ASIAN STUDIES

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UNIVERSITY of
PUGET
SOUND

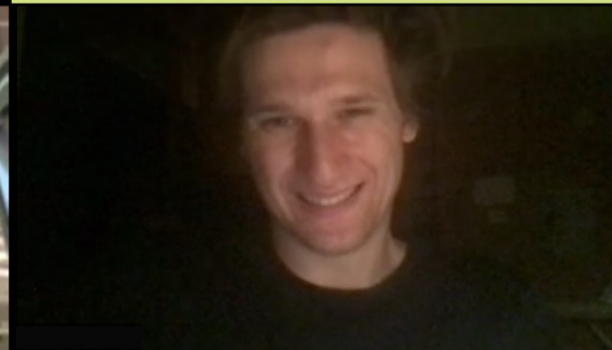# Un-COIL-ing Virtual Study Abroad

OVERVIEW

- Practical focus of talk
- The pandemic and its impact on study abroad
- Background on COILs: format, partner collaboration, logistics
- Indonesia program case study
- PALAC possibilities

The Pandemic and Study Abroad

- The COVID-19 pandemic led to study abroad being essentially shut down for over a year.

- Many faculty and international education staff struggled to find alternatives that would achieve (at least some of) international education's core learning outcomes

- I was among these, and developed a successful online virtual, cultural exchange (Barkin 2020) to replace my Indonesia study abroad program, building on and adapting strategies from the COIL literature

Teaching About Asia in a Time of Pandemic

David Kenley
Editor

ASIA SHORTS

What is a COIL? *Collaborative Online International Learning*

"COIL is not a technology or a technology platform but rather a new teaching and learning paradigm that develops cross-cultural awareness across shared multicultural learning environments" (Rubin 2017: 33)

- *COILs have been discussed as a **new vector of internationalization** for college campuses.*
- *Alternative to **intercultural learning** practices like study abroad (and faculty collaboration), allowing for more equity of access and a **high-impact** experience.*
- *Key facilitating factors: broader availability of different online technologies and tools, alongside increasing concerns about student and faculty travel including safety concerns, financial concerns, environmental concerns, and most recently, health concerns.*

A Brief History of Virtual Exchanges

- Online collaborations between universities date back to the dawn of the Web in the mid 1990s, but have taken on new dimensions over the past 15 years.

- Early inter-university courses (usually 'one offs') began in the 2000s, sometimes including shared syllabi or parts of syllabi, assignments, and collaboration work between students.

- In the mid to late 2000s, new online tools (like Google Docs, Skype, blogging platforms) began to appear that allowed for richer collaboration work as well as new forums for reflection.

- During this time (in 2006), SUNY opened its COIL Center, and facilitated COILs between with universities in Mexico City and later the Middle East and North Africa, providing critical institutional support, resources, and training.

What Does a COIL Involve?

- COIL in SUNY's vision is based on developing co-taught courses where teachers from two cultural backgrounds work together to develop a shared syllabus, emphasizing experiential and collaborative student learning.

- Others have instead focused on "COIL modules" within courses, emphasizing specific assignments and points of connection between courses.

What Does a COIL Involve?

Programming Possibilities

- (Partially) shared syllabi, readings
- Synchronous or asynchronous shared class sessions, lectures
- Student-to-student synchronous video discussions
- Synchronous or asynchronous shared writing assignments
- (A)synchronous video, photo, or audio work
- Employing tech such as Zoom, Docs, YouTube, social media, blog/wiki platforms, course mgmt. systems, etc.

Core Foci

Case Study: Indonesia Virtual Exchange

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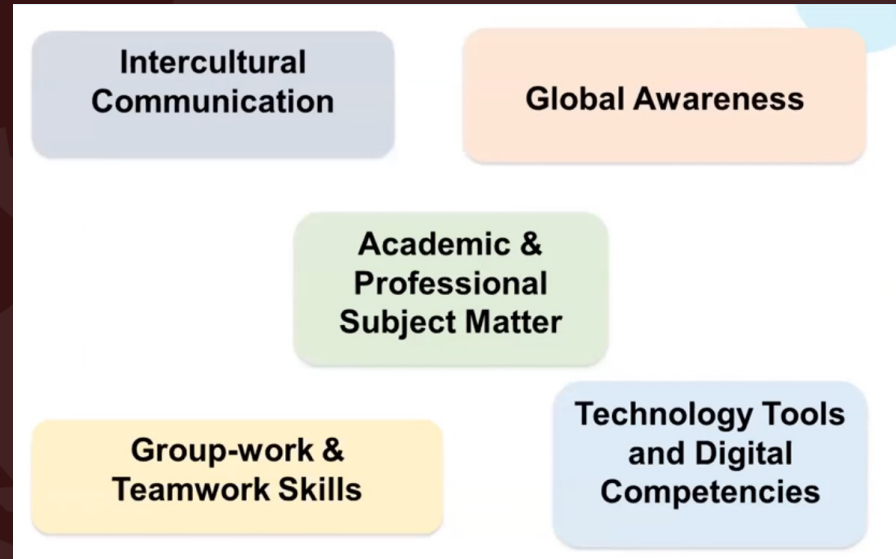
- Not a traditional COIL; built on existing course structure
- Teams of four students conducted a series of Zoom discussions around course themes; related interests; personal biographies
- Teams completed collaborative writing assignment on their theme
- Individuals recorded personal reflection videos on their experience

Martha Sooai | YSEALI Indonesia, Power & Politics Team

Sahnaz Melasandy | YSEALI Indonesia, Power & Politics Team

Sofia Gatmon-Sandrock | Puget Sound, Religion Team

Case Study: Indonesia Virtual Exchange

- Program design principles: shared workload /responsibilities; (2) collaborative assignment goals; (3) individual agency within academic constraints
- Productive virtual exchanges don't require the full COIL structure to succeed
- Studying abroad online: reassessing program goals; loss of cultural context; shift to collaboration and autoethnographic reflection

Should PALAC be COILing?

PALAC

- Strong exchanges depend on stable partnerships between universities
- Opportunity to build relationships and develop high-impact & accessible international programming
- Associated with increased retention and student success (Dyba 2017)

Should PALAC be COILing?

- Requires administrative support & tech resources
- Requires interested faculty teaching courses with overlapping themes and schedules
- Investment of time and energy (but far less than study abroad programs)