

Stories of Higher Education Teachers' Experiences of Collaborative Online International Learning: A Narrative Inquiry

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June 2025

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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UK

*Stories of Higher Education Teachers' Experiences of Collaborative Online
International Learning: A Narrative Inquiry*

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore the experiences of higher education teachers who have engaged with Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) as an Internationalisation at Home (IaH) initiative.

Accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, COIL as an approach to internationalisation has gained traction in recent years. It offers an opportunity for students to develop vital intercultural and employability skills without the need for international travel. This makes COIL a more inclusive and sustainable approach to internationalisation than traditional methods such as student mobility.

However, whilst research on the practice of COIL is growing, it has primarily focused on the experiences and outcomes for students. Recognising that the success of COIL relies primarily upon the efforts of educators, this research sought to centre their experiences to better understand the context within which COIL can thrive.

The research utilised a narrative approach, collecting stories from COIL teachers through unstructured interviews. Using Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as a theoretical framework, these stories were interpreted and weaved together to co-create the final narrative which forms the findings chapters of this thesis.

The findings illustrate the complexity of the context within which COIL teachers operate. The narrative illuminates how their motivation to, experience of, and ultimately their ability to successfully design and teach a COIL, are all influenced by their own international history, level of CQ and institutional culture. In revealing the complex relationship between these factors, this research provides valuable insight for institutions, educational leaders and practitioners wishing to develop COIL.

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Acknowledgements

*I've heard it said that pigs will fly
and someday soon they'll rule the sky.
That may sound strange, but, if it's right,
I don't suppose they'll fly a kite.
I'll bet, instead, they'll have to train
so they can learn to fly a plane,
or join the Navy where they'll get
to learn to fly a fighter jet.*

- Kenn Nesbitt

There are a great many people to thank for keeping me going during this journey. First, my peers at Lancaster, and the tutors on the first five modules who laid the groundwork for this thesis. My supervisor: Richard Budd, who must surely have thought I would never make it this far but didn't let on, instead providing much feedback and encouragement, as well as much valued challenge, insight and advice.

My colleagues old and new have been there through thick and thin. The team at OCAED have gone above and beyond in their support, somehow knowing better than I did whether I needed advice, feedback, a pep talk, or just the opportunity to rant.

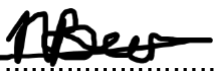
My family and friends have certainly been the losers over the years I have spent working on this thesis. They have been cancelled on more times than I can count and dealt (mostly uncomplainingly) with a grouchy version of me when I did grace them with my presence. Thank you for sticking around and rest assured that I am aware I have much making up to do!

To Dan Williams, you have by turns inspired me and supported me. For always knowing what I need, for accepting my latest challenge with good grace, and for the mounds of patience, love and encouragement you have sent my way, thank you.

And finally, for my parents. For Mum, who has taught me that we can learn to do anything if we set our mind to it, and certainly not to let a stupid thing like lack of wings get in the way of learning to fly. And for Dad, who may not have seen me finish this thing, but I know would be proud – not least because. I managed to get a poem about flying pigs in there somewhere.

Author's declaration: This thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

The word length of this thesis does not exceed the permitted maximum of 50,000 words.

Signature 

Word count: 52,758

Chapter One: Introduction and background

1.1 Aims of this chapter

Anchored in my experiences working as both a professional services and academic member of staff in various United Kingdom (UK) higher education institutions, this thesis explores the stories that university educators tell about their experiences with Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL). Based on narrative interviews with higher education (HE) teachers and using Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as a theoretical framework, the thesis identifies some of the factors that contribute to COIL success, with a view to assist in identifying policy and practice that can be implemented by institutions wishing to nurture COIL. Five years post-Covid pandemic, when the strong impetus to replace physical travel with virtual alternatives has lessened, this offers timely insight for policy makers and practitioners looking to increase engagement with COIL.

In this introductory chapter, my intention is to make clear why this research project is needed and why it is relevant to researchers, practitioners, and policy makers, as well as of interest to me. In doing so, I will state the aims and objectives of the thesis, the context within which it takes place, and its contribution to knowledge.

1.2 Establishing context: the imperative for internationalisation

The drive to internationalise higher education is by no means new. Whilst HE has arguably always been international (Ridder-Symoens, 1992), a goal set by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in 1999 to integrate 'an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution' (OECD, 1999 p16) is widely considered to have been a catalyst (Magne, 2019; Mudiamu, 2020). The goal has been interpreted and implemented in a variety of ways over the years, with an initial focus primarily on the recruitment of international students, transnational education, and international mobility of students and staff (Magne, 2019). However, the context within which institutions seek to realise this goal has seen enormous change over the last quarter of a century and has prompted universities to reassess and adapt their approach. This has contributed to the

rise of Internationalisation at Home (IaH) initiatives, including Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL).

1.2.1 Internationalisation at Home

The concept of Internationalisation at Home will be explored in detail in Chapter 2: the literature review, however, it can be briefly described as: *“the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments”* (Beelen & Jones, 2015 p76).

Encompassing both the formal and informal curriculum and wider university services (Beelen & Jones, 2015; Mestenhauser, 2006), IaH makes use of existing approaches to teaching and learning, particularly collaborative and experiential methods (Beelen, 2013). These methods seek to provide students with international opportunities that are embedded within the curriculum and within the students’ country of residence. In so doing, greater numbers of students are afforded the opportunities for intercultural development that are offered by traditional mobility, regardless of their ability or willingness to travel (Beelen, 2013). However, the design of effective IaH initiatives of any kind requires staff who are sufficiently equipped to deliver these opportunities to their students. Staff involved in IaH need cultural competence, in addition to skills in communication, collaboration and project management, alongside adaptability, open-mindedness, critical thinking and awareness of global issues (From et al., 2025).

1.2.2 Collaborative Online International Learning

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), as a form of IaH is:

“An inclusive, environmentally friendly teaching and learning method used to internationalise the curriculum, in which educators from different educational institutions in different countries connect to co-design and co-facilitate collaborative online learning assignments that are embedded within the curriculum, with the goal of facilitating the development of students’ collaborative skills, intercultural competence, and curriculum content learning through collaboration.” (Hackett et al., 2024 p1084).

COIL is a pedagogical approach with a methodology that has been well developed over the years to offer equivalent outcomes to physical mobility in terms of intercultural competences (EAIE, n.d.). Chapter 2 further explores the key principles and components of COIL.

1.2.3 Widening participation

An increasingly mobile world population means the student body in the UK is becoming more diverse with increasing numbers of under-represented or ‘post-traditional’ students (Mudiamu, 2020; United Nations, 2019).

The objectives of the sector regulator - the Office for Students - around ensuring participation, experience, outcomes and value for money for all students (Office for Students, 2018a) require universities to consider their ability to support all students to succeed and progress. Any university that wishes to charge above the basic tuition fee cap is required to produce an Access and Participation Plan (APP). The APP details the strategies that institutions will put in place to address risks to equality of opportunity for students throughout the course of their degree programme, and how these will be implemented, measured and evaluated (Office for Students, 2018b). Being successful at widening participation is therefore not only a moral imperative for the UK higher education sector, but also a financial one.

Universities across the UK have responded with a number of initiatives intended to, for example, decolonise the curriculum (Charles, 2019), promote equity of attainment (Universities UK & National Union of Students, 2019), improve student experience (Cullen, 2020; Temple et al., 2016), and foster ‘graduate skills’ (Beckett & Kemp, 2008). At the intersection of these initiatives lies the drive to internationalise HE and equip students with the skills and mindset to live and work in a globalised world, through the development of Intercultural Competence (IC) (Mudiamu, 2020).

Traditional internationalisation approaches have relied upon the physical movement of students and staff, which have been demonstrated to have positive outcomes for students. Research by Universities UK (Universities UK International, 2022a) found that graduates who worked or studied abroad

during their degree were less likely to be unemployed and more likely to have earned a first class or upper second-class degree. They were also more likely to be in further study, and for those who were working, they were more likely than their peers who had not travelled to be in a graduate-level job, earning on average 5% more (Universities UK International, 2022b). Whilst this indicates correlation, not causation, the same report also found that the benefits of mobility are more pronounced for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and for Black and Asian students. This implies that mobility can be an effective intervention for improving the outcomes of underrepresented students.

There are undoubtedly, however, social, cultural, economic and institutional barriers to mobility. There are lower rates of participation recorded from students who come from low socio-economic backgrounds or low-participation areas, Black and ethnic minority students, care leavers, and students with a disability (Universities UK International, 2022a). Despite efforts to close the participation gap, mobility remains inaccessible to a significant number of underrepresented students. Internationalisation at Home (IaH) initiatives, such as COIL, are therefore an attractive way to provide more equitable access to international experiences, and the skills and competencies that such experiences aim to develop (Beelen, 2013).

1.2.4 Covid-19 pandemic

“Covid-19 [has] hastened the dawn of a new post-mobility world, or one in which physical travel is unnecessary for the creation and transmission of knowledge across borders.” (White & Lee, 2020 para 4).

Whilst the concept of IaH has been gaining popularity since the late 1990s (Beelen & Jones, 2018) and COIL has been practiced since the early 2000s (Rubin, 2022), their relevance was multiplied almost overnight by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. With international travel halted, the potential for technology to connect students across borders was more readily accepted. At the same time, the necessity to adopt virtual collaboration in virtually all areas of life and work lessened the technological barrier to entry of online exchanges, as people became more used to and more competent at using online collaboration tools (Weaver et al., 2024). As a result, the pandemic period saw a huge increase in

Virtual Exchange (VE) initiatives in higher education, with teachers seeking ways to foster international connection and collaboration amongst their students whilst travel remained unavailable (Rubin, 2022).

A factor for which VE methods such as COIL has often been criticised is its propensity to remain the preserve of the Western World (Helm, 2020). Indeed, a bibliometric analysis of the VE literature found that the space is dominated by researchers from the USA, with significant but comparatively limited presence in Europe and Asia (Barbosa & Ferreira-Lopes, 2023). It may be that COIL/VE is prevalent in other areas, but it is the northern hemisphere that claims ownership of COIL knowledge and influences practice through the research/knowledge landscape (Talbot, 2023; Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021). Furthermore, despite the roots of telecollaboration - an early form of VE - emerging from the discipline of language learning, English remains the lingua franca of exchange, privileging English-speaking countries (Borghetti & Beaven, 2017; López-Duarte et al., 2021; Wells, 2014). The relative inclusion of VE compared to physical travel holds only when students have reliable access to a stable internet connection and the required equipment and software (Stallivieri, 2020). However, it is possible that a positive consequence of Covid-19 was to break down some of these barriers, through the improvement of infrastructure and access to technology, and a universally shared experience. As Anita Patankar, panel member at the International Virtual Exchange Conference 2021 put it:

“We realised that Global North-South, all of those terms, suddenly didn’t mean anything because countries everywhere were struggling ... we started to have more conversations” (Bali et al., 2021).

Thus, the Covid-19 pandemic was effective in raising the profile of VE and COIL, which has been described as a ‘hot-topic’ in education (O’Dowd & Beelen, 2021) whilst also opening it up to wider perspectives from across the globe.

1.2.5 Future skills

The pressure on universities to produce ‘work-ready’ graduates has increased (Baker, 2020). Simultaneously, the rapid advancement of digital technologies impacts the jobs of the future, and therefore the skills students require to succeed when they enter the workforce (Brown et al., 2020; Dimick, 2008). The *Future of Jobs Report* (World Economic Forum, 2025) positions the labour market as a global landscape that future workers must be competent to navigate. In a post-pandemic world, it identifies some of the key skills required for future work to be technological literacy, creative thinking, resilience, flexibility, curiosity, social influence and environmental stewardship.

Both the World Economic Forum and United Nations (UN) 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015) call for higher education that prepares students to adapt to sustainability in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. This requires students to practice skills that develop them as global citizens whilst also limiting unsustainable international travel. This is in line with the reality of the labour market, with workers being increasingly required to work in global virtual teams. As early as 2014, 79% of knowledge workers were found to be working always or frequently in geographically dispersed teams (Ferrazzi, 2014). Creating online opportunities for students to practice intercultural communication and problem solving is therefore seen as authentic and valuable to their life and work after graduation (Mudiamu, 2020).

1.3 Positioning the research context

1.3.1 The role of staff in internationalisation

According to Jones (2013), integrating internationalisation within an institution requires an approach that develops the right culture, attitudes and practices across the entire university, whereby internationalisation as practice becomes part of everyday life and language with clear milestones indicating achievement, rather than being a separate objective. This includes the staff, who must be sufficiently skilled to create cross-cultural learning environments which nurture students’ development of intercultural competences. When it comes to COIL, it is the academic staff who are considered to be the main

drivers and innovators in getting projects off the ground (Rubin, 2017; Rubin & Guth, 2015).

However, several scholars have identified a gap between the expectations set by institutions of their academic staff in curriculum internationalisation and the ability of staff to meet those goals (Green & Whitsed, 2015; Leask et al., 2020). This gap is frequently reported to be an engagement issue (Whitsed et al., 2022), however, Van den Hende and Riezebos (2023) argue that this fails to acknowledge the organisational context within which academics are working. Despite the increasing emphasis on internationalisation, Intercultural Competence (IC) is not typically described by universities as part of the academic profile (Agnew & Kahn, 2014; Gregersen-Hermans, 2017). Typically, institutions have been vulnerable to the 'immersion assumption' (Hornbuckle, 2015), whereby IC is assumed to develop through proximity to people of different nationalities. In reality, it is acknowledged that teachers may or may not have a cognitive understanding of intercultural context (Ross, 2020) and are often unprepared to develop intercultural pedagogical knowledge (Cushner, 2011).

There is recognition that staff must be adequately supported to engage with internationalisation. Mudiamu (2020) recommends that faculty policies and practices, including routes for promotion, should be linked to internationalisation of the curriculum initiatives. Brighton (2020) advocates for IC training for staff, and numerous scholars highlight the need for high quality training for teachers, if they are to be expected to adequately design and assess internationalised learning experiences (Leask & Carroll, 2011). Research shows that educators who have had cultural experiences themselves are more inclined to have an understanding of the intercultural context (Hirsch, 2017; Jokikokko, 2010; Walsh & Casinader, 2019), revealing the importance of teachers' personal intercultural experience. For those teachers who have not had rich cultural experiences themselves, it has been argued that as intercultural sensitivity actually decreases with age (Straffon, 2003), students may in fact demonstrate higher IC than their teachers (Cushner, 2011). This can naturally be a difficult

position for a teacher to overcome when it comes to planning intercultural learning.

Despite these findings, for the most part, training for staff focuses on the practicalities of *how* to implement specific interventions, rather than on supporting staff to develop their own IC (Brighton, 2020). It is perhaps not surprising to see that some staff engaging with COIL report a feeling of being unprepared for the high expectations placed on them to be global educators and facilitators of change (Swartz et al., 2019). This is perhaps more so the case for COIL over other internationalisation initiatives, as the process of developing a COIL involves an intense period of online intercultural collaboration between two or more teachers across cultures (Clauss et al., 2020; O'Dowd, 2018). Indeed, there is a view that the ultimate value of COIL is that it engages and internationalises teachers just as much as it does the students (Rubin, 2017). However, given that the intercultural collaboration of students is highly facilitated during a COIL, this then raises the question of how the staff are enabled to manage the collaboration effectively, and who takes responsibility for this.

1.3.2 My position as researcher

In sympathy with my chosen narrative approach, this short section of the thesis serves to share my own story and how my identity and positionality have influenced this research (Grix, 2018). This is particularly important as my research participants were fellow educators who work in similar areas of professional practice to myself, and thus I took on a dual role of both “insider” and “outsider”; being familiar with and having experience of COIL but not knowledge of *their* experiences and context. My positionality throughout the interviews was therefore fluid, depending on what was being discussed (Buys et al., 2022). Acknowledging and scrutinising my researcher identity, which is naturally shaped by my past professional experiences, allows me to recognise where and how it influences the research process, and its potential contribution to the richness of the research.

As a practitioner researcher, I have worked in multiple roles within higher education and each of them has in some way shaped my world view and

therefore both my research topic and methodology (Holmes, 2020). Although the roles themselves have been quite varied and spanned three different UK universities, they have had two key things in common. Firstly, all three institutions prioritise teaching over research and have a strong interest in inclusion and widening participation. Secondly, every role that I have held in UK higher education has involved working with academic staff to enhance their teaching. Both these factors are core to my professional identity, influencing how I perform my role, the values and ethics that guide me, and the community of practice to which I belong (Fitzgerald, 2020). When it comes to research, this shapes my interest in understanding what motivates and enables staff in embedding new initiatives in their curriculum.

The decision to focus on COIL was made when I was working in a professional services role that aimed to support academic staff in setting up COIL projects. This was pre-Covid-19 pandemic and although COIL had been in practice for some years, the research base was still quite limited. Initially I wanted to contribute to the small but growing body of literature that aimed to demonstrate the impact of COIL on students' IC development (Barbosa & Ferreira-Lopes, 2023; L. Dovrat, 2022). However, as my career progressed, I found that I no longer had access to student participants and, in any case, my interests were changing. Having moved into positions that were more focused on strategy, I found an interesting space where my experience as a practitioner in supporting academics with change met that as policy maker, creating the environment that enabled that practice. I was able to see more clearly the bigger picture of just how many factors impact a teacher's ability to teach effectively (Menon & Suresh, 2021; Stensaker et al., 2014), particularly within the aims of my role to enable the development of inclusive, digitally enabled curriculum. With it being a pedagogical approach that combined digital skills and intercultural competencies in a method that has the potential to be very inclusive (Hackett et al., 2024), COIL remained of interest. I was, however, now more intrigued by the desire to understand what was happening for staff and how they are enabled to successfully implement COIL. As this was a less researched topic, it also offered greater opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to knowledge.

The choice to use a narrative methodology is similarly a product of my professional identity. As a curriculum designer, storytelling was one of the most powerful tools in my toolbox. The use of stories in teaching is well established (Gudmundsdottir, 1991) with the concept of narrative being fundamentally linked to cognition and understanding (Plowman et al., 1999). In essence, the construction of a story by piecing together events and knowledge creates new meaning and communicates that to others through telling (FutureLearn, 2018). This sense-making is collaborative, with narrator and listener co-constructing meaning throughout the performance (Schmoelz, 2018). This social-constructivist perspective influences not only my chosen pedagogical approach but also reflects my ontological position. The narrative inquiry approach allows the participants (narrators) in this research the autonomy to select and share the life experiences and events that they deem relevant to their COIL story, providing additional insight into the society, culture and context within which their experiences occurred (Delmas & Giles, 2023). From their stories, I am able to make new meaning about the COIL experience and to reflexively interpret that through the lens of my professional identity.

1.4 Research aims and objectives

As discussed, internationalisation is a strategic priority for the UK higher education sector. Due to the changing landscape of UK HE, there is also increased interest in internationalisation opportunities that are more widely available to all students (Mudiamu, 2020). Therefore, whilst outward mobility remains a priority, Internationalisation at Home (IaH) initiatives such as COIL are increasingly being suggested by institutions.

The COVID-19 pandemic particularly accelerated the growth of COIL projects in institutions around the world (Mudiamu, 2020), and there is a growing body of research that seeks to define, explain and measure the impact of COIL (Dovrat, 2022). These are, however, primarily from a student perspective. Whilst there is a proliferation of training materials available for teachers to support them in designing and teaching a COIL, implying a practitioner understanding of the knowledge and skills that staff need, there is little research to confirm this. Nor

is it understood, given that staff are considered to be the driving force of COIL (Rubin, 2017; Rubin & Guth, 2015), what motivates them to engage with it.

The objective of this research was therefore to explore the experiences of teachers who had taught a COIL and the factors influencing and/or hindering their decision to COIL and ability to manage the project successfully. In exploring these experiences I wanted, given that teachers are an underrepresented group in COIL research, to amplify their voices, using a method that enabled me to share their stories. By using an unstructured, narrative interview approach, I hoped to enable the participants to choose for themselves which events and experiences were important in their stories. Finally, by giving voice to teachers, this research project seeks to explore what factors could support more people to engage with COIL within their institutional contexts. Beyond a contribution to the understanding of COIL, findings from the research are expected to inform institutional policies and practice to nurture COIL and other IaH initiatives.

It is important to note that although a previously identified positive impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on COIL was to open it up to wider participation (see Section 1.2.4), this research is still rooted in a Western perspective. Whilst the narrative approach has the potential to foreground marginalised voices through storytelling, this would require effective collaboration with underrepresented communities throughout the research design (Samuel & Ortiz, 2021). Ultimately, the voices represented in this research are limited by my own background as researcher - requiring interviews to be conducted in English - and my reach in terms of participant recruitment.

1.5 Thesis contribution to knowledge

The contribution of this thesis to the field of higher education is an exploration of the experiences of educators, who are currently underrepresented as participants in COIL research. The narrative approach uncovers deep insights into the teacher experience that allows for greater understanding of the complex personal and institutional factors that impact upon COIL, and the relationship between them. Through analysis of teachers' stories, this study highlights the centrality of both Cultural Intelligence and institutional support to

the success of COIL and provides evidence to support and further develop what is currently regarded as good practice in terms of training and institutional policy. Furthermore, there is a methodological contribution through the novel use of a prompt poster during the interviews, which will be described in Chapter 4.

1.6 Outline of the thesis

The thesis consists of a further six chapters. Chapter 2 is the Literature Review, in which I provide an in-depth discussion of COIL's role within the internationalisation agenda and the benefits it is purported to provide for students. In Chapter 3, I introduce the theoretical framework of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and how and why it is utilised in this research.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the methodology I have used to conduct this research, including the research questions guiding the project and an introduction to the research participants. In Chapters 5 and 6 I discuss the findings, which are presented as a combined narrative made up of the voices of the participants alongside my interpretation and analysis.

Finally, in Chapter 7 I conclude with a summary of the research project and key findings, including recommendations to institutions to enable greater engagement with COIL.

1.7 Chapter summary

This introductory chapter has briefly introduced the factors which have led to COIL rising in popularity in the UK HE sector and the context within which educators are designing and teaching COILs. It has demonstrated the need for more understanding of the educator experience, and how this research will provide a contribution to knowledge in that area.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This review of literature relevant to the research questions situates Collaborative Online International Learning within the context of higher education policy and practice, from a predominantly UK/European, and Western perspective. Addressing first the ‘what’ and ‘why’ of internationalisation in higher education, it then focuses on one aspect of the ‘how’; introducing the circumstances under which COIL is used and its intended outcomes, discussing and critiquing the current literature base. Research relating to the experiences of - or outcomes for - staff who COIL will be specifically explored and supplemented by some wider literature pertaining to staff experiences of internationalisation.

2.1 Internationalisation of Higher Education

COIL is a teaching and learning method which aims to internationalise the curriculum (Hackett et al., 2024; Rubin, 2023a). It is therefore important to understand the wider context of the internationalisation of higher education, so as to situate the staff experience of COIL within the broader aims of the sector.

For this section, relevant literature was identified through a search of the WorldCat database, using the keywords ‘international*’, ‘global*’, ‘internationali?ation of the curriculum’, ‘internationali?ation at home’, and ‘higher education’. The initial inclusion criteria were peer-reviewed papers, published in English within the past ten years (2015 - 2025). However, after reviewing the initial results, it became clear that the most recent papers were continuing to refer to definitions from a core group of authors who were most prolific in the period 2005 – 2015. With such a large body of literature on the topic, this section of the literature review is by no means systematic and serves to capture the main discussion on internationalisation of higher education over the past 20 years. The intention is to provide a grounding of the aims, intentions, and main activities associated with internationalisation of higher education, in order to contextualise the space in which COIL sits, and the imperatives that are placed upon staff to internationalise the university experience.

2.1.1 Defining internationalisation in higher education

The internationalisation of higher education is a global phenomenon and has been for quite some time (Rumbley et al., 2020). As conceptual understanding has evolved, its definition has been regularly revised (Mudiamu, 2020), yet its main purpose remains contested and the understanding of benefits, risks and processes, undeveloped (Knight, 2008). It is noted that there is a tendency for people to use the term ‘internationalisation’ in a way which best suits their purpose (de Wit, 2013), or, as articulated by Teekens: “*It may mean very different things to different people at different times and this does not seem to be a bothering fact*” (Teekens, 2004 p57). This section will briefly outline the context of internationalisation of higher education and the differing ways the term is used, before arriving at a definition that most adequately captures its intent and purpose.

Whilst the internationalisation of higher education has arguably been a centuries long endeavour (Ridder-Symoens, 1992 in Tight, 2022), scholars do agree that an increased fervour in recent decades is a response to globalisation of the economy (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Brandenburg & de Wit, 2015; de Wit, 2013; Maringe, 2010; Knight, 2014; . As remarked by Jane Knight (2008 p1), a preeminent scholar in the field, “*internationalization is changing the world of higher education and globalization is changing the world of internationalization*”. Thus, in order to understand what is driving internationalisation, we must first recognise what is meant by globalisation.

Teichler (2004) asserts that globalisation initially referred to the impact of the blurring of national borders upon higher education but that, over time, that meaning has diminished, with globalisation and internationalisation becoming synonymous. Indeed, Scott (2015) argues that the two terms cannot be separated, and that they are intertwined to form a complex phenomenon with wide-reaching impact upon higher education. Despite this blurring of boundaries in common usage, there are separate yet interrelated definitions for the two terms, with many scholars arguing for a distinction between them. Altbach et al. (2019 p7) define globalisation in higher education as “*the reality shaped by an increasingly integrated world economy, new information and*

communications technology, the emergence of international knowledge network, the role of the English language, and other forces beyond the control of academic institution”.

This is seen as distinct from internationalisation, which is considered a reaction to globalisation, and captured as *“the policies and programs that universities and governments implement to respond to globalization”* (Altbach et al., 2019 p8). Vught et al. (2018) note that this distinction has a tendency to position globalisation as a force for competition in which education is a “tradable commodity”. Internationalisation, meanwhile, is posed as a solution, based on international cooperation and mobility. Brandenburg and de Wit (2015) observe that this leads to the broad categorisation of internationalisation as ‘good’ and globalisation as ‘bad’.

Value judgments aside, it is considered that the effects of the global environment cannot be avoided by higher education institutions (Altbach et al., 2019 p7). The first imperative for internationalisation within universities is regularly cited (Magne, 2019; Mudiamu, 2020) as a response to the OECD’s goal for HEIs to integrate an *‘international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution’* (OECD, 1999 p16). Since then, within the context of globalisation and neoliberalism, in which education is a commodified value on the global marketplace, the need for internationalisation has continued to grow in importance (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014). Over time, the imperative for internationalisation in higher education has been shaped not only by this competitiveness and economic considerations but also by the pursuit of academic and cultural exchange, peace and mutual development (Bamberger et al., 2019; Knight, 2014). As addressed in the introduction, the forces of globalisation require universities to ‘produce’ graduates who are equipped with the intercultural skillsets to thrive in an increasingly global world (World Economic Forum, 2025). Simultaneously, a moral (Evans et al., 2019) and regulatory (Office for Students, 2018a) imperative is driving the need to ensure that all students have access to the opportunities that will support them in developing these skills. Thus

internationalisation is a goal in which academic institutions around the world are united (de Wit, 2013) and the approaches to it, evolving.

Whilst the definition of internationalisation has been frequently updated and refined, the most oft cited and foundational definition of the term, particularly within COIL/VE literature, remains that posed by Knight as: “*the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension in the purpose, functions, or delivery of postsecondary education*” (Knight, 2003 p2). Twenty years later, this definition is still seen as relevant, although there is concern that it invites the badging of any activity with a global or intercultural aspect as internationalisation (de Wit, 2014). Knight herself argued that the concept of internationalisation and “the fundamental values underpinning it” requires an update (Knight, 2014 p76). In seeking clarity, these same two authors have taken the approach not of refining the definition of internationalisation, but of defining what internationalisation *is not* (de Wit, 2011; Knight, 2011). On this they agree that internationalisation is *not* the sum of international activities such as study or work abroad schemes; offering programmes in English (for those countries where English is a non-native language); developing international partnerships and transnational education programmes; or increasing numbers of international students on campus. The key, they argue, is that internationalisation is a process through which these aforementioned activities lead to internationalised outcomes such as increased mobility of labour, free trade and the creation of a knowledge economy.

Knight’s definition of internationalisation with its focus on process, when considered alongside the clarifications that speak to its intention as a force for social good, is therefore the one which guides this research.

2.2 Approaches to internationalisation

The term internationalisation covers a range of activities and approaches, as illustrated by Figure 2.1. This section will summarise those approaches that are most relevant to the context of this research.

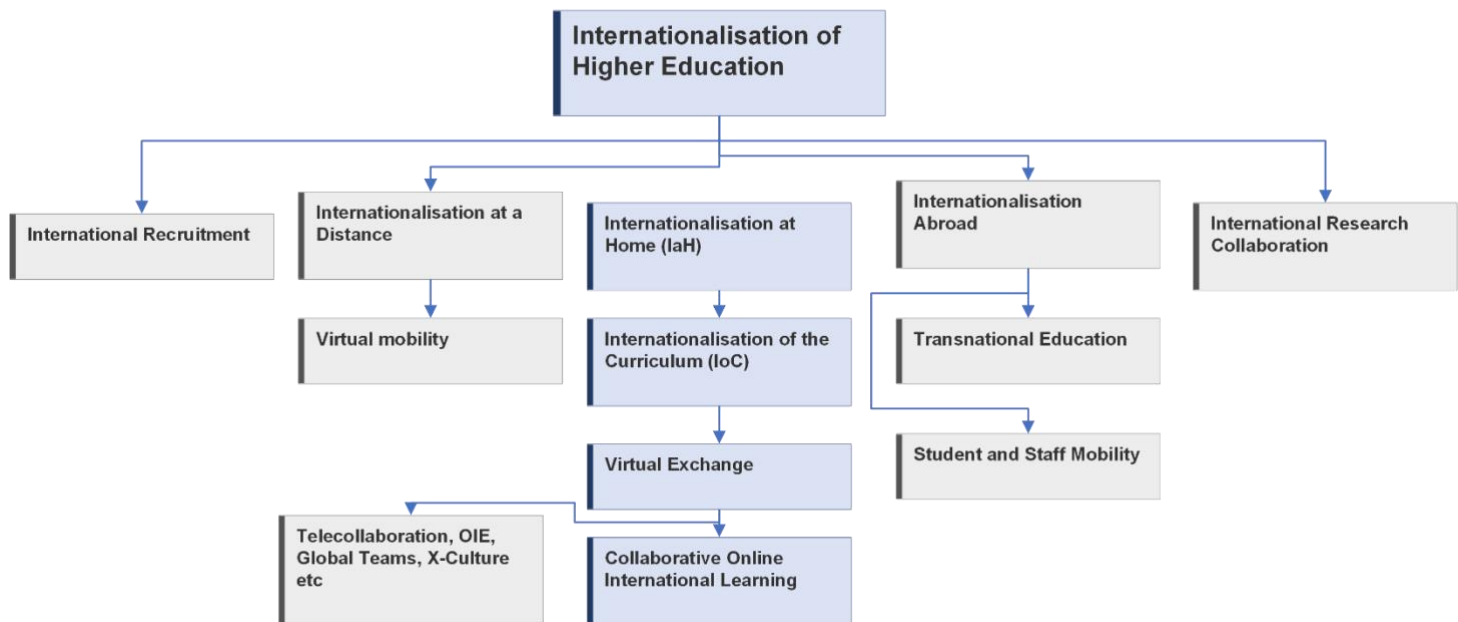


Figure 2.1 Internationalisation of HE hierarchy

2.2.1 Internationalisation abroad versus Internationalisation at Home

Expanding on her definition of internationalisation, Knight (2008) sought to categorise international activities into two types. The first of these is internationalisation abroad, which is concerned with educational opportunities that involve education across borders. This may include for example, mobility of students and staff, programmes, courses, and projects. The second category is Internationalisation at Home, which involves activities that can be undertaken in the students' home country, that nonetheless enable them to develop intercultural skills and knowledge, and to be more active in a globalised world (de Wit, 2013). This can include curriculum and teaching and learning processes, as well as extra-curricular activities, liaison with local cultural/ethnic groups (e.g. through societies) and research and scholarly activities. Included within this category is Virtual Exchange (VE), of which Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) is one type.

The concept of IaH, which began to gain traction in the early 2000s, is a response to the prior focus of internationalisation as requiring student and staff mobility, an idea that seems to have been prompted at least in part by the European Union's 1987 enactment of the European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS) programme (Beelen & Jones,

2015; Mudiamu, 2020). In order to understand why IaH may be needed, it is important to first understand internationalisation abroad, and what mobility of students can and cannot contribute to the broader aim of internationalising higher education.

2.2.2 Internationalisation abroad: student mobility

The format of student mobility can vary enormously, ranging from short term field/study trips of a week or two long, to a semester or even full year working or studying abroad. Some of these mobility opportunities – more commonly the longer time periods – offer the student the experience of full immersion, living and studying or working in a host country. Such opportunities are often promoted by governments and higher education institutions as a way to develop positive cultural outcomes in students (Cleak et al., 2016; Roy et al., 2019; Winslade, 2016). The benefits of such immersion are well documented and include a range of skills and attributes that can be categorised under the heading of Intercultural Competence (IC) (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012; Reichard et al., 2015; Winslade, 2016). These include:

- Cultural awareness: the increased recognition and understanding of differences between cultures (Bohman & Borglin, 2014; Cleak et al., 2016; Crossman & Clarke, 2010; Griner et al., 2015; Tuleja, 2008).
- Cultural intelligence: an individual's ability to interact with others across cultures (Holtbrügge & Engelhard, 2016; Varela & Gatlin-Watts, 2014).
- Global mindedness: the extent to which an individual feels connected to the global community (Clarke III et al., 2009; Douglas & Jones-Rikkens, 2001; Hadis, 2005).
- Cultural sensitivity and empathy: being open to and showing respect for cultural differences (Anderson et al., 2006; Crossman & Clarke, 2010; Ruddock & Turner, 2007).
- Cultural adaptability: an individuals' ability to adapt to a culture other than their own (Mapp, 2012; Williams, 2005).
- Language skills: linguistic ability and confidence (Cubillos et al., 2008; Hernández, 2010; Reynolds-Case, 2013).

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- Cross-cultural communication skills: the ability to communicate in cross-cultural settings (Clarke III et al., 2009; Gullekson et al., 2011; Orahood et al., 2004; Tuleja, 2008).
 - Personal outcomes such as improved academic performance (Houser et al., 2011; Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2015) and perceived gains in employability (Cleak et al., 2016; DeGraaf et al., 2013; Meier & Smith, 2016).

Teekens (2004) describes two types of potential pitfalls when it comes to mobility, the first of which is the question of assumed student outcomes. As she explains it, engagement with difference through a mobility does not presuppose that learning will take place. As described by Paige et al. (2009), in order for a student to benefit from their immersion in another culture, “*self-reflection is a necessary pre-condition*”. Without reflection, there is a danger not just that no learning will occur from study abroad, but potentially that it actually leads to *negative* outcomes. Teekens (2004) warns of the danger that if a student is not open to integrating with the host culture and changing their views, they may experience a reinforcement of stereotypes and even the development of xenophobic views. Norris and Dwyer (2005) identify a related issue with so called “island programs”, in which a student uproots themselves to their host country only to find themselves living in a self-contained bubble wherein they are surrounded by familiarity, which limits opportunity for intercultural learning. This effect may sound familiar to staff who have observed international students in their cohort “grouping together”, drawn by the irresistible call of the familiarity of home (Teekens, 2004).

The second problem with mobility according to Teekens (2004) is an issue of accessibility, in that mobility is an option only available to a minority of students who have the time, money, and motivation. A large proportion of students who complete an international mobility come from families with an above-average socio-economic status, with parents who have attended university themselves (Beerkens et al., 2016; Caruso & de Wit, 2011; López-Duarte et al., 2021). Study abroad typically increases the time taken for a student to graduate and is extra time that some students cannot afford (Shaftel et al., 2007). However, this is not only an issue of affordability. Eichler (2004) found that students from

lower socio-economic backgrounds are often unaware of mobility opportunities, with parental education considered to be a key factor in this failure of knowledge transfer (López-Duarte et al., 2021). When they are aware of the opportunity, they are typically less motivated to take it up (Bryła & Ciabiada, 2014) and are likely to lack the support required to successfully engage with mobility (Cairns, 2019).

There is also an ethnicity participation gap, with evidence demonstrating that students of colour are much less likely to take up a mobility opportunity than their white peers (Dessoiff, 2006; Lincoln Commission, 2005). Research suggests several reasons for this disparity, including the very real fear of experiencing racism whilst abroad; familial or caring responsibilities; perceived economic cost; and a lack of representation amongst staff leading mobility programmes (Carter, 1991; Dessoiff, 2006; Van Der Meid, 2003). There are similar disparities in participation by gender, with reports indicating that female students participate at roughly twice the rate of males (Dessoiff, 2006; NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2003).

A further challenge faced by many students is that of the language barrier. Whilst the increasing use of English as the lingua-franca in degree programmes across the globe (Borghetti & Beaven, 2017; López-Duarte et al., 2021; Wells, 2014) lessens this barrier for students from English-speaking countries, it also creates new challenges. Firstly, it privileges students from those countries where English is widely spoken, and students and staff from disciplines such as languages or business, where there is likely to be a higher degree of comfort with English, or at least a familiarity of the notion of communicating in a language which is not your own (Hoffa, 2008; Lincoln Commission, 2005). Secondly, teaching in a language other than the primary local one risks creating language-based clusters akin to Norris and Dwyer's (2005) 'islands', which effectively keep international students distanced from locals, failing to achieve that all important 'immersion' (López-Duarte et al., 2021).

When considering the whole story of student mobility, we see that there is potential for positive impact on students' intercultural and personal development. However, there are significant challenges facing students when

considering a study abroad opportunity, and these challenges disproportionately affect some members of the student population. HESA data for the academic year 2022/23 shows that in the UK, only 0.71% of students studied abroad for all or part of that year (HESA, 2024), indicating that mobility is simply not an opportunity that the majority of students benefit from. It should be noted that this figure represents a significant decline in student numbers following the COVID-19 pandemic, which drastically reduced international travel globally. Prior to the pandemic, 14.6% of students studied abroad in the 2018/19 academic year (HESA, 2020), and 3.8% in the 2019/20 academic year (HESA, 2021) before the UK lockdown beginning in March 2020 prevented further travel. It remains to be seen whether there will be a return to pre-Covid numbers of students taking up a mobility, but even if they do, the number of students benefitting (in the UK, at least), still makes up only a small proportion of the student body. By contrast, IaH is intended to be a more inclusive option, bringing international opportunities to everyone, including those who are unable or unwilling to travel (Beelen & Jones, 2015).

2.2.3 Defining Internationalisation at Home

The IaH concept has its roots in the University of Malmö (Sweden), which in the late 1990s, at a time when study abroad was being widely promoted through the Erasmus programme, found itself without an international partner to whom they could send students. Bengt Nilsson, then Vice President for International Affairs, sought to create local intercultural and international learning opportunities for students and in so doing, became ‘the father of internationalisation at home’ (Beelen & Jones, 2018).

The concept gained traction with the European Association for International Education (EAIE) forming a Special Interest Group which subsequently published a position paper outlining the idea (Crowther et al., 2003). Initially, the concept was described rather broadly, defined more by what it was not than what it was, as: “*Any internationally related activity with the exception of outbound student and staff mobility*” (Crowther et al., 2003 p8). However, the cleavage of IaH from any and all mobility activity served to inadequately address the relationship between them. There was an acknowledgment that

whilst IaH activities are distinct from mobility, international experiences at home could support students with the skills required for a work or study abroad opportunity and thus could promote and improve the quality of, and widen participation in outgoing mobility (Beelen, 2013).

In defining what IaH *is*, Beelen and Jones (2015) stress that it is *not* an aim or outcome, but rather a set of activities addressed to *all* students, not just the mobile minority. These activities take place at home, within a disciplinary context, and with the intention of developing international and intercultural competencies in all students. The student is therefore at the centre of IaH, and its anti-exclusionary stance means that IaH must be embedded within the core curriculum and the wider student experience. IaH should not be located only in elective modules or programmes, since this would not reach all students (Beelen & Jones, 2015). Furthermore, IaH encompasses both the formal and informal curriculum and wider university services (Beelen & Jones, 2015; Mestenhauser, 2006). An important characteristic of IaH is that it is not in itself a pedagogical approach, but it makes use of existing approaches to teaching and learning, particularly collaborative and experiential methods (Beelen, 2013). It takes advantage of the diversity of students and staff to foster cross-cultural interactions, incorporates cases and perspectives from international contexts, and utilises guest lectures to offer alternative cultural perspectives. Increasingly, online collaboration is used to create virtual, international/intercultural classrooms (Beelen & Jones, 2018), an approach which was mainly the preserve of foreign language classrooms until the early 2000s (O'Dowd, 2018).

Bearing in mind the characteristics and approaches described, the updated and more broadly accepted definition of IaH is “*the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments*” (Beelen & Jones, 2015 p76). This definition captures the inclusivity and student-centredness which is at the heart of IaH but avoids any nod to the intention or aims of such activity. This is a factor for which the movement has been criticised, with Whitsed and Green (2013 para 10) stating that it focuses “*on*

activity and not results as indicators of quality". Beelen himself laments that the lack of a measure of quality allows for a performative approach that purports to be morally good whilst failing to demonstrate positive outcomes (de Wit & Beelen, 2014). Despite this criticism, there is evidence that IaH activities do lead to positive outcomes. Soria and Troisi (2014) go so far as to state that IaH activities positively influenced students' self-reported development of intercultural competencies as much – if not more than – traditional study/work abroad.

IaH has been largely favourably received as an approach to internationalisation that is available to all students, including those without the means or will to travel abroad. The rather open definition allows for a high degree of personalisation in the design of activities, allowing staff to adapt it to the context, discipline and student cohort.

2.2.4 Internationalisation of the Curriculum

Internationalisation at Home (IaH) and Internationalisation of the Curriculum (IoC) are highly related terms, often used synonymously (Mudiamu, 2020). As both terms are used to describe COIL and therefore inform what staff are being asked to do through COIL, understanding their relationship to each other is important to this project. The two terms are sometimes described like nesting dolls, with one concept residing inside the other, yet with disagreement over which is the parent and which is the child. Helm and Guth (2022) argue that whilst IaH is as concerned with curricular and extra-curricular activities as IoC, its specific exclusion of mobility across borders has it considered as a subset of IoC. On the other hand, some say that IaH cannot effectively take place without some element of IoC (Leask, 2015), implying that IaH activities are broader than IoC, and thus this is the parent in the relationship. Beelen and Jones argue that Knight's seminal definition of internationalisation "*undervalues the fundamental role of the curriculum in the enterprise of Internationalization at Home, and that it is neither a 'related factor,' nor an 'activity,' but it is at the heart of the concept*" (Beelen & Jones, 2015 p61). This conceptualisation of curriculum as central to IaH hints at a deeply codependent relationship, but not necessarily a hierarchical one. The crux seems to be in how curriculum is

defined, and whether it is purely the formal, taught course content, or includes other activities.

True to the nature of internationalisation in education, the term IoC is therefore widely debated and variously defined (Robson, 2015), which certainly contributes to the debate over the IaH/IoC hierarchy. One of the most oft-cited definitions is Leask's, which concentrates on the formal, assessable aspects of the taught curriculum:

"The incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the content of the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning arrangements and support services of a program of study" (Leask, 2009 p259).

Other definitions are more aspirational, with some scholars placing emphasis on the impact on, or outcomes for students rather than the activities of teachers and institutions. For example, Zhou and Smith (2014) define IoC as providing students with intercultural experiences in order to develop their intercultural skills. Clifford and Montgomery (2014) and Reid and Spencer-Oatey (2012) describe IoC simply as preparing students for socially responsible citizenship, without specifying how this can or should be done.

It is Jones and Killick (2007) who broadened the definition of IoC from being concerned purely with a student's formal programme of study, to incorporating the wider context of their student experience. This is more in line with the wider discourse around curriculum, in which it is widely accepted that curricula are made up of not just the formal curriculum, but also informal and hidden curriculum (Hafferty, 1998). The broadened scope of IoC therefore includes extended curriculum activities such as work and study abroad programmes, volunteering, engagement with clubs and societies and engagement with international peers. In addition, Jones and Killick (2007) attribute importance to symbols and messages that portray institutional culture and commitment to internationalisation and diversity. This can include the visible diversity of staff and their attitudes, as well as institutional practices such as celebration of diversity, respect of multi-faith and multi-cultural perspectives, inclusive food services and ethical purchasing policies. This wider scope of IoC highlights both

the importance of accessibility of extra-curricular activities and the potential impact of staff on the ability of institutions to provide an internationalised experience for their students. There is a clear cross-over here between what is purported to be IoC activities and those previously defined as IaH, particularly in the purported importance of the diversity of staff and students.

So, whilst Leask's 2009 definition remains popular, there is a trend towards widening the concept of IoC beyond the formal curriculum. Indeed, Leask herself has stressed the importance of considering and purposefully constructing internationalised learning environments. This is captured in her updated definition, given as:

"Internationalization of the curriculum is the incorporation of international, intercultural and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study" (Leask, 2015 p9).

This research takes the view that IoC and IaH are intertwined and symbiotic, with both encapsulating activities that go beyond the formal curriculum. Many internationalisation activities could be justly defined as both, yet there are certainly activities that are clearly one and not the other, lending importance to the ability to distinguish between them. For example, Internationalisation at Home's core focus on inclusivity means that it includes only activities that are embedded within core curriculum and student experience and thus available to all students. Similarly, physical mobility cannot take place at home and thus can only be described as an Internationalisation of the Curriculum initiative. However, as an activity that takes place online and is typically embedded within a module or programme of study (Rubin, 2017), COIL can be described as both an Internationalisation of the Curriculum and Internationalisation at Home initiative. There are instances where COIL is optional for students, and in this instance it would be more accurate to describe it as an IoC activity.

The complexity of these terms and their definitions has been explored in detail here deliberately, to illustrate the context within which staff are urged to engage with internationalisation initiatives. Staff asked to 'internationalise the

curriculum’ are confronted with a myriad of definitions and approaches (as illustrated by Figure 2.1) from which they must make meaning and plan a practical approach. The following section will narrow the focus to the specific field within this research sits: Virtual Exchange and COIL, illuminating how this approach relates to the wider internationalisation agenda, and what this means for staff.

2.3 Virtual Exchange

Having discussed and defined some of the context that underpins this research, the literature review will now explore the phenomenon under investigation; the specific IoC/IaH activity known as Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL). To identify the literature informing this section, searches were carried out in the WorldCat database and the specialised publication, *Journal of Virtual Exchange*, using combinations of the following key words: ‘Collaborative Online International Learning’, ‘COIL’, and ‘Virtual Exchange’. The inclusion criteria were peer reviewed articles and books published in English after 2006, this being the year that the term ‘COIL’ was first coined (Rubin, 2022).

COIL is a form of Virtual Exchange (VE), with VE being an umbrella term encapsulating a range of IaH activities that utilise technology, rather than physical travel, to facilitate international/intercultural exchange (Virtual Exchange Coalition, 2019). VE itself is not a new concept, with a variety of relevant activities and approaches having been developed independently in a range of contexts and across different disciplines over the last several decades (O’Dowd, 2018). These have largely developed without awareness of each other, leading to a proliferation of terms being used to describe similar activities. These include, for example, telecollaboration (Belz, 2001; Warschauer, 1996), online intercultural exchange (O’Dowd & Lewis, 2016), e-tandem/e-twinning (O’Rourke, 2007), globally networked learning (Starke-Meyerring & Wilson, 2008), virtual exchange (Helm, 2015), X-culture (Farrell et al., 2025), and, of course, COIL (Rubin, 2016). This linguistic variation does create challenges for the field. Rubin lamented: “*one of the problematics of this format is that it is called by so many different names, thereby making it harder for the practice to be more commonly understood and implemented*” (Rubin, 2016 p263).

In recognition of this issue, there have been attempts by researchers and practitioners to bring together these practices through a common terminology that enables greater communication and collaboration within the field (O'Dowd, 2018). The UNICollaboration organisation, which promotes training and research into VE across all discipline and interest areas, was founded in 2016 (UNICollaboration, n.d.b). Many of the original collaborators in this initiative were from the discipline of foreign language education, where the term in common usage was telecollaboration. Noting that this was not a word that was widely recognised and bearing in mind the aim of the organisation to seek more collaboration across disciplines, an alternative term was sought. Seeing that the term virtual exchange seemed to be gaining in popularity and was used in a wide range of contexts, including by educational organisations such as Soliya and by large foundational, governmental and intergovernmental bodies such as the Stevens Initiative and the European Commission, this was ultimately the terminology chosen for their interdisciplinary organisation (O'Dowd, 2018). The organisation has nurtured a community of practice of researchers and educators through its publication; the Journal of Virtual Exchange, as well as regular conferences and events, training programmes and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) (UNICollaboration, n.d.a). The result is the recognition within the community of scholars and practitioners of Virtual Exchange as an umbrella term that describes a range of related yet distinct practices and approaches. The common elements of the various VE approaches are identified in the following definition:

“Virtual exchange involves the engagement of groups of learners in extended periods of online intercultural interaction and collaboration with partners from other cultural contexts or geographical locations as an integrated part of their educational programmes and under the guidance of educators and/or expert facilitators” (O'Dowd, 2018 p5).

All forms of VE therefore share a focus on the interaction, communication and collaboration of participants who are geographically and culturally distant (Virtual Exchange Coalition, 2019). They utilise technology to enable

connection and aim to develop intercultural competence in participants (Helm & Guth, 2022).

However, it is important to note that despite this common thread, there is still great variety amongst different VE practices. As Rubin and Guth point out: “Virtual Exchange is like the word sports, while COIL is like the word basketball” (Rubin & Guth, 2023 p26). Hackett et al. (2024) take this analogy further, explaining that much like not all sports will lead to gains in physical fitness (chess, poker and esports are examples that do not have this outcome), such is the variety in VE approaches - and therefore outcomes - that they cannot be effectively evaluated under the umbrella term. Whilst there is benefit in a unifying term that enables scholars and practitioners to find and learn from each other, there is also a need to distinguish between the various practices. O’Dowd (2018) differentiated between subject-specific virtual exchanges, shared syllabus approaches, and service-provide approaches. These are outlined in Table 2.1 (adapted from O’Dowd, 2018, p6.)

Approach to virtual exchange	Common terminology and well-known examples	Main characteristics
Subject-specific: Foreign language learning	“Telecollaboration” “Online intercultural exchange” “E-tandem” “E-twinning” (K-12) “Tele-tandem”	Focus is on developing foreign language skills whilst incorporating intercultural communicative competence and digital competence. Often bilingual. Practitioner-led initiatives. Traditionally have lower levels of facilitation than other types of VE.
Subject-specific: Business studies	“Global virtual teams” Example: X-Culture	Focus is on employability - developing online intercultural skills for the workplace. Practitioner-led or facilitator-led (see X-Culture). Focus on experiential learning and collaboration.
Service-provider approaches	“Virtual Exchange” Examples: Soliya Global Nomads iEarn Sharing Perspectives	Focus is on developing intercultural awareness and digital skills. Often involve problem-based learning through ‘Wicked problems’ e.g. SDGs. Facilitator-led exchanges. The service-providers provide the platform, programme, partners and facilitation. Universities pay a fee for their students to participate.
Shared syllabus approaches	“COIL” “Globally networked learning environments”	Focus is on development of intercultural competence and digital competence. Practitioner-led. Addition of international learning outcomes, activities and assessments to course syllabus. Partner classes often create a shared syllabus (or part of one).

Table 2.1 Approaches to Virtual Exchange (Jones & Killick, 2007)

2.3.1 VE benefits

Large-scale, qualitative and quantitative research reports from EVOLVE (an Erasmus+ sponsored project) and the Stevens Initiative (a US-based non-profit organisation) confirm that VE provides multiple benefits for students. In addition to high student satisfaction, the four main benefits in terms of learning gain are described as: intercultural competence, language, digital literacy, and soft skills (EVOLVE Project Team, n.d.; Stevens Initiative, 2024). Whilst these reports are not peer reviewed, they confirm the findings of earlier, small-scale studies

(Baroni et al., 2019; Çiftçi & Savaş, 2018; Dooly & Vinagre, 2022; Jager et al., 2019) on a much larger scale.

2.4 Collaborative Online International Learning

This literature review has thus far served to situate COIL within the context of internationalisation of higher education. It has discussed the concepts which influence and guide COIL, defining terms and providing an overview of the sector forces which are influencing staff who engage with COIL. It will now move on to looking specifically at what we currently know and understand of COIL, outlining when, how and why it was conceived, how it has distinguished itself from other forms of VE, and finally, what is known about the staff experience of COIL.

It should be noted that the body of knowledge on COIL is somewhat limited and has so far undergone a predictable evolution, with research typically falling into one of three categories:

- Explaining what COIL is and hypothesising its benefits to students
- Case studies describing singular COIL projects
- Attempting to demonstrate the impact of COIL by measuring student outcomes, particularly in relation to the development of intercultural competencies

The relative proliferation of literature defining, explaining, and documenting COIL projects is indicative of the infancy of research on the topic, such that there is still a market for narratives and case studies situating COIL as a valid learning experience (Esche, 2018; O'Dowd & Lewis, 2016; Rubin, 2016).

Despite numerous projects to raise the profile of COIL as an effective learning tool (O'Dowd, 2021), it remained a poorly known concept in higher education with uptake mostly limited to just a few institutions worldwide (de Wit, 2020), until the COVID-19 pandemic forced the search for alternatives to international travel (White & Lee, 2020). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on uptake of COIL is visible in an increase in publications from 2020 onwards, particularly in more practitioner-led forms such as conference proceedings.

2.4.1 A brief history of COIL

The term COIL was first created by Jon Rubin at the State University of New York (SUNY) in 2006, when setting up a new centre dedicated to this particular form of VE, which he had been practicing since 2002 (Rubin, 2022). Its take up was initially rather slow, with momentum gradually gathering until, in 2019, there were a few hundred HEIs around the world who were engaging with COIL, but less than 30 who had invested any serious resources to it (Rubin & Guth, 2019). At this stage, HEIs who were motivated to implement COIL were largely driven by a desire to widen participation in internationalisation opportunities (Leask, 2015), and secondarily by rising concerns about the environmental impact of student and staff mobility (Nikula et al., 2022; Shields, 2019).

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic provided a new incentive to COIL, with most international travel (including student mobility) coming to a halt, and almost all teaching and learning activities across the world moving online. During this time, a number of institutions and individuals seeking to continue providing an international experience for their students pivoted to virtual programmes (López-Duarte et al., 2021). COIL, and its potential as an alternative to physical mobility, was discovered anew and numbers of COIL courses began to rise (Hackett et al., 2024; Liu & Shirley, 2021; Rubin, 2022).

2.4.2 Defining COIL

A COIL project is co-designed by educators (usually from higher education institutions) located in different countries. They collaborate to create a project with internationalised learning outcomes which can be embedded within the course content at both institutions. Students from both institutions then work together on the project online and in cross-cultural teams, usually with the aim of solving a problem or producing a final product. Whilst the topic of the project should be related to the students' modules (which may be quite different from one another and possibly in completely different discipline areas), the primary aim of the COIL is to develop students' collaborative and intercultural skills (Hackett et al., 2023).

Unlike prior terms introduced in this chapter, which described categories of activities united by a common purpose, COIL is considered to be a pedagogical approach (de Castro et al., 2019; Magnier-Watanabe et al., 2017; Rubin, 2023a) which is influenced by several ‘schools’ of learning theory (Hackett et al., 2024). It combines these to create a unique method, which is often described in detail in literature and training materials yet is not easily captured in a singular definition.

As an acronym, ‘COIL’ does seem to set out the main requirements of a COIL project through its nomenclature in that it is (adapted from de Wit, 2020; Hackett et al., 2024; Rubin, 2023):

- i) **Collaborative** – it involves active collaboration from both teachers and students. Collaborative Learning, with its roots in social constructivism (Bruner, 1961; Vygotsky, 1978), is one of the core pedagogical approaches at the heart of COIL. It involves teachers acting as facilitator to groups of students as they work together to solve a problem or challenge, complete a task, or create a product (Dillenbourg et al., 2009; Johnson & Johnson, 2008; Laal & Ghodsi, 2012).
- ii) **Online** – most, if not all, interaction and communication takes place online. The online nature of COIL offers a more inclusive international opportunity beyond those few students who travel abroad (Leask & Green, 2020). It also enables students to develop digital capabilities through practicing online communication and collaboration (Rajagopal et al., 2020; Villar-Onrubia & Rajpal, 2016).
- iii) **International** – COIL takes place across national boundaries and must involve at least two cohorts who are based in different countries and therefore situated within different cultural contexts (Hackett et al., 2024). The underlying premise of this is Social Intergroup Contact Theory (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005), which posits that sustained contact between social groups, when facilitated effectively, can support in developing intergroup empathy and understanding, and breaking down stereotypes and bias. When those group differences are nationality, this translates to developing intercultural skills or competences, in which a student is more able to live and work effectively across cultures (Deardorff, 2006).
- iv) **Learning** – COIL is both integrated within the learning experience (a key feature of Internationalisation at Home) and involves learning through

experience. COIL is a student-centred approach that draws on Kolb's 1985 model of experiential learning which tells us that engagement with authentic experiences, coupled with purposeful reflection, lead to meaningful learning (Hackett et al., 2024).

This 'name as meaning' approach to describing COIL is a common approach taken in the literature (Hackett et al., 2024) that goes some way towards explaining its core elements. However, it fails to speak effectively to the motivations and intentions of COIL. In fact, the term COIL is increasingly coming to be used as a verb, rather than a descriptor. Tracing its origins to the Latin verb *coligere* and the medieval French verb *coillir*, both meaning 'to gather' (Rubin, 2022), colloquially, 'COILing' a course is taken to indicate the act of transforming a course through virtual exchange (Mudiamu, 2020).

The acronym also does not adequately capture the 'shared syllabus' approach identified by O'Dowd (2018). A defining feature of COIL is that it is integrated within a module/course of a student's programme of study, and it takes place over several weeks (SUNY COIL Center recommends 5 weeks). This means that teachers must work together to co-design a COIL that complements their respective modules and also fits within both module timelines. Students need to be able to collaborate in a way that meets the internationalised learning outcomes of the COIL *and* the learning outcomes of their module. This results in the 'shared syllabus' which is worked on by all participating students and provides an international collaborative and comparative perspective that they can apply to their module learning objectives. Figure 2.3 shows how this design and teaching process may look in practice. The various activities taking place during pre-COIL, COIL and post-COIL stages are laid out chronologically, including details of who is involved in each activity and how they may communicate.

Recognising the unsatisfactory nature of the way that COIL is defined, Hackett et al. (2024) sought to collate and review definitions given in the literature with the aim of creating one unifying definition that encapsulated all elements of COIL. The resultant definition is the most complete available, defining COIL as:

“An inclusive, environmentally friendly teaching and learning method used to internationalise the curriculum, in which educators from different educational institutions in different countries connect to co-design and co-facilitate collaborative online learning assignments that are embedded within the curriculum, with the goal of facilitating the development of students’ collaborative skills, intercultural competence, and curriculum content learning through collaboration” (Hackett et al., 2024 p1084).

This definition serves to distinguish COIL from other forms of VE, through its focus on the goal of COIL as being to develop students’ collaborative and intercultural skills, rather than, for example: languages (telecollaboration) or subject-specific knowledge (X-culture). Critically to this research, it also centres the role and actions of educators as vital to COIL. Without the collaboration of teachers, according to this definition, there can be no COIL. It is for these reasons that this particular definition of COIL is the one that informs this research.

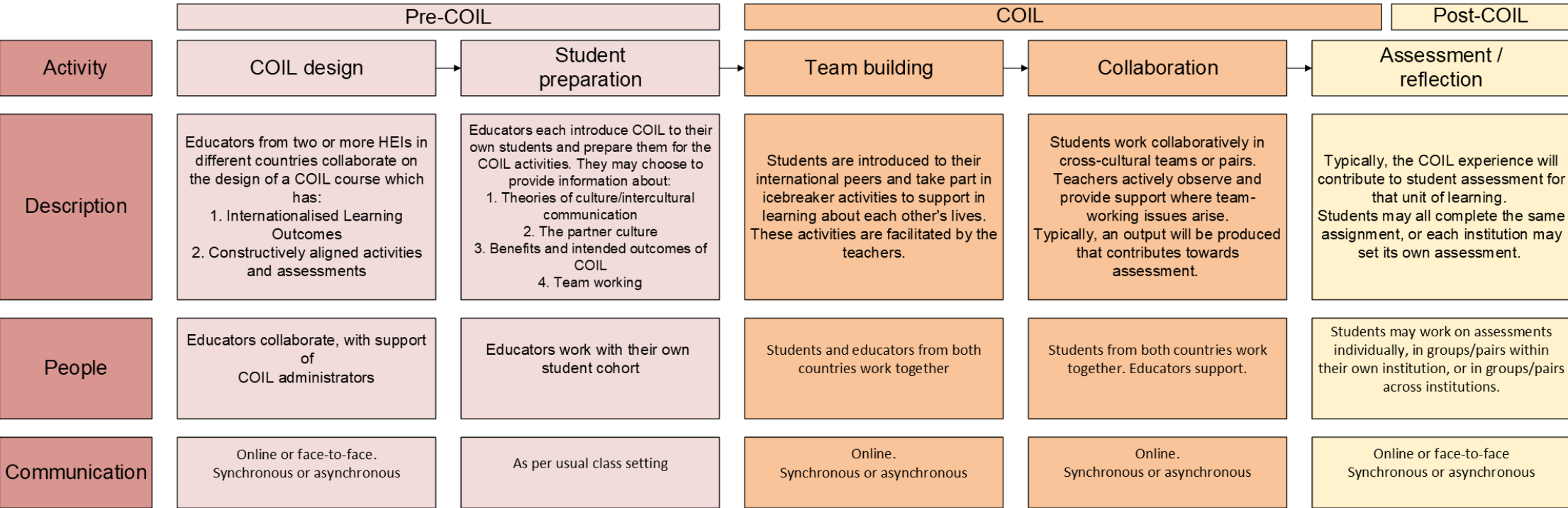


Figure 2.3 Stages of a COIL project

2.4.3 Benefits of COIL

COIL is lauded as a means to develop valuable intercultural competence (IC) skills in students (Liang & Schartner, 2022; Liu & Shirley, 2021) and meet the previously discussed sector imperative to internationalise higher education. However, as this literature review has demonstrated, there are a number of alternative, tried and tested methods with which to incorporate intercultural competence into the curriculum, including physical mobility/exchange programmes and language learning (Bennett, 2004; Deardoff & Hunter, 2006; Griffith et al., 2016). So, what, therefore, are the specific benefits of COIL?

Perhaps the most obvious benefit has already been discussed: the offering of an experience comparable to a physical international exchange without the need to travel (Bijnens et al., 2004). This opens up the possibility of an international experience to participants that would otherwise be unable or unwilling to travel for social, financial or other reasons (Villar-Onrubia & Rajpal, 2016). All forms of VE, including COIL, are therefore considered to be more accessible than physical mobility and can support a widening participation initiative (Davies, 2003; Rajagopal et al., 2020). During the 2020 COVID-19 global pandemic, whilst international travel was severely limited, it provided a means to collaborate across borders and participate in a cultural exchange that would not otherwise be possible (Liu, 2023).

Furthermore, the necessity of utilising online tools with which to facilitate the exchange has additional benefits for participants' development. Firstly, it enables the development of digital literacy in participants as they are required to get to grips with collaborative technology (Guevara & Legaspi, 2018; Rubin, 2016). Secondly, the act of online communication imitates a scenario in which many students are increasingly likely to find themselves in the workplace: that of remote working (World Economic Forum, 2025). Participants will need to grapple with organising themselves; deciding on appropriate communication methods that consider time zones and working preferences to effectively collaborate on a piece of work within a given time frame (Bauk, 2019). Students are not just developing their knowledge of another culture; they are doing so in an environment that limits visual cues and places additional stress in the form

of deadlines and technology requirements. Given the requirement of the educator to work collaboratively, online, and across cultural boundaries in order to design and develop COIL, the same developmental benefits must also apply to staff (Rubin, 2017).

It should be noted that whilst these benefits are claimed, the evidence base is limited and is largely drawn from single case studies, describing and evaluating the impact of COIL after the fact. Several scholars have called out for more empirical evidence as to the efficacy of COIL, utilising mixed methods and control groups (L. Dovrat, 2022, 2023; Fernández-Cézar et al., 2024; Hackett et al., 2023; Liu, 2023).

2.4.4 Potential limitations of COIL

Despite the cited benefits, COIL is as vulnerable, if not more so, to the ‘immersion assumption’ (Hornbuckle, 2015) as physical mobility. This is the assumption that simply engaging learners in collaborating with other cultures will automatically lead to intercultural competence. The reality is that limited research verifies this (Richter, 1998 in O’Dowd, 2007).

Unlike a physical mobility where participants will find it difficult to avoid at least some interaction with the culture of the country they are visiting, those participating in a virtual exchange are able to more actively choose their level of engagement (Marcillo-Gómez & Desilus, 2016; Salas-Pilco et al., 2022). Even if participation is mandatory (e.g., embedded in a module and forms part of summative assessment), a student can still make the decision not to engage. Even for those who do choose to participate, they are not fully immersed in their partner’s culture all the time (Bauk, 2019). Secondly, the previously discussed benefit of VE also providing an opportunity for participants to develop their digital skills could put some students at a disadvantage, undermining the potential widening participation benefits. Those who do not have access to or are less comfortable with online tools or remote communication have an additional learning curve to overcome. This is further exacerbated where participants are communicating in a second language or where they are less able to utilise non-verbal communication (Liu, 2023). It is possible that this

could amplify cultural differences and for the potential for misunderstandings to be increased in this instance. The danger, therefore, is that unmediated or inadequately supported VE projects could reinforce negative stereotyping and potentially have consequences in direct opposition to the aims of the programme (Boehm et al., 2010; O'Dowd, 2007; Villar-Onrubia & Rajpal, 2016).

Finally, a key feature of COIL virtual exchange projects is the aspect of collaboration: students from different cultures working together. Given the widespread notion that group work in general is unpopular with students (Burdett & Hastie, 2009), it must be considered that students insufficiently skilled in group work in general, and unprepared to collaborate with a culture different to their own, may encounter issues. Effective intercultural communication skills are considered vital for the development of intercultural group relations (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002). Without adequate preparation, mediation and reflection this could lead to damaged relationships, reinforcement of damaging stereotypes and a negative view of a culture (Amirault & Visser, 2010; Bruhn, 2017).

2.4.5 Staff experience of COIL

The potential limitations of COIL as outlined above highlight the importance of the role of staff in creating an effective COIL experience. As reinforced by Hackett et al.'s (2024) definition of COIL, the educator collaboration is a core requirement in the design of a COIL course. If they are to overcome the limitations previously cited, then it must be assumed that a teacher needs to be sufficiently skilled to manage an intercultural collaboration and negotiate the design of a COIL that effectively facilitates students, avoiding the trap of immersion assumption and overcoming inequities in digital skills or access. However, there is little literature that neither adequately addresses the staff experience, nor the skills and knowledge that they require. Thus, whilst previous research on COIL has demonstrated the effectiveness of the practice for achieving student outcomes and led to guidelines on effective COIL course design, little has focused on the teachers' perspective, beyond naming the pedagogical competencies they require (Mudiamu, 2020; O'Dowd, 2015).

A systematic review of the literature in the WorldCat database, Google Scholar and *Journal of Virtual Exchange* used the following keywords: ‘Collaborative Online International Learning’, ‘COIL’, ‘Virtual Exchange’, ‘higher education’ ‘teacher’, ‘educator’, ‘faculty’, ‘academic’, ‘instructor’. This garnered only two results focusing on the staff experience of COIL: a doctoral thesis (Mudiamu, 2020) and an auto-ethnographical study describing one COIL project and its impact on the authors’ professional learning experience (Swartz et al., 2019). A further two papers examined staff experience of the broader category of VE: a small-scale qualitative study of faculty experiences of implementing VE in Israel (Dovrat, 2023) and a report from the EVOLVE project (an Erasmus+ initiative seeking to promote awareness and implementation of VE) (Nissen & Kurek, 2020). Although each of these papers acknowledged that little research has been conducted on teacher experiences of COIL/VE, a combination of working through these papers’ references and citation searching revealed some further relevant literature, which will be discussed here.

Swartz et al.’s (2019) depiction of their experience of COIL reflected on the high expectations placed on them as higher education teachers to be global educators and facilitators of change, with little clarification of how that should be achieved - an experience ratified by that of others (Buckner & Stein, 2020). They felt that running a COIL project was helpful to them in developing the skills required to be those global educators. This reflection was reinforced by Nissen and Kurek’s (2020) observation that the experience of planning and facilitating VE for students supported the teachers’ development of intercultural competence, collaboration and language skills, in addition to general pedagogical skills and knowledge. Mudiamu (2020) similarly found that COIL acted as a development opportunity for staff, although the benefits were cited as growth in professional practice and disciplinary knowledge, rather than the intercultural outcomes that are more typically associated with COIL and VE.

There is certainly guidance available for staff who wish to COIL, and for institutions who wish to encourage COIL, suggesting that there is some understanding of the support that staff need. Rubin (2023) speaks of the importance of embedding COIL within institutional goals (p69); motivating

teachers (p82); defining shared responsibilities with partners (p75) and utilising the support of stakeholders such as instructional designers (p70), teaching and learning centres (p76), international offices (p84) and language departments (p78). Such guidance for institutions has its roots in personal experience and shared wisdom from the community and is supported by surveys of COIL Connect members (COIL Connect, 2021) that provide a quantitative snapshot of current practice at COILing institutions. Such surveys do not, however, tell us whether these practices are effective, or provide any qualitative data that may serve to further our understanding of what works and why. They suppose what institutions should be doing based on what has been done before, with no critical analysis of whether it is effective, particularly from the perspective of the teacher who is tasked with the actual doing (Dovrat, 2023). Guidance that is aimed at teachers is seemingly similarly derived. Courses, workshops and handbooks aimed at teachers cover such topics as introduction to COIL, finding partners, designing COIL activities and facilitating student collaboration (SUNY COIL Center, n.d.; UNICollaboration, n.d.a). There are studies emphasising the need for teachers to develop their skills in course design and intercultural facilitation (Chun, 2015; Clavel-Arroitia & Pennock-Speck, 2015), but they are guided by the pursuit of successful student outcomes and do not consider the teachers' personal experience.

As is demonstrated by the proliferation of publications that amount to guidance or case studies describing effective COIL projects, the current state of COIL research is highly pragmatic. There is limited use of theory (Dovrat, 2024; Dovrat, 2022), the sustained use of which would benefit COIL research by developing a common language and overarching concepts with which to interpret and compare the findings of discrete pieces of research (Fernández-César et al., 2024; Hackett et al., 2023; Reeves et al., 2008).

2.4.6 Staff experience of implementing internationalisation of the curriculum initiatives

Given the limited information available about staff's experiences or perspectives of COIL, we must turn to the wider literature to understand the kinds of issues

that might be facing staff embarking on COIL. This section summarises the discourse around barriers and enablers to staff in implementing IoC initiatives.

Whilst universities have traditionally managed international research collaborations successfully, fewer higher education institutions have experience with cross-cultural pedagogic collaboration (Rubin & Guth, 2015). Edwards and Teekens (2012) stated that for teachers whose focus is on teaching in their area of expertise, the requirement to embed an intercultural dimension into a course that was not designed for it adds a disproportionate burden. This was a feeling that also arose in Swartz et al.'s (2019) depiction of their experience of COIL, for which they felt unprepared and under-skilled to create the internationalised experience expected of them.

Studies have found that institutions frequently perceive lack of faculty engagement to be the main barrier to IoC (Childress, 2010; Mudiamu, 2020). Some scholars attribute this to a misalignment or tension between the desire of central administration to internationalise curricula on the one hand, and the primary focus of faculty to teach only their area of expertise on the other (Edwards & Teekens, 2012). Proposed solutions to this centre around the concepts of 'mandate, reward, and monitor', suggesting that faculty engagement requires both a carrot and stick approach (Edwards & Teekens, 2012; Mudiamu, 2020; Stohl, 2007).

There is further recognition in the literature on IoC that the delivery of a meaningful intercultural learning experience demands high levels of Intercultural Competence (IC) of staff. Some literature does indicate that prior international experience is not necessary for faculty to participate in internationalisation initiatives if professional development is provided (Beelen, 2018; Mudiamu, 2020). In fact, Beelen and Jones (2015) assert that professional development is vital in facilitating impactful internationalisation, even where staff do have prior international experiences. However, there is considered to be a lack of adequate professional development for teachers on this topic (Beelen, 2018; Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014; Van Gaalen & Gielesen, 2014).

Given the increasing drive to internationalise higher education, the IC of academic staff is of growing interest and institutions are beginning to implement professional development strategies to support faculty engagement in internationalisation (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017). Yet, despite burgeoning research into COIL, it does not form part of these strategies, perhaps because there has been very little written about collaborative virtual learning of staff (Swartz et al., 2019); a process which could provide much insight. The limited literature that does exist on this suggests that COIL can provide an environment for shared professional learning (Bégin-Caouette et al., 2015; Webster-Wright, 2009).

As has been established, COIL projects are driven by the educators (Hackett et al., 2024; Helm, 2015; Rubin, 2017; Rubin & Guth, 2015) and thus, perhaps even more so than more traditional internationalisation initiatives, a successful COIL project requires significant levels of IC from the educators. To plan the project, they must collaborate with at least one international partner and create a new global learning network for their students. During facilitation, they must guide their students through the same perceptual and behavioural transformations that they themselves may have only just experienced for the first time (Mudiamu, 2020). Achieving this with limited support requires strong motivational factors and involves significant international exposure and levels of IC (Swartz et al., 2019). However, when it comes to COIL, the support that is available seems to focus mainly on effective course design for student outcomes. There is little evidence in the literature of resources dedicated to providing staff with IC development (Brighton, 2020). Indeed, in response to academics indicating that they need support if they are to design and deliver virtual exchange initiatives, the Dutch Ministry of Education added the condition that an educational developer or advisor must be involved in VE projects for which they provide grant funding (Beelen, 2022). Such an initiative is certainly laudable, and aligns with other COIL guidance (Rubin, 2023b); however, it prioritises the development of pedagogic knowledge over IC – or simply assumes that teachers already possess the latter.

2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has provided an overview and discussion of the factors influencing internationalisation of higher education. Grounded in the work of Knight, Beelen and Jones, this provided some context to the environment in which COIL, an IaH/IoC initiative which aims to widen participation in internationalisation activities, is placed.

The exploration of the COIL knowledge base charted its evolution over the years, beginning with the work of pioneers in the field - Rubin, Guth and Doscher - who were the first to introduce the COIL methodology and approach. More recent scholars, most particularly Hackett, Dawson and Dovrat have begun to shift COIL research in a more critical direction, further defining the COIL method and seeking to validate its approach and claimed outcomes. It is these authors who have most heavily influenced the direction of this study, highlighting a gap in the literature addressing staff experiences and perspectives of COIL and particularly a lack of theoretically underpinned research. It is appropriate, then, that the next chapter will introduce the theoretical framework that has shaped this project, exploring staff perspectives of COIL.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework – Cultural Intelligence

This chapter will examine and critique the concept of Intercultural Competence (IC) and the various models and scales associated with it, before introducing the theoretical framework of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as a lens through which to conceptualise and describe staff experiences of COIL.

The literature review has demonstrated that the current research into COIL is lacking in two areas: representation of the staff perspective, and systematic methodologies utilising theoretical frameworks (L. Dovrat, 2022, 2023; Fernández-César et al., 2024). This study therefore seeks to employ such a framework as its foundation, providing a lens through which to guide the research, analyse and interpret the data, and ensure that the findings are grounded in established knowledge (Luft et al., 2022). This lens is particularly important when using a narrative approach, as the resultant data is expansive and could potentially be analysed from any number of potential viewpoints, leading to a chaotic discussion that is inherently biased by the perspective of the researcher (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

It is timely at this stage to re-introduce the research questions, in order to demonstrate how the chosen theoretical framework has shaped the research aims and approach. The overarching question guiding this study was:

‘What are the narratives of higher education teachers who have designed and taught a COIL project?’ with the following sub questions:

- 1: What do teachers’ stories of COIL reveal about their Cultural Intelligence?
- 2: What stories do teachers tell about what motivates them to COIL?
- 3: What factors do teachers describe as supporting or hindering their ability to design and teach a COIL project?

3.1.1 Introducing intercultural competence (IC)

Throughout the literature review, IC has been introduced as a desired outcome for students that is driving IoC and IaH initiatives, including COIL (Hackett et al., 2023). It has also arisen as both a potential benefit of and/or requirement for staff who COIL (Brighton, 2020; Swartz et al., 2019). It was therefore logical to

assume that indicators of IC would feature in teacher accounts of their experiences of COIL and selecting an IC model as a framework would provide a systematic method with which to interpret and retell their stories.

IC has a long research history rooted in various disciplines, from education (Anderson et al., 2006; Deardorff & Hunter, 2006) to management (Bücker & Poutsma, 2010; Lloyd & Härtel, 2010), psychology (Chiu & Hong, 2005; LaFromboise et al., 1993) and beyond. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that there exists an abundance of IC models, leading to a lack of conceptual clarity (Ang et al., 2007; Deardorff, 2006).

The picture is further obscured by a proliferation of terms used more or less synonymously with IC; for example, cross-cultural competence/adaptation, cultural intelligence, global competence, intercultural communication competence, intercultural sensitivity, transcultural competence, and so on (Schnabel, 2015). As a widely used and accepted term, Intercultural Competence (IC) is used here, acknowledging that whilst there are certainly distinctions between them, the other terms cited share the inherent meaning of IC (Deardorff, 2006).

3.1.2 Defining Intercultural Competence

IC is broadly accepted to describe the ability, or set of abilities, that enable an individual to function and communicate appropriately across cultures (Ang et al., 2007; Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006; Whaley & Davis, 2007). Further, it is agreed that the process of developing intercultural competence involves a high degree of reflection, in which the individual reflects upon their own identity and cultural background (Bennett, 2004; Deardorff, 2006).

Beyond this very general conceptualisation, definitions vary hugely as to whether IC is a personality trait, set of skills, or a performance outcome (Griffith et al., 2016). In a study where administrators from 24 post-secondary institutions in the US were asked to rate nine definitions of IC, Deardorff (2006) found that there was widespread disagreement. Ultimately, she arrived at the following definition, which represents the greatest level of agreement amongst scholars and practitioners in the field:

“the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes” (Deardorff, 2006 p24).

3.1.3 Intercultural Competence models

Regardless of subtleties in definition, it is widely accepted that IC has various components that can be identified and assessed (Deardorff, 2011; Griffith et al., 2016) leading to the existence of more than 30 IC models and over 300 related personal characteristics (Leung et al., 2014; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

Within higher education literature, the favoured models and associated definitions tend to be those that are related to education, training and research, which have been categorised in multiple ways. Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) identified five categories: compositional, co-orientational, developmental, adaptational, and causal.

Compositional models are the simplest, identifying and describing the knowledge, skills and attitudes of IC. Co-orientational models describe the components or process of a successful intercultural interaction. Developmental models describe IC as a process of individual development over time, defined as discrete stages. Adaptational models combine aspects of the previous models to describe which components lead to a successful intercultural interaction. Finally, causal process models outline how the characteristics of compositional models interact to predict IC. These five categories are further explored in Table 3.1. This categorisation (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009) supported comparing and evaluating which model would be best suited for this study.

Type	Focus	Strengths	Weaknesses	Examples
Compositional <i>What are the elements that constitute IC?</i>	Components of IC in the knowledge, attitudes and skills domains.	Provide the basic content for any theory of intercultural competence.	Do not specify the relationships between the components; Lack criteria for competence and progression.	The Facework based model for Intercultural Competence (Ting-toomey & Kurogi, 1998); The Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006); The Global Competencies Model, Hunter, 2006 (Hunter et al., 2006).
Co-orientational <i>What happens during the intercultural encounter and how is success defined?</i>	Outcomes of interactional processes in terms of effectiveness, appropriateness and satisfaction; Criteria for intercultural competence in terms of increasing correspondence of meaning between culturally different actors.	Attention for the need for clarity in an intercultural interaction and a minimum level of common reference; Include linguistic components.	Limited attention for management of ambiguity and dealing with uncertainty as key elements of intercultural competence.	Intercultural Interlocutor Competence (Fantini, 2009); Intercultural Communicative Competence Model (Byram, 2020); Cohesion-based model for Intercultural Competence (Rathje, 2010).
Developmental <i>How does IC develop and what are the levels of IC?</i>	Development of intercultural relationships over time to allow for co-orientation and intentional and reflective learning.	Systematically identify stages or levels of IC; Allow for rubrics and criteria of IC.	Does not identify components that facilitate the development of IC.	Intercultural Maturity Model (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005); The Developmental Model for Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1993); revised by Hammer, 2011; The U-Curve Model of Intercultural Adjustment (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963).
Adaptational <i>What are the cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural changes that enable a successful intercultural encounter?</i>	Adaptation as a process and criterion for IC.	Adaptability as foundational for IC development.	Adaptability as a criterion has not been defined or validated.	Intercultural Communicative Competence Model (Kim, 2009); The Intercultural Communicative Accommodation Model (Gallois et al., 1988); The Attitude Acculturation Model (Berry et al., 1989).
Causal process <i>Which factors lead to or influence the development of IC?</i>	Specify the relationships between the various components in the development of IC.	Allows for the development of specific hypotheses for IC development.	Some of the models include too many feedback loops and/or two-way causal paths that limit rigorous testing.	Model of Intercultural Communication Competence (Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017); The Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Model of Intercultural Competence (Hammer et al., 1998); The Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006).

Table 3.1 Categorisation of IC models

The key factor driving this decision was the research questions and aims, which were first and foremost about teachers' experiences. IC provides a relevant framework with which to understand those experiences holistically, and to structure the discussion. However, it is not intended through this study to try to compare their level of IC, nor to explain when, how and through which activities teachers develop it. There is also no intention to *quantify* teachers' levels of IC, which is a topic of some contention in the literature (Lantz-Deaton & Golubeva, 2020). This research does not take a position on whether measurement of IC is accurate or advisable, however, it does recognise that a narrative approach in which the participants are free to discuss events and topics that are of interest to them is unlikely to garner data that would allow for a rigorous and comparative analysis of IC indicators. On this basis, most categories of models were discounted.

Adaptational, co-orientational and causal models were all considered inappropriate as an analytic tool in this instance due to their requirement for detailed information about intercultural interactions, and their focus on what makes a 'successful' intercultural interaction (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

Developmental models were also not considered, as they chart the development of IC over time. This was potentially of interest as a means to chart how narrators' IC was impacted over time by their engagement with COIL and other international experiences. However, this would have necessitated a significant level of detail of participants' intercultural experiences to be collected to identify movement through the stages (Lantz-Deaton & Golubeva, 2020). This, in turn, would have required a more structured interview approach, or a longitudinal study, and would be more appropriate to a research project which was primarily concerned with teachers' IC, rather than teachers' wider experiences relating to COIL.

Ultimately, a compositional model – namely, Cultural Intelligence (Earley & Ang, 2003) - was selected, as it would support the identification of components of IC in teachers' accounts.

3.2 Conceptualisation of Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

Cultural Intelligence (Earley & Ang, 2003) is a specific form of intelligence denoted by an individual's ability and adaptability to make sense of and operate within situations characterised by cultural diversity (Wang & Goh, 2020). It is perhaps misnamed, as intelligence cannot be equated with competence (Sternberg, 1986), yet CQ is defined as "*a person's capability to adapt as she interacts with others from different cultural regions*" (Ang & Dyne, 2009; Earley & Ang, 2003). In the context of a COIL project, cultural intelligence is thus the ability of a teacher to adapt their professional behaviour within the new cultural setting of international pedagogical collaboration.

Cultural Intelligence was developed by Earley and Ang (2003), building upon Sternberg's (1986) framework of the multiple foci of intelligence. Sternberg's work was notable for its description of intelligence not just as capabilities residing within a person, such as knowledge and ability, but also as overt actions and behaviours. Thus, he proposed four ways to conceptualise intelligence:

- (a) metacognitive intelligence is the processes individuals use to acquire knowledge.
- (b) cognitive intelligence is individual knowledge.
- (c) motivational intelligence acknowledges that most cognition is motivated and thus focuses on scale and direction of energy.
- (d) behavioural intelligence focuses on individual capability for action.

The conceptualisation of CQ applies the metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioural aspects of intercultural competence development within intercultural learning contexts.

3.2.1 Metacognitive CQ

Metacognitive CQ is an individual's cultural consciousness and awareness during intercultural interactions. It occurs when people make judgments about their own thought processes and those of others. It includes (Van Dyne et al., 2012):

- Awareness— knowing about one's existing cultural knowledge (Ridley et al., 1992).

-
- Planning – strategizing before a culturally diverse encounter (Bell & Kozlowski, 2008).
 - Checking – checking assumptions and adjusting mental maps when actual experiences differ from expectations (Bell & Kozlowski, 2008).

People with a high metacognitive CQ would be highly aware of their own cultural behaviours, and their level of knowledge about other cultures (Van Dyne et al., 2012). They would reflect during intercultural interactions, question their own cultural assumptions, and adjust their cultural knowledge following interactions with people from other cultures (Earley & Ang, 2003). For example, a teacher with a high metacognitive CQ would notice cultural diversity in their classroom, observe and reflect on how cultural differences manifest in classroom dynamics and would consider how to adapt their own behaviours before acting.

The metacognitive factor of CQ is important because it represents an ability to adapt and change one's thinking and assumptions. It involves active thinking within different cultural settings; challenges to previously held cultural assumptions and a drive to adapt and revise strategies so that they are more culturally appropriate and more likely to lead to desired outcomes in culturally diverse situations (Van Dyne et al., 2012).

3.2.2 Cognitive CQ

Cognitive CQ is an individual's knowledge of cultural norms, behaviours and practices in different cultural settings (Ang & Van Dyne, 2009; Wang & Goh, 2020). It includes culture-general knowledge, which is knowledge of the universal elements that constitute a cultural environment (Wang & Goh, 2020) and context-specific knowledge, which refers to knowledge about a particular target culture. Understanding the general elements that characterise culture is useful in enabling people to identify cultural differences and understand how these may impact behaviour in cross-cultural situations (Triandis, 1977). On the other hand, context-specific knowledge is particularly helpful for engaging in intercultural interactions within a specific context (for example, a COIL project in

which the teacher works with a specific target culture). Context specific knowledge includes:

- Business – knowledge about economic and legal systems (Triandis, 1994).
- Interpersonal – knowledge about values, social interaction norms, and religious beliefs (Hofstede, 1984; House et al., 2004).
- Socio-linguistics – knowledge about rules of languages and rules for expressing non-verbal behaviours (Triandis, 1994).

This knowledge applies to an individual's own culture, as well as those that are different from their own.

The cognitive factor of CQ is critical because knowledge of culture influences people's thoughts and behaviours. Understanding a society's culture, and how it manifests in systems and patterns of social interaction enables greater propensity to interact with those from a different cultural society (Wang & Goh, 2020).

3.2.3 Motivational CQ

Motivational CQ is an individual's confidence and drive to function effectively in culturally diverse settings (Ang & Van Dyne, 2009). It includes:

- Intrinsic interest – deriving enjoyment from culturally diverse experiences (Ryan & Deci, 2000).
- Extrinsic interest – gaining benefits from culturally diverse experiences (Ryan & Deci, 2000).
- Self-efficacy – having the confidence to be effective in culturally diverse situations (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Szerszen, 2024).

Motivational capacity furnishes individuals with a sense of control and autonomy over the achievement of goals (Kanfer & Heggstad, 1997). This is important in culturally diverse settings because intercultural interactions are frequently characterised by obstacles that generate uncertainty and anxiety (Maertz Jr et al., 2009; Molinsky, 2007). Therefore, those with high motivational CQ are more able to direct attention and energy towards engagement in cross-cultural situations based on intrinsic interest and self-efficacy (Brooks & Schweitzer, 2011).

This factor of CQ is particularly of interest in this research project as it is a predictor of likelihood to voluntarily engage in a cross-cultural interaction (Ang & Van Dyne, 2009; Wang & Goh, 2020). For example, a teacher who has previously enjoyed and experienced good outcomes from a cross-cultural experience is more likely to engage in a COIL project than one who dislikes cross-cultural encounters or is not confident in their ability to be effective.

3.2.4 Behavioural CQ

Behavioural CQ is an individual's capability to adapt verbal and nonverbal behaviour when interacting with people from diverse cultural backgrounds (Ang & Van Dyne, 2009). It enables individuals to manage and self-regulate their social behaviours in intercultural situations, therefore minimising miscommunication and misperception (Wang & Goh, 2020). It includes (Lustig & Koester, 2010):

- Non-verbal – modifying non-verbal behaviours such as gestures, facial expressions, body language.
- Verbal – modifying verbal behaviors such as accent, tone, speed of speech, use of pause and silence.
- Speech acts – flexibility in method of communicating specific types of messages such as choice of words or degree of directness.

Together, the three aspects of behavioural CQ illustrate the complex flexibility required for successful intercultural interactions. Non-verbal flexibility demonstrates respect for different cultural norms. Meanwhile, verbal flexibility ensures effective communication and reduces misunderstandings. Flexibility of speech acts demonstrates a nuanced understanding of communication norms in different cultures (Spencer-Oatey, 2008).

Behavioural CQ is critical because verbal and non-verbal behaviours are the most noticeable features of social interactions (Ang & Van Dyne, 2009). Those with high behavioural CQ are able to overcome their natural habitual behaviour and demonstrate flexibility in intercultural settings (Wang & Goh, 2020).

3.3 CQ as theoretical framework

Earley and Ang (2003) set forth that the four components of Cultural Intelligence are each distinct facets that contribute to an overall capability to function effectively in culturally diverse settings. Importantly, the dimensions of CQ may or may not correlate with each other. For example, a person may simultaneously demonstrate high levels of Cognitive CQ, yet low levels of Motivational CQ. In other words, a person may know a lot about a particular country and its national culture but not wish to travel there or engage with people from there. In this way, it also differs from other perspectives on culture and intelligence in that it recognises that an individual may be able to adapt and function effectively in one culture yet be unable to transfer this learning to another culture (Van Dyne et al., 2012). For example, in the context of COIL, a teacher may be able to work very effectively with a colleague (or students) from Sweden but struggle to do the same with colleagues from Egypt. CQ therefore offers the tools to analyse how a teacher's intercultural competence and wider intercultural context and life experience impact upon their experience of COIL in greater depth than other IC models.

As to how CQ is developed, research indicates three broad categories: individual differences (including language ability), intercultural training, and intercultural/international experiences as critical inputs to CQ (Pidduck et al., 2022). Although several studies highlight the role of intercultural training in the development of CQ (Yari et al., 2020), international experience has received the most attention. Such direct experiences are often considered much more important than training in the development of intercultural competence (DeRue & Wellman, 2009). Wang and Goh (2020) conceptualise CQ as a malleable form of intelligence, drawing on bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) to propose the following three tenets:

1. people have multiple innate capabilities;
2. those capabilities develop through exposure to and interaction with various contexts (e.g., school, travel, relationships); and
3. motivation determines the extent to which individuals draw upon their experiences in developing capabilities.

This reinforces that prior international experiences are of importance in developing intercultural competencies but specifically highlights the crucial role of Motivational CQ in leading an individual in realising their CQ potential.

The four components of Cultural Intelligence clearly position CQ as a set of abilities or capabilities, as opposed to stable personality traits. It includes things which can be learned, i.e. the knowledge attributed to cognitive CQ, alongside skills that can be developed through experience and intercultural learning (Behavioural and Metacognitive CQ). Crucially, it also accounts for an individual's personal drive to engage in culturally diverse experiences (Motivational CQ). None of these components are static. That is, they are not inherent characteristics that one is born with, but rather abilities that are developed or regressed through engagement with culturally diverse experiences (Ang & Van Dyne, 2009). In the context of narrative research that engages with individuals' stories over time, this recognition of CQ as potentially fluctuating depending on context is vital.

In this study, which seeks to explore the context of teachers' experiences of COIL in higher education, CQ offers a holistic lens for analysis that places an equal importance on an individual's life experiences and desire for cultural diversity as it does on their skills and knowledge of other cultures. CQ places importance on Motivational CQ as a vital component in enabling individuals to realise their CQ potential (Wang & Goh, 2020). Furthermore, the inclusion of extrinsic as well as intrinsic factors within Motivational CQ recognises the importance of the wider context within which a teacher is operating, including their institutional culture and policies, political environments and external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the embedded nature of COIL within the curriculum, a teachers' experience with COIL cannot be unaffected by the policies of their institution. Similarly, it is hard to imagine that any teacher did not feel the impact of the global pandemic on their work. Thus, a framework that recognises and enables the consideration of such factors is vital.

Ultimately, the CQ framework enables the identification of knowledge, behaviours, skills and attributes that support an individual in adapting to and navigating various cultural contexts (Earley & Ang, 2003). As COIL - and the act

of designing and teaching COIL - is an inherently intercultural experience, CQ therefore provides an appropriate lens through which to analyse and interpret the narrators' experiences, whilst also recognising and accounting for their wider experience and context. CQ will therefore be used as a framework to analyse the narrators' stories, with the methodology chapter providing more detail as to how this provides rigour to the analysis and why this is important in a narrative inquiry. However, it lends much more to this research than direction of analysis. The positioning of the elements of CQ as distinct facets (as described previously) allows for complexity in interpretation and offers insight into the relationship between individuals' skills, knowledge, behaviours, experiences and motivations. As a framework, it allows for nuance that makes it particularly appropriate for application to this research, and the research questions that guide it. The elements of CQ will therefore also be used to guide the structure of the composite narrative that makes up the findings chapters, and as a framework to make sense of the similarities and differences in the narrators' experiences.

3.3.1 A note on measuring Cultural Intelligence

Although it is not the intention of this research to do so, CQ can be 'measured' via the CQ Scale, an extensively validated 20-item questionnaire which can be completed via self-report or observation (Ang et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2008; Shokef & Erez, 2015; Van Dyne et al., 2012).

What compositional models - and therefore CQ - do not do, is identify which activities facilitate the development of IC. They merely indicate an individual's level at the moment at which the questionnaire is completed. Providing an assessment of teachers' CQ levels is not the concern of this research, but the model can be used to identify where aspects of CQ are being demonstrated. What this research hopes to do, by analysing teacher's stories of COIL and their wider intercultural experiences through the lens of CQ, is to bring greater understanding to the intercultural competencies involved in and developed by COIL.

3.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the framework of Cultural Intelligence, which guides the research questions and data analysis. Cultural Intelligence will be used to identify aspects of intercultural competence that feature in teachers' accounts of COIL, and their motivations to engage with it as a pedagogical approach.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore the purpose of the study in greater detail, introducing the philosophical underpinnings and providing a rationale for the chosen research design. The data collection methods will be described, including research procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations.

4.1.1 Research aims

The aim of this study was to explore the COIL experiences of higher education teachers, within the context of their own Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Learning. As the planning and teaching of a COIL project is a process of intercultural collaboration (Rubin & Guth, 2015 p28), Cultural Intelligence (CQ) was used as a framework with which to interpret their experiences through an intercultural lens. Gaining a better understanding of how teachers experience COIL could enable institutions and individuals to better prepare for COIL, and to create an environment that nurtures successful COIL projects with good student outcomes.

The overarching question guiding this study was:

'What are the narratives of higher education teachers who have designed and taught a COIL project?' with the following sub questions:

- 1: What do teachers' stories of COIL reveal about their Cultural Intelligence?
- 2: What stories do teachers tell about what motivates them to COIL?
- 3: What factors do teachers describe as supporting or hindering their ability to design and teach a COIL project?

The intention of this study was therefore to better understand the variety of factors that teachers feel are significant in forming their COIL story, and the impact of these on their ability to ultimately complete one or more COIL projects. When considering Creswell's (2007) four categories of research purpose: explanatory, emancipatory, exploratory and evaluative, the purpose of this research is exploratory and explanatory. That is, it seeks to better understand how an under-researched group (higher education teachers) experiences a phenomenon (Robson & McCartan, 2017), and to share this learning in a format that can be applied in similar contexts. This aim

necessitated a qualitative method, in this case a narrative inquiry, which is best suited to exploring teachers' individual experiences of COIL, and the meaning they attributed to that experience (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The process of data analysis was intended to find recurring themes and patterns within the narrators' (participants) stories and interpret them through the framework of Cultural Intelligence (CQ). Through a process of restorying that led to the presentation of the findings as a collective narrative, this research aimed to disseminate research findings whilst giving the participants a voice, projecting their opinions, ideas and experiences (Krappmann, 2010; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012).

4.2 Epistemological and ontological position

In this research I sought to understand the lived experience of planning, designing and teaching a COIL project through the narratives of higher education teachers. I take a relativist ontological position, assuming that reality and phenomena are experienced differently depending on who is experiencing it and the conditions under which it is experienced (Cohen et al., 2013). Epistemologically, I am assuming that truth is socially constructed. That is, that the narrators' experiences are constructed or interpreted by both them as participant and myself as researcher. The resultant knowledges (as opposed to knowledge) are a product of how we come to understand them within social, cultural, historical and ideological constructs (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This research thus takes a social constructivist position.

From a social constructivist perspective, we make meaning of life experiences through language, social interactions and context, which we organise and interpret by making links with prior experiences, expectations and perceptions (Polkinghorne, 1988). One way in which we do this is via narrative, or storytelling (Bruner, 1986). The narrative approach therefore allows the participants (narrators) the autonomy to select and share the life experiences and events that they deem relevant to their experience of COIL, providing additional insight into the society, culture and context within which their experiences occurred (Delmas & Giles, 2023). In order to systematically explore the interaction between the narrators' socio-cultural contexts and the

stories they tell of their learning through COIL (Cohen et al., 2013), I employ Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as my theoretical framework.

4.3 Research design

*“Knowing what you want to find out leads inexorably to the question of **how** you will get that information.”* (Miles et al., 2014 p42)

4.3.1 Qualitative methodology

Methodology can be described as the practice of researchers and the ideas and presuppositions that underlie those practices (Bryman, 2008). As described above, the aim of this research is to explore participants' experiences. Thus, a qualitative methodology, which is concerned with exploring phenomena and attributing meaning to participants' experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2013) was deemed appropriate. Qualitative research offers the opportunity to develop a detailed understanding of phenomena whilst giving voice to participants and uncovering what may lie beneath presenting behaviours and actions (Cohen et al., 2017).

In identifying the most appropriate method for the research aim, several qualitative approaches were considered, most notably phenomenology and narrative inquiry. The following section will consider these in turn, explaining how and why the narrative approach was selected.

4.3.1.1 Discounting phenomenology

A phenomenological approach was initially appealing, with it being rooted in the idea that by interpreting and explaining peoples' experiences of a phenomenon, we can thus describe, interpret and explain it (Cohen et al., 2017).

Phenomenological research aims to describe what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon (Creswell, 2016). There is a focus on lived experience of participants and recognition of the subjective nature of experience, allowing for rich description rather than categorisation and abstraction (Denscombe, 2021). These elements of phenomenology align well with the exploratory aim of this research. However, by focusing on commonality, the purpose of phenomenology is to identify the universality of human experience (Manen, 2016). In adopting this approach, the researcher identifies a phenomenon – such as running a COIL project – and collects data

from those who have experienced it, with the intention of identifying the “essence of the experience” (Creswell, 2016). Whilst this approach has the potential to offer a satisfying explanation of the “what” and “how” of COIL (Creswell & Poth, 2023), it does not offer the opportunity to explore participants’ stories in detail.

As an alternative - and opposite - approach, I also considered phenomenography: a way of analysing data that seeks to identify the *differences* in the way people experience a phenomenon (Ashwin, 2025). When used in educational research it can produce descriptions of concepts that are useful for the practice of teaching and learning (Hajar, 2020). However, with its focus on description, this approach seemed similarly reductive in not allowing for an exploration of the fullness of peoples’ experiences, and the wider contextual events/factors that impact upon them.

Therefore, when considering the exploratory aim of this research and the philosophical assumptions that underpin it, I felt that rather than trying to capture the similarities or differences in narrators’ experiences, an approach that placed greater emphasis on the individuality of participants’ narratives and considered their accounts within the wider context of their lived experience, would be more appropriate.

4.3.1.2 Arriving at a narrative approach

As the research questions driving this research are concerned with the experiences of participants and how they describe them through their personal stories, narrative inquiry was the most suited approach. Taking the view that each individual experiences COIL differently, this research design is based on the belief that to discover what is different, how, and why, the approach must respect the individual voices of the participants. As a global pedagogy, COIL is used by teachers from many countries, cultures, languages and institutions, and will represent a variety of economic situations, family backgrounds, personalities, identities and ambitions. These factors will affect how they experience COIL, and the research approach should facilitate the generation of these stories in order to better understand the contexts within which COIL can flourish.

Narrative inquiry as a methodology is concerned with making sense of individuals' experiences through the collection and analysis of their stories. The approach allows the researcher to consider each participant's story holistically, gaining deeper understanding through immersion in a particular world view (Lewis, 2017). The concept of narrative and how it is used in narrative inquiry will be discussed in the next section.

4.3.2 Defining narrative

Narrative is variously defined, depending on the discipline within which it is being applied (Riessman, 2008). However, whilst different disciplines may focus upon different aspects, there are commonalities that speak to a central understanding of the concept of narrative (Hall, 2019), with the most consistent feature being that of 'story' (Riessman, 2008). Linde (2015 p2) defines narrative to be understood as *'a representation, or construction, based on a sequence of events in the past, that communicates something from the memory of the narrator'*. This purposeful collection and organisation of multiple data points in order to make and communicate meaning through plot is repeatedly offered as the core definition of narrative and referred to interchangeably as either 'narrative' or 'story' (Caine et al., 2013; Kramp, 2003; Lewis, 2014; Lieblich et al., 1998; Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 2008). Regardless of the preferred term, what is commonly recognised is that narrative can be understood as accounts of events, connected through chronology or plot (Czarniawska, 2004; Feingold, 2020).

The actual telling - or narration - of the story is an interaction in which the storyteller and the listener/reader attempt to communicate and come to a shared understanding of their social world (Hall, 2019). The story, then, represents one interpretation of reality, constructed within the wider social and cultural contexts within which it is told (Caine et al., 2013; Feingold, 2020). Narratives, therefore, *'capture both the individual and the context'* (Moen, 2006 p60), meaning that eliciting stories of personal experiences of a phenomenon, as opposed to asking questions about it, can provide insight that we would not otherwise have access to (Shelton, 2021). *'The study of narrative, therefore, is*

the study of the ways humans experience the world' (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

4.3.3 Narrative across cultures

As humans, narrative is one of the primary devices available to us to communicate lived experiences to others (Bruner, 1986). This is thought to be a distinctive and universal human characteristic (Lyotard, 1994), with the ability to enjoy storytelling existing in all cultures (Pinker, 1997; Tooby & Cosmides, 2020) and with all languages incorporating the grammatical structures required for constructing narratives (Butler-Kisber, 2010 p63). Knowledge of shared stories is considered a fundamental part of what establishes us within a community (Kuhn, 1974): we evidence our cultural membership through our ways of crafting stories (Dyson & Genishi, 1994). Stories are the remembered, interpreted and narrated account of our experiences, constructed for an audience in order to communicate the desired meaning of the lived event and to connect with others (Rosenthal, 2006). Narratives therefore provide us with access to people's identities and personalities and, for researchers, storytelling provides a rich tapestry through which they can investigate how humans experience the world (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Furthermore, within a cross-cultural context, Conle (1999 p809) argues that descriptive narrative facilitates more effective intercultural communication than the logical argument demanded by a question-and-answer format. This is in part, she suggests, through the development of 'metaphorical connections', which she terms as 'resonance' across cultural boundaries (Conle, 1996 p305). Intercultural awareness itself, seen as being developed through a process of experience, relationships to others and other cultures, and reflection, may also be developed through thinking narratively (Mitton-Kükner et al., 2010 p1163). Given the intercultural nature of this research, and it being open to English-speaking participants from any country, the narrative approach therefore has the potential to enable equitable participation by all narrators and to facilitate communication between the researcher and participants (Conle, 1999). The interview approach, as described in section 4.4, was developed with this in mind. The elicitation of narrative through an invitation to 'share their COIL story'

afforded participants the opportunity to recall and construct the narrative of their experiences that they wished to share.

4.3.4 Introduction to narrative inquiry

“Story is the very stuff of teaching, the landscape within which we live as teachers and researchers, and within which the work of teachers can be seen as making sense.” (Elbaz, 1991 p3)

Practically speaking, narrative inquiry is a broad term to describe qualitative research methodologies that collect and use stories to understand participants’ lived experiences (Parks, 2023; Polkinghorne, 1988). As an approach, it typically appeals to those interested in examining people’s experiences from their perspectives (Barkhuizen, 2019; Bell, 2002). In educational research it is most often used to explore the ways that teachers develop their professional identity (e.g. Barkhuizen, 2022; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013).

Approaches to narrative inquiry vary hugely, yet they are united by their researchers’ interest in how individuals use stories to communicate meaning in their experiences (Kramp, 2003; Riessman, 2008). Typically, two types of narrative inquiry are described: analysis of narratives on the one hand, and narrative analysis on the other (Polkinghorne, 1995). Both approaches centre around stories, collected in any number of ways such as journal entries, speeches, poetry, autobiography or via interview, the latter being the most common data collection method in narrative inquiry.

Analysis of narrative involves collecting stories as data and analysing them according to a paradigmatic process (Polkinghorne, 1995). In taking this approach, themes are identified within the data in a very similar manner to other approaches used in qualitative research, for example thematic analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995 p16; Riessman, 2008).

Narrative analysis, on the other hand, involves collecting experiences and weaving them into a coherent storied form. In this approach, multiple events and actions are related to each other through a singular narrative, in which the new plot as told by the researcher remains true to the data yet brings “an order

and meaningfulness” that is not apparent in the individual stories (Polkinghorne, 1995, p16). The creation of this new, combined narrative is known as ‘restorying’ (Kramp, 2003). In educational research, restorying is often described as the creation of a composite or collective narrative, which is defined as *“an account that is written as a vignette by using data from multiple participants’ interview transcripts to represent a specific aspect of the research findings”* (Johnston et al., 2023). It is a weaving together of participants’ stories to present complex ideas in a format that is accessible to readers and can therefore be a powerful resource for impacting upon educational practice (Barone, 2007).

In practice, it is common for the two approaches of narrative analysis and analysis of narrative to be used together, as they complement each other. As described by Kramp (2003 p120): *“used together, they provide a rich analysis of the stories your research participants shared with you in their interviews”*. This research makes use of both approaches, thematically analysing the individual stories according to the theoretical framework of Cultural Intelligence and using the process of restorying to present the findings as a composite narrative. This combined narrative illuminates ideas and themes and critically, the relationships between them, in a way that is only apparent when viewing the narrators’ experiences as a whole. It is this approach that provides a unique insight into the experiences of teachers who COIL, and how this is impacted by their wider life experiences and institutional contexts.

4.3.5 Reflexivity: the role of the researcher in narrative inquiry

In narrative inquiry my role as researcher comes with multiple responsibilities. Firstly, there is the need to create an environment through which the story can emerge (Genette, 1980), which is contingent upon the relationship between researcher and narrators. There are inherent imbalances between the researcher and those being researched (Råheim et al., 2016), but as discussed in the introduction, this relationship is further complicated by my knowledge of the research topic and the fact that the narrators are also my peers. I needed to be mindful of my identities during the interview process in order to limit bias and ensure that the story that emerged was authentically that of the narrator (Buys

et al., 2022). In describing the narrative interview approach, Brinkmann (2022) highlights the importance of the researcher actively engaging in the act of storytelling, through gestures, active listening and demonstration of interest. How this was managed reflexively, minimising the impact of my values and identities, will be discussed in the section on data collection.

Once the stories had been elicited, I as the researcher had a further responsibility to organise them in a way that meaningfully represents the participants' experiences (Delmas & Giles, 2023). In so doing, the narrative is unavoidably shaped by my own interpretations which are in turn a product of my own knowledge and context. My awareness and experience of COIL and higher education as a practitioner were critical in interpreting and identifying themes in stories, and particularly in being able to identify the complexity of the relationship between factors. Through the research process, I therefore act not only as researcher but also as collaborator with the narrators, working with them to capture, preserve and retell their unique stories. It is this relationship that makes the narrative approach so distinct from simply asking questions. Whilst this contributes to the richness of the research, it can also lead to undue influence over the research process and so reflexivity in analysis was vital. The data analysis section will describe how I sought to limit the imposition of my own expectations during the analysis and restorying process.

4.4 Data collection: the narrative approach

Data were collected via one, 90-minute interview with each participant. All interviews took place between 14 - 30 August 2023 and were conducted online, via Zoom.

4.4.1 Eliciting narrative via interview

In order to answer the overarching research question, '*What are the narratives of higher education teachers who have designed and taught a COIL project?*', a method that allowed the narrators to describe their experiences in their own words was sought. Interviews were considered to be the most appropriate format for this study as they provide the opportunity for participants to share detailed accounts of their experiences (Riessman, 2008). Interviews also have

a level of flexibility in the way they are structured so that they can be more or less led by either the researcher or the participant (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

A typical approach in qualitative research is the semi-structured interview (Braun & Clarke, 2013). With this approach, the researcher has a pre-defined set of topics that they intend to cover, however, the order and wording of the questions will be adapted as the interview develops. This enables the researcher to ensure their areas of interest are explored, whilst also allowing for the conversation to develop more organically in a way that is led by the participant (Robson & McCartan, 2017). This approach can be used in narrative research; however, there is typically more need for the researcher to 'give up control' (Riessman, 2008) in order to elicit the desired extended narration from the participant. Shifting the locus of control from the researcher to the participant and allowing them the freedom to tell their story in a way that is meaningful to them, and less influenced by the identities and values of the researcher, requires a looser format to the interview (Robson & McCartan, 2017).

There can, however, be a tension between the desire of the researcher to encourage the narrators to tell the story they wish to tell, and the need of the researcher to answer their research questions (Riessman, 2006). Indeed, a complete lack of structure can also be confusing to the participant who is at a loss as to what you wish them to talk about. This was succinctly expressed by one of the narrators of this study, Celeste, at the beginning of her interview, as she asked:

So when you say you want me to just talk about my COIL experience, I see you're not wanting to direct that so that's fine. It's just that, of course, one tells any kind of story in different ways, depending on what you think the point of the story is. Do you really just want to hear what I say without any prompting?

Celeste, UK, Art History

Accounting for this, I decided to run the interviews in three stages, adapted from the Biographic Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) (Wengraf, 2001). This would allow for direction towards specific events (COIL), and critically, the ability to gather information about the *context* of the stories, as necessitated by

step three in Clandinin and Connelly's (2004) procedure for conducting narrative research. This would also facilitate the answering of the three research sub-questions, which are concerned with the wider context that motivates and facilitates a teacher to COIL. As a reminder, the three sub-questions are:

- 1: What do teachers' stories of COIL reveal about their Cultural Intelligence?
- 2: What stories do teachers tell about what motivates them to COIL?
- 3: What factors do teachers describe as supporting or hindering their ability to design and teach a COIL project?

4.4.2 Interview stage one: initial elaboration of story

In the invitation to interview (see Appendix Six), they were told that I was interested in hearing in their own words what their experience of COIL has been, and that there was no need to do any preparation in advance. The participant information sheet (see Appendix Three) provided some further background about the aims of the study. This is in line with typical narrative interviewing techniques, in which the narrative is elicited through the interview, as a collaborative process between participant and researcher, rather than independently by the participant (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2015; Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). In practice, one participant brought some quotations that she wished to share from students and colleagues along to the interview, suggesting that the information provided ahead of time was sufficient to allow some consideration of key topics for participants.

In the first stage of the interview, after explaining how the interview would unfold, I began by asking participants to introduce themselves. The intention of this was two-fold. Firstly, it eased the narrators into the storytelling process, by giving them a topic in which they are undoubtedly experts to speak about. This ensured that they felt relaxed and comfortable to move on to the main part of the interview (Brinkmann, 2022). Secondly, by providing no information about what I as researcher expected to hear in their introduction, the information that participants chose to share here was indicative of the aspects of their identity that they considered relevant to an interview about COIL (Barkhuizen, 2022; Fitzgerald, 2020).

Following the introductions, the interview then began with a single question designed to elicit the full narrative. Open-ended questions are more likely than others to provide narrative opportunities, e.g., “Tell me what happened...” as opposed to “When did X happen?” (Riessman, 2006). Thus, the prompt used to elicit the initial narrative was both simple and open-ended:

‘Please tell me your COIL story.’

According to Wengraf (2004), the task of the single-question narrative interview stage, and by extension of the interviewer, is purely to facilitate the narrator’s telling of the story. Any questions that the interviewer may have should not be asked during this stage, with their role being purely to enable the story to be told in the way that the narrator feels comfortable telling it. The reasoning for this approach is that the interviewer is supporting the narrator to uncover the story that is relevant to them, following their own ‘systems of relevancy’ in a way which is uninformed by the interviewer’s own interests (Wengraf, 2004). Therefore, whilst the narrator was responding to this initial question, I did not interrupt, interject, or ask questions that could alter the direction of the narrative. Instead, I used active listening techniques such as gesturing, smiling, nodding and making eye contact (Brinkmann, 2022; Louw et al., 2011) to encourage the narrator to follow the threads of their story. Audio-recording the interviews facilitated active listening as I was able to fully engage in the interview without the need to take detailed notes.

When it seemed that the narrator had stopped talking, I left a longer than natural pause to allow the narrator time to pick up the thread again, should they wish to (Talmage, 2012). If no more narrative was forthcoming, then neutral prompts such as ‘what happened next?’ or ‘can you tell me more about that?’ were given. When it was certain that no more narration would be forthcoming, we moved to stage two.

4.4.3 Interview stage two: extracting more story – the prompt poster

The second stage of the interview aligns with ‘sub-session 3’ of the BNIM method, in which it is permissible to ask questions that orient the narrator to the concepts and questions that are important to the researcher (Wengraf, 2004). A

prompt poster (Figure 4.1) was used during this stage, as a support to narrators in telling their stories and to introduce wider contextual information that may not have been elicited by the initial prompt. The intention of the poster is to introduce typical tasks and events associated with pre-, during and post-COIL activity to support the narrators in identifying and elaborating on moments that are of significance to them. The prompts are largely based around typical COIL activities (Rubin & Guth, 2015) as it is suggested that interviewees generally find it easier to discuss experiences related to specific events, times or places (Elliott 2005, cited in Riessman, 2008). In some cases, these prompts supported the collection of contextual information that Clandinin and Connelly (2004) cite as necessary to enable the researcher to situate individual stories within the narrators' personal experiences. This includes information about their jobs, homes, culture and international experiences.

Whilst the prompts do relate to activities that are likely to occur following a specific order, the prompt poster does not present them temporally. This is because the aim is not for the remainder of the interview to follow a rigid structure, but rather for the narrator to discuss those topics which they are drawn to and feel they have something to communicate about. The prompt poster was therefore used very flexibly and was introduced to the narrators with the explanation that they can choose to discuss as many or as few as the prompts as they would like, in whatever order appeals to them. This allows the narrator to move between events as their narrative unfolds (Wilson et al., 2007). If the narrator is not interested by or does not see the significance of a prompt to their personal COIL story, they are free to not engage with it.

The use of a prompt poster of this kind appears to be novel in narrative research; however, it is based upon more commonly used tools such as life/story grids (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2012; Shelton, 2021); story curves (Kim et al., 2017) or timelines (Kolar et al., 2015; Sheridan et al., 2011). The purpose of such methods is to provide a visual tool for mapping important events against the passage of time and prompting wide-ranging discussion. They were initially developed to facilitate recall in older respondents (Berney & Blane, 1997; Blane, 1996), but their use has been found to be valuable for a much wider



Figure 4.1 Prompt poster used during stage 2 of the interviews

range of participants (Wilson et al., 2007). Typically, they are composed of a grid, table, or line in which one axis represents the passage of time. Narrators place critical moments that they feel are significant in their narrative at the appropriate point on the line. The visual element of these tools is said to help engage the interviewee and interviewer in constructing and reflecting on a narrative, whilst creating a more relaxed research encounter that supports the narrator's voice and facilitates discussion of sensitive issues (Wilson et al., 2007).

For this research, it was felt that a visual approach could be valuable in supporting a relaxed interview dynamic (Parry et al., 1999) and providing specific events or timeframes for interviewees to discuss (Riessman, 2008). However, given that the interviews were due to take place online, such a document could be a distraction from the relaxed environment I was hoping to create. Updating a digital timeline/grid is much fiddlier than a paper one and assumes a certain digital skillset (Motschnig & Schmoelz, 2017). Therefore, the decision was taken to use the prompt poster, which would provide events and topics to aid in a narrator's recall and support them in discussing their experiences (Sheridan et al., 2011) without requiring the cognitive load of simultaneously completing a digital creation task. A further benefit of this approach was that, whilst story grids and similar tools must be used from the outset of the interview in order to ensure the collection of a complete timeline (Wilson et al., 2007), the prompt poster could be introduced later. This allowed for the collection of an initial, unprompted narrative which therefore highlighted the experiences and events that the narrator deemed most immediately relevant to COIL.

4.4.4 Interview stage three: clarifying questions

The final stage of the interview was the opportunity to ask clarifying questions. Following Wengraf's (2001) BNIM process, no new topics are to be introduced at this stage, and questioning should, wherever possible, use the same words and phrases as were used by the narrator when raising these topics.

Unlike the preceding two stages, questions in this section may not elicit narrative at all; they may simply be clarification queries. In practice, this section frequently involved eliciting more detail on topics that were raised by the narrator but not explored in detail. An example of a full transcript, including clarifying questions, can be found in Appendix One.

4.4.5 Interview location: enabling online presence

As indicated, all interviews took place online, via Zoom. The primary advantage of using an online platform such as this is that it allows both interviewer and interviewee to choose where they join the interview from: a distinct advantage

for an international research project, where participants are globally dispersed (De Villiers et al., 2022).

Some evidence suggests that 'zoom fatigue' may be experienced during online interviews (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020), stemming from the cognitive labour of maintaining conversation flow in a digital environment whilst simultaneously monitoring your own self-image as seen through the camera. Difficulties managing conversation flow can be further exacerbated by poor internet connections causing a lag in video and/or sound. However, Zoom has a number of advantages that support it in being able to foster 'real-time co-presence and interactivity' (Lupton, 2021). The aspect of choice over personal surroundings means that all actors tend to feel more relaxed and comfortable than they would if they were required to be face-to-face (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2021), facilitating the act of storytelling. Some evidence even suggests that people may feel more comfortable discussing personal issues in their own homes, where they are able to maintain a safe distance from the interviewer (Gray et al., 2020). The reduction of external stimuli, and the focus of a camera on the participants' upper body can also amplify their verbal and non-verbal cues and better-facilitate active listening (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2021). This was further supported by the ability to record the interviews, allowing me the freedom to better demonstrate active listening (Wengraf, 2004) and fully engage with the participant without the need to take notes. On balance, the convenience of an online platform allowed for greater flexibility for both interviewer and interviewee and did not prevent the narrators from successfully sharing their stories, as evidenced by the interview transcripts (see Appendix One).

4.5 Pilot study

Conducting a pilot study allows the researcher to test the feasibility and effectiveness of the research design (Robson & McCartan, 2017) and an opportunity for reflexivity (Lees et al., 2022). Given the practice of narrative interviewing requires the *unlearning* of typical interview technique and conversational habit (Wengraf, 2004), this was considered to be particularly

vital here. In this research, a pilot study was conducted to trial the interview procedure and to assess the suitability of the prompt poster.

The pilot study involved one narrator, who had been recruited via the same method as those in the main study, but who was not eligible to take part in the research. The inclusion criteria for the study were that potential narrators must have taught at least one COIL course in higher education within the past four years. The participant who came forward was a COIL coordinator, involved in managing COIL projects and supporting teachers in their running of them. They had a great deal of experience with COIL and certainly had their own COIL story to tell; however, they had not actually run a COIL themselves and so they were unfortunately ineligible for this particular study. As they were nonetheless willing to take part, it was decided to include them as a pilot. The resultant interview was not included in the final analysis.

Feedback from the narrator who took part in the pilot was positive with regard to the structure of the interview and the opening prompt. They did, however, find the prompt poster initially confusing. The first iteration of this poster (Figure 4.2) used only single words or phrases rather than the short questions that were adopted for later interviews (Figure 4.1). It appeared that the words on their own were not sufficient to elicit narrative from the narrator, and it was necessary for me to provide several verbal prompts and questions to encourage them.

The narrator was comfortable describing their experiences and making choices about which prompts they wished to elaborate on. They fed back that they appreciated that the prompts were not ordered and that they did not feel pressured to respond to all of them. The prompts were successful in elaborating narrative on topics that had not previously been covered.

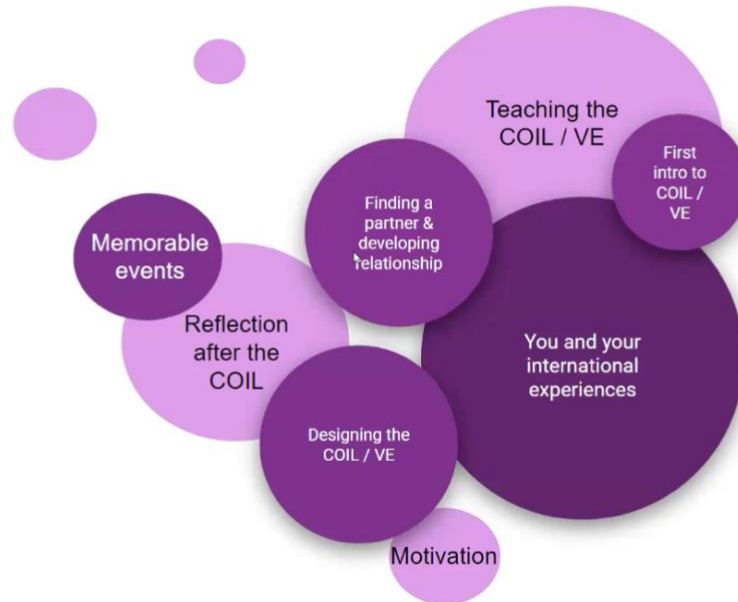


Figure 4.2 Prompt poster used during the pilot interview

For myself as researcher, the pilot interview was particularly useful for gauging how my behaviours influenced how the narrator chose to tell their story (Buys et al., 2022; Lees et al., 2022). I reflected on the need to provide additional explanation about how the interview would be structured, and what the narrator was being asked to do. As a result, I began later interviews with a more detailed explanation of the three stages as previously described, including why this structure was important, and a reassurance that it may feel uncomfortable to talk for such an extended period or answer open-ended questions. The relevant part of the explanation was briefly repeated before each interview stage, and the narrator was encouraged to ask questions. The prompt poster was updated to be more visually appealing, and to include questions rather than words or phrases.

Overall, the pilot study was a useful opportunity for reflection which led to a number of changes being made to the interview tools and researcher behaviour, although the underlying structure of the interviews remained unchanged.

4.6 Reflections on the interview process

After adopting the adaptations described in section 4.5 following the pilot, the interview protocol proved to be effective in eliciting rich stories from each

participant. Table 4.1 provides the word counts for the transcripts resulting from each interview, indicating the significant volume of data generated.

Narrator	Word count
Pilar	5,956
Catherine	5,447
Louise	9,447
Storm	12,446
Celeste	13,217
Stella	8,624
Henrik	8,976
Berend	10,498
Josephine	8,647
Luke	9,647

Table 4.1 Interview transcript wordcounts

At the point of completion of the ninth interview, I felt that although each narrator's story was unique, there were no new themes emerging. However, the tenth interview (Luke) led to quite a different story – as will be explored in Chapters 5 and 6. As such, I do not feel that I reached data saturation, and the results of this research are not generalisable. However, narrative research - particularly that which is exploratory in nature - is by intention a deep dive into a few unique, nuanced stories and saturation is therefore a less critical concept than the depth of those stories (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Rahimi & khatooni, 2024). My focus was on achieving thoroughness and depth of analysis and as such, the decision to stop at ten participants was a practical one, as the volume of data generated would have been unmanageable. This also informed my decision not to schedule a follow up interview with each participant, which is often used in narrative research to clarify the story and strengthen the narrative (Wengraf, 2001). A second interview would have been desirable and could be considered a limitation of this research, but as sufficient data were collected from the first interview to answer the research questions, it was not necessary.

4.6.1 Research participants, or 'narrators'

The research participants in this study are referred to throughout as 'narrators', in order to adequately reflect the role that they played in the shaping of this thesis.

The research utilised both purposeful and referral sampling. This allowed for eligible narrators to be selected based on the aims of the research (Robson & McCartan, 2017) and for further narrators to be recruited via their social and professional networks (Heckathorn, 1997). This method is typically employed when needing to reach hidden, marginalised, or difficult to reach populations. In this instance, it was a convenient way to tap into the higher education COIL community, which is relatively small yet globally dispersed with few sources for locating members. This sampling method has been criticised for its potential for bias due to the reliance on participant referrals, with the final sample potentially being heavily influenced by the initial participants (Parker et al., 2019). This was mitigated against by beginning with an initial set of four contacts that were as diverse as possible, with each having a different nationality and/or home institution.

The initial contacts were Celeste and Catherine, who both contributed to this research, in addition to another member of the COIL community who was not able to spare the time for an interview but nevertheless shared the call amongst their own networks. Between them, they work at three different institutions: two in the UK and one in the Netherlands. They also represent three different nationalities. Through their networks, the remaining eight narrators (and the pilot) were invited to take part. Figure 4.3 shows the initial contacts and how recruitment snowballed through their networks. Although this approach meant that some of the participants knew other narrators, none of them had a relationship as COIL partners.

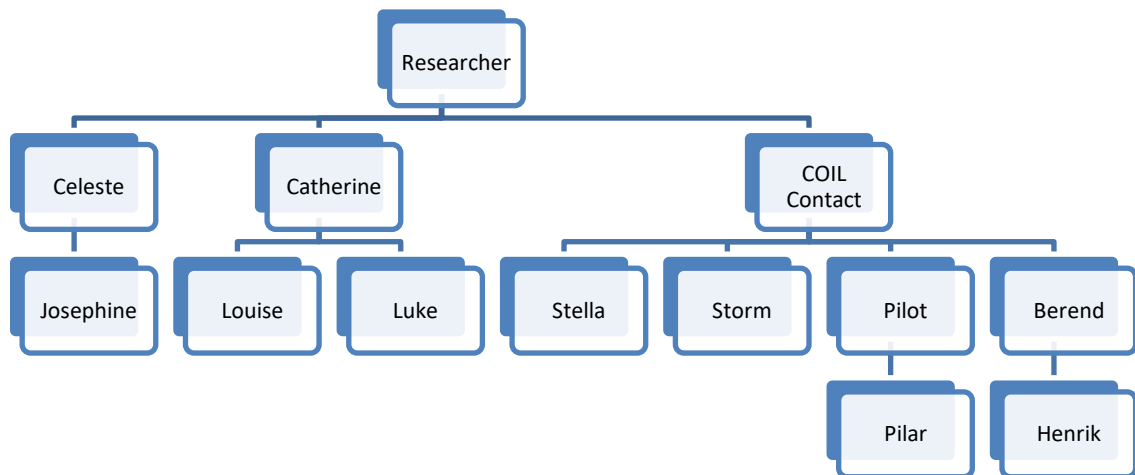


Figure 4.3 Participant recruitment contacts

Narrative research involves high volumes of data and a depth of analysis that typically necessitates small numbers of participants (Lieblich et al., 1998). The aim of this research is not to generalise to a wider population but rather to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the participants in a manner that the findings may be transferrable to other contexts. Therefore, a deep analysis of a small number of narrator stories is both desirable and in line with the narrative approach. Initially, a minimum of six narrators from at least three higher education institutions was sought, which was considered an appropriate sample size for narrative inquiry (Shelton, 2021), bearing in mind the density of the data collected.

The inclusion criteria were simply that narrators must have taught at least one COIL within a higher education setting within the past four years. This was deemed to be a timeframe that was recent enough for participants to recall their experience, whilst also allowing for COIL experiences before, during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. This was a consideration due to the impact that the shift to online teaching necessitated by the pandemic had on the development of COIL, as outlined in the literature review and introduction to the research context.

As this was an exploratory study and there was no prior research to suggest which characteristics or contexts might impact upon COIL experience, any COIL teaching experience was deemed to be relevant. There were no other inclusion criteria, with participation being open to any HE COIL teacher regardless of level of experience, country or institution, partner experience, or personal characteristics such as gender, age or ethnicity.

Initially, the sample consisted of eleven eligible narrators (excluding the pilot as described previously). Unfortunately, one teacher did not attend their interview and was unable to reschedule so they were withdrawn from the study.

Ultimately, the final sample of ten higher education teachers (for whom pseudonyms are used) consisted of six teachers from three UK universities, two from a university in the Netherlands, one from a Spanish university and one working at a UK transnational university campus in China. All participants were English speaking, although many speak more than one language.

Descriptive data for the participants is summarised in Table 4.2. However, it is important to note that these data were not systematically collected, i.e., participants were not specifically asked to share any such details. This is in accordance with the stated intentions of the narrative approach taken here, to illuminate what the *narrators* feel is relevant and important to *their* COIL experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004). If I had asked them what languages they speak or which countries they have lived in, it would signal to them that this of interest to me and could bias their accounts. Furthermore, in analysing their stories I could draw false conclusions about the importance of such experiences, based on my own perceptions. The descriptive data therefore indicate only those life experiences which the narrators chose to share as part of their COIL stories.

Narrator	Country of residence	Nationality	International experience	Languages spoken
Pilar	Spain	Spain	Worked abroad Teaches English & Spanish, Fulbright scholarship	Spanish & English
Catherine	UK	UK	International holidays	English
Louise	UK	UK	International holidays	English
Storm	China	South Africa	Worked and studied abroad (multiple countries) Fulbright scholarship	English
Celeste	UK	USA	Worked and studied abroad	English
Stella	UK	Canada	Works abroad, Fulbright Award	English
Henrik	Netherlands	Netherlands	Studied and worked abroad (multiple countries) Teaches languages	Dutch, German, French & English
Berend	Netherlands	Netherlands	Teaches languages	Dutch & English
Josephine	UK	France	Works abroad, teaches languages	French & English
Luke	UK	UK	Studied and worked abroad	English, German & Russian

Table 4.2 International experiences as shared by narrators

4.6.1.1 Barriers to recruitment

It was anticipated that there may be barriers to recruitment, due to the relatively small community of ‘COILers’ and the potentially substantial time commitment required of participants in a narrative study, for which they were not compensated or incentivised.

Fortunately, this was not an issue, and active recruitment was halted after one week, when the desired sample size had been exceeded. It was deemed that any additional narrators would lead to a volume of data that was unmanageable within the scope of the study. An approach in which narrators were selected based on certain criteria from a larger sample size was considered, with the potential benefit of increasing the diversity of the narrators. However, with the small sample sizes of a narrative inquiry, true diversity cannot be fully achieved and indeed would have little benefit, as the aim of this approach is to achieve depth of understanding rather than to generalise findings to a larger population (Creswell & Poth, 2023).

The keenness of members of the COIL community to engage with this research may be attributable to the referral recruitment method, with people more willing to give their time when asked by someone with whom they have an existing

relationship. It may also lend credence to findings of the literature review that teachers of COIL are under-researched as a population and have a desire to be heard.

4.6.1.2 Participant pseudonyms

The narrators in this study and any characters such as partners, colleagues or students who appear within their narratives have all been assigned pseudonyms. Initially, I assigned names to the narrators that I felt reflected their cultural background and personality. However, in so doing, I acknowledged that these decisions would undoubtedly have been influenced by my own personal experiences and interactions. I also recognised that given the various international backgrounds of the narrators there may be cultural nuances associated with names that may not be apparent to me.

Research indicates that names are sometimes linked to certain characteristics, behaviours or personalities and thus can impact how an individual is perceived by others (Hurst, 2008; Lahman et al., 2015). This can hold true in any scenario, including within research. Given that one of the stated aims of this research was to give voice to its participants, I felt that it was therefore important to allow the narrators the opportunity to select their own pseudonyms. This enabled narrators to maintain their anonymity yet also choose a name that is perhaps meaningful to them, or that they see as reflecting themselves and their stories (Shelton, 2021).

All participants were therefore told the name that they had been assigned and given the opportunity to change it for a pseudonym of their own choosing. They were also able to select names for any ‘characters’, institutions or locations identified within their stories, which so far had not been assigned any pseudonyms. Only two participants (Storm and Stella) opted to select their own nom de plume, with Storm offering the following insight into her choice:

*“I prefer ‘Storm’ as I perceive myself to be a **good** disruptor.”*

The remaining narrators opted to keep the name they had been assigned. No one wished to name any of the other characters, places or institutions that featured in their stories.

4.6.1.3 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval for the research was given by Lancaster University (Appendix Two) and the project was designed and delivered according to the code of practice. The data collection and handling adhered to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) guidelines. All interview data were stored in university approved storage (OneDrive) and any identifying features of persons or settings were omitted or anonymised and this anonymisation was further checked by the narrators.

The initial invitation email included information about the research purpose, the interview process and the participant's right to withdraw at any time before or during the interview, and for up to two weeks after the interview. Narrators were informed that their data would be anonymised as soon as was reasonably practicable and deleted upon completion of the degree. All narrators were provided with information sheets (shown in Appendix Three) outlining this information and this was reiterated at the beginning of each interview. Informed consent on the basis of this given information was obtained prior to each interview (see Appendix Four for a copy of the consent form).

Efforts were also taken to ensure that recalling their experiences did not result in emotional distress or discomfort for narrators. Whilst the topic of COIL was not expected to be distressing, there was a small chance that memories of cross-cultural encounters may not have been positive. Experiences related to the way that personal characteristics such as nationality, ethnicity, sexuality and gender identity are perceived and discussed in different cultures could potentially be triggering. Such topics were not part of the interview protocol (see Appendix Five) and would only be discussed if raised by the participant themselves. The information sheet (shown in Appendix Three) specifically drew attention to the possibility of such topics being raised and stated that people should not take part in the research if this is a concern for them.

4.7 Data analysis: Analysis of narratives

The narrators' stories were recorded and transcribed by me, assisted by speech-to-text transcription software. This was a time-consuming but valuable process as it developed my familiarity with the data which was vital for the

analysis and restorying stages (Hahn, 2008; Josselson, 2013). A further benefit of this process over more time-saving methods such as audio coding was the resultant output of searchable text (Evers, 2011; Stonehouse, 2019).

The two main methods of transcription are naturalised and denaturalised transcription (Davidson, 2009). Naturalised is the most detailed, capturing both what was said, and *how* it was said, including details such as body language, gestures, involuntary sounds, mumbling and breaks in speech. Denaturalised, on the other hand, focuses purely on *what* was said. It accurately presents the discourse but omits any contextual information or description of voice (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). This research, as it is suggested that much research does (Forbat & Henderson, 2005; Oliver et al., 2005), utilises a combination of both methods. As this particular narrative inquiry is concerned more with what the stories tell us rather than how they were told, some details of speech, such as intonation, were not included in the transcripts. However, in wishing to retain as much of the participant voice as possible, other paralinguistic features such as pauses (denoted by ellipsis), repetition of words (indicating the narrator is thinking about their next words), and laughter were all captured. These were not systematically analysed, but it was felt that they contributed something to the narrators' unique pattern of speech and the context of the story being told. As such, the process of transcription involved subjective interpretation on my part, in selecting which features to retain in the transcript and which to omit (Nascimento & Steinbruch, 2019). In this way, transcription is a cultural practice (Duranti, 2006), in which I as researcher needed to be cognisant of the linguistic and cultural nuances of transcription, and the impact that this would have on the resultant narratives (Nascimento & Steinbruch, 2019).

The transcripts were anonymised and sent to the narrators for review. This member checking approach is not without contention in qualitative research, with Hagens et al. (2009) asserting that it is unclear what impact this practice has on the quality of research. They consider that the practice has negligible impact on the researcher but can have both negative and positive impact on the participant and therefore advise careful consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of this procedure before carrying it out. The justification in this

instance was threefold. Firstly, it allowed the narrators to check that their anonymity was assured. Secondly, it enabled the narrators to validate the transcript, correcting them if necessary and thus ensuring that the resultant transcript is an accurate representation of the participant-transcriber's voice (Grundy et al., 2003). Finally, and most critically for narrative inquiry, it afforded the narrator the opportunity to edit their story in a more substantive way. The temptation for participants to modify their transcripts is often presented as a potential problem, but in the context of narrative inquiry, this is viewed differently. As this thesis is built upon a shared story, co-constructed by researcher and narrators (Johnston et al., 2023), it is ethical to ensure the narrators can tell their story in a way that they feel represents them.

Ultimately, none of the narrators chose to significantly alter their transcript, suggesting that the data collection process employed was successful in eliciting the narrators' stories as they would wish them to be told. One narrator (Stella) requested further anonymisation of their transcript, which was actioned. A further two narrators (Louise and Storm) made minor edits to correct misheard words or spelling errors. Only two narrators (Celeste and Luke) did not verify the accuracy of their transcript. An example of a transcript can be found in Appendix One.

4.8 Restorying narratives: data analysis

The data analysis process involved rewriting the narrators' stories. This process followed the guidance given by Polkinghorne (1995), in which the key elements of the stories are identified and rewritten to follow a chronological sequence (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). In addition to identifying typical story elements such as time, place, characters and plot, the framework of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) was also used at this stage, to identify intercultural behaviours in the narrators. The use of the theoretical framework, and the guidance of Polkinghorne, was vital in enabling a reflexive analytical approach. In this way, the identification of critical story elements was guided by theory and narrative structure, limiting the imposition of my own expectations on the data.

4.8.1 Initial coding: identifying the key elements

CQ, defined as “a person’s capability to adapt as she interacts with others from different cultural regions”, provides an appropriate framework with which to describe and make sense of the narrators’ experiences. The four CQ capabilities outline the cognitive, metacognitive, motivational and behavioural aspects of intercultural competence, which can be observed within intercultural learning contexts (Ang & Dyne, 2009; Earley & Ang, 2003). Together, the capabilities encompass a holistic and internationalised view of the narrators’ experiences. When further organised chronologically through the process of restorying, this allows the researcher to capture a sense of the narrator’s intercultural development over time, identifying similarities and drawing comparisons with other individuals. Table 4.3 recaps the four CQ capabilities.

Cognitive CQ	Metacognitive CQ
An individual’s knowledge of cultural norms, behaviours and practices in different cultural settings. It includes: • Business – knowledge about economic and legal systems • Interpersonal – knowledge about values, social interaction norms, and religious beliefs • Socio-linguistics – knowledge about rules of languages and rules for expressing non-verbal behaviours	An individual’s cultural consciousness and awareness during intercultural interactions. It occurs when people make judgments about their own thought processes and those of others. It includes: • Awareness – knowing about one’s existing cultural knowledge • Planning – strategizing before a culturally diverse encounter • Checking – checking assumptions and adjusting mental maps when actual experiences differ from expectations.
Behavioural CQ	Motivational CQ
An individual’s capability to adapt verbal and nonverbal behaviour when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. It includes: • Non-verbal – modifying non-verbal behaviors (e.g., gestures, facial expressions) • Verbal – modifying verbal behaviors (e.g., accent, tone)	An individual’s confidence and drive to function effectively in culturally diverse settings. It includes: • Intrinsic interest – deriving enjoyment from culturally diverse experiences • Extrinsic interest – gaining benefits from culturally diverse experiences. • Self-efficacy – having the confidence to be effective in culturally diverse situations

Table 4.3 The four capabilities of Cultural Intelligence (adapted from Ang et al., 2007)

I began by reading and re-reading the transcripts through the lens of CQ (Earley & Ang, 2003). This process was aided by coding the transcripts, using NVivo, to identify where the CQ capabilities were observed within the

narratives. An example of a CQ-coded transcript excerpt can be seen in Figure 4.4.

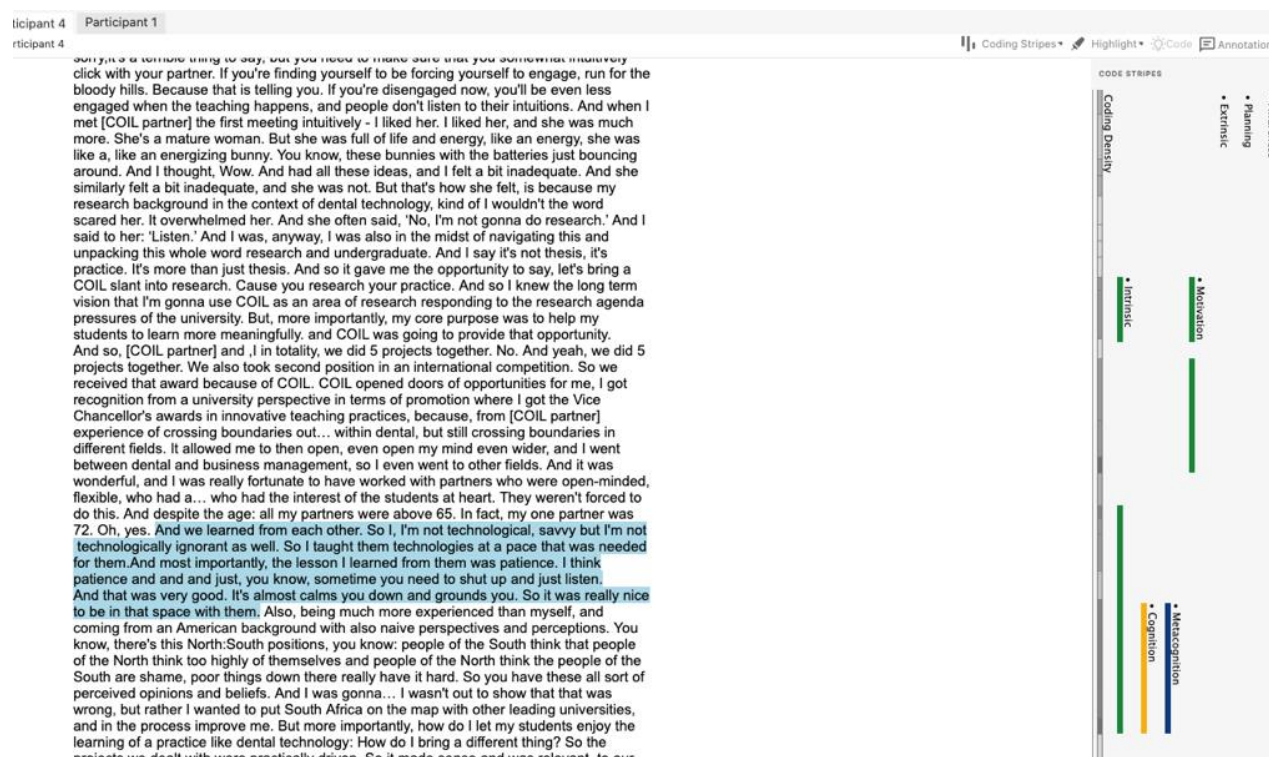


Figure 4.4 Screenshot showing initial coding of a transcript according to the CQ framework

The coding at this stage was very functional. For example, the following quote from Storm was coded as demonstrating both Cognitive and Motivational CQ:

“You know, there’s these [global] North:South positions: people of the South think that people of the North think too highly of themselves and people of the North think the people of the South think ‘shame, poor things down there really have it hard’. So you have these all sort of perceived opinions and beliefs. And I was gonna... I wasn’t out to show that that was wrong, but rather I wanted to put South Africa on the map with other leading universities, and in the process improve me.”

Storm, China, Dentistry /Educational Development

The Cognitive CQ is demonstrated by her identification of beliefs that some cultures may hold about others, and this drives her Motivational CQ to engage with intercultural experiences. Importantly, the code here merely identifies the elements of CQ and does not attempt to measure or quantify them in any way. In this example, Storm’s knowledge of others’ beliefs is characterised by a sweeping statement that generalises and potentially stereotypes. This more

nuanced analysis of what was being said and the inferred meaning would come later.

Using the NVivo software functionality, the coded excerpts were extracted from the narrators' transcripts and organised chronologically according to the stage of the COIL project (pre-, during or post COIL). As the nature of the interviews meant that narrators' stories did not always follow a logical chronology, this stage was vital in enabling the researcher to make better sense of participants' stories. Clandinin and Connelly (2004) and Riessman (2008) describe this process of the creation of 'stanzas', which serve to organise and bring order to transcribed speech.

Once the initial coding of CQ capabilities had been completed and the excerpts organised, these were then further analysed thematically, enabling the researcher to draw out wider contextual information and identify shared or contrasting storylines. This phase followed Polkinghorne's (1995) analysis of narrative approach, as introduced earlier in this chapter. Each stanza was analysed and coded according to the experiences it described. It was at this stage that more attention was paid to the nuance of what was being said. Rather than simply identifying themes, attention was paid to the context and experiences being described and the relationship between those and the narrator's CQ. What emerged from this process was a set of common narrative themes, representing shared or common experiences amongst the narrators. Appendix Six shows examples of the resulting codes and code families.

4.8.2 Producing interim narratives

The next stage was then to rewrite each narrator's story chronologically, emphasising the themes that they best represent. The purpose of reconfiguring the narrator's words into a storied account is to bring together the events, context and emotions that together make up individual experience (Polkinghorne, 1995). The process also enables the researcher to present the richness and detail of narrator's accounts in a form that is easily digested by the reader, and which allows for the identification of shared storylines (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002).

The result of this stage was a set of ‘interim narratives’ (Shelton, 2021) for each of the narrators. These weaved the researcher and narrator voice, maintaining large sections of direct quotes from the transcripts. These interim narratives served as the basis for the final composite narrative, in which the narrator words and stories are combined, in service of the bigger picture. The intention of these interim narratives was to capture each narrator’s unique story before crafting the final composite narrative (Johnston et al., 2023). It also acted as a means to ensure that differing perspectives were not lost, as the temptation when writing a composite narrative can be to focus on the shared storylines, at the expense of points of divergence (Johnston et al., 2023).

The final composite narrative as it is presented in the findings chapters weaves together the researcher and narrators’ voices, utilising direct quotes, sometimes substantial in length, to preserve the narrators’ unique voice. Furthermore, observations from the literature are incorporated within, so that the research findings become, in effect, co-authored by both researcher and participants. As described earlier in the chapter, this combined narrative serves to demonstrate the complexity of the relationships between COIL teachers’ identities, life experiences, institutional context and COIL experience. When presenting this final narrative, decisions had to be made about what to include and what to leave out. Ultimately, elements of narrators’ stories were selected for inclusion based on their relevance to the Cultural Intelligence framework and the research questions guiding this study. As is typical in narrative inquiry, data that did not contribute to a narrative that responded to these concepts was left out, meaning that the same data could potentially tell many alternative stories, depending on the research questions, theoretical framework, or researcher interpretation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004; Johnston et al., 2023; Polkinghorne, 1995).

4.9 Chapter summary

This exploratory research aims to answer the over-arching research question *‘What are the narratives of higher education teachers who have designed and taught a COIL project?’*

It is underpinned by a social constructivist and subjective position and accordingly uses a qualitative methodology, in this case narrative inquiry. The research findings will be presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Before COIL: stories of teachers' personal international experiences and their motivation to engage with COIL

"I've always had this interest in other countries, languages, cultures. The way people see the world from, like, their own country's perspective. I think that's relevant because I think that's what's made me more interested in COIL. I've got this interest in you know, languages, cultures, whatever."

Luke, UK, Dietetics

5.1 Introduction

In this and the next chapter, I analyse and interpret the narrators' stories while adhering to my ontological research approach, which posits that reality is constructed through social contexts and diverse perspectives. As part of narrative research, I explore themes within the stories, utilising the conceptual framework of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and referring to existing literature to create a combined narrative. Conscious of Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) warnings about the implications of intersubjectivity in narrative research, wherein the whole narrative is presented without appropriate reflection or analysis, I extract relevant portions to explore the context and experiences of narrators, rather than reproducing entire narratives verbatim. These story extracts serve as valuable insights in narrative inquiry (Goodson & Sikes, 2016).

Josselson and Lieblich (1997) assert that narrative analysis requires the researcher to engage in 'meaning making', applying conceptual knowledge to make sense of the stories as told. Accordingly, in this research it was important that the stories of experience be analysed in relation to the conceptual framework of Cultural Intelligence so that experiences can be conceptualised and thus serve as a 'bridge to other life situations' (Josselson & Lieblich, 1997 p.xii).

In this chapter, I therefore combine primary data from the interviews with insights from the literature to examine the themes of COIL teachers'

international experiences, their Cultural Intelligence, and their motivations to engage with COIL. As a reminder, the research questions are:

RQ: *What are the narratives of higher education teachers who have designed and taught a COIL project?*

Sub question 1: *What do teachers' stories of COIL reveal about their Cultural Intelligence?*

Sub question 2: *What stories do teachers tell about what motivates them to COIL?*

Sub question 3: *What factors do teachers describe as supporting or hindering their ability to design and teach a COIL project?*

In the following discussion I respond to sub-questions 1 & 2 under two themes:

- o Theme 1: International experiences and Cultural Intelligence (Cognitive, Metacognitive and Behavioural CQ)
- o Theme 2: Motivation to COIL (Motivational CQ)

The themes derive from the conceptual framework of Cultural Intelligence and act as a lens through which to interpret the collective narrative and emergent discussion. The themes are developed through selected extracts from the narrators to clarify, confirm or contrast the developing collective narrative. In selecting these extracts, the ethical decision was made to give voice to each of the participants, ensuring that they all have a space within the collective narrative (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Therefore, each participant is represented by at least one narration over the following two chapters, whilst shorter quotations from each are used throughout to highlight similarities and differences in the narrators' experiences.

5.2 Cultural Intelligence: a brief reminder

Cultural Intelligence, or 'CQ' is defined as "*a person's capability to adapt as she interacts with others from different cultural regions*" (Ang & Van Dyne, 2015; Earley & Ang, 2003). It is a specific form of intelligence characterised by an individual's ability to make sense of and operate within situations of cultural diversity. In the context of a COIL project, cultural intelligence is thus the ability of a teacher to adapt their professional behaviour within a new cultural setting.

Developed by Earley and Ang (2003), the CQ model describes intelligence not just as capabilities residing within a person, such as knowledge and ability, but also as overt actions and behaviours. These signifiers are categorised into the four components of CQ, summarised in Table 5.1.

Cognitive CQ	Metacognitive CQ
An individual's knowledge of cultural norms, behaviours and practices in different cultural settings. It includes: • Business – knowledge about economic and legal systems • Interpersonal – knowledge about values, social interaction norms, and religious beliefs • Socio-linguistics – knowledge about rules of languages and rules for expressing non-verbal behaviours	An individual's cultural consciousness and awareness during intercultural interactions. It occurs when people make judgments about their own thought processes and those of others. It includes: • Awareness – knowing about one's existing cultural knowledge • Planning – strategising before a culturally diverse encounter • Checking – checking assumptions and adjusting mental maps when actual experiences differ from expectations
Behavioural CQ	Motivational CQ
An individual's capability to adapt verbal and nonverbal behaviour when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. It includes: • Non-verbal – modifying non-verbal behaviours (e.g., gestures, facial expressions) • Verbal – modifying verbal behaviours (e.g., accent, tone)	An individual's confidence and drive to function effectively in culturally diverse settings. It includes: • Intrinsic interest – deriving enjoyment from culturally diverse experiences • Extrinsic interest – gaining benefits from culturally diverse experiences. • Self-efficacy – having the confidence to be effective in culturally diverse situations

Table 5.1 The four capabilities of Cultural Intelligence (adapted from Ang et al., 2007)

The extent to which the narrators demonstrate CQ, how they have developed it, and how this influences their engagement with COIL will be explored in this chapter through two themes. The first will discuss the extent to which the narrators demonstrate Cognitive, Metacognitive and Behavioural CQ, and the experiences that supported them in developing it. Motivational CQ and the broader topic of motivation to COIL are then discussed in the second theme, which will explore the factors that influence our narrators' decision to get involved in COIL.

5.3 Theme 1: International experiences and Cognitive, Metacognitive and Behavioural CQ

During their interviews, narrators were not specifically asked about their prior international experience, instead being prompted to introduce themselves and to tell the story of their experience with COIL. What information they chose to share about themselves in their introduction is therefore indicative of the parts of themselves and their experience - their identity - that they feel are most relevant to their role as protagonist of their own COIL story (Childs, 2011; Klerfelt, 2018). A recurring theme was their exposure to other countries and cultures, which were described in Table 4.1, and have been organised chronologically in Figure 5.1, to illustrate where COIL features in their international histories. Individuals' international experiences, as described by them during their narration, are plotted chronologically against the key life stages of childhood (blue), university (red), prior employment (green) and current employment (purple). Future plans are also included at the end of the timeline (yellow). Each life stage is represented with a different colour to differentiate them, with their first COIL appearing in pink. Any international experiences described by the narrator as negative or 'missing' are denoted by orange. An illustrative snapshot of Catherine and Louise's timelines are included in Figure 5.2.

Given that COIL requires a teacher to work effectively across cultures (Jaramillo Cherez & Gleason, 2022; Rubin & Guth, 2015; Wengraf, 2001), we might expect that they require high CQ if they are to succeed. As research has identified a positive relationship between CQ and significant international/cross-cultural experiences (Pidduck et al., 2022), it is perhaps not surprising therefore that all of the narrators referred to international or intercultural exposure at various levels in their stories. Defining what constitutes a *significant* intercultural experience is flawed, with studies measuring this varying as number of countries lived in for six months (Kim & Van Dyne, 2012), number of months worked abroad (Li et al., 2013), number of countries visited (Shannon & Begley, 2008), or study abroad experiences (Varela & Gatlin-Watts, 2014).

Narrator	Childhood / life experience	University	Prior employment	Current institution	Future plans
Pilar	Grew up in Spain Bilingual (Spanish & English)		Worked in USA (14 years)	Spanish university Teaches languages Students mostly Spanish and female Teaching in English First COIL 4 COILs so far	3 more planned COILs Conference presentation with COIL partner PhD on COIL
Catherine	Born in NI Grew up in England Feels that they have not had a lot of international experiences			English university Teaches theories of culture Very diverse students Secondment to global experience team Secondment to set up COIL centrally Moved to NI First COIL School COIL lead	About to start role at new university in NI and looking to introduce COIL, working with partner from previous COIL
Louise	Grew up in England Family home in France Parent living in Australia Travel with family - enjoys learning about different cultures	X-Culture (VE) embedded in degree Fellow PhD students very international	English University Associate course director role - lead on internationalisation Very diverse students and staff First COIL Post-Covid field trips Trained USA university in COIL Became COIL mentor COIL failure - logistics	English university Not supported to do COIL	Research collaboration with failed COIL partner
Storm	Grew up in South Africa Now living in China Multiple language exposure		South African university International exchange scholarship (USA) Students from marginalised backgrounds, English as 3rd or 4th language First COIL scholarship SUNY COIL training with partner 7 COILs 9 publications 6 international conference presentations	UK TNE university in China Training others in COIL / ICC	Developing strategy to embed COIL at new institution
Celeste	Born & now lives in UK Grew up in USA Brazilian cousin by marriage Loves international travel	Semester at sea (visited 12 countries)		English university International network of colleagues Global Partnerships Lead COIL failure - logistics SUNY COIL training First COIL	Increase COIL uptake in faculty
Stella	Grew up in Canada Now lives & works in UK Enjoys travel Partner's family multi-cultural		Multi-cultural (very diverse) city in Canada	English university COIL training First COIL More international projects since COIL	Encouraging others to COIL Learning more about TNE and strategic partnerships
Henrik	Grew up in the Netherlands Multilingual (Dutch, English, German)	Studied English & German translation in Brussels	Taught in Sheffield, England	Netherlands university Teaches Business English & international relations Teaches culture models / theories Very international student cohort First COIL Blended Intensive Programmes Culture shock working with COIL partners Responsible for virtual/hybrid international programmes	Increasing partners for COIL Measuring students' ICC development
Berend	Grew up in the Netherlands Bilingual (Dutch & English) Concerned about English language ability	Didn't speak English at all between 1991 (school exams) and 2018	Previously worked in very Dutch mono cultural business settings	Netherlands university Teaches culture models / theories Very international student cohort First COIL Experienced culture shock Manages a very international team Programme manager for international business Run COIL 8 times with various partners	New COIL with different partners
Josephine	French Multilingual (English / French +)	University in France		English university Teaches languages Erasmus COIL training First COIL Chose partner from unfamiliar culture Presented COIL at international conference	New COIL with different partners
Luke	Grew up in UK Learnt French and German at school	Studied Russian 10 week internship in Malta Year abroad	Worked in Germany teaching English Worked with people from New Zealand & Australia and was interested in their training and experiences	English university First COIL COIL failure - students not engaged COIL failure - partner relationship breakdown (EU funding)	

Figure 5.1 A timeline of narrators' international experiences

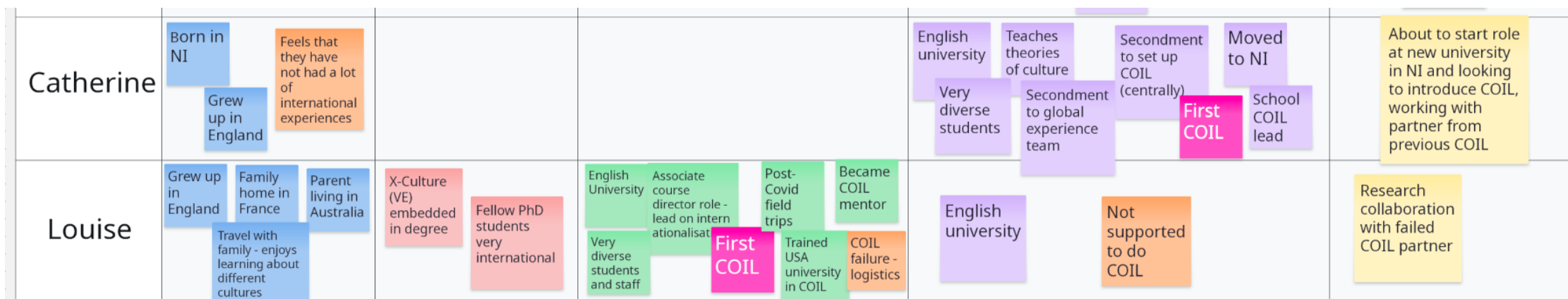


Figure 5.2 Close up of Catherine and Louise's international timelines

There is recognition of the need for a measure that reflects the complexity of cross-cultural experiences, accounting for depth, breadth and type of experience (Pidduck et al., 2022). However, in the absence of this, this study takes significant international experience to be a period of a semester or more spent living, working or studying abroad. As illustrated by Table 4.1, seven out of the ten narrators do indeed have significant international experience, and six out of the ten demonstrate language ability (being fluent in one or more additional languages). As such, this section is not occupied with identifying, describing or rating those experiences, but rather it is seeking to better understand the relationship between those experiences, teachers' CQ, and COIL. The selected story extracts in this theme serve to illustrate the variety of international and multicultural experiences of the narrators, and the level of importance that they place on these experiences in relation to COIL.

5.3.1 Transformative international experiences

For some narrators, their prior international experiences are especially significant to them and feature prominently in their narrations. One such example is Celeste, who begins by telling us about her childhood and university experiences.

I've had a lot of international experiences in that I don't live in the country where I was brought up, so that itself is an international experience. I also did a semester at sea, which was a way of doing an international year that was different from the usual one, and you went on this boat for a semester. You did classes on the boat, and you stopped at I think 12 locations. And I will say it was an absolutely transformative experience for me: to see a whole sequence of different cultures just made me realise that actually, the way Americans live isn't the only way to live. And then there was definite culture shock going home.

Celeste, UK, Art History

In raising this, Celeste clearly feels that her international experiences are relevant to her COIL story. Furthermore, the way that she describes the impact of her semester at sea is typical of the cited benefits of immersive mobility opportunities such as study and work abroad in increasing cultural awareness (Crossman & Clarke, 2010; Tuleja, 2008). She credits her exposure to other cultures as developing her metacognitive and cognitive CQ, by expanding her

awareness of her own culture and cultural knowledge, through learning about other cultural settings (Ang et al., 2007). In fact, the extent to which Celeste has been shaped by these experiences is a recurrent theme in her story and something she routinely reflects upon:

My expectation now is not that people will communicate in the same way as I do, and that I'll always understand them, or always be able to make myself clear. You just don't know what are other people's assumptions. Having done a lot of travelling, having put myself in a lot of situations where I'm ignorant and stupid compared to other people, because when you can't speak their language, of course you're kind of stupid, and you sound stupid, and I know that. And it means that I don't think other - and I think this is important, actually - I don't think other people are stupid because they speak English badly. And I think a lot of experience has taught me not to react in that way even internally. You just have to figure out how you can have the conversation at the right level. Oh, and having a really radical sort of sense of the radical difference of people's starting points is important and being prepared to look for those connecting threads of humanity that I think are there. I've never been anywhere where I haven't experienced it. No matter how different the society. And so it's understanding that those things can coexist: the sort of difference and the underlying humanity can coexist.

Celeste, UK, Art History

What we can see here in Celeste's story is empathy and how she has been able to learn from her own experience of being an alien in another culture and apply it to future intercultural scenarios. She therefore demonstrates high levels of Metacognitive CQ, being alive to the varying perspectives of different cultures and how this can impact communication, understanding that this must be planned for. She ensures she has strategies to manage and facilitate effective intercultural communication for herself and her students (Earley & Ang, 2003). Her willingness to adapt her communication style and language also suggests a level of Behavioural CQ, although this cannot be directly observed. Furthermore, she demonstrates a high capacity for Cognitive CQ, entering intercultural scenarios expecting to find differences and learn things about how the other culture operates which she can then apply to future scenarios. Celeste clearly feels that it is her prior immersion in other cultures that has enabled her to develop these skills that support her in confidently navigating intercultural settings.

Celeste was not the only narrator to centre their international experiences in their COIL story. All the narrators spoke of their prior experiences or lack-there-of. Henrick, for example, opened by explaining that he is ‘very Dutch’, but studied English and German translation in Brussels, and spent some time teaching in Sheffield, UK, where he picked up a ‘Northern twang’ to his accent. Later, he reflects on the importance of understanding the differences between cultures:

And if you talk about the Dutch and Germans, you know, it's very rude and rough and quite straightforward and almost insulting. And then you go to the other side, which is more loquacious and lively. You know the more Southern European approach where there's a lot of information involved. Knowing that really helps you finding out who you are as a student or as a person and knowing that you're from a different background. And you shouldn't change yourself just because you're in an intercultural, international group, you can still maintain your own traits. The best thing is that you actually keep, you know, maintain your own strengths, but still be able to, you know, deviate a bit sometimes, or use different approaches. And if that A doesn't work, let's go to B, and if B doesn't work, let's go to E or F or G, whatever.

Henrik, Netherlands, Business

Similarly to Celeste, Henrik demonstrates Cognitive CQ in his awareness of the differences in how people from various cultures tend to communicate, and Behavioural CQ in his willingness to trial different approaches to working together (Ang et al., 2007). Where Henrik's account demonstrates particularly high levels of CQ is his recognition that traits associated with his own culture can be perceived negatively, whilst also understanding that this does not make his culture any worse, or better, than others (Bennett, 2004). It is simply different and requires him to work to his strengths in intercultural situations and find ways of working that will suit everyone. In someone with lower CQ, we might expect to see planning (Metacognitive CQ) that involved minimising one's own cultural traits, and over-modification of behaviours in accordance with this plan (Behavioural CQ) (Pidduck et al., 2022).

5.3.2 Reflection on the impact of international experiences

Thus far, Celeste and Henrik tell a story of COIL teachers who have high CQ and significant prior international experiences. This is in accordance with

Pidduck et al. (2022), who recognise a positive relationship between high CQ and the prevalence of international/cross-cultural experience. Celeste takes this one step further, seeing a link between teachers' international exposure and their interest in engaging with internationalisation initiatives:

What I've noticed in the faculty is that the other people who are proactive in doing culture or COIL: possibly every single one of them is non-native British. All the people I know who want to do COIL are all people who come from another country or have lived in another country.

Celeste, UK, Art History

This inference aligns with the assertion that the act of designing, planning, and teaching a COIL is in itself a highly collaborative, cross-cultural assignment (Jaramillo Cherrez & Gleason, 2022), which it is argued that individuals with higher levels of CQ are better equipped to navigate (Kim et al., 2017; Shaik et al., 2020). Beyond the cultural intelligence required to work with a partner to plan a COIL, there is also the skillset needed to effectively facilitate students through the project. If we take COIL to be a practical means of teaching intercultural competence to students, we might expect that teachers who have high CQ themselves are in a better position to teach their students, with the opposite being true for those teachers with low CQ. In discussing issues faced by language teachers in teaching Cultural Intelligence to their students, Ishihara and Menard-Warwick (2018) argue that a significant barrier is teachers' own lack of intercultural experiences. Meanwhile, Gu (2016) identifies that teachers commonly misunderstand CQ as a stable body of cultural facts relating to the target language area, disregarding the need to develop intercultural skills or attitudes. When identifying what does lead to successful teaching of CQ, Gong et al. (2022) found that language teachers' identities played a critical role. Specifically, self-identification as a 'cultural learner' who is exposed to multicultural environments and uses them as practical spaces to learn, was associated with an ability to successfully teach CQ. In essence, the more people are exposed to intercultural experiences, the more those experiences shape their identity as a multi-cultural person. This, in turn, leads to greater cultural knowledge acquisition (Cognitive CQ) and awareness in intercultural situations (Metacognitive CQ), contributing to higher overall CQ. This better

equips teachers to support students through the process of developing CQ themselves (Pidduck et al., 2022).

The prevalence of international exposure, high CQ levels, and self-identification as ‘multi-cultural’ amongst our narrators is, as Celeste suggests, not surprising. However, the order of such experiences, what the narrators learn from them, and the impact this has on COIL does vary significantly. We turn now to Luke, whose words opened this chapter, and who introduced himself by cataloguing his significant international exposures, beginning with his school lessons:

So at school back in the day I did French and German, I was very interested in languages. And I went to Uni to study Russian with linguistics and did a year abroad. During my university time I did a 10-week internship-type programme with the EU, based in Malta. And then, after my degree I worked in Germany for a year with the British Council as an English language teaching assistant in a school. So all of that, I think, is relevant.

Luke, UK, Dietetics

Like Celeste and Henrik, Luke has had significant experience of living and working internationally. Where Luke’s account differs, however, is in the level of reflection on those experiences and evidence of learning from them, which was identified by Gong et al. (2022) as a vital component of the ability to successfully teach CQ. Luke’s interest in other cultures and in learning how his profession (dietetics) differs in other cultural settings is notable throughout his narration. Yet, when applying the same analytic approach to Luke’s account as the other narrators, there is comparatively little in his story to demonstrate how his exposure to other cultures has led to the development of CQ. An example of this is in his approach to finding partners.

Trying to find partners is quite difficult. So what I did was I looked at all the partners that they’ve got to see what courses they have, and if any of them link into nutrition or dietetics. The ones that did, I would look at their websites, find emails, email people and say, ‘Do you want to get... Do you want to meet up? Talk about potential COILs, or whatever?’ It’d go nowhere... I think back to Malta, the reason why they got off the ground was they met at a conference, and they talked about it. But then, I also think, is it only running because I’m doing it? If I said, ‘how about you

running this year, as in you do the admin, and whatever?’ will it then stop?

Luke, UK, Dietetics

Luke took over a number of COIL projects from colleagues, so the partnerships were pre-existing. When he was in the position of finding a partner for himself, he would find himself frustrated by lack of response and the way he tells it shows no evidence of Metacognitive or Behavioural CQ. This would have involved him reflecting on whether his communication was appropriate for the target culture and adapting accordingly. Furthermore, as he talks about how the Malta project that he took over from a colleague is only still running because he is doing the bulk of the work, he reveals his individualistic approach to the partnership. There is a lack of evidence that he works collaboratively with his partners in the way that we might expect were he truly motivated by a desire to have more intercultural experiences. This may simply be indicative of the narrative approach, as Luke was not specifically asked about what he learned from his experiences; however, the lack of reflection is notable because it was present in all other accounts, and because, in the words of Paige et al. (2009), “*self-reflection is a necessary pre-condition*” to benefit from immersion in another culture. Luke’s lack of reflection indicates that he may have experienced the ‘immersion assumption’, in which proximity to other cultures is presumed to lead to gains in CQ development (Teekens, 2004). In fact, developing intercultural competence is considered a lifelong process, which requires an individual to increase their self-awareness and at times question their assumptions and beliefs (Bennett, 1993; Deardorff, 2020), necessitating active reflection. The concept of COIL success or failure will be explored in more detail in the next chapter, but for the time being it is relevant to note that Luke’s story was also unique amongst the narrators in that he described his experience of COIL entirely negatively. Every one of his COIL projects had issues with partnership or student engagement, with some of them failing entirely due to lack of student interest.

5.3.3 Narrators without ‘significant’ international experiences

Whilst all narrators talked about their international experiences, they did not all have, or *believe* they had, the considerable international exposure that is often

assumed of teachers engaging in internationalisation of the curriculum initiatives (Swartz et al., 2019). Four of the narrators, Storm, Catherine, Louise and Berend, talked about limited intercultural exposures at the time of their first COIL project, although they varied in the level of confidence that accompanied these experiences. Catherine in particular feels insecure in the extent of her international experiences stating unequivocally that she is '*not particularly cultured or well-travelled*'. However, her account reveals intercultural experiences in addition to cultural knowledge gained through other means, beginning with her family's move to Northern Ireland.

We moved to Northern Ireland about 6 years ago and I was born in Northern Ireland but grew up in [UK city], would come over here most years for holidays and we would take the kids over for holidays. So I felt like, I knew, you know, there wasn't much of a cultural shift: it was still the UK. But it was a massive culture shock when we were living here. It's not very diverse. So actually, somebody with a different accent like ourselves were seen as, you know, different. So you could really kind of link [our experience] to how people coming from different countries must feel, you know, that feeling of being different, being constantly asked particular questions about different things that you just think, 'What does it matter? Why do you need to know?' But actually they do. So I definitely experienced cultural shock there.

Catherine, UK, Business

There are two things that are particularly notable about Catherine's description of how it felt to move back to Northern Ireland. Firstly, she recognises the difference between visiting somewhere and actually living there, identifying that she had made assumptions about how familiar she would find the culture and thus indicating that Cognitive CQ alone is not sufficient to navigate multicultural scenarios (Earley & Ang, 2003; Van Dyne et al., 2012). This could be seen to counter the discourse of the immersion assumption, in implying that the immersive experience is required for deeper learning to take place. However, the second point of note in Catherine's account is the evidence of reflection on her experience and how that leads to deeper understanding and empathy for others.

Whilst the experience of living in NI provided the situation for learning, it is actually Catherine's reflection that demonstrates the presence of Metacognitive CQ, in showing her ability to adapt and challenge her previously held assumptions (Earley & Ang, 2003; Paige et al., 2009). She is highly reflective, aware of how she is perceived by others, and can use the experience of her own culture shock to empathise with others who find themselves in multi-cultural environments. This is a level of self-awareness aimed for in cultural intelligence training (Tan & Chua, 2003).

Another narrator, Berend, similarly claimed limited international experience yet demonstrated similar reflective ability:

My own international experience before I was enrolled in this project, well, it was actually zero, because I worked in Dutch business life for over 20 years before I switched to [Dutch University 1], and that was always in very Dutch companies, very Dutch, and, well... Dutch language, Dutch people, etc. I didn't have any substantial international experience before I started in, well, the international education, so to say. I did experience some culture shocks because I wasn't aware of my own behaviour in the international networks, and it's not that I'm so bossy or something, but I am, as I already mentioned, I am quite direct, and I am enthusiastic about projects, and I want to get things done. But you really have to be very fond of internationalisation. Where the people are non-natives in terms of English speaking, you have to master the language. So, for instance, I did my secondary school exams in English in 1991, and then I didn't speak a word of English from 1991 to 2018. So I had to learn it again, etc. So sometimes, after the holidays it's a bit staggering, etc. But you have to get over that threshold, and you have to accept that maybe your English isn't perfect, but if it's understandable, and if it's workable in an international setting, then it's okay.

Berend, Netherlands, Business

Berend's story captures the challenges of being thrown into multi-cultural scenarios as a 'novice' and needing to quickly develop the skills and competencies associated with successfully navigating international experiences. For Berend, his command of the English language is a cause for concern, as is what he sees as his 'Dutchness', characterised by a directness that he recognises can be perceived as bossy by other cultures. In common

with Catherine, he views himself to have only limited international experiences despite taking responsibility for internationalisation for his school and speaking another language to the level that he is able to teach in it.

Although Berend is seemingly concerned that his English is not perfect, he is still confident enough to enter international exchanges knowing that he will be able to make himself understood. He is also willing to wear his insecurities openly, using them to help students develop the confidence to put themselves into unfamiliar, multi-cultural situations. In doing so, Berend displays Motivational CQ very strongly, having high levels of self-efficacy, described as the confidence to be effective in culturally diverse situations (Ang & Dyne, 2009). He is also highly intrinsically motivated, purporting that he is willing to invest his own time in international opportunities because he enjoys them, and he is inspired by the people he meets. Berend's belief that he was lacking in international experiences before he took on his current role has neither impacted the development of his CQ nor his ability to benefit from the virtual international experiences that he is now engaging with. For Berend, his new role in the university with its responsibility for internationalisation acted as a catalyst that led to increased engagement with further international experiences.

For Catherine, the absence of other immersive international opportunities led her to seek to develop her understanding of culture through other means, as she explains:

I do quite a lot with cultures in my teaching and delivery. And Hofstede – I'm sure you've come across his work - does a lot on kind of national stereotyping, which I know there's a lot of resistance to in more current research that, you know, everybody should be treated kind of individually and equally. But actually there is still a lot that holds on national cultures. And I gave an example of one of my managers when I worked in [University International Office] was French and he had some typical traits of French people...

And you find that certain cultures are also keen to be more dominant. So I think, with the German partner, for example, they were quite dominant in how they thought it would work and what they wanted and we were more obliging in being able to deliver to that. I mean, we could see the

benefit in what they were asking for, but I think, yeah, there's certain cultures where they want things done a certain way. And I think that's why the Hong Kong one didn't work, because everything had to be a certain way, and every time we accommodated that there was another issue that wasn't right. And then we'd fix that. And there was another. So, you found, you know, every time there was something else. And actually, I think the colleague that I got working on that was probably too accommodating in the end, and it went longer than it possibly needed to.

Catherine, UK, Business

Catherine speaks about her theoretical knowledge of national cultures (indicative of Cognitive CQ) but also evidences how she applies that knowledge in cross-cultural situations. She again reflects on working with partners from numerous countries, identifying differences in expectations and working practices from both sides and where these have led to difficulties. She also describes in her account how changes in behaviour are required in order to facilitate a successful exchange, demonstrating Behavioural CQ. Whilst her descriptions of ways of working in various cultural settings could be considered to be stereotypical, Catherine acknowledges that this is a danger with theories of national culture such as Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2009). There is also an indication of potential development of Behavioural CQ as a result of reflecting on prior excessive behavioural adaptation in yielding to another culture's expectations. This was of course a feature of Henrik's account, and demonstrates significant CQ (Bennett, 2004; Pidduck et al., 2022).

5.3.4 COIL as professional development

Several narrators demonstrated development of CQ and increased seeking of international experiences through their COIL interactions. Figure 5.1 shows the trajectory of cross-cultural exposures increasing post-COIL for Catherine, Louise and Berend; however, it is in Storm that this is most pronounced. When discussing her experience at the time of her first COIL, Storm explains:

I was recognized to be an established teacher with established teaching experiences but I didn't feel very established because I hadn't done any international teaching or collaboration. So personally, I felt a bit inept. Obviously I would not admit that back then, but now I can.

Storm went into her first COIL project with no significant prior international experience and a feeling of inadequacy in terms of navigating cultural differences. However, in the four years since her first COIL experience she has completed seven COIL projects, a period of teaching in the USA, and has moved to China from her home country of South Africa, where she is working in a UK transnational university. She has also published several research papers on COIL and is developing significant pedagogical expertise in COIL methodology and the development of students' intercultural competence. Storm's trajectory from feeling 'inept' to having the confidence (Motivational CQ) and skillset (Behavioural, Cognitive and Metacognitive CQ) to expose herself to increasingly significant international experiences is the most substantial of all the narrators in this study. In her case, it seems that she has been supported by a growth mindset with which she views her partnerships as opportunities for mutual benefit and learning from each other:

I realized that [my COIL partner] had other skills and knowledge, one of which was intercultural competence...and we learned from each other. I'm not technologically savvy but I'm not technologically ignorant as well, so I taught them technologies at a pace that was needed for them.

Storm, China, Dentistry / Educational Development

This is in alignment with the modest scholarship on collaborative virtual learning of teachers, which suggests that a scenario such as COIL can provide an environment for shared professional learning (Bégin-Caouette et al., 2015; Webster-Wright, 2009). Storm's experience in many ways also models the trajectory that is intended for her students by drawing on her existing skills and knowledge to effectively build a collaborative relationship with her international peers. In this way, Storm guides her students through transformation whilst also transforming herself (Agnew & Kahn, 2014). Developing through COIL in this way, whether intentional or not, was another commonality amongst the narrators. For Josephine, COIL provided the opportunity to develop her awareness of a new culture:

What I wanted is a COIL project that wasn't with my own contact. I felt that the fact that the training paired up with a country that I would not

have any contact with; a country that I'm in the same boat as the student finds themselves being linked up with a different culture, different country that is unknown... I have a bit of knowledge of the culture; North African culture, but I don't really know it or grasp it, as I know the country, the people that I'm in contact with regularly or visit regularly. So, in that sense, I think that's really helped me to start completely fresh, like a student: meeting someone from Algeria, thinking about a project that would help their student, that would help my students. And then we're on the same level, same aspiration.

Josephine, UK, Languages

Josephine shows an intrinsic motivation to engage with new cultural experiences and the confidence - or in CQ terms, self-efficacy - to try them out. Strikingly, she also demonstrates a willingness to be vulnerable and to place herself as learning alongside her students. By ensuring she has the same prior experience of the target culture as her students, she is effectively reducing her Cognitive CQ and modelling for her students how she then draws on the other aspects of CQ, primarily metacognitive (Klafehn et al., 2015), to enable her to communicate and collaborate effectively within a new cultural setting.

The idea of being open with students about one's own mistakes or knowledge gaps in intercultural scenarios is further described by Berend.

I also use my own experiences and my pitfalls when I talk to students. So I think that's also one of the important things that taking on a vulnerable position yourself as a teacher can also help students to have to, to show their vulnerability in their cooperation, part of themselves.

Berend, Netherlands, Business

Berend recognises that what he is asking of his students is highly reflective and personal, and at times can be uncomfortable or require an individual to be vulnerable. In such situations, he sees his role as teacher to support the students through this process by showing empathy and solidarity and, critically, being able to share his own experiences. His empathetic approach is in congruence with personality traits associated with a propensity for high CQ (Ang et al., 2006) and is a trait that he has in common with Celeste, as demonstrated earlier in this chapter.

5.3.5 Theme 1 summary

Certainly, there is evidence within our narrators' experiences that teachers who are engaged with COIL have themselves developed high CQ. However, whilst some narrators came to COIL with significant international experiences in place, others gained it through intercultural training, via the COIL itself, and/or were motivated to seek out other international experiences after their engagement with COIL. This suggests that COIL can be an effective means of developing CQ for teachers, and that they do not necessarily have to be highly international themselves to offer this international experience for students. This supports the findings of research demonstrating that the design and delivery of VE initiatives can enhance teachers' CQ (Nissen & Kurek, 2020). What does seem to be important is a person's adaptability and propensity for reflection, as indicated through the multiple accounts but most starkly illustrated by the contrast between Luke's experience and that of the other narrators.

Given the importance that prior research (Iskhakova & Kosheleva, 2023; Pidduck et al., 2022; Tarique & Takeuchi, 2015) places on international exposure as a predictor for seeking out further such experiences, the question then raised is what would motivate those who have not had those opportunities in the past to engage with COIL? This will be explored in the next theme: motivation to COIL and Motivational CQ.

5.4 Theme Two: Motivation to COIL and Motivational CQ

Those with a high Motivational CQ demonstrate an interest in experiencing other cultures and the self-confidence that they will function effectively in a new culture (Szerszen, 2024). It is described by Ang and Van Dyne (2009) as having three components:

1. Intrinsic interest – deriving enjoyment from culturally diverse experiences
2. Extrinsic interest – gaining benefits from culturally diverse experiences
3. Self-efficacy – having the confidence to be effective in culturally diverse situations

With COIL being an inherently international experience, it is typically assumed that those with significant prior international experiences are more self-motivated and confident (intrinsic and self-efficacy) to engage with it, compared to those with less international experience, who may require additional extrinsic motivation to drive them (Brighton, 2020). However, as we have seen from some of our narrators' stories, not everyone comes into COIL with extensive international experiences, and in fact some develop their CQ via the act of engagement with COIL. We must also consider that whilst COIL is undoubtedly an international experience, it is not a traditional one, with the cultural activities taking place entirely online. It is a considerable effort to organise a COIL project (Rubin & Guth, 2023), whereas the act of international travel is, by comparison, relatively simple to arrange. Teachers may therefore have high motivational CQ, but not necessarily the motivation to COIL. This theme will explore which additional factors motivate teachers to engage with COIL.

Table 5.2 presents an overview of the various motivations described by each narrator. All but one of the narrators described more than one motivating factor, and so the table separates the primary motivator from secondary motivating factors and identifies whether their motivation is intrinsic, extrinsic, drawn from self-efficacy or a combination of these. Also included is whether the narrator was working in a role that saw them responsible for Internationalisation of the Curriculum at the time of their first COIL, and any external catalysts that prompted their involvement in COIL. In this section, the intention is to explore some of these aspects of motivation in more detail, delving into what it is that COIL teachers enjoy (in the case of intrinsic interest), and what specific benefits or incentives are sufficient to prompt extrinsic interest. In particular, the stories shared here will serve to highlight the complexity of motivation and how factors such as teachers' identities, prior experience and institutional or even global context all impact on motivation.

Narrator	Primary motivation	Secondary motivation	Responsible for IoC?	Catalyst to COIL	Primary Motivational CQ category
Pilar	Student benefit (IC)		No	Covid-19	Intrinsic
Catherine	Student benefit (IC)	Institutional requirement	Yes	Job opportunity	Intrinsic / Extrinsic
Louise	Institutional requirement	Reward, promotion, personal development, Student benefit (IC);	Yes	Job opportunity	Extrinsic
Storm	Personal interest (Research; IC; promotion/awards)	Student benefit	No	Invitation from network	Intrinsic / Extrinsic
Celeste	Personal interest (IC)	Student benefit (IC)	Yes	Job role	Intrinsic / Self efficacy
Stella	Travel opportunity	Student benefit (IC)	No	Funding	Extrinsic / Intrinsic
Henrik	Student benefit	Interest in other cultures	Yes	Existing university partner wanted to try it	Intrinsic / Extrinsic
Berend	Student benefit	Personal development	Yes	Existing university partner wanted to try it	Self efficacy
Josephine	Student benefit (employability and IC)	Personal development (IC & T&L), Innovation	No	Covid-19	Intrinsic / Self efficacy
Luke	Personal interest (IC)	Institutional requirement	No	Institutional objectives	Intrinsic

Table 5.2 Motivations to COIL

5.4.1 Covid-19 pandemic: necessity is the mother of invention

As Table 5.2 indicates, two narrators were prompted to begin their COIL journeys during the Covid-19 pandemic. In neither case was the pandemic their primary motivation, but rather it created a unique situation in which the circumstances were right to experiment with this method. Pilar explains how she came to try COIL for the first time during this period:

I can tell you many stories about cultural shock, because, as I said, I was 14 years living in the US from Spain. And I have to say that because I have experienced all this, I feel it moved to working with COIL and to provide opportunities for cultural exchange among students... And as I said, I am professor in education, and [the students] have to be working within a diverse environment. They are going to have diverse students. So that if they don't have the opportunity to work with people from other cultures, they won't be able to be sensitive to other people's cultures in their own classes. Right?

So I was a strong believer of opening the doors to the world to students through teaching Spanish as a second language. And one year I was one of the professors going with the students abroad, and I really noticed how the students change, how they transform if you work with them intentionally. And when Covid happened, all the international exchange abroad - physical international exchange - was limited, right? We were not allowed to do that. I thought they are going to miss this opportunity, let's try to do something, let's do virtual exchange.

At that moment, it was just an idea. Oh, like: 'Hey, we cannot do physical exchange? Let's do virtual exchange.' And I didn't read anything about it. I had no clue on how to do it. We just figured out 6 different events where we had our students connected in zoom, sometimes, other times it was asynchronously. And then we had a great experience. And then so during that time I heard about COIL and then I thought, 'Oh, there is something that is really actually done, and planned, and people know how to do this'. So and then I started to read about it, and I got interested in COIL.

Pilar, Spain, Education / Languages

Pilar is intrinsically motivated by a desire to support her students in developing CQ. She recognises the need for them to develop this capability in part due to her own international experiences but also because of her observations about the classrooms of the future that she expects her students to be working in. Such a strong intrinsic motivation, coupled with her years spent immersed in the target culture providing her with the confidence to effectively navigate it, means she requires very little support or encouragement to initiate a COIL project. In fact, as she describes, her first project takes place before she has heard of COIL, being born out of a need to innovate to provide international experiences for her students during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The pandemic was also a catalyst for Josephine, who describes how the changes to her daily work during that time enabled her the space to innovate:

In my story about COIL, I would say that the nature of teaching is such that there was little room to develop a COIL project until the context of Covid. Let's be honest: for me, my story really started on COIL because I suddenly had free time away from administration duties as program lead. Also being concerned that students were on their own and not having the interaction in the classroom. So I think in my story, the context and the

opportunity the Covid crisis brought in was actually fantastic. It gave me that push to actually do something for the students and to use the technology to all its capacity and devote time to myself for training. I saw immediately COIL as a solution for enhancing the student experience during that time.

Josephine, UK, Languages

Josephine, as an experienced language teacher and highly internationalised individual, is used to navigating multicultural contexts and supporting students in developing IC via immersion in languages (Oberste-Berghaus, 2024). International experiences such as field trips are common in her discipline (Campbell & Gedat, 2021), which likely contributes to the international aspect of COIL not being a concern to her. What really interests Josephine is the potential to innovate, to continue to provide an engaging student experience within the restrictions of the pandemic whilst also making use of technology and developing herself professionally. The pandemic provided her with a reason to try something new and the time and space with which to try it. In common with Pilar, she did not need any additional support from her institution, and she is confident to seek information and guidance externally and simply get on with the task of setting up a COIL.

In examining the motivations and catalysts for Josephine and Pilar, we see that they are both sufficiently experienced, confident (high self-efficacy) and intrinsically motivated such that they need no persuasion to engage with an international experience. What they did require was an impetus to engage with COIL specifically, and the time and autonomy to try something new, which for both teachers was afforded by the Covid-19 pandemic.

5.4.2 Working for the benefit of students

Other narrators describe different catalysts; however, the underlying desire to provide an opportunity for their students to develop IC is a commonality across almost all the narrators' accounts, with all but one narrator (Luke) expressing this motivation, as shown in Table 5.2. For many, this stems from an awareness that the world is increasingly global, and students will need the skills to navigate increased multi-cultural environments (Brown et al., 2020; Dimick, 2008; World Economic Forum, 2025). For Pilar, her personal international experiences and

her witnessing the transformative impact of travel with purpose is at the core of her belief that students will need IC. However, for other narrators this understanding holds regardless of whether they have had personally benefitted from extensive international experiences, as we see from Catherine's account:

I think people today, students today, really need to internationalize their experiences because even if they intend to work locally, live locally, don't go outside of their comfort zone, the world is so diverse that you're still gonna be dealing with people that are very different. So you need the tools to be able to do that. And I'd actually seen COIL projects at the kind of outset and thought, this is something that could be really good for students. And you know, students have really always been the driving force for me. If I believe that something's gonna be good for them to experience, then I'll engage with it. And that would be what would motivate me.

Catherine, UK, Business

Similarly, Storm, who had only limited international experience prior to her first COIL, was also driven by a desire to support her students, stating “*My core purpose was to help my students to learn more meaningfully and COIL was going to provide that opportunity*” .

As discussed in theme one, both Storm and Catherine displayed not only limited international experience prior to COIL but also lower self-confidence in their ability to navigate intercultural situations compared to the more experienced narrators. They are both strongly intrinsically motivated by the idea of upskilling their students, but it is perhaps not surprising that they each also have additional motivating factors.

5.4.3 Extrinsic motivations

The first of these additional motivations, in the case of Storm, is related to her intrinsic interest in research and personal professional development. Storm's introduction to COIL was via an invitation from a peer in her professional network, whom she met through a teaching fellowship from her government.

I believe that research informs teaching and teaching informs research and I also realized that [the potential COIL partner] had other skills and knowledge, and she had all these ideas, and I felt a bit inadequate. And she similarly felt a bit inadequate, and she was not, but that's how she felt, because of my research background in the context of dental

technology. And so it gave me the opportunity to say, 'Let's bring a COIL slant into research'. And so I knew the long-term vision was that I'm gonna use COIL as an area of research responding to the research agenda pressures of the university.

Storm, China, Dentistry / Educational Development

In talking about her first meeting with her potential COIL partner, Storm reveals how she saw COIL as a means to learn from her partner and develop her own IC and subject and educational knowledge (Bardach & Klassen, 2021) whilst also creating new opportunities to research her practice. Storm is unusual amongst the narrators in that that she did not display any of the antecedents of CQ such as international experiences, language ability or intercultural training (Pidduck et al., 2022) prior to her first COIL experience. In this instance, the drive that Storm has from her other motivators are strong enough to override the low self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation to engage in international experiences. Indeed, as discussed earlier, those motivators were in fact strong enough to drive Storm through multiple COIL projects, a period teaching abroad and now living in another country and teaching at a transnational university. Catherine, on the other hand, had limited international experiences but did have a background in theories of international culture and had experienced a significant *intercultural* exposure, in moving from England to Northern Ireland. Already teaching intercultural competences to her students, she was motivated by a desire to ensure they had the international opportunities she did not but the ultimate catalyst that led her to COIL was a job opportunity:

I actually took a secondment role to our global experience area to set up COIL projects, to work with academics within different schools to help them embed COIL projects. They were actually actively looking for an academic to join the team to work with academics around the university, they were looking for a bit of kudos, really, of somebody who would have that standing when going in to try and convince other academics. So that's where I started. I did a year of that.

Catherine, UK, Business

The university that Catherine worked at had a strategic ambition to increase numbers of students taking part in COIL and they recognised the value in this initiative being led by an academic who would have insight into how to motivate

and support others. Catherine talks about some of the initiatives that she put in place to drive engagement:

I did COIL leads to try and encourage others within our school of the benefits and also in that time convinced the central People Team that in [Annual reviews] for academics there should be an internationalisation target that all staff should be looking to internationalise their curriculum and their student experience in some way. So we managed to get that put on the [Annual Review] process, which again helped with COIL, because it meant people were more interested because of the reviews, you know, were partly linked to it.

Catherine, UK, Business

The creation of leadership roles and the use of an annual review process that is linked to progression provides extrinsic motivation for teachers to engage with COIL (Earley & Ang, 2003). This appears to work initially, with the university meeting their targets; however, it is interesting to note that Catherine actually stopped running COIL projects after her secondment ended and did not return to them until a few years later, during the Covid-19 pandemic. Of her experience this time round, she says:

I found I got a little bit frustrated quite often. You didn't seem to get the time or the recognition within school, that's actually got worse. And often you could spend a lot of time working with a partner, and then nothing would come of it, and then you'd be quite, you know. Well, that was a waste of time and all that effort, and nobody seemed to recognize or appreciate that. So you felt like you were doing a lot of work for no benefits, really.

Catherine, UK, Business

Catherine's experience is particularly insightful in terms of motivation because she was in a position not just of completing COILs herself but also needing to motivate and engage her peers to do so. Her secondment role meant that she needed to learn quickly how to run a successful COIL, and how to convince others to do the same. What Catherine describes is a top-down approach to motivation, which focuses primarily on increasing extrinsic motivation via the creation of opportunities and the use of targets and objectives. It is interesting to see how, in Catherine's perspective, this approach became less effective

over time as COIL became less incentivised through workload hours and recognition. This is also seen in Louise's account, who explained how she has not been motivated to engage with COIL since moving to a new institution which does not incentivise it in the same way.

I mean, I've done it [COIL]. So personally, I could, you know, generalise it and do it again. But I wouldn't be recognised for all that workload. It's not really part of your development plan, the [Appraisal process] and so I don't see what would motivate me, even though I've got the knowledge.

Louise

Although Louise does enjoy international travel and cultural experiences, she was highly extrinsically motivated by a promotion opportunity to engage with COIL. Once this factor was removed, she was no longer interested in it. This suggests that in the long term, teachers seem more likely to sustain COIL when they are intrinsically motivated. When extrinsically motivated, the removal of the incentives may lead to people withdrawing from COIL.

Luke's story illustrates other issues with reliance on extrinsic motivation through the setting of objectives and targets, as he describes the impact of top-down pressure to engage with COIL:

They keep saying about, we need to have so many students doing these COILs. But what do they mean by COIL? Cause to me a COIL is things that I've mentioned. But to them a COIL could be as simple as a speaker from Ireland talking about stuff online to like 30, 40 students, and then you then facilitate a discussion around what they've learnt about it, and there we go, that's our COIL done! And they've learnt about it. And like, really? That's, that's like, just going to a lecture. They're not actually doing anything. I don't think they're learning really anything about something meaningful.

So yeah, I don't know. Well it's the nature of the work that we do. You get people in positions where they have these ideas which are pretty meaningless and crap and they want to drive a certain thing through and say that they need to have again, like so many projects, so many students doing it. I'm more interested in the actual contents of that COIL: Is it worthwhile doing?

Luke, UK, Dietetics

For Luke, the setting of targets for numbers of students doing COIL without the accompanying understanding of what makes for an *effective* COIL experience is a source of frustration. There seems to be a conflict between his desire to do COIL well and his institution's measure of success being driven by numbers rather than quality. This is further exacerbated by what he feels are issues outside of his control that led to him not being able to reach the targets set. This is most keenly observed when he discusses the issue of student engagement and assessment.

As soon as you bring up things like your engagement or people not wanting to do it, [they say] 'it needs to be assessment driven, assessment drives learning'. That's the only thing they've got to say about it... but I never had control over the assessments for the module that this COIL was part of.

Luke, UK, Dietetics

It would appear that although Catherine and Louise's experiences indicate that targets through annual appraisals can be effective, there is a danger in these causing stress and frustration when staff are not sufficiently equipped to, or otherwise rewarded for, reaching them. Indeed, Swartz et al., in describing their own experiences of COIL, refer to it as a 'grassroots initiative as opposed to a top-down administrative decree' (Swartz et al., 2019 p21). They envision COIL as being characterised by the collaboration between teachers, which, in turn, requires them to be motivated by the desire for professional learning. Reward for professional learning, as opposed to mandating it, therefore appears to be an important motivating factor.

5.5 Chapter summary

When viewing the combined narrative holistically, we can see that there is a pattern emerging to the relationship between COIL teachers' CQ, how that was developed (via international experiences or training), and the motivating factors that lead them to COIL. Furthermore, given the myriad alternative ways, including international travel, that an individual could fulfill their Motivational CQ, there seems to be the need for a catalyst which sparks a specific interest in

COIL. These have been explored above and can now be divided roughly into two categories:

1. Situational catalysts

Events or circumstances such as the Covid-19 pandemic provided a situational catalyst for some of our narrators. The restrictions of the pandemic either allowed people more time to experiment with new methods of online teaching (Josephine) or prompted our narrators to find a new way of providing international experiences for students whilst physical travel was not possible (Pilar). This type of catalyst is associated with higher self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation.

2. Institutional catalysts

This is where the university encouraged (or mandated) a teacher to engage with COIL through the creation of job roles (Celeste, Henrick, Berend, Catherine, Louise), or through objectives related to internationalisation (Louise, Luke). Alternatively, this role may be taken on by an external organisation, through the provision of funding or development opportunities (e.g. Stella, whose story will be further explored in the next chapter).

These catalysts tend to be effective in creating extrinsic motivation; however they may also support individuals who are also intrinsically motivated.

In the stories told by our narrators we see that those with lower levels of self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation require stronger extrinsic motivation (primarily in the form of incentives or reward from their institution) in order to engage with COIL. At the same time, those individuals who have developed their CQ via prior international experiences were more likely to be highly intrinsically motivated. However, even those who *were* highly intrinsically motivated needed some catalyst or additional extrinsic motivation to encourage them to put their energies into COIL, rather than an alternative type of international experience. Therefore, there is an implication that institutions have a role to play if they wish to encourage COIL, to ensure that those extrinsic motivators are in place. For sustainable COIL, which continues after extrinsic motivators are reduced or removed, then intrinsic motivation must also be developed.

Recognising that the institutional conditions are relevant to individuals' motivation to COIL, the next chapter will explore the factors that enable teachers to capitalise on their motivation to design and deliver a successful COIL project.

Chapter 6: From motivation to action: factors that enable COIL

In the previous chapter, the narrators' combined stories revealed a relationship between teachers' prior international experiences, their levels of CQ and their motivation to engage with COIL. The narrators' recounted experiences indicated that they all possess CQ. For some narrators, although they increased their intercultural skills through COIL, they came to it with high levels of pre-existing CQ. Other narrators, however, had had relatively few international experiences that allowed them to develop and demonstrate their CQ, and so engagement with COIL has been their primary means to develop these skills. In terms of motivation, even those with high intrinsic motivational CQ required a catalyst to encourage them to pursue COIL specifically, over any other type of international experience (e.g. physical travel). Having explored and introduced the notion of situational and institutional catalysts as a motivation for COIL, this chapter will further explore the factors that enable teachers to successfully capitalise on their motivation and deliver a complete COIL project. This chapter therefore responds to research sub-question 3:

RSQ 3: What factors do teachers see as supporting or hindering their ability to design and teach a COIL project?

As in the previous chapter, primary data from the interviews will be supported by insights from literature to create a combined narrative that sheds light on enabling factors for COIL. Although their personal stories are unique, the analysis identified some common themes in the factors that enabled or hindered these teachers' COIL journeys. The narrative here will introduce these factors, analysing the interplay between them and other elements such as teachers' CQ level, motivation to COIL and the organisational culture that they are working within. Ultimately, this chapter will present the factors leading to an environment that motivates and supports teachers in designing and delivering COIL projects. Based upon the thematic analysis and construction of interim narratives, the COIL enablers fit into two categories, which are used to structure this chapter:

1. Effective partner relationships
2. Driving student engagement

6.1 Theme 1: Developing effective, mutually beneficial partnerships

Some COILs are effective, others aren't. Generally, it's down to the partners.

Catherine

By definition, a COIL - as a **Collaborative** Online International Learning project - cannot take place with just one teacher behind the helm, as they must have a counterpart at their partner organisation with whom to plan and deliver the project (Hackett et al., 2024; Rubin et al., 2023; Suarez & Michalska Haduch, 2020). It is therefore not surprising that the concept of partnership and the partner relationship features heavily in the narrators' accounts and was their most oft cited cause of either success or failure of a COIL.

Not all narrators described the relationship that they had with their partners, but for those that did, there was an interesting divide between whether they described their partner as a friend or as a business associate. As will be demonstrated through the various extracts explored in this section, the factors defining this categorisation are simple: Celeste, Berend, Henrik, Storm and Stella all talked about having an enjoyable or friendly relationship or engaging in non-work activities together. Louise and Catherine, on the other hand, talked about their partners in a more transactional way, seeing them as collaborators with each of them needing to fulfil specific obligations in order to complete the project.

6.1.1 When and how partnership becomes friendship

Meeting each other in [USA City 2] was very important for us as teachers, because it created some sort of friendship between the teachers. And that's maybe one of the main differences between teaching in a physical environment versus the digital environment: you have to work harder. You have to do more to get some sort of relationship between the teachers. And if the teachers don't have any relationship... When the pleasure doesn't show off in the relation between the teachers, you're never gonna achieve that in your student teams... So it's very friendly. It's nearly friendship, I would say.

Berend, Netherlands, Business

Berend describes his partnership as being close to a friendship and sees this as a requirement if a project is to be a success. This aligns with research on the student experience of COIL, with Crossman and Bordia (2011) finding that students often use COIL projects as an opportunity to find friends. Furthermore, those who were successful in developing friendships were more engaged and experienced better outcomes in terms of intercultural competence from the COIL. This was attributed to the notion that social interaction drives the learning process and increases enjoyment and thus engagement. This student experience seems to also be the staff experience for Berend, who goes on to say that *“the success of our last COIL was very much higher than of our first COIL, because, as teachers, we know each other much better”*. The implication here is that, alike to the students, the outcome of COIL for Berend has improved as his relationship with his partners has developed.

It is notable that Berend credits having physically met with his partners as an important step in the development of their partnership, a notion that is also evident in Stella's account.

The folks from [partner country] came to visit us before, and then we've been to visit them afterwards. And when we went over it was really nice. [The funding organisation] was really funny about this money to go visit each other cause it was really like, 'just go visit each other'. They really wanted us to use it as just like kind of relationship building. There were no ties to what we had to do when we got there, it was pretty open. And we just, you know, when we went over there, we really just hung out. They spent a morning just walking us around [town]. And so, like one of them had grown up there his whole life, and so he was like 'Do you want a [film] tour?' I was like, 'Yes, I do.' So. It was kind of cool from that perspective.

Stella, UK, Educational Development

In Stella's case, the way she describes her relationship with her partners is akin to that of the initiation phase of friendship (Foa & Foa, 1980), in which, through repeated interactions, they can find common ground and essentially decide whether they like each other (Blieszner & Roberto, 2004). This friendship development, in turn, increases her enjoyment of the project.

6.1.2 The role of in-person interaction in relationship building and skills development

Stella's COIL project was part of a funded professional development programme, with the funding organisation encouraging them to meet face-to-face with no intention other than relationship building. This implies that the funders have identified the partner relationship to be a critical aspect of the success of COIL and, like Berend, feel that face-to-face interaction is the most expedient way to develop this relationship. This appears to be a commonly held belief within the COIL community, with some of the most prolific COIL-ing institutions adopting and recommending travel opportunities as an enabler. In a series of case studies illustrating how institutions have successfully scaled up COIL activity (Rubin et al., 2023), five out of six institutions cited travel grants for their academics as a useful tool in increasing engagement with COIL. There is currently no research determining the *necessity* of COIL or VE partners meeting physically; however, research on the effectiveness of students in building self-organising teams in online versus face-to-face environments found that online environments negatively influenced social interaction (Sjølie et al., 2022). Additionally, even amongst the narrators, who are all experienced in COIL and believe it has value, there is a pervading notion that physical travel is more effective in developing students' intercultural competence. We see this from Henrik, whose role sees him specialising in online and digital education:

I was a bit sceptical at first when we first started setting up all these COIL projects. I thought, 'oh, isn't that just the second-best thing? Why shouldn't we just send people away to, you know, have all these intercultural international experiences?'

Henrik, Netherlands, Business

And also from Luke:

I think, probably doing COIL would allow a student to appreciate but maybe not understand. I mean, they can't really understand it unless you are there seeing it in action. This is why I think a semester abroad is useful, if you're abroad because you have to get down and dirty and even feel what's going on. But with a COIL I think the best you can get is

an appreciation for how things are being done in the countries and about how people might view problems, view solutions.

Luke, UK, Dietetics

Although Henrik later realises the benefits of COIL, the initial opinions vocalised by him and Luke align with a prevailing idea that the ultimate intention of IaH initiatives such as COIL is to encourage students to travel abroad (Wächter, 2003). This concept has been challenged, with some researchers (Soria & Troisi, 2014) asserting that IaH initiatives can actually be more effective than Study Abroad opportunities in developing students' intercultural competence. This, they found, is due to the concerted effort by teachers to create meaningful international experiences in which students' development and the required reflection (Paige et al., 2009) is actively and effectively planned. In contrast, students who are not supported to make the most of a study abroad opportunity may fall foul of the immersion assumption (Hornbuckle, 2015). For students, a further benefit of COIL over study or work abroad programmes is that it is purported to be more inclusive and provides a more easily accessible international experience for all (Beelen & Jones, 2015).

The teacher who must plan and facilitate the process for their student may well benefit from the additional opportunities for development and relationship building afforded by meeting in-person (Suarez & Michalska Haduch, 2020). However, this reliance on travel may similarly create inequities amongst those institutions which are able to fund staff travel (or who are part of an accessible funded travel scheme such as the EU's Erasmus programme), and who have staff who are privileged to be able to travel, compared with those who do not. Celeste reflected quite deeply on this issue when she was considering the value of travel and meeting partners face-to-face:

You do get into economic differences as an issue. Equality is very important in any COIL project, and one of the nice things is that mostly, since we're dealing with universities, we're not actually just dealing with the random general public. We are dealing with people with access to computers and Zoom, and all those sorts of things. But of course, once you start talking about people moving around, the economic disparities between the UK and a lot of the people that you might want to do COIL projects with are really quite harsh, and I don't think it is actually

reasonable to say, well, everyone just has to pay their own way, and if they can't afford it, then you don't do it. I mean, I think that's very, very problematic. And that is, that is a post-colonial issue that you know, we've effectively nicked a whole lot of resource from developing countries. And now you know, and now they can't afford to do the same things we can, but that's probably because we stole so much from them you know. So as soon as you start talking about people physically moving around, it becomes really difficult. I just think it's not fair, it's not just, and morally wrong you know, to say "Well, they have to pay themselves". They can't, and the whole nature of the relationship is unequal. It is an unequal relationship; it is intrinsically and inherently unequal.

Celeste, UK, Art History

COIL may already present some challenges for those in the Global South (Wimpenny et al., 2022), such as the linguistic gap created by over-reliance on English as lingua franca (Stallivieri, 2020; Tight, 2022), or the digitalisation gap in access to ICT hardware, software and connectivity (Stallivieri, 2020). The increased financial and time costs of travel, if it were to be recommended as a means to support teachers in developing COIL, could then further marginalise those from the Global South. Whilst funding opportunities are available, such as the grant that supported Stella's COIL project and associated travel, these again present an additional burden to teachers in the time taken to apply for and fulfil funding requirements (Fackrell et al., 2024). Furthermore, many funding bodies are from the Global North and their eligibility criteria may place restrictions on who can apply or how the funds must be used (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, n.d.; Fulbright Commission, 2023), perpetuating Western hegemonic approaches to internationalisation.

Inequity related to travel opportunity is not just an issue experienced between the Global South and North but also impacts staff and students across economically similar regions. In their stories, Luke and Henrik provided alternate perspectives on the EU-funded Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP) initiative (European Commission, 2025), which combines VE with a physical mobility. Aside from issues of red tape, Henrik, who is based in the Netherlands, within the EU, describes the opportunities afforded by BIP as *"wonderful, because then you actually get to meet people in the flesh that you*

actually worked with online". On the other hand, Luke, who is in the UK and therefore ineligible for access to European Commission funding, explains how the mobility requirements of BIP are not financially feasible for his students and have previously led the breakdown of a partnership:

[My partner was] talking about having a 2-week trip, because they have to be 2 weeks for their funding. So I was like: 'This is not gonna happen.' But they just kept on pushing for it. It was like a thousand pounds per student. And I was like 'I don't think any student is going to pay a £1000'. Not to be rude, But going to [Italian city], I mean, what's in [Italian city] that they would pay £1000 for? No. So when I said, 'our students, there's no one on our side who's gonna be able to go on that', that was that. And then this year they've, well, chopped us out, really. I think it's because of that funding structure where if you can get like 3 universities together to do something, and you can get funding for it. So that's what they were hoping to do with us and because of the issues with, like, you know, funding it all went a bit wayward. So we sort of lost that COIL project because of their interest in doing more mobility.

Luke, UK, Dietetics

We can see in Luke's story that the creation of a travel opportunity for students or staff on one side of the partnership produces an inequitable situation that ultimately becomes untenable. What was intended to be an incentive has become a barrier that makes it more difficult for teachers based within the EU to COIL with teachers outside the EU. As a result of Brexit, this impacts the UK, where several of the narrators are based, but it creates a barrier for any country outside of those associated to the Erasmus programme. If COIL is to remain, as intended, a more inclusive approach to internationalisation than traditional, *physical* mobility, then institutions, governments and funding organisations may wish to think carefully about the impact of encouraging or incentivising travel for either students or staff. Supporting staff to develop effective intercultural partnerships online would, however, be appropriate. The next section will explore an alternative type of intercultural partnership and the extent to which the partner relationship needs to be rooted in friendship, and therefore the face-to-face interaction implied above.

6.1.3 Partners as business associates

Whilst some teachers described their partner relationships as friendships, for others, the relationship was more transactional. There was great emphasis placed on the need to be strategic to get the COIL done, and therefore to choose your partner wisely, as described by Louise.

And actually, you've got to kind of vet the partners. You can't just choose them all. You gotta make sure that that you know what they're doing, and do they know about COIL? Will they support you, or are you just gonna do their work for you and for them? As an academic, it's not about being liked by a partner. It's just about making sure that you're respectful and you're kind. But you need to be clear with them. If they don't meet the quota, you need to be transparent and just not lead them along. Just say 'Right. I don't think it's gonna work at this time because of XY and Z. Maybe another time.'

Louise, UK, Business

Louise has developed a set of expectations that she needs from a COIL partner and she is confident in ending the relationship at an early stage if she does not feel it will work. This is a very goal-oriented approach that prioritises the task (completion of a COIL project) over the development of the relationship. This is an unusually uncompromising approach amongst the narrators in this study; however, the experience of several teachers does illustrate that an unwillingness to break a partnership that is not working as expected can lead to frustration and, ultimately, failure of a project. We see this most clearly from Luke who touches on the role of partnership in describing project failure.

And I like kept chasing them both our side and their side, because the partners, this time, were late doing things or just didn't get it. And I was like, 'What's happening here?' And also with the partners it seemed to be... I don't know how much the partner sort of academics were involved with it. Because it was always me, I did all the [VLE] stuff. I got the groups sorted. I did all the design of it, and whatever.

Luke, UK, Dietetics

Luke's account reveals a frustration that his partner(s) is not engaging with the partnership, leaving him trying to do the work on his own and ultimately feeling unable to manage the project effectively. Luke's motivation is not sufficient to ensure the completion of the project when his partner is not also engaged,

reminding us of the centrality of educator collaboration to the definition of COIL that guides this project (Hackett et al., 2024). The scenario in which he finds himself appears to be exactly that which Louise is trying to avoid, by assessing her partners' capabilities prior to committing to a project. Whether aiming for friendship or business partner, the ability to negotiate roles within the partnership appears to be vital.

6.1.4 The role of negotiation in developing an effective partner relationship

Whilst Louise's approach to vetting her partners was the most stringent, almost all the narrators described the need to find common ground with their partners, and to approach the relationship with a willingness to compromise. This was true even with those who viewed their partners as friends, as illustrated by Berend:

You have to be very flexible, very eager to drop new ideas and to talk very respectfully with each other about new ideas, the possibilities, and also what's not possible.

Berend, Netherlands, Business

Berend's conceptualisation of collaboration is very interpersonal and positive, focused on the teacher's ability to adapt to the needs and behaviour of their partner. This indicates highly cooperative motives, whereby the individual has equal and high concerns for both oneself and the other party, of a kind that is typically found to be less present in intercultural contexts compared to intracultural situations (Martin et al., 2002). Berend's previously demonstrated CQ, coupled with his openness to negotiating with his partner are in line with findings that CQ can be a powerful predictor of intercultural negotiation effectiveness (Groves et al., 2015; Imai & Gelfand, 2010).

Other narrators were less focused on the more personable aspects of collaboration but still highlighted the importance of reaching consensus and/or having shared objectives. Josephine describes how their shared understanding of the aims of the COIL enabled them to quickly agree upon a COIL design.

So we managed to design at the design stage really quite easily. Not... I don't want the word argue, but the word of agreeing: not disputing the

aims of the project. We actually had very clear aims and then found a consensus on each of the outcomes of the project quite easily. So we had a fairly common set of outcomes that were the purpose of the COIL.

Josephine, UK, Languages

By contrast, there were some notable instances whereby an inability on the part of one or more partners to reach a compromise has led to the breakdown of a partner relationship and ultimately, project abandonment. We saw this from Luke, but also from Catherine, who gave the following reflection on a colleague's unfortunately failed COIL project in this section of an extract previously shared in Chapter 5:

I think my colleague that I spoke about with Hong Kong: that was definitely a cultural thing. Everything had to be a certain way, and every time we accommodated that there was another issue that wasn't right. And then we'd fix that. And there was another. So you found, you know, every time there was something else. And actually I think the colleague that I got working on that was probably too accommodating in the end, and it went longer than it possibly needed to.

Catherine, UK, Business

In this quote, Catherine shows her awareness of how different cultural backgrounds may favour and expect different ways of working (Cognitive CQ). The inability (in Catherine's perception) of her less COIL-experienced colleague to forge a successful working relationship with their partner reinforces the notion previously touched upon that CQ equips COILers with the understanding that they and their COIL partner's way of thinking about the issues to be negotiated are affected by their cultural group membership (Brett, 2000; Groves et al., 2015; Imai & Gelfand, 2010). This then enables them to understand their own and their partner's behaviours and to adapt in the manner previously described by Berend. However, what Catherine is also illustrating through this anecdote is that, as in any successful collaboration, there needs to be give and take on both sides to create a mutually beneficial working relationship. There is recognition here that working together well does not mean simply doing whatever the other partner wants.

These stories of partnership contrast hugely with that of Luke, who was identified in Chapter 5 as having significant international experiences but not

demonstrating how he was applying the learning from them to his COIL experiences. In particular, Luke did not demonstrate the critical component of reflection which is considered a vital aspect of CQ development (Paige et al., 2009). Whilst the narrators who evidenced CQ in their account also show evidence of reflecting on their partner relationships and adapting their approach and behaviour accordingly, Luke does not. In fact, only rarely does Luke refer to his partners, and always in the context of something going wrong, as illustrated by the Blended Intensive Programmes story.

These stories are a reminder that the nature of COIL requires at least two people and two working environments to be effective for a project to flourish (Hackett et al., 2024). However, with so many variables, not all breakdowns in negotiation can be fairly attributed to culture (Brett, 2000). Indeed, Celeste's experience of trying to set up a COIL with a colleague who she very much sees as a friend quite clearly illustrates some of the other factors that inhibit COIL:

The COIL project that I wanted to do was with a colleague of mine who's also a friend who lives in the States and does a lot of work in a local museum there. We wanted to do something together, working with students, looking at a museum in each of their own places, and then sharing experiences from that on the theme of how museums deal with artefacts from native people... We really like each other. We think we have a great idea. We've got 2 local museums. We were not able to find a module on both sides where we could frame that in a way that would work for both of them at the same time in the same semester. And that's just to do with the rigidity of university systems. You know, universities are not fluid organisations. We were able to find some pairings, but they were always in the wrong semester, you know. And we had different ways of framing it, we tried lots of different ideas, and we just couldn't do it. And what I found interesting about that was, you know, with the best will in the world, two people who know each other and want to work together: you know we wouldn't be happier than working together with a good idea that really, you know, has a lot of academic interest and pedagogical potential. And we couldn't make it work. I may at some point, I suppose, look for someone else, but that feels a bit like a betrayal of you know my colleague and friends. So I don't feel good about that at the moment.

Celeste, UK, Art History

In this instance, having an effective partner relationship in which both sides are keen to work together and flexible in trying different approaches is simply not enough to overcome the logistical issues that they are confronted with. The only way that Celeste can see to make this project work would be with a different partner. This illustrates the true complexity of COIL and the number of factors that need to align for a project to be possible. It also highlights the distinction between a top-down and bottom-up approach. This is a grassroots initiative for Celeste and if the COIL were to happen it is because she is intrinsically interested and motivated to work with her friend. Therefore, if it is not possible to make the project work with this partner, there is little incentive for her to find an alternative. On the other hand, where colleagues such as Louise have been extrinsically motivated to embed a COIL in their course, they are more able to take a business-like attitude to the partnership. They seek to find a partner with whom they can successfully run a COIL and are not tied by loyalty to a particular partner.

6.1.5 Theme 1 summary: the features of effective partnership

The collective narrative of teachers' experiences of COIL partnership shows that for these teachers, the partner relationship is vital in enabling COIL projects. A partnership does not need to extend to friendship, although that is clearly the preference of some teachers, but it does need to be functional and enable mutual benefit. Critical to this is the teacher's (and their partner's) motivation and ability to effectively engage in a cross-cultural negotiation.

The association between CQ and intercultural negotiation outcomes is under-researched, but empirical studies (Brett, 2000; Groves et al., 2015; Imai & Gelfand, 2010) do demonstrate that high CQ is a powerful predictor of negotiation effectiveness, which these teachers' experiences corroborate. What has not been explored here and would be an interesting avenue for further research is whether the relationship between CQ and negotiation outcomes is reciprocal, i.e. could extensive experience with negotiation (either inter or intra cultural) support the development of cultural intelligence? Similarly, would experienced negotiators, regardless of CQ level, be more equipped to navigate

the planning of a COIL project? There is an over-representation of business disciplines amongst the participants of this study, which is also seen in the COIL projects being offered via COIL Connect (COIL Connect, 2025), and the prevalence of business subject-specific VE initiatives such as X-Culture (O'Dowd, 2018). This raises a question about a possible relationship between the skills valued by the business disciplines and those required to COIL, which would again warrant further research.

6.2 Theme 2: Driving student engagement

Another COIL that I did sort of failed because the students didn't really buy into it. So, although I can buy into it, if they don't, they think, 'well, I'm not doing it for you'.

Luke, UK, Dietetics

Theme 2 recognises that a requirement of all successful COIL projects is the presence of engaged and motivated students (Lazareva, 2018; Tadal & Marino, 2023), yet encouraging that deep level student engagement is also one of the most challenging aspects of COIL (Baroni et al., 2019; Curtindale et al., 2020; O'Dowd & Ritter, 2006). All narrators touched upon this requirement and reported various factors that either supported or hindered their ability to effectively motivate their students.

6.2.1 Teachers' knowledge of COIL and effective COIL design

A common feature of teacher accounts was the need to ensure that students understand why they are being offered the opportunity to COIL and are motivated to take part. Seven of the narrators talked about how they should 'sell' the experience to their students, for example Luke said:

I guess you need, you know, knowledge of what you're doing. Why are you doing it? How are you gonna sell it to your students? And so for us it would be that once they graduate, they can become a healthcare professional with the [professional body]. So if you link it to things like the [professional body], you can say 'this is useful, for when you go to start working, you know, useful for your CPD when you start working', you know. You can build on it.

Luke, UK, Dietetics

Some teachers were concerned with identifying these selling points, which were typically centred around employability, and communicating them to students. We see this again in Louise's account.

And I think a key component for these COILs to be successful is that they need to be advertised. We advertise it to the students, snappy advertisements. What are the benefits out of this? Be it COIL certificates, be it maybe continuous professional development.

Louise, UK, Business

This focus on tangible benefits to students largely stimulates their extrinsic motivation (Earley & Ang, 2003). Studies across a range of scenarios have demonstrated that this is an approach that can be effective in driving initial engagement with cross-cultural situations; however, sustained motivation and successful cross-cultural adjustment seems to require the further development of both intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy (Konanahalli et al., 2014; Presbitero, 2017; Robinson, 2023). Indeed, as discussed in the previous chapter, this was also true for the narrators in this study who were motivated by a range of intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

Perhaps recognising the need for something more by way of motivating factors, as the teachers in this study became more experienced at COIL, their accounts show that they began to consider how the COIL design itself could signal purpose to students. Features that teachers discussed as being of importance were:

- Including intercultural Learning Outcomes (LOs) that emphasise the development of intercultural competence (CQ)
- Providing pre-COIL CQ training (for example, teaching theories of international culture/communication or knowledge of the target culture)
- Structuring and facilitating activities to support CQ development, relationship building and enjoyment
- Enabling students to recognise and articulate their development via assessment, reflection and the use of CQ scales

These will be explored in turn in the following sections.

6.2.1.1 Developing intentional intercultural Learning Outcomes

A common recommendation from the narrators was to ensure that any COIL project has international/intercultural learning outcomes that signal to students what they will be able to do as a result of engagement with the COIL. When examining COIL literature that seeks to guide others in designing COIL, the requirement to set LOs is a staple feature (Deardorff, 2023; Guth & Rubin, 2015; Zak, 2021). It is therefore not surprising that seven out of the ten participants directly addressed the need to include LOs, including five (Stella, Josephine, Catherine, Luke, Louise and Storm) who had all engaged with some form of COIL training. Some of the most insightful comments, however, came from those who had initially run projects without them. Henrik explains:

You must communicate to your students, saying, this is not just a random hobby that we're taking up. Actually, it is a vital part of your education. So our curriculum now is basically learning outcomes based. In the beginning, we said: 'Let's set up a smart COIL, we'll just find some students and that would be enough'. And now it's more, much more professional. And I think it's good, because, again, like I said, they should be based on learning outcomes, they should be embedded into the program, they should have a real clear place in your vision of what you want to teach to your students, you know, if they wanna teach intercultural skills, great: COIL could definitely help with that. But how would you do that? So that's why learning outcomes are a really good starting point, because all the activities that you'll come up with are never the goal itself. It's very much about what you wanna teach the students, right? And that's the basis for the activities and the business case, or whatever you're gonna use as a vehicle.

Henrik, Netherlands, Business

Through experience, Henrik has seen firsthand that simply bringing culturally disparate students together does not necessarily lead to the intended intercultural learning (Deardorff, 2023; Hornbuckle, 2015). He has therefore recognised through practice what other narrators learned through training. This reflection and engagement with continuous improvement was also demonstrated by Josephine, who had received the benefit of COIL training and thus included LOs from the start, but identified that actually, this was not quite enough for her students:

I realised that one thing I didn't do in the first and the second year is, explain really the learning outcome: Why we are doing this, what it will help you with. So then from year 3 that's my first lecture. I now always tell them. I show them: employers don't just appoint you on the degree you've got, only medicine and things, they will look at the degree. Others, they'll look at competence. I show them the competence: I say this will be working as part of the COIL, so I do a big 30 min explanation. When I explain the module, I explain the syllabus, explain the design of the COIL, and that worked beautifully. And so I think it was that message not at first given to the student - why I chose the COIL, and what it's going to do for you.

Josephine, UK, Languages

Josephine recognised that her students needed support to decipher the LOs and understand why they were relevant to them. In particular, they needed guidance on applying the learning gained throughout the COIL to their longer-term goals, for example, postgraduate employment prospects. Whilst this taps into students' personal motivations and provides them with further impetus to get involved in COIL, it also links to the narrators' stated motivations as explored in the previous chapter: to support students in developing skills and competencies that support them to live, work and study in a globalised world (Brown et al., 2020; Dimick, 2008; World Economic Forum, 2025). Josephine's chosen approach – to be explicit with students about the transferable skills they are gaining through COIL (O'Dowd, 2023) – effectively serves the motivations of both student and teacher.

6.2.1.2 Preparing students for effective engagement via pre-COIL training in culture and intercultural communication

Whether or not students needed to be taught about intercultural communication, theories of culture, or be provided with pre-information about the culture of their partner students was contested amongst the narrators, with only half of them stating that this was required. For those who do provide it, they revealed quite strong feelings on its necessity, as we see from Storm's account:

Without pre-COIL training you're wasting your time, in fact, it will take you a longer time to complete the COIL objectives. The pre-COIL

sessions is not a change, but an improvement. So instead of having one pre-COIL session, I had 2-3 pre-COIL sessions that we divided into smaller bite-sized sessions of one to one and a half hours. We invited my academic developers to kind of co-teach with me an aspect like academic writing, reflection, what is culture? What is diversity? Giving game concepts to kind of induct them and prepare them for the first synchronous meeting across various time zones.

Storm, China, Dentistry / Educational Development

Storm describes how she has adapted and improved her COIL projects in order to allocate more time to adequately prepare students for their intercultural experience. Similarly to how Henrik recognised through trial and error that there was a need for COIL to have LOs, so Storm has identified the need for specific student preparation. This is in line with research and guidance that names communication and cultural issues as two of the most common barriers in virtual exchange (Baroni et al., 2019). Support mechanisms such as the preparation activities described by Storm are considered by some to be required in order to move students beyond superficial engagement and create an environment in which they can reflect on the complexity of cultural difference (Curtindale et al., 2020; O'Dowd & Ritter, 2006). When looking to the wider body of knowledge on theories of learning, particularly adult learning, this approach could also be described as developing metacognitive awareness in students, i.e. learning how to learn, in the context of intercultural scenarios. This is a student-centred approach that has been gaining traction since its first conceptualisation in the late 1970s (Flavell, 1979).

Despite the literature and guidance materials advising that students are supported in this way (Doscher & Rubin, 2023), it is of note that of the five narrators who did not categorically state that they provide pre-preparation or cultural training for their students, four of them did not mention it at all, implying that it is not something they have considered, or do not consider to be of importance. An exception to this was Catherine, who utilised the narrative interview as a space to reflect on her experience with COIL and how she could improve it for students. In doing so, she stated:

I think we set up quite a lot of time developing the partners. And then we kind of plunk the students straight in. So maybe thinking a little bit more about you know, we've taught them about culture and stuff throughout their studies, but maybe recap on that a little bit more, preparing them for the types of things that they'll be experiencing, and then being actually able to recognize that learning experience. And maybe that might be something. Yeah, and actually talking to you has made me think about that, and how we could improve that. So that that's been good for me.

Catherine, UK, Business

This is a further example of the reflective approach to continuous improvement that was demonstrated by Henrik and Josephine, although in this instance the space to reflect was not provided to Catherine until she attended the interview. The importance of reflection opportunities to support *students* in consolidating their COIL learning is explored later in this chapter, but a question raised here for future research is whether *teachers* would also benefit from that opportunity.

6.2.1.3 Facilitating and structuring activities to enable relationship building and enjoyment

Moving beyond the preparation phase and into the running of the project, there continued a theme of purposeful and structured activity for students. Teachers expressed a desire to make the activities enjoyable for students, whilst also enabling them to build effective relationships with their partners that would prepare them for later collaboration. Louise describes the initial activities in her COIL project:

I wanted to have more of a student-centred approach. And how we came to this decision was because I talked with my associate head in the school about how we can make these COIL projects fun. In the first session, we wanted to really make it student-centric. So we wanted the Chinese students to share about what is life like in China. And this is during Covid time as well, so what could they do? What do they do during this time? And the British students? And then we had a bit of a breakout room, and where we kind of then would invite students to ask each other questions. And then we talked about the agenda for the next week.

Louise, UK, Business

Louise deliberately facilitates her students' first interaction with their peers in China, and, in accordance with Doscher and Rubin's (2023) recommended COIL stages, she brings students together in 'getting-to-know-you activities'. The intention of these is to establish social presence, familiarity and connection amongst the students and thus these tasks are low-stakes and focused on a topic on which every student is an expert – themselves – rather than relating to their subject discipline or the topic of the COIL project.

Every narrator emphasised the value of spending time on this, with Berend in particular drawing a link between the perceived success of the early activities and later collaboration:

And actually, what we see, but accounts substantiate scientifically, of course, is that the teams that have a lot of fun and real fun in the first week are much more successful than the teams that are a bit more laid back, or a bit more reluctant to seek for collaboration, etc. And what's nice to see is that after a plenary session in the first week we actually send the students, or we ask the students, to meet up in their private team channels. And we can see how long those private meetings take in these team channels and some teams finish the meeting after 15 min. But there are also teams that talk in this first talk for one and a half hour, and those teams are much more successful and open for feedback and very much more prone to approach teachers than the other teams. So, investing in team collaboration in the first week or in the first 2 weeks is very important.

Berend, Netherlands, Business

Typically, guidance places this type of activity purely as an introductory phase in COIL, before moving onto activity that emphasises task completion (Doscher & Rubin, 2023; Rubin & Guth, 2015). However, some research suggests that extending the light-hearted nature of the icebreaker into later activity, creating opportunity for shared laughter, can create a more engaging learning environment for students (Dewey & Sidek, 2024).

As time moves on and students enter the collaboration phase of their COIL project, in which they are engaged in their group work, the narrators described how they continued to structure and monitor student interaction. For example, Pilar explains:

I was allotting some time in class every week during the 5 weeks of the COIL. I would allow them like 1 hour a week in class, to work on that, to talk about that, or to express difficulties, to share among the different groups on what were their experiences, how they were doing, how they were planning, and also at the very end, during the last reflection we were talking about what happened and what didn't happen, but should have happened. So that for them the learning was not only for what happened, but also what was omitted. So at the end they felt that it was a good experience, and I think that they had raised awareness about the other. That was one of the main points they were aware, or reflectively aware, of the different strategies that they used to connect with the other students. They also were aware of their cultural differences and I think developed a little bit of a skill of listening and starting relations with people that they didn't know from another culture.

Pilar, Spain, Education / Languages

All the narrators described in some way how they checked in with their students throughout the COIL and ensured that they had timetabled opportunities to connect, collaborate, reflect and troubleshoot. Luke, the narrator who initially did not do this, described how he struggled to keep his students motivated and engaged:

I got the groups all set up. I had the feedback session, and I had asynchronous time for them to work on it. We're all together, but nobody did anything. It was a zero-completion rate. Unless you like, have a session where you are sat there with them in front of you, and you say: 'do this' like it is an exam, I don't think you'd get much... I don't know, uptake, engagement, or whatever. So that one I was like. 'Oh, this is pretty shit, isn't it? Now I've done all this work, and it's like for what?'

Luke, UK, Dietetics

Luke's experience illustrates the need for teachers to be continuously engaged with and monitoring student activity throughout the COIL, even when they are involved in independent group work. This tracks with Doscher and Rubin's description of the teacher's role during the Collaboration phase as "*Monitor structured individual and group work: Check in with students regularly to identify and address challenges to progress*". (Doscher & Rubin 2023, Table 11.1). However, this is not to say that the narrators felt they should make the COIL

entirely smooth sailing for their students. Indeed, as Henrik describes, some frustration is expected and required to maximise the learning gain:

Actually, we are secretly hoping for frustrations that come up, and then how to solve that. That's what they're learning, or when they're learning, actually.

Henrik, Netherlands, Business

It is broadly agreed that the development of intercultural competence – the stated aim of COIL – requires experiential learning, incorporating cultural immersion and challenge, through which the student comes to terms with their own cultural identity in relation to others (Bennett, 2011; Deardorff, 2020; Perry & Southwell, 2011). Thus, as Henrik explains, teachers need to be able to find the balance between providing enough support that students are positively engaged with their international peers, but not so much that they are entirely protected from experiencing the challenge of cultural difference and developing the competencies to work through them.

6.2.1.4 Enabling students to recognise and articulate their CQ development

Firstly, we actually did, you know, throw them in and see what happens. But now we actually find out that it's good to have a common language that students can use to reflect on their own development.

Henrik, Netherlands, Business

In extension of the previously stated need to be explicit with students about what they are learning and why, all the narrators also expressed that students need to be able to recognise that learning and articulate it to others. This is recognised in the literature and associated COIL guidance through the requirement to incorporate an element of reflection within a COIL project, that supports students to think critically about their experience and how they have developed (Crossan, n.d.; Hackett et al., 2024). The teachers in this research described how they incorporated opportunity for reflection through formative or summative assessment tasks, or via pre- and post-COIL intercultural

competence self-assessments. How they did this will be explored in the following sub-sections.

6.2.1.4.1 Self-assessment of intercultural competence

Self-assessment scales or surveys were used by four out of the ten narrators in their COIL projects. On a rudimentary level, implementing pre- and post-survey instruments can serve as an imperfect tool to demonstrate how students' levels of IC have developed over the course of a COIL project (Hammer et al., 2003; Schauer, 2020).

However, as a tool for measuring outcomes, a single instrument is generally considered inadequate for assessing all aspects of IC, due to the previously discussed lack of consensus on the skills, attributes and competencies required (Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2009). A further consideration is how much development you can reasonably expect to see over the relatively short period of a COIL project. Indeed, although Storm utilised such instruments herself, she also argues:

We talk about autonomous learning, self-regulating learning, and students becoming agents of their own learning [through COIL]. How do you measure that in COIL? You can't claim it. I can't claim my students are critical thinkers. I can't claim they have developed intercultural competencies. I can, however, say I've started, and I've pushed them in a direction to start thinking critically, creating awareness on competencies.

Storm, China, Dentistry / Educational Development

For two of the narrators (Henrik and Josephine), such surveys were not actually used to measure student outcomes but rather were more purposefully engaged to enhance the students' learning experience:

One of the things that we've tried now is that we're using the Intercultural Readiness Check [IRC] model. If you're doing a one-week COIL, that's not enough to measure intercultural progress or development. But, if you're doing a 7- 8-week project together, I think you can quite easily do a sort of a benchmark, starting with a self-test at the beginning of the whole trajectory, and then at the end as well, and see where you've progressed, and what progress you've made on these different aspects. And that IRC is actually, we find, a wonderful way to measure, to sort of

academically measure intercultural developmental skills rather than saying, 'Oh, yeah, I've learned a lot of from it, and I find out that the Americans are so and so'... and it, you know, remains quite shallow. Whereas now he has some wording, some lingo to actually, you know, describe them. So we actually asked these students, could you reflect on the whole process? Not just the report that you're handing in, but much more importantly, the whole process, using that particular IRC model. So then they come up with all kinds of wonderful words like, 'I've actually overcome my openness to change or my apprehensiveness to change', or 'I've grown as a person, because I have adjusted my communicative style'. You know, those, they're using that kind of sort of big words, rather than saying, 'Yeah, I now know what to talk about with American students', because that's quite shallow.

Henrik, Netherlands, Business

For Henrik, the IRC model is not so much as a measure of outcomes as a framework for reflection, offering students a language with which to better understand and describe how they have developed throughout the COIL. Research shows that the process for reflection begins with description of experience and deepens through examination of those experiences and articulation of learning (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Kawai, 2021; Whitley, 2014). By providing the students with a language with which to explain their experiences, Henrik enables that deeper level reflection to take place.

Josephine also used an IC instrument to further her students' learning, although in a different manner. She utilised the instrument at the beginning of a COIL to demonstrate to students that they had gaps in their competencies:

So, what I do with the students is the first assignment they do, they do an online cultural competence test. And then they get feedback against the global norm - everybody that took the test that year. And so then it gives them some action areas, and they have to comment on it and say what surprised them in the results, what surprised them in the level they reached. So, it helps them into their development of cultural competence, because they've always heard that they're one of the best because they're linguists. They love languages, they love culture, they love learning, so they feel very, very confident. And they are, they have competence. I can't take that away from them, but sometimes they over assess themselves as being very good. So, they get that initial assessment, they get to think of what they should be focusing on. Then

they do the [COIL] project where they put it into practice, and as part of the extra assignments they do I get them to do a reflective piece, now, where they're actually bringing together the cultural competences, the practical experience of [COIL] and their own learning as a reflective piece.

Josephine, UK, Languages

For Josephine's students, the survey helped them recognise the benefit they could gain from the COIL and gave them specific goals that they could focus on and evaluate their progress against at the end of the project.

This, and Henrik's use of the IRC model, conform to the collective narrative of the importance of being explicit with students about the intention of COIL. Given that the stated outcome of COIL is students' development of IC, the decision not to use such scales to summatively assess said outcome speaks to the narrators' understanding of the timeline of IC development. As Deardorff (2022) outlines, IC is a lifelong process and as students, and indeed teachers, will be at differing stages of their own development, formative assessment – assessment *for* rather than *of* learning (Williams, 2005) - is a more appropriate tool.

6.2.1.4.2 Use of formative and summative assessment

All narrators discussed their use of some form of assessment during the COIL to support students' learning. However, whilst every teacher utilised formative feedback, only four out of the ten used a summative, credit bearing assessment. Where summative assessment was used, it was highly scaffolded through formative assessment and learning activities, as described by Storm:

We had that first synchronous meeting after going through all the pre-COIL sessions because the second and third day they would have to launch their 1 min videos which they already did preparatory work for in their pre-COIL sessions. And so the focus of that week was just to comment on each other's video and become friends. We had some really clear objectives. So, we find the criteria of learning objectives and we kind of change how deliverables were happening. We also introduced two formative assessments for the big task which was the poster and the protocol before they launched it on the Instagram page. So we gave them two formative feedback sessions, and the formative assessment

was also a way of teaching them. And we made our COIL content part of our mainstream content. So COIL replaced an assignment of mine where I had a traditional assignment. It now was just called a COILed assignment, so COIL carried up to 25% for my final assessment mark.

Storm, China, Dentistry / Educational Development

For Storm, the COIL is fully integrated within the module it is delivered in, with 25% of the module's credit coming from the COIL assignment. With this in mind, she has structured the project so that it is constructively aligned, with the learning activities and assessment(s) working together to illicit the stated learning outcomes (Biggs, 1996). Furthermore, formative assessment acts as an opportunity for students to receive feedforward feedback that informs, supports and enhances their learning (Clark, 2012). Storm felt that the COIL needed to be a core part of the module it was embedded in, so that students needed to engage with the COIL to meet the module's LOs through a COILed assessment. This opinion was shared by Catherine, who stated:

I think it has to be a meaningful project in order for their assessment really to work and it has to have a natural link with the learning outcomes of the module.

Catherine, UK, Business

For Luke and Louise, the inability to make changes to their assessments so that they could incorporate COIL was a source of frustration, with them feeling that they were unable to adequately engage students without this. Luke tells us:

They keep saying, you know, 'assessment drives learning'. Yeah, yeah, yeah, fine. But you need to have control over who writes the assessment, who writes the modules, and how to put in the COIL. And you actually need to have the staff who want to do these things, and who can, you know, put it into an assessment, put it into a module. And they also need to have the students who want to do it. So, I'm finding that over the years people are just more concerned about actual assessments and only doing what they need to do.

Luke, UK, Dietetics

For these four narrators, the ability to fully embed the COIL within summative assessment was deemed to be important, ranging from desirable (Shelley, Catherine and Louise) to vital (Luke). Yet, for the other six narrators, it was not

a consideration that they felt compelled to talk about, focusing instead on their use of formative assessment. There is as yet no research that investigates the relationship between summative assessment and students' engagement with COIL projects; however, some research indicates that summative assessment does not make a significant difference to students' participation in online group work (Brindley et al., 2009). Considered alongside Deardorff's assertion that formative assessment should be the focus in enabling development of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2022), it would seem that summative assessment may not be required. It is of note that Catherine, Louise and Luke are all from the same university and thus there may be factors of institutional culture that are impacting their focus on the need for COILed summative assessment.

6.2.2 Theme 2 summary

As the narrators discussed their evolving experiences of COIL over time, they indicated how they had reflected on each project and engaged in continuous improvement. Typically, the cycle of improvement focused first on improving student engagement *with*, and secondly student outcomes *from*, COIL. During this process of reflection and improvement, the teachers' knowledge of COIL, the process of developing CQ, and effective COIL design is being developed. What the narrators have collectively identified in emphasising the need for learning outcomes, purposeful and structured learning activities and appropriate formative assessments is a need for COIL courses to be constructively aligned learning environments. This approach ensures that students know what they are working towards (the stated learning outcomes) and have the opportunity to engage in appropriate activities and assessment tasks that develop and consolidate their learning (Biggs et al., 2022). In other words: good COIL design is good learning design; a statement implicitly supported by Rubin with the inclusion of the milestone "*The institution has designated instructional design staff*" in his 3-year plan to scale up COIL within institutions (Rubin, 2023 p148).

What is notable within the stories of these narrators is that those who had engaged in COIL training developed their COILs to be constructively aligned

from the outset. Others did not construct their COILs in this way initially, but through a process of reflection and improvement, gradually developed their design to fit this structure. Even amongst those teachers who did engage with COIL training, there was evidence of the reflection and improvement cycle, with them making iterative improvements to their COIL projects over time. As they became more confident in their knowledge of what a good COIL project could look like, they developed projects that took a deeper approach to students' CQ development, with increased emphasis on meaningful interaction. Both Catherine and Henrik describe the development of their understanding of what COIL is over time:

So previously we'd had things like international speakers come in and do a guest lecture, and people were saying, Oh, that's a COIL project! And we were saying, no, not really. For it to be meaningful there needs to be student to student interaction, and there needs to be certain criteria that's hit, to be able to deem it as a COIL project.

Catherine, UK, Business

Now it's actually more sort of defined, but just after Covid we called everything COIL, and we even did a COIL for a couple of days, or just one, one session in the afternoon! Maybe I shouldn't have called it COIL... Actually, it was more like an interactive class or lecture with a small exercise to be done with students, groups from both sides. So that was also called COIL. But then, again, if we talk about COILing now, I think it has to be a bit more than just an hour or a day. It actually involves either a semester or, in our case an 8-week program, which is part of our semester.

Henrik, Netherlands, Business

The initial, 'shallower' projects described here would not be considered COIL according to COIL definitions and guidance (Crossan, n.d.; Hackett et al., 2024). They are, however, initial forays into providing an online international experience for students which would be more accurately described as Virtual Exchange (Hackett et al., 2024). What is evident from the narrators' stories is that the more they have seen and reflected on how students develop CQ, and what kind of interaction facilitates that, the more they have learned for themselves about how to design effective COIL projects.

This combined narrative tells us firstly that, for some of these teachers, COIL training was an effective shortcut to developing effective COILs. Secondly, there is an implication that lack of COIL training can be resolved by a teacher's pedagogical knowledge and experience, combined with an ability to reflect and willingness to adapt (resilience). We saw these later qualities in action in Luke's account, which portrayed obvious frustration, but also evidence of resilience, problem solving and continuous improvement. Indeed, Luke later remarks:

Perseverance is a skill or attitude people should have doing COILs, because if it fails once, it's like: what do you do then? It's quite easy then for me to say I'm not doing it. This is why I need to have the interest in doing this kind of stuff, the perseverance.

Luke, UK, Dietetics

These qualities have previously been observed in other narrators in this research and have also been identified as gains in professional experience through COIL by others (Swartz et al., 2019). Furthermore, these are qualities associated with CQ, and the ability to negotiate and communicate across cultures. Specifically, the adaptation of behaviour and process indicates high levels of Behavioural CQ (Earley & Ang, 2003).

However, as Luke's account also demonstrates, these qualities alone are not adequate to ensure COIL success. It is their presence alongside reflection, pedagogical knowledge and other aspects of CQ that are characteristic of COIL success in the other narrators' accounts. Additionally, as COIL is a collaborative endeavour, we might assume that there is some requirement for these qualities to also be present in the partner. As partners were not involved as participants in this project, that cannot be confirmed but would be an avenue for further research.

6.3 Chapter summary

Drawing on the discussion in this and the previous chapter, what we see through the experiences of the narrators is that knowledge of COIL, COIL design, and how CQ is developed are critical in supporting teachers to design effective COILs. Furthermore, the ability to negotiate and construct a shared COIL design through an effective partner relationship is vital to COIL success.

For the purposes of this project, COIL ‘success’ was not formally defined, with the inclusion criteria being simply that narrators had completed a COIL project, with no requirements placed on specific outcomes. However, as illustrated through the discussion, the concept of COIL success - or effectiveness – can mean different things to different people. As the narrators became more experienced at COIL, they sought to make improvements in terms of student outcomes (meeting the LOs and development of IC) and satisfaction (as evidenced by engagement and understanding ‘why’ COIL is relevant to them). On the other hand, the perception of some narrators was that their institution was not as concerned as they were about the *quality* of the COIL experience, with their focus being purely on numbers of students taking part in COIL. As this study did not include the perspectives of policy makers it cannot speak to the intentions or requirements of institutions encouraging COIL, but this could be an area for future research.

The stories show that COIL training can be an effective means to develop the required knowledge and skill in teachers to complete a COIL. However, even the most prepared teacher is unlikely to produce a COIL project that cannot be improved (Swartz et al., 2019), yet those narrators who were unprepared by training could, with knowledge of learning design and a level of CQ develop the required COIL knowledge through low stakes ‘shallow’ COIL experience. Some narrators (Pilar and Storm) referred to the usefulness of support provided by academic developers in helping them develop constructively aligned COIL projects. Indeed, Stella (an educational developer)’s participation in her COIL project came about due to the requirement of the funders that an academic developer be a member of the team, whilst Storm’s post-COIL career development leads her to a new role as an educational developer. There is, within these narrators stories, a strong link between the pedagogical knowledge and skills of academic developers and the skills required for COIL, which confirms the recommendations of Rubin (2023a) that institutions provide instructional designers to support COIL teachers.

The concluding chapter will reflect further upon the findings outlined in this and the previous chapter, considering the extent to which they can be generalised

and applied to other contexts. This will include a set of recommendations for institutions wishing to support COIL.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The overarching question guiding this study was: 'What are the narratives of higher education teachers who have designed and taught a COIL project?' with the following sub-questions:

1: What do teachers' stories of COIL reveal about their Cultural Intelligence?

2: What stories do teachers tell about what motivates them to COIL?

3: What factors do teachers describe as supporting or hindering their ability to design and teach a COIL project?

The prior two chapters have sought to respond to these questions through the telling of the combined narrative, which weaves together the words of the narrators with my own perspective and analysis as the researcher and practitioner. I have used the theoretical framework of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as a lens through which to interpret and make sense of experiences.

Chapter 5 aligned to sub-questions 1 and 2, whilst Chapter 6 responded to sub-question 3. In this final chapter, I look back on the thesis as a holistic narrative, evaluating the methodology and summarising how it provides a unique contribution to knowledge. Finally, I make recommendations for policy and practice that may be applied by HEIs wishing to encourage greater engagement with COIL.

7.2 Original contribution to knowledge

This research provides a contribution to knowledge in several ways. Firstly, the experiences of teachers have been overlooked not only in literature pertaining to COIL, but also in the broader field of Internationalisation at Home. Prior to this study there existed guidance and training programmes aimed at COIL teachers, but this was not underpinned by any research that sought to understand their experience of COIL and the factors that would support them to undertake COIL successfully. This in-depth exploration of teacher experience, revealing their motivations and the context in which they occur, therefore provides an insight into the factors and environments required to nurture COIL engagement, which are represented in Figure 7.1. This is also the first

exploration of COIL teachers' intercultural competence, using Cultural Intelligence as a lens through which to analyse and make sense of teachers' experiences. As Figure 7.1 illustrates, a major finding of this study (and a new research contribution) is that teachers' CQ is central to the ability of these narrators to design and deliver COIL. Given the recognition that COIL is driven by teacher effort (Hackett et al., 2024), this is a potentially rich source of evidence-based information for institutions, educational leaders and policy makers wishing to encourage COIL. It lends credence to existing guidance/training, contributing a theoretical understanding of what could work and why, for application to policy.

The richness of the information gathered was facilitated by the narrative approach used. By adopting an unstructured interview technique in which participants were encouraged to share whatever they felt was relevant to their COIL story, it was possible to elicit detail on wider life experiences than would have been gathered through semi-structured interviews with pre-set topics (Lewis, 2014). The analysis of these narratives reveals the nuance of relationship between teachers' internationalised identities, including their prior international experiences and demonstrable CQ, and the factors that support or hinder their COIL endeavours. This, in turn, allows the identification and development of approaches that meet teachers where they are, enabling and motivating them.

Finally, this thesis makes a methodological contribution to knowledge through the use of a prompt poster (Figure 4.1) in the interview process. The purpose of this was to provide participants with potential talking points after they have concluded their initial and unprompted storytelling. Similar to the accepted practice of story grids or timelines, the intention was to provide the narrator with a framework of sorts with which to structure their story (Riessman, 2008). Unlike a story grid or timeline, the prompt poster allowed potential topics to be presented in a non-linear fashion, by encircling them around the image of a globe. With no obvious hierarchy to the topics, and with narrators having the freedom to select whichever topics they wished to embellish, the prompt posters indicated the topics which were of most significance to the narrators

(Wilson et al., 2007). This may be a novel approach within narrative inquiry and would benefit from further investigation as to its effectiveness compared with more established methods.

7.3 Revisiting the research questions: Who does COIL and why?

In answer to the first research sub-question: '*What do teachers' stories of COIL reveal about their Cultural Intelligence?*', this study found that COIL teachers could be described as internationalised, largely demonstrating significant Cultural Intelligence (CQ) in their narratives. However, whilst most teachers seemed to have been highly international before their engagement with COIL, others came to COIL with limited international or intercultural experience and developed it through or during their period of engagement with COIL. This tells us firstly that COIL may be an effective tool for developing teachers' CQ and, secondly, that it is possible for a teacher with limited CQ to successfully design and teach COIL projects, if the right circumstances are in place. For example, Storm came to COIL with very little international experience yet was highly intrinsically and extrinsically motivated (Motivational CQ). Following her first experience of COIL she has gone on to complete multiple projects and to actively seek international experiences, including now living and working in a new country.

The answer to the second research sub-question, pertaining to teachers' motivations, is important in providing further context to the kind of environment that is capable of nurturing COIL engagement. All the narrators in this study, even those who did not have extensive prior international experience, were in part motivated by a desire to increase their international or intercultural exposure. All but one also wanted to create international opportunities for their students and wished to do so because they felt it would offer necessary development for those students. However, for none of the narrators was this reason enough to engage with COIL. COIL is complex, time consuming and, being a collaborative endeavour, highly reliant on another person or persons for success (Hackett et al., 2024; Rubin et al., 2023; Suarez & Michalska Haduch, 2020). This research found that for a teacher to choose COIL over any other international experience (e.g., travel), there must be a strong secondary

motivator in place. Every teacher in this study had a catalyst that spurred them to choose COIL, and the type of catalyst appeared to be related to how intrinsically motivated and confident the teacher was to seek international opportunities. For those who were intrinsically motivated, a change in environment such as the COVID-19 pandemic preventing travel, or the desire/requirement to make international opportunities available to a wider range of students was enough to prompt them to innovate and find alternative IaH opportunities such as COIL. Those teachers who had less self-efficacy and lower intrinsic motivation needed a top-down directive from their institution to motivate them to engage with COIL. Regardless of what prompted a teachers' initial engagement with COIL, all the narrators in this research felt that they would only be motivated to keep up sustained engagement with COIL if their efforts were appropriately recognised, valued and supported. This indicates the complexity of factors impacting COIL, and the importance of institutional context. The suggestion is that institutions must support, encourage and reward COIL if they wish to nurture it as an approach to IoC.

7.4 What factors enable or hinder COIL?

The answer to the third research sub-question is intrinsically linked to the first two, in that the factors that enable COIL vary by individual and are related to their existing levels of international experience and CQ. Broadly speaking, for these narrators, the less internationally experienced they were, the more institutional support and extrinsic motivation they require.

Ultimately, the factors that enabled COIL can be categorised into three areas:

1. Teacher motivation

As discussed previously, teachers must be motivated to engage with COIL in the first place and *remain* motivated if they are to sustain COIL practice. In order to stimulate engagement with COIL, teachers need Motivational CQ, which is composed of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy (Earley & Ang, 2003). They further require a specific motivator to choose COIL over other international opportunities. For those teachers who are highly internationalised and have high intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy, only stimulation of extrinsic motivation may be required. However, for those teachers

who do not have the benefit of international experience, they needed additional extrinsic motivation, and/or support in developing their intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy.

2. Teacher competence

The primary predictor of a successful COIL project for the participants of this study was a healthy partner relationship. An effective relationship could look very different from one partnership to another as the way of working is negotiated by its members, but the core skills to manage that negotiation remain. Teachers need sufficient Cognitive, Metacognitive and Behavioral CQ to manage intercultural communication, and interpersonal skills that support relationship building and constructive negotiation (Ting-toomey & Kurogi, 1998; Van Dyne et al., 2012). Furthermore, the greater teachers' understanding of what COIL is, how it works, and what its intended outcomes are, the better prepared they are to design a project that creates an appropriate and effective learning environment for the students (Swartz et al., 2019).

3. Student motivation and engagement

The final area vital for COIL success is student motivation and engagement. The teachers in this study reported greater success when students understood what COIL was and why they were doing it and felt motivated by the intended outcomes. In contrast, where students did not understand 'the point' of the COIL, it led to lower satisfaction (in the case of Josephine's first COIL), or even complete failure of a project (as described by Luke). A teacher's ability to design a constructively aligned project is an important factor here but there are also several institutional factors that serve to motivate the students, particularly related to assessment and institutional culture.

Specific policies and practice that can be implemented by institutions in support of these three categories will be outlined in the recommendations following.

7.5 The role of the institution in nurturing COIL: recommendations

I conclude this thesis with a set of recommendations for institutions wishing to encourage COIL initiatives. In reviewing the factors that enable or hinder a COIL, it would be easy to assume they are reliant on the abilities and

experiences of individuals. However, the context within which those individuals is working had an extraordinary impact both on their desire to do COIL, and to complete it successfully. As this research has shown, it is possible, if they are supported appropriately, for a teacher with limited international experience and CQ to engage with COIL, and in so doing increasing their skills and capability for future international experiences. The role of the institution is to understand the experiences and capabilities of its teachers and to provide motivation and support that is appropriate to their abilities.

Figure 7.1 illustrates the three aforementioned categories of factors enabling COIL, and some of the interventions that can support them.

When considering recommendations, it is important to note that every institution is different, and this may be further amplified in a global context. HEIs in some countries may find some recommendations more difficult to implement than others, although it is worth reflecting in each case whether that is the result of regulations or cultural expectations.

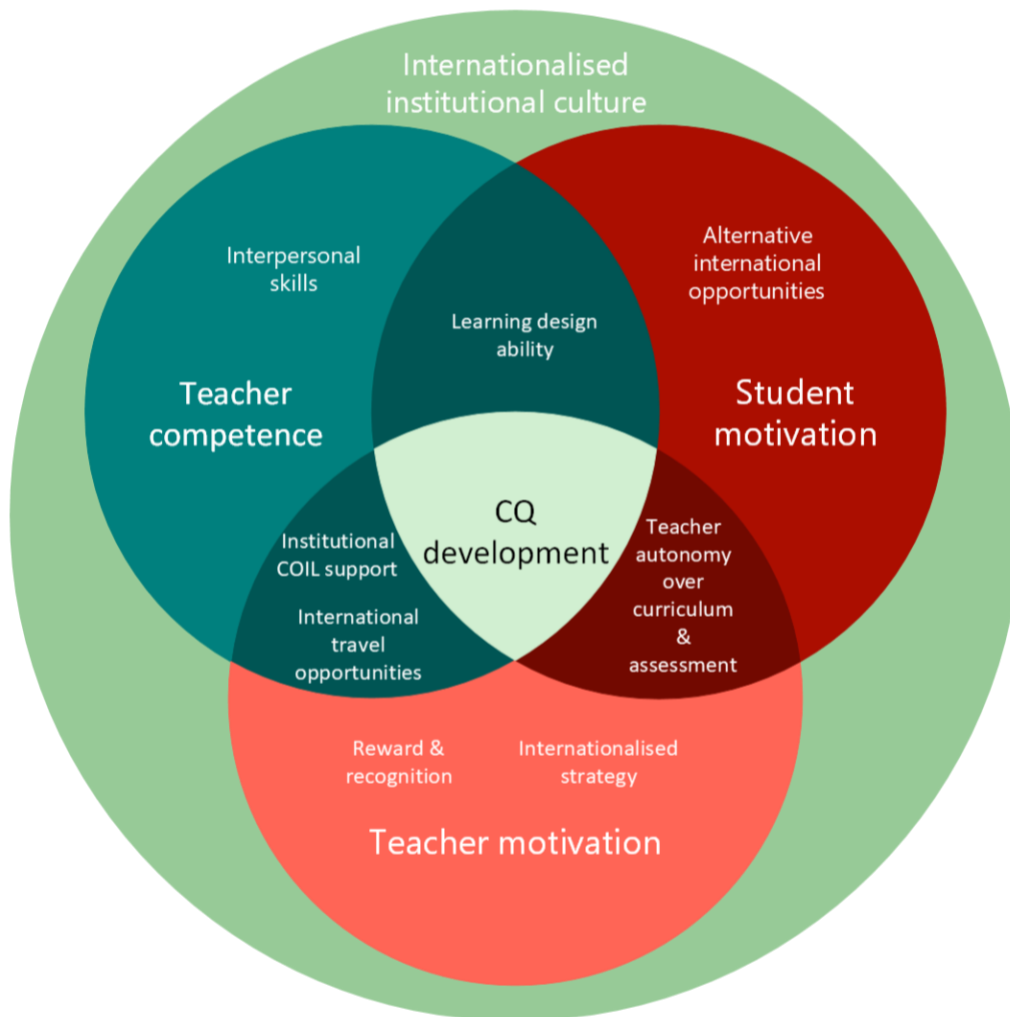


Figure 7.1 COIL enabling factors

7.5.1 Develop staff Cultural Intelligence

As illustrated by Figure 7.1, the intervention that is central to all three categories of COIL enablers is CQ development. Currently, most guidance intended to support educators with any internationalisation initiative tends to focus on the ‘how-to’, taking a step-by-step approach to implementation and taking for granted that teachers will already have, or be predisposed to develop quickly, the intercultural skills required to carry them out (Brighton, 2020). However, designing a COIL project is a significant challenge that requires managing an intercultural partner relationship whilst simultaneously creating a learning experience that facilitates students to become effective intercultural communicators themselves (Rubin et al., 2023; Suarez & Michalska Haduch, 2020). This requires teachers to not only understand what COIL is and intends to do, but also to have the skills and knowledge to support students in their intercultural development. Teachers therefore need to have the requisite CQ to

manage their own international collaboration and have sufficient Cognitive and Metacognitive CQ to identify the skills that they need to facilitate in their students. As was illustrated by the experience of Catherine, and supported by other research (Brighton, 2020), this development can be aided through knowledge of theories of culture and/or intercultural communication.

Although this research found that engaging in COIL can support teachers in developing their CQ, those teachers with limited international experiences need to be highly motivated to COIL and well-supported in order to compensate for their initially lower levels of CQ. Therefore, the provision of training and international opportunities available to staff that aim to develop their CQ would support teachers with the base knowledge and skills to manage their partner relationship and design an effective COIL project that engages students (teacher competence and student motivation). Increased CQ also leads to greater confidence (self-efficacy) and intrinsic motivation to engage with further international experiences (teacher motivation) (Earley & Ang, 2003).

7.5.2 Teacher professional development and learning design support

As discussed in Chapter 5, good COIL design is good learning design. The narrators in this study who understood constructive alignment and online pedagogies were able to apply that knowledge to the design of their COIL and thus create effective COIL experiences. Furthermore, narrators reported that where students were able to see the purpose of the COIL through Internationalised Learning Outcomes, they were more engaged. Greater engagement was also reported when students were able to see their progress via appropriate assessment and reflection, which aligns with general findings on student engagement (Matus et al., 2024; Saeed & Mohamedali, 2022).

Ensuring staff have access to appropriate development activities in the design of online learning and/or learning design expertise would therefore support the development of teacher competence and student motivation.

7.5.3 Provide reward and recognition

Reward and recognition (extrinsic motivation) was a significant motivator for all the narrators in this study, regardless of their levels of intrinsic motivation. Even

staff who are highly motivated to engage in international experiences need a reason to engage with COIL over other opportunities. Many of the other recommendations provided here will contribute to motivating factors, but the narrators were very clear that they need to see that their work on COIL is valued and appreciated.

Appropriate activities that signal value to teachers include making COIL part of progression/promotion frameworks, secondment opportunities, building esteem through celebratory events and articles, providing small stipends or grants to support COIL development, and supporting international travel as part of the COIL. The most significant indicator reported by the narrators was the allocation of time for COIL development in workload plans.

7.5.4 Make it easier for staff to adapt their syllabus and assessment

Some narrators reported difficulty in motivating students to engage with COIL, as they were unable to embed it within their summative assessment activities. This was claimed to be the result of academic regulations binding staff to the assignments described in module descriptor paperwork and requiring changes to assessment to be made many months ahead of time. This lack of flexibility also impacted the design of other aspects of COIL, as teachers found that they were bound to timetables and syllabi that did not integrate well with that of their partners. Some narrators conversely noted that they had recognised that they found it easier to be flexible than their partners and that this freedom from time spent negotiating regulations allowed them more space to focus on effective COIL design. This was motivating for teachers, and also for students, who are more likely to engage with COIL if they can see that they will be assessed on it (Zeng et al., 2018).

The development of academic regulations and associated processes that support staff to have more autonomy over the way that their module is delivered and assessed would be a significant enabler to COIL. Policy makers may wish to work with international partners in countries where this is seen to be easier (for example, the Netherlands), to understand how such regulations are written and the culture that accompanies them. Academic regulations can be notoriously difficult to change, and equally prone to misinterpretation about how

restrictive they truly are (Dill, 2001; Dill & Beerkens, 2013). Therefore, if change is not possible, then an examination of what can be changed within the rules and the production of guidance to support teachers in doing this would help to create a culture of flexibility.

7.5.5 Include COIL as a specific, named activity in international strategies

This recommendation returns to the idea that even the most motivated of teachers need a reason to engage with COIL rather than other international experiences with lower barriers to entry. A commonality amongst those narrators who were relatively inexperienced was that they were prompted to engage with COIL through a top-down directive. They would not have got involved with COIL had they not been told to do so. Therefore, the creation of objectives relating to COIL activity as part of any internationalisation strategy can be a very effective motivator for staff.

However, this approach must be used carefully and in collaboration with the other recommendations made here. Teachers with lower CQ and less international experience will need a great deal of support to be able to put COIL into practice. There is also a danger that including COIL as an objective in international strategies can inadvertently create a barrier and frustrations for those teachers who are more knowledgeable about COIL, as we saw in Luke's story. Some narrators found that the use of targets for COIL led to the creation of COIL projects that were ineffective and potentially even harmful in terms of developing students' IC. They were disincentivised by these practices and felt that the institution was not adequately recognising the time, effort, and expertise required to craft an effective COIL.

Therefore, this recommendation is to incorporate COIL into the institution's international strategy, with an appropriate definition of what COIL is and accompanied by sufficient support and incentives as described previously.

7.6 Research evaluation

Having summarised the findings, it is important to contextualise them by taking a moment to critically reflect on the research process, identifying limitations and thereby qualifying the strength of the findings.

This has been a small-scale study exploring the experiences of ten COIL teachers in higher education settings. The small sample is not representative of all COIL teachers, but the decision to work with a small number of participants enabled the collection and analysis of rich and detailed data that provided significant insight into their lives. This approach reminds us that breadth and depth are not necessarily down to sample size, but rather the focus of a study (Todres & Galvin, 2005). The value of narratives that explore individual perspectives has been described as yielding a particular kind of breadth that illustrates how an individual meaningfully organises broad and fundamental human themes (Abramson, 1992; Merriam, 1988; Miller, 1999). Depth, in this instance, comes from the density of contextual information gathered.

In order to enable wide reach into the COIL community and ensure multiple international perspectives were represented in this research, a snowball recruitment method was used. Through this method, the initial eligible participants who I contacted were able to put me in touch with their international partners and colleagues, providing access to a greater diversity of participants than I would otherwise have had. The ten COIL teachers who ultimately contributed to this research were working in the UK, the Netherlands, Spain and China, with many of them immigrants to those countries. Nationalities represented included the UK, South Africa, Spain, the Netherlands, USA and Canada. This provided perspectives beyond the UK, which is of particular import when discussing internationalisation and allows for recommendations that are as applicable to potential international COIL partners as they are to the UK context. As COIL requires cross-cultural collaboration, it is vital that recommendations aimed at increasing engagement with COIL acknowledge the cultural context within which they originated (Altbach et al., 2019 p7).

A limitation of this recruitment approach, and the therefore of this study, is a bias towards narrators who come from the UK and the global north.

Additionally, as the interviews needed to take place in English due to limitations in my own language skills, some COIL teachers were excluded, and some participants were required to tell their stories in a second or even third language. This could potentially diminish the storytelling experience due to difficulties with cultural nuance or even lead to misunderstandings or misinterpretation (Lee & Hellermann, 2020). This was mitigated as far as possible through member checking of transcripts, but this thesis should nevertheless be seen as being Western in orientation, from the theoretical framework used (Cultural Intelligence) to my own cultural background which will have influenced my interpretation and retelling of the narrators' stories.

It is also of relevance that as a UK-centric researcher, I may be missing vital context about the higher education sector in other countries that may provide additional context to some narrator's stories. Indeed, I was able to recognise, for example, that the UK institutions represented were all post-1992 institutions focused on teaching rather than research, and with a greater diversity in their student cohorts than might be expected in a Russell Group or research-intensive university. The narrators from the Netherlands similarly noted that they were working in a university of applied sciences, rather than a more research-oriented institution. As I am not familiar enough with the structure of higher education in other countries, it was not possible for me as a researcher within the constraints of this research to draw any further conclusions about the possible prevalence of COIL in one type of institution over another, but it is certainly a topic worthy of further investigation.

The identities of the participants - and indeed myself as researcher – clearly shaped the data analysis and re-storying process, and this was something I have reflected deeply upon. I had not fully anticipated how much of an impact this would have, and if I were to do this research again the main change I would make would be to be more purposeful in my sampling. There were questions raised as to the impact of certain contexts such as the narrator's discipline area, type of higher education institution, nationality or mother tongue, and also who their partner was. A sampling method that included partners or sought to either

focus in on or diversify participant demographics could more adequately address these questions.

The methodology chapter outlines how I carried out the narrative inquiry method, including how and why I adapted it, the ethical considerations, and critically, the role of the researcher in this approach. It acknowledges the limitations of a narrative approach which include subjectivity and potential for researcher bias, a reliance on participant memory, and issues of authorship and ownership of the story (Barkhuizen, 2019). It is evident from the transcriptions of the interviews (see the example in Appendix One) and the process through which narrators were able to confirm their truth and choose their own pseudonyms, that a great deal of care was taken to ensure the narrator voice was represented appropriately. Utilising the theoretical framework of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as the lens for analysis allowed for a consistent and rigorous approach that placed the findings within the context of existing literature (Lederman & Lederman, 2015).

The decision to use unstructured interviews was a difficult one for a novice researcher, as I could not be sure that what the narrators talked about would help me answer my research questions. I felt instinctively, and from the thorough literature review, that recounting an internationalised experience such as COIL would naturally require narrators to draw on topics and events that elicit information about CQ. However, I did incorporate a contingency plan with the prompt poster, which enabled me to introduce potential topics after the narrator had exhausted their initial story. This also addressed the aforementioned limitation of narrative inquiry of reliance on participant memory. The pilot interview enabled me to test the approach and make tweaks. Ultimately, restorying the narratives so that they could be presented as one - as a holistic 'big picture' of COIL experiences - demonstrated that the success of COIL is hugely impacted by the wider context of where it is taking place and who is leading it. The prevalence of personal attributes and wider life experiences in the narrators' stories, and the fact that this information was volunteered rather than requested information, highlighted their importance and

justified my choice to take an open and unstructured approach. This further contributed to my confidence and growth as a researcher.

The extent to which these findings can be generalised is a question commonly asked of narrative inquiry. This study, as is true of most narrative inquiry, is inherently context-specific, being grounded in the lived experiences of the narrators involved. However, the findings can offer valuable insights that resonate beyond the immediate research setting. The richness of description and the use of the Cultural Intelligence framework to derive theoretical insights from the narratives enables others to assess the relevance of findings to their own settings (Firestone, 1993). However, when extrapolating findings, it is important to be conscious of the socio-cultural and contextual dimensions that shape the narrative. Who the narrators are - their backgrounds, experiences, nationality, institution and socio-cultural context - all have bearing on the story told and should be remembered when applying findings elsewhere (Bochner & Herrmann, 2020). Ultimately, the value of the narrative inquiry lies not in universality of claims, but its capacity to offer nuanced understandings to inform, inspire or challenge practice in other contexts (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Wei, 2023).

7.7 Final reflections

The purpose of this research was to explore teachers' experiences of Collaborative Online International Learning in higher education, through the collection of rich and detailed narratives.

In conducting this project, I interviewed ten participants, who became the 'narrators', to understand not only their perspective of COIL, but also the wider life experiences and context that they deemed relevant to their COIL story. The interviews provided in-depth insights from the teacher perspective and their experiences and narratives illuminated what is needed to nurture engagement with COIL. It highlighted and discussed the complexities of the relationship between individuals' international experiences and their institutional context. This enabled the identification of factors that could support institutions in developing policies and practice that will enable COIL, whether their teachers are highly internationalized or not.

The scope of this research meant interviewing a small sample of teachers, who were predominantly from the global north. As described in section 7.6, the demographics and context of the participants and their partners is hugely impactful to the story as it is told, and a more purposeful selection of narrators would be beneficial. This research could be further strengthened by using research methods that allow for participants to interact in their preferred language or to involve additional data sources such as observation during partner collaboration (pre-COIL) and student interactions during the COIL, via the online platform.

The act of completing this study has undoubtedly developed my research skills and my identity as a researcher. The process of defining the purpose and aims of the research, framing the questions, and deciding on the most appropriate method with which to answer them was perhaps the most challenging. Due to job changes that made it difficult to recruit participants for the project as I had originally conceived it, I needed to be flexible and change the direction of the research. As a result, this project was longer in conception than it was in execution. However, this bump in the road proved to be fortuitous as I feel that the shift from a student to staff focus has led me to a project that better addresses a research gap and aligns with my own interests. It has also given me the opportunity to develop knowledge of a method that was new to me – narrative inquiry – and the associated skills of running an effective narrative interview and managing the associated large volume of data. Using a theoretical framework as a basis for coding has given me confidence that my analysis is robust, whilst following the restorying process reassures me that my methods remain true to the narrative approach. Whilst I was aware that my own identity and values would impact my interpretation of the stories I was told, I was surprised at how often the application of the CQ framework illuminated my own biases and preconceptions. As such, as a researcher, I have been newly convinced of the value of such frameworks in guiding analysis and interpretation. Finally, the act of re-telling the narrators' stories for a new audience has taught me to consider the needs of the reader, whilst retaining the original voices. I have had to make many decisions about which stories to tell and what to include or leave out, to meet the requirements imposed by a

doctoral thesis. I am keenly aware that a different researcher may have chosen to tell a different story, and that I myself could provide additional narratives from the data that did not address the research questions. However, ultimately, I feel that what I am presenting here meets the requirements whilst remaining true to the voices of the narrators.

Appendix One: Interview transcript

Interview transcript: Pilar

The following is an anonymised transcript of an interview with 'Pilar', a professor at 'Spanish University 2', a private university in Spain.

To ensure an unbroken narrative, interviewer questions/prompts have been removed, unless they provide necessary context. Pre and post-interview conversation is not included, unless relevant to the research aims.

Interviewer: Was there anything that you wanted to ask me before we get started?

Pilar: No, but I want to tell you something. I'm also starting my doctorate and one of the points that... I'm still in the very preliminary phase. So one of the things that they wanted to research is maybe to make a scale in order to record an inventory of actions that facilitators do when they do a COIL, right and correlate that with the rate of effectiveness in achieving intercultural communication by the students. And I thought that your work and my work will be very much related. So, I'm happy when, when I saw the announcement from [COIL scholar] that you were doing this, I thought, oh, it's a good contact for me as well. But I will answer absolutely with what I know. I have done 2 or 3 COILs, and this is my experience.

Interviewer: Brilliant! Yeah, I think there probably will be lots of crossover, and it'd be great to, and just to keep in touch and chat more about it. And if there's anything I can do to help with yours...

So to start with then. Could I ask you just to introduce yourself?

Pilar: So I'm [Pilar]. I am actually right now, I am professor at [Spanish University 2]. Before that I was working in the US. I have been a teacher of primary and also secondary education, teaching Spanish as a second language. So that... in the university, in [Spanish University 2] I'm 3 years now and I am teaching in the area of education. So it is... I have different topics. My main topic is family and family relations, and the other one is innovation in education.

And another thing that I do is that I also teach in the Masters in bilingual education. So the other parties are methodology of bilingual education that I teach in English, and also I teach resources to teach Spanish as a second language, because this is my expertise, is teaching a second language in high school level. So this is me at the moment.

Interviewer: Thank you. And in your own words, then, could you tell me what COIL story?

Pilar: So I had a first experience that was not actually COIL, it was more like a virtual exchange that I did with the students in their 16, 17 years old. And so, after after Covid, all the International Exchange abroad. Physical International Exchange was limited, right? We were not allowed to do that. So that was in the

moment when I moved back to Spain, and then I contacted with a school, a high school here in Spain also, [Spanish University 2] has a high schools, and then the English professor there, and me as a facilitator, organize a virtual exchange with the students in [High School. Aat that moment, it was just an idea. Oh, like hey? We cannot do physical exchange? Let's do virtual exchange. And I didn't read anything about it. I had no clue on how to do it. We just figure out 6 different events where we had our students connected in zoom, sometimes, other times it was asynchronously.

And then we had a great experience. And then so during that time I heard about COIL...being at the... being more at the university level, right? And then I thought, 'Oh, there is something that is really actually done, and planned, and people know how to do this'. So and then I started to read about it, and I got interested in COIL. So that the following year we plan a virtual exchange again at the high school level, including also like a service project. And this... so it was more similar to a COIL, because it extended for the length of a year, with also 4 or 5 different moments to connect between the students., and we as professors. But our goal was to raise awareness about other peoples in their own schools. So we were... The groups were working together, let's say, in talking about education in Honduras, or education in Argentina, or education in 'Da da da'. So they're working together and figuring out how to show with a poster the differences in the educational systems in both the schools. And they have to plan and post these posters in their schools so that they would raise awareness in the rest of the school about problems or difficulties, or how the systems were in different countries.

So that was more organised in the structure. And the final result was not necessarily better than the other. In terms of the intercultural exchange, how the students felt about it and what were their emotions about connecting with other people. So this is year one, year 2. Year 3,that was last year - then I had a several COIL experiences at the university level. So my first was in Spanish, using Spanish as the language with the [Mexican University]. [Mexican University], they are very well organised. They had a COIL coordinator or global coordinator, and she was leading the path and setting the path for the professor in [Mexican University] and me. And so she would say, 'Okay, we are in the first meeting. This meeting is just to get to know each other, and to plan and to know what are the dates that you are planning to have your COIL. What are your subjects of interest, and try to figure out what do you want to do?' And then so she was leading the steps one by one that was super easy for me, a lot of work. And I felt that it was so well structured that I was able to have a successful COIL just because it was so well organised. And then the experience was good from my side.

My students had difficulties to connect with the students in Mexico. The students in Mexico had just come back after Covid, because they were closed for longer periods than us, so for them it was like, Oh, going back to school, you know. Everybody was a little bit slow down. You know, they had a slow pace, and my own students were 'We need to do this, need to do that, bla bla bla.' So that was a difficulty there to get together. So some groups were very successful, others not that much, but at the end the whole experience was good.

I think it was good also because I use a lot of class time for the COIL. I didn't let them just work by themselves. I was allotting some time in class every week during the 5 weeks of the COIL. I would allow them like 1 hour a week, for sure, in class, to work on that, to talk about that, or to express difficulties, to share among the different groups on what were their experience, how they were doing, how they were planning, and also at the very end, during the last reflection we were talking about what happened and what didn't happen, but should have happened. So that for them the learning was not only for what happened, but also what was omitted. So at the end they felt that it was a good experience, and I think that they had raised awareness about the other. That was one of the main points they were aware, or reflectively aware, of the different strategies that they used to connect with the other students. They also were aware of their differences, their cultural differences and I think I develop a little bit of a skills of listening and starting relations with people that they didn't know from another culture.

But it was, I think it was because there was a lot of you know, on top of them, and they, in fact, they all of them were Spanish speakers, right, the Mexicans and the Spanish and the Spanish, and they were aware also of the different terms that we would use to define something, and the differences on how do we approach learning, reading, critical reading, reading, comprehension. So writing, so they were aware of all of that. And that was the main purpose of the COIL, right?

So that was the first semester. And then I have another one. This one was in English. and we did it with [USA University 3]. And that one was in English, completely and then students in [USA University 3], were virtual students. They were... They didn't have a presence in the classroom while my students were present in the classroom. So that was a virtual class that they were taking at the University, and it was about critical literacy. And my students were in a class about methods of bilingual education. So the classes were different. But at the end it was good that they had to come up with a set of readings for elementary students. that would raise, or that would teach them, or help them or train them into critical analysis, critical reading, critical literature, critical analysis.

It was more difficult than the previous one. One: because my students were not...so much familiarized with the term critical literacy or critical thinking enough theoretically. They will have an idea. But they didn't really have the knowledge, the profound knowledge of what is this? And they approach it as, 'okay... this is a project in the class that we have to do, start and finish and get it done'. So it didn't... I feel... I don't think it was so brilliant as the previous one. My relation with the Professor from [USA University 3] was fantastic. We were 2 professors working from our side and 2 professors from their side. Our students were at the master level. So postgrad. And the other students were younger, they were at grade school. They were undergrads. Also, they have again difficulties to do it. They have to work asynchronously because it was again 6 hours of difference, and that make it a little bit more complex, I guess.

Also, I think that because we didn't weigh the same inside the subject. I mean, the evaluation didn't weigh the same percentage for me than for them. And I

think that made that the commitment of the student was not balanced. And that was like, maybe this is not a good idea. We have to agree that the deadlines... and that was another thing... deadlines were not the same day from one group for the other. So that didn't work well. Same thing with the way of the assessment, evaluation. And there was one of the activities in the COIL was different for me than for the students there. And that was also another difficulty, another trouble that is not needed. You know: sometimes we make things too complex, and it should be as simple - that's more simple, better.

And then we have another one also with the same group of students at the master level, and we did it with a [Dutch University 3]. And this one was very interesting, because the plan was not actually to do a COIL. The plan is that the students from the Netherlands would come to visit [Spanish City 2]. They would spend some days with us in class, and some days also visiting and implementing a lesson plan in a school that we would organise. So that was the final product, let's say, to deliver a lesson in a school. However, we decided that we had to work like a COIL that have face-to-face at the very end. That would be the present phase where students were exchanging physically right? They were working together physically.

And that was also very interesting, very interesting at the beginning, was a little bit difficult to plan, because, our students had to work with the students in the Netherlands, asynchronously planning a lesson. But we managed to give them the same, a structure of a lesson, plan and give them the different steps and deadlines that they have to be accomplishing that work. And at that moment the same group of students have had already, the previous COIL experience. So it was like, okay, we can improve this right because they have that experience before. This one was working a little bit more smoothly.

And for them, the highlight was to be able to get together to meet each other. I think they went out one of the days they got together informally, and that was also something that they like to do and getting to know each other. And then they were working in their groups the day previous to the delivery of the lesson plan, creating the materials, the posters, the worksheets that they were going to employ in their classes, in their lessons, and the following day, when they went to the school we had 2 things. One day was, was 2 days. Actually one day was a visit to the school and having a... and getting a...touring the school. And then the director of the school was explaining, how is this Spanish educational system. So that they - students from the Netherlands - were able to know what is this educational system in Spain? And compare and contrast with their own system.

So the conversation that they...was really very, very reachable for our students and for them as well, because we did this together. And then the second day was to deliver the lesson, and they had to deliver the lesson, that was a 10 min lesson. Then they have to deliver it 3 times, because they have 3 groups of the same class. And so they were able to interact among themselves and also with the students, and then improve that lesson every time they would deliver the lesson. Right?

So, and then we have a debrief. We took lunch together, so at the moment their conversation was flowing. It was going really well. And at the end they wrote a reflection part as well, and they said yes to do it again the following year, and trying to travel as well. Our Spanish students, they're willing to travel to the Netherlands the following year, so that experience will repeat this year. In fact, we have a meeting in September, early September to start planning how are we going to do it again this year.

That also created more opportunities to exchange between the 2 universities. So that our university has a lot of programs in the health area and their university are as well, is having... they have also health. Different, grades, right in health. So they are getting together as well to try, maybe to have teachers, professors, exchanges or research, collaborative research, or other kind of a project that we have can do internationally between the 2 universities. So what trying to say is that a COIL sometimes is an open door to make a more and to include more variety in the portfolio, internationalization portfolio, I guess we can call between the 2 universities.

And so this is in general my experience in COIL. I have again COILs this year. I have... I also 3 COILs this year. One with Mexico, not with the [Mexican University 1]; with [Mexican University 2]. And this one will be about cultural identity.

The second one will be again with [USA University 3], probably, and as well with [Dutch University 2], with the Netherlands.

Interviewer: <shares prompts>

Pilar: Yes. So there are some things that they didn't talk about before, like the biggest, right, is finding a partner. So that in my experiences I found, well, for my high school was my personal connections. Right? I got, I got my personal connections with yes, within [US City 4], and with [Spanish partner] here in Spain. But when I have done the COIL experiences at the university level I attend an... I attended to one of these matching partners events... I don't know, I don't remember how they call them right now. And then there is where I met the [Mexican University 1] professor. It was very helpful. It was very helpful, as well, that during this matching period that was, I think... I thought it was very fun. Because it was very well organised, perhaps you have attended to them as well? When they do like a general meeting, and then they do breakout rooms so that you get together with people that probably will have the same interest as you do. So, 1) it was very interesting to hear what people were doing at the Universities. So that was like, 'Whoa! I haven't done this, and I think it could be very interesting', or 'Oh, I can do something with people in math! Even though my my areas are not stem related' and so that was very interesting, and then breaking it down little bit smaller, getting to know and get the contacts of people that I thought that I could match well. And my criterias for matching were 1) the subject or the topic they wanted to explore, that if that topic they wanted to explore could fit on my syllabus.

Then I could be, 'okay. If that fits because the time fits, and also the subject. The topic fits then I can do a COIL with this person'. Also, if my feeling was that

though I can do a good connection with this person? So and then I started to... After that I started to connect with these people. And this is how we got together.

I think that also our COIL coordinator was doing follow-ups, and that will help me as well to, to don't let it sit in my drawer. To not like... Oh, he would tell me, 'oh, Maria, did you find someone? Did you? Were you able to do that much?' And that was kind of an encouragement point as well for me to make the effort to do calls.

So that was the finding a partner question that you see or teaching the COIL. Teaching the COIL, one good moment where, when I share videos with my students about the other university. So they had a visual, or what? What is these people? What people? Where are they? Like putting them in a context. I think that helped them. They like it. They'd like to do that. And in my first experience was a memorable moment when they started to share their snapchats. So.. and so I was like, 'Oh, wow!' This is what you're looking for, right? You're professor of languages, you are looking for opportunities to talk with native speakers. Look at that: they are doing it spontaneously! Fantastic, awesome! That was the best.

The other part also, at the university level is that I would make teams, and, so groups in teams so that they could chat in the groups. But they didn't use them. They prefer to use their Whatsapp groups or any other instruments. So that was another part that it was like, Okay, we need to reframe this part and let them a little bit more freedom to get together and to do their work.

The designing of the COIL. For me... my students didn't do anything. It was me with the other professor designing the COIL. My first experience with [Mexican University 1] was fantastic because they were very well organised. They had, let's say, a form, where all the different things that we have to cover were there like our schedule, our times, our holidays, our main goals, that we decided we were our main goals for the COIL, and we also link the main goals today. And then the different phases like, What are we going to do for the ice breaker? How many days are we going to employ? How many sessions are we going to employ for the ice breaker? Then the 3 collaborative sessions: How are going to do them? What is the evidence that we're going to collect from the students that they have done it? And the last one, the reflection part: How are the questions that we wanted the students to do? and the platforms that we're going to use? So that, I think, helped me a lot. Me and the other professor as well, help us a lot to get to know, what are we doing? It was also very useful to share that with the students together with a presentation, so that the students had 1 point where they would go to and see, okay, this is where I am now, and this is the next step.

Can we move forward if we want to, or not? Or are we on time or not? What are the resources that we need to use? Everything was in the same place and that helped a lot, and it was my starting point also, for the other COILs that I have developed later on.

So for me in the designing part, [Mexican University 1] did a great job on organising all that.

And what were your international experiences? Well, I think I have talk about this as well: cultural shock. I can tell you many stories about cultural shock, because, as I said, I was 14 years living in the US from Spain. So I have many, many stories about... So it was not something really related with COIL, but yes, with my previous experience, and I have to say that because I have experienced all this, I feel it moved to working COIL and to provide opportunities for cultural exchange among students. I think this is very, very important these days, and is an eye-opener, like a window that we open to the world, to our students from the window. So all the opportunities that we can provide them to work together, or at least to get to know each other. To know people with a purpose. I think we are preparing them for the future much better. And we are also kind of making them click something in their minds to be more open minded, and flexible in direct interactions with people from other cultures. We cannot forget that we cannot be living, not thinking that the world is diverse and different. And there is no more, I guess, one single culture in a classroom, and, as I said, I am professor in the education, in the grade of education, so that they have to be working with diverse environment. They are going to have diverse students, culturally diverse and also diverse due to other needs that the students may have. Same thing with their families. So that if they don't have the opportunity to work with people from other cultures. They won't be able to be sensitive to other people's cultures in their own classes. Right?

In my university, in the classes they have, they are very homogeneous. So most of my students are girls. I don't have boys most of the time. And they are all, I would say, uni-cultural. I don't know, opening the opportunity to them for them to get to know other people. Are there ways of working, even from different, multiple disciplines? Not only culturally, I think it would be something that they will appreciate in the future

About motivation. I think I have been talking about these questions already. First introduction... This is what I explained to you at the beginning, in my introduction as well. I don't, I don't think I have anything else to add about it.

About the post COIL reflections. I think it's a good idea to make the students do their post-COIL reflections with meaningful questions about the process and also about the final result in terms of their cultural exchange that they have lived, that they have experienced.

But I think that it is also important to do it between the teachers. Like we have finished everything and focused not only on the pedagogy of the COIL or the content or subject, the specific topics, but also on our experience as professors from different cultures, different universities working together for something. Sometimes my experience on that was that, for example, with a COIL that I did with [Mexican University 1] was one part that was directed to us. So you have finished. Now sit and do your reflection. And that was helpful because we didn't postpone it. We have to do it. We did it. It was closer to time of the finish of the COIL than with the other universities, for example, with [USA University 3].

We actually are going to present in the IVEC in Brazil one flash communication, one of these short communications. So we have been working together. After

we finish, we have our reflection and now we're starting to work together again in order to prepare for the conference.

And with [COIL partner] for example, because they were going on vacation, and then we were going on vacation, and we didn't have anybody behind us telling us, 'Hey, you have to sit and do your post-COIL reflection': We haven't done it yet. So this is going to happen now in September when we finish this in May. So this is so... this is why I think that at the university level is important to have someone following up all the COILs that are happening at the university. And I don't know if it is one coordinator or one team of people depending on how many COILs are in that university or in that school. But having someone that not only helps you to facilitate, but is supporting you during the process. Is giving... You know is giving you... The company is providing support along the way.

And I think I have covered everything

Interviewer: Could you give me just a little bit more insight as to what support do you get institutionally to help?

Pilar: Yes. So, let me start with from my side, from my university, so from my university, we have one person that I think that because he like to do exchanges is the one that has... developed more in this area. So he from the university's side, is a professor of economy and marketing. So he does his work as a professor and he also a kind of coaches. And as he can, because he really doesn't really have much time. He coaches or give us resources, provides resources on how to do COIL. So he is the COIL coordinator. He sends us emails about matching events. And that could happen, or he has set up a team in teams, and people that like COIL get into that team where you can find a lot of resources like articles or reading materials that we can use, or a presentations that professors have used to explain. 'What is a COIL?' or forms or formats that we can use to get organised. So everything is there. You have one 'go to' place in order to find something related with COIL.

The other thing that we have is that when we start a COIL we have to register in a form

so that the school knows that you're doing a COIL. I think that the main reason to do that at the beginning was to follow up innovation that the professors could do in their classes. Nowadays is more also a way to capture data about intercultural competence. So that the students could do - actually is not mandatory, but if the facilitator wants to, they can do - some time to answer a question about their... is like a pre-test, post test kind of thing to see what is the gain they have achieved during the COIL process. And then this person, this coordinator, doesn't really follow up because he's alone with all the COILs that we have at the university. He cannot do it. But then, from time to time he would facilitate a professional development training or a professional development coffee get together to exchange ideas.

So this is what we do from the school side. He works in coordination with the international coordinators that we have in each of the schools and also at the university level. And it works, they are called international coordinator, in our

schools, works independently and trying to get international connections. And then anything that we can think that could work, we follow up like what I was explaining about our relation with the university in the Netherlands. So we have a COIL that we can follow up with more opportunities to do other things, and then we pass it to the International Department. This is from our side.

My experience with the [Mexican University 1], I think, was the best. Because they did have a COIL coordinator that would start the conversations, be with us during the conversations at the beginning. She could facilitate also, for example, the links to padlets. If we decided that we were going to do 3 activities using padlet, she would create the padlet and facilitate the links if we had to set up a Zoom Meetings. She would send us the zoom link, and everything. She would help us, support us in this part as well, which is not difficult, it is just time consuming. So she was doing that for us. They would also review this, a common form that we had to do all the planning and then provide us feedback and tell us 'in this point you need to be more specific, because so and so', whatever and the other thing she would do was to facilitate us with a template of a presentation. And she would say, 'This is the template that you may or may not use, but this is something that will help you to introduce what is COIL for your students'. So that [Mexican University 1] and myself, we're using exactly the same information. And that helps the students to both know what the other group knew. So that was very helpful. She also facilitated us with an excel spreadsheet to include all the names of our students, all their emails, their nationalities, or and also their majors, because my students were all on the same major, but these students from the [Mexican University 1], they were from different majors, taking an intercultural class. So do we have all of them also there, and that helped us also to give, provide the assessment. So that I would see how the other teacher was assessing. And she was seeing what I was assessing to my students. So we had that opportunity to balance. So that was very helpful, and also it facilitated us to make the groups, right? Once you have a spreadsheet and then put the colours, so it helped a lot to get organized. I could do it, yes, but she knew what I needed to put in the spreadsheet, you know. So that was fantastic. And then she was, as I said, she was following us along the process. And at some point she said, 'You're by yourself. You're working very well. I will get back to you at the end. You don't need me before now.' She knew on which day are we finishing the COIL, and a week later she would contact us.

'Hey, how is it?' And so she was proactive. Of course it was always available at our demand, but it was good that she was proactive. So these are the 2, with [other university], they also have a COIL coordinator. So she facilitated the first meeting that I had with the professor.

Now we are working on the design phase, and he and I are working together by ourselves. So she didn't facilitate any form or any presentation or anything. We are using my... the ones that I have, and modifying from them. So that's it. Oh, my gosh, they are fantastic! You have to talk with them. Yeah, very, very well organised. Yeah. Well, they are full time dedicated to the international support of whatever it is, students that are going to abroad on an abroad exchange and abroad experience. Or a professors that are working on something international. So yeah.

Interviewer: What led you to decide to do your PhD on the topic of COIL?

Pilar: Well, I think it's my life. I think it was my life. So when I, this... I mean being a professor, or dedicating my time to education, is like a second, a second part of my life. I was... when I started working, and when I was in my 20 something I was working in human resources, at some point I decided not to work and get with my family. We moved to the US and I volunteer a lot there in the education system, so that made me get into the education world, right? And then, when Covid happened, I like technology a lot. So I'm one of the teachers that before COIL, I was using technology for my classes a lot. I had the opportunity to work with a schools where the students had one ipad per student from the beginning, from 2012 when I started, I was in high-tech schools. And then so technology and my international experience kind of get together in a COIL, right. So I was a strong believer of opening the doors to the world to students through teaching Spanish as a second language. I saw that with my students, and I always was thinking oh, we need something else. We need pen pals, or we need to have students that talk with each other and talk about their cultural differences, and so on. So. And we were doing that, and with the physical exchanges that would happen over the summer. So one year I was one of the professors going with the students abroad, and then I kind of came across, really noticing how the students change, how they transform. If you work with them intentionally, not like they go for an exchange. And it's not related with language, or that no, there was a language component and a cultural component on it. And when the Covid happened that I thought they are going to miss this opportunity, let's try to do something, let's do virtual exchange.

And I didn't know that that thing existed actually. So I like to do it. And then I... but this is when I read about what is COIL. Oh, there is something, there is something that already has happened in the world about that. So I read about that, and then I facilitate the COILs for that reason.

So my PhD is related with that, because I think... I have to do something. I mean, doing a PhD for me is like, I will never use it, because I am almost 60. So it's like, 'why am I doing this?' If I have to do something, that it really engages me? That is interesting for me to read about. So it's connected with my personal experience, and it is connected with what I want for my students as well.

Appendix Two: Ethical approval

Date Sent: Monday, July 17, 2023 12:05 PM

From: ERM

To: <n.beer@lancaster.ac.uk>

CC: <r.budd@lancaster.ac.uk>

Subject: EdRes-2023-3695-EdAp-1 Ethics approval from Research Ethics Committee

Name: Nicola Beer

Supervisor: Richard Budd

Department: Educational Research

Ed Res REC Reference: EdRes-2023-3695-EdAp-1

Title: Exploring staff experiences of Collaborative Online International Learning

Dear NicolaBeer,

Thank you for submitting your ethics application in REAMS. The application was recommended for approval by the Ed Res Research Ethics Committee, and on behalf of the Committee, I can confirm that approval has been granted for this application.

As Principal Investigator/Co-Investigator your responsibilities include:

- ensuring that (where applicable) all the necessary legal and regulatory requirements in order to conduct the research are met, and the necessary licences and approvals have been obtained.
- reporting any ethics-related issues that occur during the course of the research or arising from the research to the Research Ethics Officer at the email address below (e.g. unforeseen ethical issues, complaints about the conduct of the research, adverse reactions such as extreme distress).
- submitting any changes to your application, including in your participant facing materials (see [attached amendment guidance](#)).

Please keep a copy of this email for your records. Please contact me if you have any queries or require further information.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Richard Budd and Dr Jonathan Vincent

Co Chairs of Education Research Ethics committee fass.lumsethics@lancaster.ac.uk

Page 1 of 1

Appendix Three: Participant information sheet



Participant information sheet

Exploring staff experiences of Collaborative Online International Learning

For further information about how Lancaster University processes personal data for research purposes and your data rights please visit our webpage:
www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/data-protection

For further information about how Lancaster University processes personal data for research purposes and your data rights please visit our webpage:
www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/data-protection

I am a PhD student at Lancaster University and I would like to invite you to take part in a research study exploring how staff in Higher Education experience COIL projects, and whether components of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) feature in their accounts.

Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the study about?

The aim of this research is to provide more theoretical and practical knowledge of Higher Education teachers' experience of Collaborative Online International Learning, within the context of their own Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Learning. The researcher recognises that the act of planning and facilitating a COIL is as much of an intercultural experience for the teachers as it is for the student and wishes to explore why and how teachers navigate this experience.

Why have I been approached?

You have been approached because you have been involved in planning and delivering at least one COIL project, and I am interested in hearing from you what that experience was like.

I would be very grateful if you would agree to take part in this study.

Do I have to take part?

No. It's completely up to you to decide whether or not you take part. Your participation is voluntary.

If you know me in a personal or professional capacity, please be assured that participation/non-participation will not impact your relationship with me and participation is intended to be genuinely voluntary.

What will I be asked to do if I take part?

If you decided to take part, this would involve the following:

-
1. Taking part in one interview, which will last approximately 90 minutes. This can take place face-to-face or online via Zoom, as you prefer.
 2. Reviewing a transcription of the interview and providing any corrections or additional information as you wish.

Will my data be identifiable?

The data collected for this study will be stored securely in University approved secure cloud storage and only the researchers conducting this study will have access to this data. The files on the computer will be encrypted (that is no-one other than the researcher will be able to access them) and the computer itself password protected.

Audio recordings will be destroyed once the project has been examined.

The typed version of your interview will be made anonymous by removing any identifying information including your name. Anonymised direct quotations from your interview may be used in the reports or publications from the study, so your name will not be attached to them. All reasonable steps will be taken to protect the anonymity of the participants involved in this project.

There are some limits to confidentiality: if what is said in the interview makes me think that you, or someone else, is at significant risk of harm, I will have to break confidentiality and speak to a member of staff about this. If possible, I will tell you if I have to do this.

What will happen to the results?

The results will be summarised and reported in a thesis and may be submitted for publication in an academic or professional journal, or at academic/practitioner conferences.

When writing up the findings from this study, I would like to reproduce some of the views and ideas you shared with me. I will only use anonymised quotes (e.g. from my interview with you), so that although I will use your exact words, all reasonable steps will be taken to protect your anonymity in our publications.

Are there any risks?

There are no risks anticipated with participating in this study. However, you will be asked to recount your personal experiences of intercultural encounters. If this is likely to be a distressing or triggering topic for you then you should not take part. If you experience any distress following participation you are encouraged to inform the researcher.

Are there any benefits to taking part?

Although you may find participating interesting, there are no direct benefits in taking part.

What if I change my mind?

If you change your mind, you are free to withdraw at any time during your participation in this study. If you want to withdraw, please let me know, and I will extract any ideas or information (=data) you contributed to the study and destroy them. However, it is difficult and often impossible to take out data from one specific participant when this has already been anonymised or pooled together with other people's data. Therefore, you can only withdraw up to 2 weeks after taking part in the study.

Where can I obtain further information about the study if I need it?

If you have any questions about the study, please contact the main researcher:

Nicola Beer on n.beer@lancaster.ac.uk

Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint or raise concerns about any aspect of this study and do not want to speak to the researcher, you can contact:

Brett Bligh Director of the Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning on

b.bligh@lancaster.ac.uk

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Lancaster Management School's Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for considering your participation in this project.

Appendix Four: Consent form



CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Exploring staff experiences of Collaborative Online International Learning

Before you consent to participating in the study we ask that you read the participant information sheet and **mark each box below with your initials** if you agree. If you have any questions or queries before signing the consent form please speak to the principal investigator:

Name of Researchers: Nicola Beer

Email: n.beer@lancaster.ac.uk

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet and fully understand what is expected of me within this study	
2. I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask any questions and to have them answered	
3. I understand that my interview will be audio recorded and then made into an anonymised written transcript	
4. I understand that audio recordings will be kept until the research project has been examined	
5. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason	
6. I understand that once my data have been anonymised and incorporated into themes it might not be possible for it to be withdrawn, though every attempt will be made to extract my data. Requests for data to be withdrawn must be made within two weeks of the interview	
7. I understand that the information from my interview will be pooled with other participants' responses, anonymised and may be published; all reasonable steps will be taken to protect the anonymity of the participants involved in this project	
8. I consent to information and quotations from my interview being used in reports, conferences and training events	
9. I understand that the researcher will discuss data with their supervisor as needed	

10. I understand that any information I give will remain confidential and anonymous unless it is thought that there is a risk of harm to myself or others, in which case the principal investigator will need to share this information with their research supervisor	
11. I consent to Lancaster University keeping written transcriptions of the interview for 10 years after the study has finished.	
12. I consent to take part in the above study	

Name of Participant Date Signature

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent_____
Date _____ Day/month/year

One copy of this form will be given to the participant and the original kept in the files of the researcher at Lancaster University

Appendix Five: Interview protocol

Narrative Interview schedule

Phase 1: Initiation

(Welcome and establish rapport) My name is Nicola and I am a PhD student exploring staff experiences of COIL/Virtual exchange [it is important to use the terminology that is familiar to the participant]. I understand that you have previously run a COIL project and so I am very interested to hear more about your personal experience.

(Purpose) Today I would like to invite you to tell me about your COIL experience(s), in your own words.

(Motivation) From your story, and those of others, I hope to gain more insight into how people experience the process of setting up a COIL project, and the skills, competencies and traits that are involved.

(Time line and process) The interview should take about 90 minutes. Can you confirm that you are happy for me to record this? I will share a verbatim transcript for your approval after the interview.

This is intended to be a narrative interview, which is a little different to the typical question and answer format of an interview. I will start by asking you just one question about your experience, and I'd like you to take your time to tell me your story as it relates to the question. I will be very quiet. Once you have finished telling me your story, I will check whether there is anything else you'd like to say before asking some follow up questions about your story so far. The idea is that between us we construct a narrative that represents your experience of COIL, in your words. Please assume I know nothing about your experience, or about running or participating in a COIL project.

Phase 2: Main narration

Q: Can you tell me your COIL story?

When the narration starts, it must not be interrupted until the interviewee pauses and signals that they have finished the story. During the narration, the interviewer provides only non-verbal signal of active listening, and explicit encouragement to continue the narration.

Q: Is there anything else you want to say?

Q: I'm now going to show you a poster with some topics related to COIL. Is there anything you would like to talk more about?

[Prop: prompt poster].

Phase 3: Clarifying questions

Rules of the clarification phase:

- Do not ask 'why' questions; instead ask questions relating to events, or topics of the research project e.g. 'What happened before/after that?'
- Do not ask directly for opinions, attitudes, or causes as this invites justifications. Every narrative will include these, but they should occur spontaneously rather than being prompted.
- Only ask immanent questions (deriving from the narrative), using the words of the informant. These may or may not be related to the exmanent question of the research.

Examples of potential questions:

- Can you tell me more about X?
- What happened before/after x/y event?
- What happened when you did [that]?
- What was your partner's role here?
- What was the student experience during this?
- What are your reflections on the experience?

Phase 4: Concluding talk

Thank you, I'm now going to stop the recording [Recording is stopped].

This is an opportunity to ask any 'why' questions and to clarify meaning if required.

Post interview

Memory protocol: capture initial thoughts and summarise phase 4 immediately after the interview has taken place.

Appendix Six: Codes and code families

Name	Files	References	Created on	Created...	Modified on	Modified by	Color
☒ Behaviour	4	5	18 Jan 2024 at 14:00	NB	29 Aug 2024 at 14:...	NB	●
☐ Non-verbal	4	5	18 Jan 2024 at 14:00	NB	11 Aug 2024 at 15:21	NB	●
☐ Verbal	1	1	18 Jan 2024 at 14:00	NB	23 Mar 2024 at 11:21	NB	●
☐ Blended Intensive Pro...	2	4	17 Mar 2024 at 12:59	NB	23 Mar 2024 at 14:...	NB	
☐ Challenge	9	48	18 Jan 2024 at 14:27	NB	30 Mar 2024 at 11:31	NB	
☒ Cognition	10	40	18 Jan 2024 at 13:54	NB	30 Aug 2024 at 11:...	NB	●
☐ Business	10	17	18 Jan 2024 at 13:54	NB	29 Mar 2024 at 12:11	NB	●
☐ Interpersonal	6	14	18 Jan 2024 at 13:55	NB	10 Aug 2024 at 16:...	NB	●
☐ Socio-linguistic	8	20	18 Jan 2024 at 13:55	NB	30 Mar 2024 at 11:12	NB	●
☒ COIL Design	10	78	18 Jan 2024 at 15:01	NB	8 Mar 2025 at 09:48	NB	
☐ assessment	10	28	17 Mar 2024 at 12:16	NB	1 Apr 2024 at 13:37	NB	
☐ COIL topic choice	9	26	18 Jan 2024 at 14:24	NB	30 Mar 2024 at 11:...	NB	
☐ Knowledge of COIL	9	47	22 Jan 2024 at 13:...	NB	19 Aug 2024 at 12:...	NB	
☐ Meeting COIL criteria	4	13	22 Jan 2024 at 13:...	NB	1 Apr 2024 at 13:41	NB	
☐ reflection	9	25	18 Jan 2024 at 15:01	NB	30 Mar 2024 at 11:...	NB	
☐ Student understand...	10	104	23 Jan 2024 at 10:...	NB	30 Aug 2024 at 11:...	NB	
☐ digital literacy	9	19	17 Mar 2024 at 12:32	NB	1 Apr 2024 at 13:39	NB	
☐ Future research	1	1	29 Aug 2024 at 14:...	NB	29 Aug 2024 at 14:...	NB	
☐ Interesting quotes	10	72	18 Jan 2024 at 15:13	NB	8 Mar 2025 at 11:38	NB	
☒ International experience	9	33	18 Jan 2024 at 14:07	NB	2 Apr 2024 at 15:51	NB	●
☐ international students	5	8	23 Mar 2024 at 12:...	NB	30 Mar 2024 at 11:...	NB	
☐ Leadership	4	9	23 Jan 2024 at 10:...	NB	30 Mar 2024 at 09:...	NB	
☒ Metacognition	9	25	18 Jan 2024 at 13:58	NB	19 Aug 2024 at 13:14	NB	●
☐ Awareness	7	14	18 Jan 2024 at 13:58	NB	30 Mar 2024 at 11:...	NB	●
☐ Checking	3	5	18 Jan 2024 at 13:59	NB	13 Apr 2024 at 10:56	NB	●
☐ Planning	6	14	18 Jan 2024 at 13:59	NB	10 Aug 2024 at 17:...	NB	●
☐ misunderstanding	2	2	24 Mar 2024 at 17:...	NB	26 Mar 2024 at 09:...	NB	
☒ Motivation	9	39	18 Jan 2024 at 13:56	NB	19 Aug 2024 at 12:...	NB	●
☐ employability	9	19	23 Jan 2024 at 09:...	NB	30 Mar 2024 at 11:...	NB	
☐ External factors (e.g...	7	13	22 Jan 2024 at 13:...	NB	29 Mar 2024 at 12:...	NB	
☒ Extrinsic	8	30	18 Jan 2024 at 13:57	NB	30 Mar 2024 at 10:...	NB	●
☐ Institutional impe...	10	48	3 Mar 2024 at 11:45	NB	29 Aug 2024 at 14:...	NB	
☐ Student ICC	9	73	3 Mar 2024 at 12:03	NB	30 Aug 2024 at 11:...	NB	
☐ financial	4	8	17 Mar 2024 at 13:02	NB	23 Mar 2024 at 18:...	NB	
☐ Inclusion	4	9	23 Mar 2024 at 14:...	NB	26 Mar 2024 at 09:...	NB	
☐ Intrinsic	8	31	18 Jan 2024 at 13:57	NB	30 Mar 2024 at 10:...	NB	●
☐ Personal benefit	6	12	22 Jan 2024 at 13:...	NB	30 Mar 2024 at 09:...	NB	
☐ Self efficacy	5	9	18 Jan 2024 at 13:58	NB	26 Mar 2024 at 09:...	NB	●
☐ Student benefit	9	51	22 Jan 2024 at 13:...	NB	30 Mar 2024 at 11:...	NB	
☐ Sustainability	2	3	23 Jan 2024 at 10:...	NB	23 Mar 2024 at 12:...	NB	
☒ Partner	9	58	18 Jan 2024 at 14:25	NB	30 Mar 2024 at 11:15	NB	
☐ Finding a partner	10	44	18 Jan 2024 at 14:50	NB	1 Apr 2024 at 13:34	NB	
☐ Good relationship	9	34	18 Jan 2024 at 14:26	NB	30 Mar 2024 at 10:...	NB	
☐ Poor relationship	4	8	18 Jan 2024 at 14:26	NB	30 Mar 2024 at 10:...	NB	
☐ Poor experience	1	4	17 Mar 2024 at 11:51	NB	17 Mar 2024 at 13:16	NB	
☐ Potential extract	10	113	9 Aug 2024 at 13:29	NB	30 Aug 2024 at 12:...	NB	
☐ Research	8	22	18 Jan 2024 at 15:04	NB	30 Mar 2024 at 11:27	NB	
☐ Student feedback - ne...	1	1	3 Mar 2024 at 12:09	NB	3 Mar 2024 at 12:09	NB	
☐ Success or failure	10	72	23 Jan 2024 at 10:...	NB	30 Aug 2024 at 12:...	NB	
☒ Support and training	10	50	18 Jan 2024 at 14:17	NB	30 Aug 2024 at 11:31	NB	●
☐ Process	4	8	18 Jan 2024 at 15:08	NB	1 Apr 2024 at 13:38	NB	
☐ Systems and process	8	17	23 Mar 2024 at 11:...	NB	1 Apr 2024 at 13:35	NB	
☐ Technology	10	47	18 Jan 2024 at 14:57	NB	30 Mar 2024 at 11:...	NB	

Appendix Seven: Invitation to interview

Beer, Nicola (Postgraduate Researcher)



To:stella@university.ac.uk
Fri 8/11/2023 9:27 AM

ConsentForm-4.docx
35 KB



ParticipantInformationSheetAug.docx
42 KB

2 attachments (77 KB) Save all to OneDrive - Lancaster University Download all



Dear [Stella],

Thank you so much for signing up to take part in an interview for my PhD research, which is exploring staff experiences of COIL/Virtual Exchange. I am really looking forward to hearing all about your experience.

I hope that this suggested time is convenient for you. If you are unable to make it then please feel free to suggest an alternative time.

The interview will take place online via Zoom and a link to join is provided in this invitation. Should you have any difficulties accessing the session, please let me know. You can contact me via this email address, or by phone/WhatsApp on +44 (0)7894 901610.

I would appreciate it if you could read the attached participant information sheet, and sign and return the consent form prior to the interview.

There is no need to do any preparation for the interview itself, I am simply interested in hearing in your own words what your experience of COIL has been like.

With best wishes,
Nik

List of abbreviations

COIL Collaborative Online International Learning

CQ Cultural Intelligence

IaH Internationalisation at Home

IC Intercultural Competence

IoC Internationalisation of the Curriculum

VE Virtual Exchange

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