

## THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS UNDER THE COLLABORATIVE ONLINE INTERNATIONAL LEARNING (COIL) PROGRAM: LOOKING AT SDG 12

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Available Online: May 2023

Revised: April 2023

Accepted: February 2022

Received: January 2022

Volume I Issue 2 (2023)

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.8031024

E-ISSN: 2984-7184

P-ISSN: 2984-7176

<https://guildofeducatorstesolinternational.com/research/>

### Abstract

Collaborative learning emphasizes student-to-student interaction and the instructor's role as a facilitator. Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) was founded in 2005 by the State University of New York (SUNY) to help schools adapt their single classroom courses to an online, collaborative format and establish strong collaborations with professors with whom they would join classes and co-teach using SUNY COIL conferences and website, as well as pre-established partnerships between the institutions. However, as the globe becomes increasingly interconnected, educational challenges aimed at cultivating intercultural competency become more important (Ceo-DiFrancesco & Bender-Slack, 2016). That is why this study aimed to (1) understand the lived experience of students who went under the COIL program in relation to SDG 12, (2) review the new knowledge students obtained when they took part in the COIL program in relation to SDG 12, and (3) discover the challenges students encountered while participating in the COIL program in relation to SDG 12. The researcher surveyed Filipino and Japanese students who participated in the COIL program concerning SDG12 from St. Patrick School of Quezon City, Kwansai Gakuin University, and Meiwa Senior High School. The study employed qualitative phenomenological research, and pertinent data were obtained through an open-ended survey questionnaire. The study was analyzed using Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method. The results showed that the lived experiences of students who went under the COIL program in relation to SD12 have something to do with all their learnings and enjoyable experiences, intercultural and global interactions, and environmental discussions and action plans related to SDG 12. Moreover, students learned and understood better the negative impact of waste on the environment, environmental awareness and practices, the culture and norms in the Philippines and Japan, and the importance and benefits of collaboration. Lastly, the study also revealed the different challenges students encounter while participating in the COIL program in relation to SDG 12, such as cultural differences, language barriers, technical difficulties, and difficulties in experimentation. Thus, it was recommended to learn to adapt to everyone and adjust according to countries' different cultures, practice and be proficient with the English language, have backup devices and platforms to use to ease technological problems, and improve implementations of experiments.

**Keywords:** *Collaborative learning, Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), Sustainable Development Goals, Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 12*

### INTRODUCTION

Collaborative learning is broadly defined as a method of learning that takes place in situations where emphasis is placed on student-to-student interaction in the learning process, and the instructor's role of being a facilitator (a "guide-on-the-side"). Additionally, online collaborative learning, also known as computer-supported collaborative learning, online cooperative learning, and online group work, has been shown to promote active peer-to-peer engagement, which may

result in knowledge co-construction. When an online collaborative international or cross-cultural learning environment is imbued with the concept of internationalization, one is dealing with collaborative international or cross-cultural learning (Kayumova & Sadykova, 2016).

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) was founded in 2005 by the State University of New York (SUNY), with the purpose of assisting schools in adapting their single classroom courses to an online, collaborative format and establishing strong collaborations with professors with whom they would join classes and co-teach utilizing the resources available via SUNY COIL conferences and website, as well as pre-established partnerships between the institutions. Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) opportunities enable students to engage in intercultural learning without the need for travel or study overseas. It has continued to gain in popularity as an intercultural educational strategy, especially as institutions of higher education pursue internationalization. When implemented correctly, online (synchronous and asynchronous) means of communication across cultures may provide chances for cultural exposure in which students reflect on their own cultural experiences and learn from their peers in another location (Katre, 2020). However, as the globe becomes increasingly interconnected, educational challenges aimed at cultivating intercultural competency becomes more important (Ceo-DiFrancesco & Bender-Slack, 2016). In an ideal world, these objectives may be accomplished by a study abroad experience for all students, exposing them to a different cultural perspective through an immersive experience. While there are several study abroad programs available, the truth is that only a small percentage of students can participate in long- or short-term study abroad programs. Financial constraints, employment obligations, and family obligations restrict some students from enrolling in short- or long-term study abroad programs (Institute of International Education, 2013). This is where prospects for Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) as an intercultural educational strategy gain prominence. The Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) model aims to develop team-taught coursework that connects university classrooms from various nations, while also giving students the opportunity to build cross-cultural awareness, subject-matter expertise, communication, and group cooperation skills online (Vahed & Steven Lavine, 2019).

## Objectives

The problem of the study is to investigate the lived experiences of students who participated in the COIL program in relation to Sustainable Development Goal 12 (SDG12). While COIL is used as an alternate method in a variety of locations across the globe, it has not yet been institutionalized in higher curriculums. Substantial research has been conducted on the activities and perspectives of the institution's staff and professors, but little is known on the perspectives of students, their assessment of COIL programs, and the effect COIL has had on their education and cultural awareness (Reed, 2016). The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to examine the unique experiences, knowledge, and challenges that students encountered when they participated in the COIL program in relation to SDG12. The problem of the study will be answered by the following research questions:

1. What is the lived experience of students who participated in the COIL program in relation to SDG12?
2. What new knowledge did students who took part in the COIL program in relation to SDG12 obtain?
3. What challenges did students encounter while participating in the COIL program in relation to SDG12?

## METHODS

### Research Design

This study made use of a phenomenological qualitative research design to further investigate the lived experiences of students who participated in the COIL program in relation to Sustainable Development Goal 12 (SDG12).

In recent years, qualitative research has experienced unprecedented growth and diversification as it has established itself as an established and respected research method across a wide range of disciplines and contexts. Finding a common definition of qualitative research that is accepted by most qualitative research approaches and researchers has become increasingly difficult. Qualitative research is no longer simply "not quantitative research," but has developed its own identity (or perhaps multiple identities) (Flick, 2018).

On the other hand, phenomenological research is a qualitative research approach that seeks to understand and describe a phenomenon's universal essence. The method investigates people's everyday experiences while suspending the researchers' preconceived notions about the phenomenon. In other words, phenomenological research investigates lived experiences in order to gain a better understanding of how people interpret those experiences. Phenomenological researchers believe that people use a universal structure or essence to make sense of their experiences. They interpret the feelings, perceptions, and beliefs of the participants in order to clarify the essence of the phenomenon under investigation. The researcher must bracket any prior assumptions they have about the experience or phenomenon when conducting phenomenological research (Groenewald, 2004).

### Population and Sampling

The participants of the study were Filipino and Japanese students who participated in the COIL program concerning SDG12 from St. Patrick School of Quezon City, Kwansai Gakuin University and Meiwa Senior High School. The researcher used a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sample that is chosen based on population characteristics and the study's objective. It is also known as selective, judgmental, or subjective sampling (Crossman, 2020). Purposive sampling refers to a group of sampling techniques that rely on the researcher's discretion in selecting the units to be studied (e.g., people, cases/organizations, events, or pieces of data). Maximum variation sampling, homogeneous sampling, typical case sampling, extreme (deviant) case sampling, total population sampling, and expert sampling are examples of purposive sampling techniques (Sharma, 2017).

### Instrumentation

Research Question	Instrument
1. What is the lived experience of students who participated in the COIL program in relation to SDG12?	Open-Ended Questionnaire
2. What new knowledge did students who took part in the COIL program in relation to SDG12 obtained?	Open-Ended Questionnaire
3. What challenges did students encounter while participating in the COIL program in relation to SDG12?	Open-Ended Questionnaire

Table 1: Data Collection Method of the Study

To gather information for the study, the researcher used an open-ended questionnaire. Open-ended questions cannot be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no,' but rather require the respondent to elaborate on their points. Open-ended questions allow researchers to see things from the perspective of the respondent because they receive feedback in their own words rather than stock answers. Researchers can use spreadsheets to analyze open-ended questions, view qualitative trends, and even identify elements that stand out with word cloud visualizations (Dossetto, 2020).

## **Data Collection**

The researcher proposed to the research adviser, Dr. Dary E. Dacanay, which instrument was to be used in the study. After the research adviser validated the proposed instrument, the researcher proceeded to ask permission from selected students to conduct the study. The researcher drafted an invitation letter and sent it to prospective respondents via email or Facebook messenger. The researcher immediately distributed the letter of consent and open-ended questionnaire to the respondents once they have agreed to participate in the study. Respondents had three days to complete their responses but may request an extension if necessary. After the respondents completed the open-ended questionnaire, the researcher collected and analysed the data for interpretation before providing the study's conclusion and recommendations.

## **Data Analysis**

The study was analyzed using Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method. According to the University of Huddersfield Repository, Colaizzi's (1978) distinct seven-step method offers a thorough analysis, with each phase remaining close to the data. The final product is a concise but comprehensive description of the phenomenon under investigation, which was validated by the participants who generated it. The method relies on comprehensive first-person descriptions of experience, which may be gathered via face-to-face interviews or through a variety of alternative means, such as written narratives, blogs, research diaries, online interviews, etc.

The Colaizzi method consists of seven steps: (1) familiarization; (2) identifying significant statements; (3) formulating meanings; (4) organizing the collection of meanings into clusters of themes; (5) integrating the clusters of themes into an exertion description; (6) producing the fundamental structure; and (7) seeking verification of the fundamental structure. In regions where little previous study exists, descriptive phenomenology is especially valuable.

## **RESULTS and DISCUSSION**

This chapter examines the data gathered on the lived experience of students who participated in the COIL program in relation to SDG12. Respondents were requested to complete a questionnaire designed to address the study questions. They were questioned about their participation in the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) program and how they were able to relate Sustainable Development Goal 12: responsible consumption and production to their experiences. Also, what new knowledge did they obtain from participating in the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) program in relation to SDG. Furthermore, the challenges and hurdles they encountered and how they were able to overcome them.



The perspectives of the participants were organized into themes. These themes were comprised of different codes provided by the respondents and grouped in order to identify the results; these provided answers to the study's research questions. After extracting and analyzing the data, it revealed the theme for the first research question "What is the lived experience of students who participated in the COIL program in relation to SDG12?" which were Students' Learnings and Enjoyable Experiences, Intercultural and Global Interactions, and Environmental Discussions and Action Plans related to SDG 12.

Research Questions	Codes	Themes/Categories
<p><b>RQ # 1</b></p> <p><b>"What is the lived experience of students who participated in the COIL program in relation to SDG12?"</b></p>	<p>Learner-driven journey</p> <p>A very tedious and stressful process but at the end it was worth it</p> <p>The longer we were together, the more we learned together and it was enjoyable</p>	<p>Students' Learnings and Enjoyable Experiences</p>



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Interpersonal skills have been upped

Added knowledge about each country's cultures

Talking with friends who live in foreign country was a big experience for me

Converse with students from various countries

Studied the national scale issues and gave awareness on it

Create a social media page that promotes creativity in the dirty we see

Discussed about processes to solve environmental problem

Discussed about global warming

Study the recycling of limonene

Common goal to accomplish

Project proposals that aim to put the ideas that regarding SDG 12

Everyone is doing their own efforts in minimizing waste and proper use of old products

Intercultural and Global Interactions

Environmental Discussions and Action Plans related to SDG 12

We had Instagram project that shows examples to recycle waste

We experimented, found improvements, and experimented again to find a more effective recycling method

We were all given topics to discuss with our Japanese counterparts in the COIL program

We planned out some activities and tasks that could be related to SDG 12

Sustainable consumption and production patterns ensure efficiency and productivity improvements

Table 2: Research Question Number 1 Codes and Themes

### **Students' Learnings and Enjoyable Experiences**

The results revealed that one of the lived experiences of students who went under the COIL program in relation to SD12 was their learning and enjoyable experiences. S1 mentioned, "It has been a pleasant, learner-driven journey hosted by our institution and WTW as my interpersonal skills have been upped." In addition, S2 also mentioned, "It was a very tedious and stressful process, but in the end, it was worth it." Lastly, S5 mentioned, "The longer we were together, the more we learned together, and it was enjoyable."

### **Intercultural and Global Interactions**

The results revealed that one of the lived experiences of students who went under the COIL program in relation to SD12 was their intercultural and global interactions, as they have gained added knowledge about each country's cultures and converse with students from various countries. S5 mentioned, "Talking with friends who live in a foreign country was a big experience for me."

### **Environmental Discussions and Action Plans related to SDG 12**

The results revealed that one of the lived experiences of students who went under the COIL program in relation to SD12 was their environmental discussions and action plans related to SDG 12. S1 mentioned, "I have studied the national scale issues and gave awareness on it. As per our action, I was delighted and honored to create a social media page with my peers that I know would matter to others greatly as it promotes creativity in the dirty, we see. Also, we once had a room tour activity, and I could see that everyone is making their own efforts to minimize waste and proper use of old products." In addition, S2 and S3 mentioned, "We discussed processes to solve an environmental problem, especially global warming, and had an Instagram project showing examples of recycling waste. Also, studied the recycling of limonene." Moreover, S4 mentioned, "Since we were all given a common goal to accomplish within the collaboration, we had project proposals that aim to put the ideas that we have regarding SDG 12 into action. We were all given topics to discuss with our Japanese counterparts in the COIL program. Coincidentally, we were appointed to discuss SDG 12. We then planned out some activities and tasks that could be related to the said SDG." Lastly, S5

mentioned, "Sustainable consumption and production patterns ensure efficiency and productivity improvements while keeping human activities within the planet's carrying capacity and honoring future generations' rights."

After extracting and analyzing the data it also revealed the themes for the second research question, Negative Impact of Waste on the Environment, Environmental Awareness and Practices, Culture and Norms in the Philippines and Japan, and Importance and Benefits of Collaboration, for the second research question, "What new knowledge did students who took part in the COIL program in relation to SDG12 obtained?"

Research Questions	Codes	Themes/Categories
<b>RQ # 2</b> <b>"What new knowledge did students who took part in the COIL program in relation to SDG12 obtained?"</b>	I learned how much physical waste is generated	Negative Impact of Waste on the Environment
	Most of physical waste were not recycled or given new purpose	Environmental Awareness and Practices
	Physical waste was just piling up and causing harm to the environment	
	Carbon dioxide is emitted even in the process of recycling plastics Carbon dioxide will adversely affect the environment	
	Not all businesses and corporations are giving	



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efforts in at least banning the use of plastic

Some organizations and volunteers do salvage waste in different environments that are then produced into other useful materials

I have learned to appreciate enterprises that has eco-friendly materials for its customers

You need to find an efficient method in recycling plastics

Everything is limitless if you are passionate in helping the current state of the world

Some people pick up garbage to live in the Philippines.

I ended up having a grasp of the culture of the Japanese

Collaboration is vital in sustainability

Collaboration brings all together to achieve a single goal

A range of viewpoints are need to create fresh answers to apparently intractable issues

Culture and Norms in the Philippines and Japan

Importance and Benefits of Collaboration

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I learned how to deal with  
barriers that are given to us I  
learned how to cooperate and  
accomplish tasks with our  
counterparts

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Table 3: Research Question Number 2 Codes and Themes

### **Negative Impact of Waste on the Environment**

The results showed that students who took part in the COIL program in relation to SD12 obtained new knowledge and a better understanding of the negative impacts of waste on the environment. Students learned how much physical waste is generated and how most of it was not recycled or given a new purpose. It was just piling up and causing harm to the environment. S3 mentioned, "I learned that carbon dioxide is emitted even in the process of recycling plastics, and if you do not find an efficient method, it will adversely affect the environment."

### **Environmental Awareness and Practices**

The results showed that students who took part in the COIL program in relation to SD12 obtained new knowledge on the environmental awareness and practices of some businesses, corporations, and organizations. S1 mentioned, "I have learned that there were some organizations and volunteers I have researched on that does salvaging waste in different environments that are then produced into other useful materials. Also, I have learned that not all businesses and corporations are giving efforts in at least banning the use of plastic. Therefore, I have learned to appreciate enterprises that have eco-friendly materials for their customers. And everything is limitless as long as you are passionate about helping the current state of the world."

### **Culture and Norms in the Philippines and Japan**

The results showed that students who took part in the COIL program in relation to SD12 obtained new knowledge of the culture and norms in the Philippines and Japan. S2 mentioned, "Some people pick up garbage to live in the Philippines." which is clearly visible in the situation of poor families and informal settlers here in the country. Meanwhile, S4 mentioned, "I ended up having a grasp of the culture of the Japanese." which students gained while participating in the COIL program of the school.

### **Importance and Benefits of Collaboration**

The results showed that students who took part in the COIL program in relation to SD12 obtained new knowledge and more appreciation of the importance and benefits of collaboration. S5 mentioned, "This collaboration is vital in sustainability because it brings together businesses, academics, government, civil society, and other organizations to achieve a single goal, which is a potent prescription for holistic thinking. To create fresh answers to apparently intractable issues, we need a range of viewpoints." In addition, students also learned how to deal with barriers that are given to them and how to cooperate and accomplish tasks with their counterparts, which are benefits of joining collaborations.

After extracting and analyzing the data it also revealed the theme for the third research question, Cultural Differences and Language Barrier along with Technical Difficulties, and Difficulties in Experimentation, for the third research question, “What challenges did students encounter while participating in the COIL program in relation to SDG12?”.

Research Questions	Codes	Themes/Categories
<p><b>RQ # 3</b></p> <p><b>“What challenges did students encounter while participating in the COIL program in relation to SDG12?”</b></p>	<p>It was difficult to derive the best way to solve problems since the problems in Japan and Philippines are different</p> <p>It was difficult to swallow the information given by the Japanese students and the ones we provided</p> <p>It was difficult to communicate thoughts and ideas with others when they don't comprehend what we're trying to say</p> <p>Language barrier along with technical difficulties</p> <p>It was difficult to inflate the fibrous plastic with air when using limonene to revive plastic as Styrofoam</p>	<p>Cultural Differences and Language Barrier along with Technical Difficulties Difficulties in Experimentation</p>

Table 4: Research Question Number 3 Codes and Themes

## **Cultural Differences and Language Barrier along with Technical Difficulties**

The results showed that cultural differences, language barriers, and technical difficulties are among the main challenges students encounter while participating in the COIL program in relation to SDG 12. Based on the statements of the students, it was difficult to derive the best way to solve problems since the problems in Japan and the Philippines are different. Therefore, cultural differences made it hard for the students to swallow the information given by the Japanese students and the Filipino students. On the other hand, students also mentioned that the language barrier and technical difficulties were also a challenge. S4 mentioned, "We often needed to ask our counterparts to repeat what they said, vice versa. Every now and then, we'd translate things to each other's language in order to get the message through thoroughly. At the same time, there are technical difficulties because sometimes we can't seem to hear each other, so people usually borrow devices from their teammates." Likewise, S5 also mentioned, "Communication is one of the obstacles I confront since it's difficult for us to communicate our thoughts and ideas with others when they don't comprehend what we're trying to say".

## **Difficulties in Experimentation**

The results revealed that there were difficulties in the experimentation of the students while participating in the COIL program in relation to SDG 12. One of which is the experimentation with limonene. S3 mentioned, "When using limonene to revive plastic as Styrofoam, it was difficult to inflate the fibrous plastic with air." which proved that while the students were doing their action plan, difficulties in experimentation happened in some implementations.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The lived experiences of students who went under the COIL program in relation to SD12 have something to do with all their learnings and enjoyable experiences, intercultural and global interactions, and environmental discussions and action plans related to SDG 12. Based on the questionnaire results, most students who joined the COIL program of the school had a great experience as their interpersonal skills were developed, and they learned so much and enjoyed the company of other students from other countries. It was indeed that the students had fun in their journey in the collaboration and its overall experience, even though it was a very tedious and stressful process. In addition, students have gained added knowledge about each country's cultures and converse with students from various countries, which they found a significant experience for them. Moreover, the collaboration made the students creative and smart when making their action plans related to SDG 12, which greatly helped the environment minimize waste and solve environmental problems. Students used social media platforms to implement their action plans and spread awareness to everyone by unleashing their creativity and care for the world.

When it comes to the new knowledge of students obtained who took part in the COIL program in relation to SDG12, the results showed that they learned and understood better the negative impact of waste on the environment, environmental awareness and practices, the culture and norms in the Philippines and Japan, and the importance and benefits of collaboration. Students learned how much physical waste is generated and how most of it was not recycled or given a new purpose. Students also learned that some businesses and organizations implement eco-friendliness by recycling and repurposing. However, students also realized that it was not the case for all, as some still use and do not

ban the usage of plastics. On the other hand, students from the Philippines and Japan also learned some of the country's cultures and norms, and the importance and benefits of collaboration, such as its vital in sustainability, achieving a goal and learning competency by collaborating with other students.

Lastly, the study also revealed the different challenges students encounter while participating in the COIL program in relation to SDG 12, such as cultural differences, language barriers, technical difficulties, and difficulties in experimentation. Based on the statements of the students, it was difficult to derive the best way to solve problems since the problems in Japan and the Philippines are different. Therefore, cultural differences made it hard for the students to swallow the information given by the Japanese students and the Filipino students. On the other hand, students also mentioned that the language barrier and technical difficulties were also a challenge. And one of the difficulties in the student's experimentation in their collaboration is the experimentation with limonene. With this, the researcher is recommending the following:

1. Learn to adapt to everyone and adjust according to countries' different cultures.
2. Be proficient and practice the English language more often to help lessen the language barrier and be more comfortable interacting in the collaboration.
3. Translate words that are not familiar and always ask for unfamiliar terms in the group.
4. Have backup devices and platforms to use to ease technological problems.
5. If the experiment doesn't work, take in the teacher's advice and research more, think about why it doesn't work, and try again and again.
6. If the experiment doesn't work, take in the teacher's advice, think about why it doesn't work, and try again and again.
7. Widen the scope of the research's respondents outside St. Patrick School of Quezon City.

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