, little interaction among students, lower quality of classes, or the teacher's lack of technical skills for online teaching. David Figlio (2016) in his article summed up results from his colleague's research that agreed that online-only classes have a negative effect on students' results in comparison with a traditional class unless the students have good technology and self-directing skills, however a hybrid class which compliments the in-person class had a similar result as the traditional one.

Yet, the student's interest in digitalized studies and activities from universities is still growing (Aldowah et al., 2017). As Bailey et al. (2018) concluded from their research in 6 leading universities and community colleges in the US, well-prepared and conducted digitalized learning was of significant value to students and the institution itself through the access of data for innovations, lowering costs and increasing effectivity (Suarez and Haduch, 2020). Therefore, there is a need to educate teachers on conducting online classes efficiently with high student engagement (Aldowah et al., 2017). Using online learning systems in education well (Wang and Lin, 2021, Kumi-Yeboah, 2018, Mudiamu-Strand, 2020), can help students to learn more effectively by providing useful functions, making study more flexible, and getting rid of geographical constraints. With the COVID-19 pandemic, many universities were forced to use online tools for teaching. This event showed (Chiu et al., 2021) that not many universities were ready to offer studies online and they had to adapt quickly. Many professors did not have sufficient knowledge of teaching online, but they had to adapt as well. This showed also the need to develop the use of technology in education further as it is also a good way how to provide education if the teachers have access to useful information technology tools.

Even though online education was slowly developing for years, this brought the opportunity to reframe education much quicker and brought opportunities for disruptive innovations in technology in education (García-Morales et al., 2021). The institutions learned a lot through this urgent switch to online, therefore, the fears of online teaching may have gotten away to some extent. But to keep this running they will need to develop more strategies and adapt the delivery style of the classes to this new environment to enable students to learn effectively. Concerning sustainable management, online programs help institutions lower the negative impact of their activities on the environment by making their study more carbon-neutral (Abad-Segura et al., 2020, De Wit and Altbach, 2020). COIL enables mobilities to be more ecological and sustainable while allowing students to join classes with peers from around the world at a low cost (Adefila et al., 2021, Jung et al., 2022).

History and Background of COIL

The COIL method of learning was developed at the State University of New York, an American University established in 1971 (Empire State College, 2021). Nowadays the University offers more than 110 online degrees and certificates. They offer face-to-face, online, or blended studies. Around the year 2002 universities were developing new ways of engaging students in global learning (ICDE, n.d.). Teachers were collaborating on creating curricula for their students while teaching in a team with professors from 2 or more universities. These types of early collaborations were called globally networked learning, global connections, virtual mobility, or telecollaboration (Rubin, 2017). Later, Jon Rubin a teacher from the State University of New York developed the COIL method of learning (Empire State College, 2021) which got its name in 2006 and the SUNY COIL Center was established. This center is supporting a network of campuses that collaborate with each other, they organize training and provide support to teachers and institutions in the network including offering an online platform for COIL partner search. Many institutions (Rubin, 2017) even outside the US joined the COIL network and started to develop these projects. Such as Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands or Kansai University in Osaka, Japan, which both joined in 2014. Additionally, to the American Center, there was a similar center developed at Kansai University in Japan, the KU-COIL center in 2015 (Kansai University, 2021). Once they were awarded funding from Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology in 2018, to broaden the relationship with US universities, the university recreated it into the Institute for Innovative Global Education (IIGE). This institute is helping Japanese universities in their network to find COIL partners from around the world, they support them during the preparation for the projects and they recently also started to offer workshops for teachers. Furthermore, they promote COIL among universities to enhance the network of more than 40 already existing members of Japanese Universities and over 60 overseas partners (Institute for Innovative Global Education, 2021).

Even though COIL was developed at the State University of New York, the term is not owned by them, and any university can use it to name this type of course (Rubin, 2017). Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) connects students and professors in different countries for collaborative projects and discussions as part of their coursework (SUNY COIL Center, 2021). COIL is an increasingly popular pedagogical teaching method that enables cooperation between faculty and students from partner universities worldwide through digital technology, without requiring them to travel abroad (Zhang and Pearlman, 2018; de Castro, et al. 2018). In the early stage, COIL classes (Rubin, 2017) were not part of the internationalization strategies of universities, but they did become its part later on. This development was influenced by the rise of social media and the influence it had on personal and business communication. Few other events supported it, such as fear of traveling to some countries due to terrorism or more recently COVID. These developments opened new opportunities for use of COIL.

COIL helps the university (Finardi and Guimarães, 2020) to offer international education for students in groups from different countries and it also supports inclusion. COIL is typically embedded into an already existing course as a part of the curriculum (House et al., 2022). The goal of COIL is to allow students from diverse backgrounds to access international learning to become global citizens. Participation in this kind of project

allows students to exchange experiences and ideas with their peers from different countries while improving their international communication, language, or social learning skills, they learn how to be more adaptable and to face challenging situations (Munoz-Escalona et al, 2020, Asojo et al., 2019, Vahed and Rodriguez, 2020). They also broaden their understanding of cultural diversity or open-minded approach to the world (Jung et al., 2022). In Europe, there is an Erasmus program for students at European universities to support their study abroad financially. However, there is no such widespread supporting program in the United States or other non-EU countries, except for some governmental scholarships that are very limited, even though the Erasmus program is expanding out of Europe (European Commission, 2021). Therefore, COIL is bringing opportunities to students from less supported backgrounds such as students from minorities or financially less fortunate families. It is also an opportunity for nonmobile students and faculty to take part (De Wit and Altbach, 2020). Most COIL projects have been done in the English language, therefore expanding these projects into different languages, such as they did at the International University in Florida for the study of Italian with a partner from Italy (Florida International University, 2021), would make it more inclusive and offer ecology of knowledge and languages.

The Benefits

COIL helps teachers to exchange experience and develop intercultural and interpersonal skills at the same time as their students while strengthening their relationships with their colleagues and gaining new knowledge for their international curriculum and teaching skills (Minei, et al., 2021; Marcillo-Gómez, and Desilus, 2016, Mudiamu-Strand, 2020). Relationships created from COIL can help them to continue the collaboration with their partner in different fields such as joined research (Bauk, 2019, Mudiamu-Strand, 2020). The faculty who experienced conducting a COIL course gained new insights into their pedagogy through collaboration with colleagues (Jung et al., 2022) and the experience of intercultural learning and teaching (House et al., 2022), improved their skills in using online learning methods or the quality of their teaching and curricula. They gained new experience from the challenge of conducting courses in a different modality especially if they conducted a professional collaboration in an interdisciplinary environment (de Castro, et al., 2018; Key and Klammer, 2021). This opportunity also brings teachers new professional international connections for future collaborations (Loth and Stilling, 2022).

Barriers in COIL

The barriers in COIL are differences in time zones, languages, culture differences, requirements or expectations of all parties, academic calendars, planning of course contents, assessments, quality assurance systems, issues related to technology, or lack of technical and administrative support (Bauk, 2019, House et al., 2022).

Important Aspects of A COIL Course

Pedagogy

COIL classes usually consist of 3 main sections, starting with icebreaker activities where students get to know

each other, get more comfortable, and trust each other with sharing their opinions. Followed by collaboration on a project that requires the participation of all participants and is finished with a reflection that helps them to transform their experience into new perspectives on themselves, others, and the world (GoGlobal FIU, 2020). The difference between COIL and other online studies is that the course is created, taught, and managed by a team of collaborating teachers from different universities in different countries (de Castro, et al., 2018). The participating students from different countries remain enrolled in their home university where they also get their credits and grades for the class. Communication in class, course materials, and assignments are accessible through technology, therefore are at a low cost for the participants.

Planning and Development

There is a high importance on creating the course as a group activity rather than individual work with the topics that overlap the knowledge of both groups of students and if possible, provide bilingual resources for the student's work (Suarez and Haduch, 2020; Yang et al., 2014). It is important that the teacher is very clear with his instructions, has enough IT skills to conduct the course, and supports students in developing friendships during their work (Klamer, 2019). Before creating a COIL project, the teachers must (Asojo et al. 2019) first create the collaboration with another university, decide on the content, identify their resources and decide on where to fit the COIL program into their existing course offered at their university (House et al., 2022). They need to find a partner for their desired field and agree with the partner on the pedagogical components and logistics of joined teaching. They can find their partner through a networking event such as a conference or on matching session through the COIL Center (SUNY COIL CENTER, 2021).

Development of the course is a big part of the work (Rubin, 2017), teachers must work on preparations a long time in advance through different time zones, academic calendars, or teaching styles. They must make the class active, reflective, and experiential for their students. The preparation phase can take around 6 months (Ingram et al., 2021). The teacher needs to be interested in innovative pedagogy, be flexible and enthusiastic about his work, and prepare the course thoroughly (SUNY COIL Center, 2021). Both teachers and students need to be dedicated and engaged in the coursework since everything is happening online. They should be prepared for possible difficulties students may face, such as technical or connection difficulties. To support the students, the university can explore options for them to use computers on campus, and with the time difference, they can suggest to students when is the best time for both parties to connect on individual project discussions (Minei et al., 2021).

Communication

During the course (Wojenski, 2014) two groups of students from each of collaborating universities work together on discussing course materials, solving a practical problem, or producing another type of group work outcome (Rubin, 2017; de Castro, et al. 2018). The length of the COIL course can be between 4 to 15 weeks (Coil consulting, 2021). They can communicate through video calls, emails, or voice calls to discuss globally relevant issues, improve their communication skills while improving their self-awareness and appreciation for

cultural diversity (Rubin, 2017; de Castro, et al. 2018). There is no fixed methodology for conducting a COIL course, it can be done fully online with various types of interaction, it can be hybrid, with few visits, while it can be a whole course or one assignment (O'Dowd, 2017; Zhang and Pearlman, 2018). This kind, of class, can be also used by the university as a preparatory course prior study abroad or students can use it as a test of their interest in physical study abroad.

Collaboration

Structured collaboration between faculty and universities on creating new academic offers with the help of technology has a big potential to help innovate and develop the institution's brand (Kurzweil and Rossman, 2018). By collaborating on the creation of new courses, the institutions can share the burden and the benefits of creating a greater quality experience for their students. While teaching together the teachers need to cooperate on each pedagogical decision in identifying the course outcomes, preparation of assignments, the time plan, or the meeting platform (Suarez and Haduch, 2020, House et al., 2022). Conducting a good quality COIL class also requires a lot of support from the management of the institution, IT support, Administrative staff for credit transfers, and similar issues to coordinate the whole project (Kurzweil and Rossman, 2018; Marcillo-Gómez and Desilus, 2016; Zhang and Pearlman, 2017).

Method

This work aims to investigate the experience of teachers with international online learning more specifically the Collaborative online international learning method to understand the benefits and challenges the teachers experience during this kind of learning. To explain why institutions and faculty could be interested in exploring the COIL pedagogy and how to prepare for the challenges it brings. The research questions were: What are the benefits and challenges of this method for teachers and students? Are the teachers trained for this method or do they get any other kind of support from their institution? What is the future of COIL in the teacher's opinion?

With the philosophical stance of critical realism and an inductive approach, a mono method of qualitative research was used for this research (Saunders, et al., 2019). Data for this evaluative study were collected in the English language through semi-structured one-on-one interviews which allow additional questions and a deeper understanding of the topic (Murray and Beglar, 2013). For a semi-structured interview, the researcher prepares basic questions about the topic to cover critical points and the rest of the interview depends on the participant's words.

The researcher designed the interview protocol based on research questions and a conceptual framework. These interviews were done through Zoom, where they were also recorded and transcribed with the permission of the interviewed person. A list of broad topics was prepared to be addressed during the interview. Interviews were used rather than questionnaires to get a deeper understanding of the subjective experience of teachers with the option to learn about details that were not thought of in advance (O'Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015). An online method of interviews was used to be able to talk to people from different parts of the world without the need to travel, save time and be able to use the recording and transcriptive feature of Zoom.

Non-probability convenience sampling technique was used (Murray and Beglar, 2013) to choose the participating teachers from higher education institutions in the State University of New York (SUNY) COIL network. This sampling was chosen because the COIL method was founded at State University of New York and therefore it is a suitable source of information. The participants were contacted and acquired with the snowball method. Some of these teachers did a COIL class together in the past. The COIL Center was also contacted for this matter and 1 participant was acquired this way. The teachers were contacted through email where also the interview appointments were agreed upon.

The focus of the study was on the teacher's experience as a provider of the service (teaching), which was not widely explored in the analyzed literature. For this study 10 teachers who have experience in COIL were interviewed, 2 of whom were also COIL coordinators. 4 of the participants were male and 6 were female. There were 6 teachers with more than 10 years of experience in teaching who were also widely experienced in international collaboration in learning and online teaching. 1 teacher had experience with only 1 COIL project and the other 3 had a few collaborations on their list. All of them plan to work on their next opportunities with COIL. Most taught courses of the interviews were in the communication field but there was also a teacher of pedagogy or IT. The bigger half of the interviewed teachers did monodisciplinary courses.

The ensurance of the quality of the research is done through the proof of reliability and validity which is not that easy to prove in qualitative research (Collis and Hussey, 2003). Reliable research should be replicable without a change in the result, which is not the case with qualitative research unless it is done in a particular environment. It is however not desirable to replicate since it should reflect the participant's socially constructed interpretations. The quality and value of data can be found in similar situations and environments (Saunders, et al., 2019). Validity of data can be also accessed by checking the understanding of data with participants which is enabled through interviews. The content of the interviews was recorded with the permission of the respondents and transcribed in Zoom. Transcripts were corrected with the recording afterward to be more accurate and analyzed to conclude the research. The raw data first need to be distilled to be able to identify important and repeated data from the non-appropriate ones for the research (Lancaster, 2004).

Data from this research gathered through interview transcripts and audios were analyzed through non-standardized, thematic content analyses. The researcher identified the patterns that came out of the data by grouping them into topics based on their relationships. The coding for grouping the data was done by hand to make it more organized and easier to identify any errors. Once the topics were identified it was divided into subtopics to allow structured explanation of the results. The topics and subtopics allowed to draw conclusions and explanations from the research (Bell, 2010). Each of the participants received an information sheet about the study before the interview and signed a consent form for the use of the data provided during the interview. The research ethics of this research have been approved by the researcher's home institution.

Results

This study was designed to increase the understanding of the experience of academics that conduct a COIL

course in their class specifically focusing on the benefits and challenges that it brings them. The findings of this research were divided into topics and subtopics based on the research outcomes. These topics include. The class preparation, Benefits for teachers, Challenges, Institution support, Tips for innovating a COIL class, the Future of COIL, and COIL vs Study Abroad.

The Class Preparation

It is essential to be well prepared for each class, in terms of materials or backup plans, having smooth communication with a partner, being trained in technological skills, and being equipped with online tools. Before COIL projects, the teacher has a chance to undergo a workshop with the partner teacher through the COIL Center which helps them to build their strategy and plan for the collaboration. It is important to communicate each of the teacher's expectations and plan the classes to be suitable for both universities bearing in mind the time difference or different holidays and other factors while preparing the classes. As one of the teachers mentioned, it is important to know what to expect, so that there is no fear of failing.

“I have learned from my years of experience, that if you lay things out it takes away the anxiety, which is where technophobia usually comes in. When people don't know, and everything is a mystery.”
(Participant 9)

Since the COIL component of the class is online, the teacher must make the course as interactive as possible to give students the chance of the inter-cultural exchange of knowledge, skills, and experience as that is one of its main values. One of the interviewed teachers pointed out that it is important to educate teachers and students in engaging pedagogy. One of the issues in the transition from in-person to online education is the need to engage students even more since they connect from different places and can hide behind the screen.

“There are lots of faculty that are not trained in engaging pedagogy. [...] you have to have training for faculty prior to the experience, and training for students, and you have to provide them opportunities to understand why they're doing what they're doing.” (Participant 9)

Additionally, it was mentioned that it is important to prepare several types of learning materials for students as they have different types of learning habits, and some types of materials can fit one student better than the other. Or, to form small groups of students for better interaction but not too small to have enough students in a group in case some of the students cannot finish the course.

Benefits for Teachers

If we want to bring benefits to students, we need to first find the motivation the teacher has to implement COIL into their class. The collaboration can be very rewarding and enriching to the teacher. The benefits that were mentioned most often are: Getting new knowledge, professional development, or personal Satisfaction.

Getting New Knowledge

Most of the teachers (n=7) mentioned that they have learned a lot during the classes about other cultures, and

countries, but also about themselves and developed communication and negotiation skills.

“I absolutely learn something new, I never left a class and thought [...] I didn't learn a bloody thing. [...] I get to experience a human experience that someone else is having”. (Participant 5)

Due to the collaborative teaching, they were able to develop their pedagogy, see different viewpoints on the practice, see connections between disciplines, develop on the other person's ideas and encourage each other to create something better. These experiences also often lead teachers to new research ideas or professional partnerships and friendships.

Professional Acknowledgment

Another subtopic that occurred, connected more to newer faculty members was gaining experience in something innovative and interesting to get more respect from others. For these teachers COIL allows them to gain international experience without having to travel to another country. Since these teachers are aspiring to receive this recognition, they often are very motivated and ready to work hard.

“Faculty who are new and are trying to prove themselves in academia, both in the classroom with their students and to their colleagues, for obvious reasons for tenure and promotion, COIL acts as a real status symbol for those people. To be able to say that they have worked internationally without actually having to travel is a huge benefit to beginning faculty because often the support and funding are not there for beginning faculty to have those kinds of experiences and COIL allows that. And that's very exciting, even though those members are often juggling lots of projects and don't have time to do a COIL project oftentimes it really does propel them in their career.” (Participant 6)

Other subtopics that were mentioned were the personal satisfaction the teacher gets from delivering students beneficial lessons that they cannot normally get from traditional classes which also leads to more motivation of the teacher to continue with these projects.

Challenges of COIL

Since COIL brings a lot of extra work for teachers, they can face many different challenges on the way. Bauk (2019) in his work mentioned the challenge with differences in time zones, languages, academic calendars, agreeing on course contents and assignments, or issues related to technology. These were also included in the research outcomes together with time in general, Issues with students' motivation or attendance, The teacher's Ego, or engagement of the partner teacher. Ego is defined as “your sense of your own value and importance” (Oxford University Press, 2021).

Time

5 teachers mentioned that one of the challenges is with the time, not only the time difference between countries or different academic calendars but also the time in general that it takes to create and run the project and to participate. It is the problem mainly for planned synchronous sessions but also for the group work students need to do out of class.

An Issue with Motivation or Attendance

Another widely mentioned subtopic was the issue with students' motivation or attendance. Some students have other obligations, or they are not motivated enough to follow the class and then some issues arise in the student group work through the engagement of individual students.

"One year you can have a lot of enthusiastic students and one year many who do not really care. [...] There are always some students that drops out, who gets sick, has family problems, or they disappear [...] you need to have big enough group to handle this for group projects." (Participant 7)

The Teacher's Ego

It was mentioned that teachers' egos can be a challenge when you work in collaboration. If a teacher starts with COIL later in their career when they already have a lot of experience and confidence in their work and expertise, it may be difficult to accept someone else's opinion in their class. Most teachers used to rely only on their own opinion and decision but in collaboration, they have to be willing to learn and understand other persons' perspectives and make the decision after discussion with them. They have to agree on the grading system if they will share the advising of all students and other items which can be challenging to do.

The Collaborating Teacher's Investment

In collaboration, it is important for the collaborating parties to share equally the work that is required for the project. It should not end up with one teacher doing most of the work. Otherwise, the other person could feel unmotivated or overwhelmed. This problem can be caused by the incompatibility of the collaborating teachers, one of the teachers may do it only due to requirements from his institution, one of them can have less experience, or any other reason. Then it is up to the teachers to develop cooperation well before the start of the course.

"They need to live up to their end of the bargain, so one of the disappointing facts that I had [...] it was really like an 80/20 relationship. I was doing 80% of the work, it's got to be 50/50 [...] if it's not then I personally feel like I'm teaching almost two classes." (Participant 4)

Another mentioned challenges were the choice of class type, there was mainly negative feedback on using class-to-class meetings with all students present at their school instead of online meetings with individual cameras. And from the teachers' perspective also the fact to motivate more teachers to do COIL and to have faculty educated in technology.

Institution Support

Since the COIL method is based on the teacher's initiative, the availability of institutional support differs in each institution and the teachers showed various experiences and ideas to be explored. As it agrees with the literature, the SUNY COIL Center is the biggest source of information and training for them. To get information

from the COIL Center, institutions have their COIL coordinators connected to it, but some institutions have coordinators on their own that are not connected to the Center.

The COIL Center

The COIL Center offers paid workshops to train member teachers who are starting with COIL. In an introductory workshop, they explain what COIL is and how it works and another workshop teachers join once they find a partner for the project. During this workshop, the teachers work together to prepare and plan their upcoming project together. The Center also helps teachers to find a partner for their project at a partnering fair. It acts as the starting point for many teachers but not all of them have the time, resources, or interest to go to these workshops so they may just start with these projects with no formal training. Some teachers go to these trainings on a request from their institution and since they do not have the self-motivation, they end up not as engaged. It is an intensive course that takes a lot of extra time out of their working hours, therefore there is no extra payment for it. This preparation takes more time than performing the actual course with students, therefore the number of engaged teachers in this pedagogy is not as big as it could be. It is worth mentioning that since COIL has been around for a few years, there are teachers who went through the training already, gained a lot of experience, and are now supporting new teachers on their new journey with their own internal trainings at their institutions.

COIL Coordinators

The member universities of the SUNY COIL network have their institutional coordinators who help the faculty with partnering and training for COIL. They have monthly meetings with the COIL Center to communicate information both ways. Each institution has a certain number of seats for faculty to undergo the trainings. As the interviewed coordinators mentioned a beneficial practice for the faculty is if the coordinator builds the time and expenses of the trainings into the budget of the university. That way it is not all up to the teacher.

Internal Institutional Support

5 teachers mentioned the internal institutional support from their supervisors and other departments such as the registrar's office for scheduling and course planning, IT, or the course designer team. If the teacher wants to get all this support, it is important that the management of the institution is supporting it as well. As one of the teachers mentioned, COIL should be an innovative and enriching project, not a burden, for teachers. Depending on the individual motivators of the teacher, compensation of a kind is desired for their hard work. Some institutions offer extra time for the increased amount of work, fewer students in class, or fewer classes to teach. Some offer extra payment, appreciation of the teacher's additional work in their evaluation or it may help them to get promoted. Some of the teachers agreed that to make COIL more accessible at more universities there is a need for bigger support from their institutions and that in the future there may be a bigger push for that since institutions are increasingly engaging in internationalization strategies and in the online options of studies. But the institutions may be hesitant to see the motivators for this action. The motivators could be to keep up with the

latest innovative pedagogical methods, get more students interested due to this offer, or promotion of the university in different fields through new partnerships. Technology is moving forward and the expectations from students towards universities are also getting higher as they need to prepare them for the future global workplace.

The Inside Tips from COIL Teachers

A teacher who has been doing COIL classes for many years has already gained some expertise and has some advanced ideas for further development of these classes to make them more enjoyable or to make the deliverables as equal as possible. Some teachers started with guest lectures or workshops during their classes, involve students in resource searches, or use only open-source materials and tools in the class that are available for free for future use of the student. Such as it was done in a university in Florida, some teachers also decide to do their projects multilingual or to use a simultaneously translating close caption system to give their students who are not native speakers the opportunity to hear the instruction or read the materials in their native language. Another framework that was recommended by one interviewed teacher was to help students identify their role in learning which helps them to be more reflective and collaborative and understand other learners. Additionally, 2 teachers stated that they are planning to implement the COIL project in a blended style, meaning that during or after the semester they plan to visit the partner institution and let the students meet in person for part of the work. That is what the COIL Center calls a Carrot type of COIL that is not very common.

Future of COIL

Most interviewed teachers (n=8) are sure that the COIL method of teaching is here to stay and will become more popular thanks to the newly learned technical skills of teachers due to the pandemic. Some think that it will become more common and used even for students of younger age and it will expand even more to other users who will recognize its benefits and will expect this way of teaching. Some also believe, such as David Figlio (2016) stated in his article, that there will be more blended learning in the project with the possibility to meet the people on the other end, but that would require the finances some students are missing. But to get more teachers involved, there is a need for more institutional support.

Some teachers also suggested the COIL Center to be more flexible in its approach. Since the COIL Center aspires to help different cultures understand each other, they like to make challenging combinations, for example of cultures that were in conflict together. In this case, the teachers suggested that the icebreaker part should be moved to a later part of the project to allow the students to connect more naturally without any prejudice upon hearing the classmate's origin in the first class.

COIL vs Study Abroad

The main benefit of COIL compared to Study Abroad seems to be the time and financial convenience which makes it more accessible to a broader audience and a bigger number of participants.

“That distance makes the idea of going abroad more challenging. So not just I don't have the money, but maybe I don't want the time off work. [...] Global learning used to be pretty confined to study abroad experiences, but COIL has a much bigger bandwidth it has a much greater appeal and access.”
(Participant 8)

“We probably send 80 students a year abroad to different countries. With my COILs, I will have, [...] just me alone about 90 students in the COIL so that will exceed even studying abroad (at my university).” (Participant 4)

Even though it does not provide the students with the full experience. The teachers believe it is a good addition to the offer of international education that would stay along with the Study Abroad option. The students can make connections through COIL and then go to the country more prepared.

Discussion

There is quite a significant amount of literature written on the topic of Study Abroad and its development, digitalization of education, and online study. A noticeable number of researchers have oriented their study on the COIL method of teaching focusing on the benefit of making students global citizens and the expectations the global society has from this generation of employees. However, even after 15 years it still seems to be new for many people. There is space for a much bigger promotion of this pedagogy among teachers and students.

Since this pedagogical method has no fixed rules, there is a variety of approaches, and the results are not well comparable. The result of this type of program depends a lot on the teacher's preparation and use of technological tools to make it interactive and engaging for students to fulfill their expectations of the outcome. The interviews approved that (SUNY COIL CENTER, 2021, Aldowah et al., 2017) it is very important to use interactive pedagogy and plan the course well with the partner university considering many possible flaws that may appear. There are still many faculty members that feel not well prepared to use diverse content in an online environment that agrees with the literature (Kumi-Yeboah, 2018, Mudiamu-Strand, 2020). Therefore, there is a space for more technical training for the faculty members and students to be able to enter the global work market. The literature does not cover much of the experience of teachers and the topic of future development of this type of education.

As some of the interviewees said, there is no one size fits all for the COIL project. The research outcomes confirm that there are various types and custom-made COIL projects, either mono-disciplinary or interdisciplinary, with a synchronous lesson or all asynchronous, individually online or classroom to classroom calls, with a personal visit or fully online (de Castro, et al, 2018; Key and Klamer, 2021). The goal can be to solve an issue in the world or for one of the partners or just to enable people to improve their intercultural skills (Rubin, 2017; de Castro, et al. 2018). Each COIL class has some collaborative component, meaning group work the students have to work on during this course to promote cross-cultural collaboration and sharing of ideas and experience, this also came out of research done by Kumi-Yeboah (2018).

The results of the study showed that since it is a faculty initiative, it is not easy for teachers to engage in COIL as it takes a lot of extra time and effort which is mostly not reflected in their salaries or other awards. There is a space for improvement from the side of institutional support. Some teachers mentioned that they received the moral support, encouragement of their supervisor, or the IT support of their colleagues. The bigger half of them (n=6) mentioned they appreciated the option to participate in the COIL Center training which is however time-consuming and therefore needs some special preparation for them to be able to go. Despite the hesitant reply about the institution's support, there are quite a few motivations that the teachers have, to pursue this pedagogy. The findings agree with the literature about teachers exchanging experience, developing intercultural skills, and making friendships with other teachers (Mudiamu-Strand, 2020, Rubin, 2017), which can lead to other professional opportunities for example research. Additionally, the hard work they put into the courses brings them personal satisfaction and motivation from students' enthusiasm and engagement, development of their pedagogy, or professional growth. To new faculty, it also brings some prestige and progress in their career. As was commonly mentioned in the reviewed literature (House et al, 2022, Mudiamu-Strand, 2020) and the participants of this study, it also allows teachers to get international working experience without the need to travel since it may not be in the university budget, especially for teachers in the early stage of their career and brings them professional acknowledgment from their colleagues.

All participants agreed that COIL is a beneficial way of study for students and themselves and for the majority of students, as was mentioned in the literature as well, it is the only way to experience internationally oriented study. In addition, the teachers agreed with the literature that there is only a small percentage of students who get to study abroad (NAFSA, 2021) for financial or other reasons and COIL makes cross-cultural study more accessible to a broader audience (Mudiamu-Strand, 2020). As was mentioned numerous times, the main benefit is intercultural understanding, and communication, getting new perspectives on life, and learning about themselves. The challenges that were shared, as mentioned also in the literature (Bauk, 2019, Rubin, 2017), were the challenge of collaboration and communication with the partner teacher and the time zone difference also with the fact that there is a need to educate teachers together with students in using technology in learning to make it more interactive. Based on the research and mentioned literature (Aldowah et al, 2017), as the pandemic showed us even clearer many faculty members do not know how to make classes engaging and how to use available technology tools during class. Additionally, the interviewed teachers stated the problem with the motivation of students and the hesitance they experience at the beginning of the class. They also raised the opinion about failed partnerships before the start of the project and the problem to motivate more teachers to include COIL in their classes. The outcome of this study identifies student engagement as a challenge that teachers had to face. However, in the comparison, Mudiamu-Strand (2020) stated in her research outcomes, that the COIL part of a course helped to get students more engaged in the course and make it more interesting for them by using social media and other technology to show them that they can connect with people from other countries.

From the literature and the interviews, it seems that COIL has not expanded to Europe much yet and is still connected to American Universities. However, the partner network of the US COIL Center includes some

European partners as well. The hesitance in Europe may be due to the Erasmus program that supports students in their physical study abroad and makes it more accessible, therefore there is no big need for online international engagement. However, during the pandemic, they also added the virtual mobility option to their projects. In the teachers' opinion, this phenomenon will continue to spread and get more popular alongside the Study Abroad option partially because of the boost of interest due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This outcome was also mentioned in the revised literature (Mudiamu-Strand, 2020, Ingram et al., 2021, Liu and Shirley, 2021). All participants mentioned that the pandemic helped teachers to learn more about online studies and online engaging pedagogy which may lead them to realize that it is not less than a traditional in-person class. There were also some ideas on how to make the class more equal by providing multilanguage materials or translations for non-native English speakers. This practice was also mentioned by Suarez and Haduch (2020) in their work.

Conclusion

The research showed that this pedagogical method brings many benefits to teachers. They get to learn about new cultures together with their students, they can develop their pedagogy and they can get recognition from their colleagues. The main challenges include time, student motivation, and the amount of engagement of partnering teachers.

Follow-up studies could focus more on student experience from a student perspective which was not possible for this study due to the timing, or it would be valuable to get opinions from institutions management on this topic. If they see it as beneficial, they could invest more in their faculty to get involved in this direction of development to promote their institution, once they understand the teacher's challenge. There was a variety of implementations teachers used in their COIL classes and therefore there is a possibility for future research only on the different types of collaboration that happened. Additionally, this study opens the door to explore the topic of how many students decided to go Study Abroad after participating in a COIL class.

This research shows sufficient data for teachers who may be interested in COIL to learn about it in more detail and see what to prepare for and how it can be beneficial and interesting for them and their institution. Additionally, it may help the faculty currently involved in COIL to compare their experience with the findings and to get inspired by some practices. It can help institutions to see the work from the faculty perspective and decide to encourage their teachers to pursue this career development. Potentially institutions that already have faculty doing COIL may decide to support them more after understanding the process and the workload the teachers face. This could also motivate students to take part in this kind of project and be interested in institutions that provide this kind of experience.

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