

<研究ノート>

## The Initiative of Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)<sup>1)</sup>

協働オンライン国際学習の取り組みについて

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Keywords: Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), multiculturalism, intercultural competence, instructional design, program evaluation, logic model

キーワード: 協働オンライン国際学習 (COIL)、多文化主義的感性、異文化間能力、インストラクショナルデザイン、プログラム評価、ロジックモデル

1) This paper introduces the overview of the project titled TP-COIL (Trans-Pacific Collaborative Online International Learning) led by Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS) and International Christian University (ICU) with cooperation of Aoyama Gakuin University (AGU) funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology-Japan (MEXT) as the promotion of its 2018 Support for Educational Reform Strategy, the Inter-University Exchange Project. The project director is Prof. Minoru Iwasaki at TUFS and many professors and staff members at TUFS and ICU engage in and contribute to this project. This paper introduces how TP-COIL proceeds from the TUFS's point of view. The instructors of working group members at TUFS consist of Prof. Jun Matsukuma, Prof. Toshie Awaya, Prof. Rin Odawara, Prof. Nobuo Haruna, Prof. Iris Haukamp and Prof. Yukako Otori. In addition to these instructors, Prof. Puja Kim, Mr. Tomonori Yoshizaki, Mr. Junichi Tashiro, Ms. Yoonjung Garu Kim, Mr. Masahito Hirano and myself engage in COIL-type education at TUFS. Many ICU professors also contribute to TP-COIL and its education. The representatives are Prof. Mark Williams, Prof. Tsuyoshi Mizoguchi, Prof. Yoshito Ishio, Prof. Atsushi Oho and Prof. Insung Jung. There are many other ICU professors who conduct COIL-type education. I am a project coordinator and instructor for TP-COIL at TUFS.



## Abstract

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS) and International Christian University (ICU) with cooperation of Aoyama Gakuin University (AGU) are jointly promoting a MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) funded project entitled "TP-COIL (Trans-Pacific Collaborative Online International Learning)". This was initiated to provide students with opportunities for Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) and to use it as a catalyst for exchange programs. Online international learning has developed in line with advances in technology, including the Internet and learning management systems (LMS). Higher education institutions around the world have been experimenting with a variety of initiatives. In this situation, the world started to face the pandemic in 2020. By the suspension of study abroad programs with mobility due to the pandemic, COIL-type initiatives have begun to be widely implemented around the world to complement the missed opportunities for students to study abroad. This paper presents the background, overview, logic model and evaluation methods of TP-COIL, which was launched in 2018, two years before the pandemic started.

## 要旨

東京外国語大学と国際基督教大学は、文部科学省補助金事業である大学の世界展開力強化事業（米国）を "TP-COIL (Trans-Pacific Collaborative Online International Learning)" と題して、青山学院大学の協力を得ながら共同で推進している。これは、協働オンライン国際学習である Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) の機会を学生に提供し、それを交換留学の促進剤とする目的ではじめられた。オンライン国際学習は、インターネットや学習マネジメントシステム (Learning Management System: LMS) をはじめとするテクノロジーの進歩に伴い、発展してきた。さまざまな高等教育機関が多様な試みを行ってきたが、2020年より始まったコロナ禍で移動を伴う留学が停止した中、学生の留学機会の逸失を補完する手段として、世界中で広く取り組まれはじめた。本稿では、コロナ禍前の2018年度より開始されている TP-COIL について、その背景、概要、ロジックモデル、評価方法について紹介する。

## 1. Introduction

TUFS and ICU initiated the project titled TP-COIL supported by MEXT in the Japanese academic year 2018 with cooperation of AGU. This project aims at promoting student exchange programs by effectively utilizing COIL-type education (TP-COIL, 2022). In the academic year 2018 and 2019, the project conducted COIL-type education for the promotion and follow-up of study abroad programs for students as planned.

However, in 2020, the world started to face travel bans across borders along with the COVID-19 pandemic. It was recognized that COIL-type education became the necessary apparatus to supplement the opportunity losses of study abroad programs for students from that time, although it was understood that COIL itself cannot be the exact alternative to study abroad programs. This paper introduces an overview of the TP-COIL project including the education activities and evaluation model. For this purpose, it refers to underlying theoretical concepts including COIL, multiculturalism, conflict-resilience, program evaluation and its logic model, explains the TP-COIL project including its background, outline and activities, and articulates the TP-COIL logic model and evaluation format.

## 2. Overview of COIL

The term COIL was coined by the State University of New York (SUNY) and the SUNY COIL Center was launched in 2006. COIL is explained as it "connects you and a colleague in another country to develop collaborative projects that your students do together across time zones, language differences and geographical distance using online tools" (The SUNY COIL Center, 2022). From a few decades ago, the internationalization of higher education started to be stated in many higher education institutions and the Internet-mediated communication across borders started in the mid-1990s along with the rapid technological development including the Internet platform as well as learning management systems (Rubin, 2017). Just before the birth of the term COIL, there were instructors who tried to link their classes with a class overseas utilizing technology for the internationalization of education. However, those practices were often not supported by institutions and totally depended on each instructor (Rubin, 2017). In the exact same year of the launch of the SUNY COIL Center which is 2006, TUFS also started the inter-university online joint education program called "PCS Global Campus Program (GCP)" in the area of Peace and Conflict Studies supported by MEXT for the first three years (PCS Global Campus Program, 2007). The concept of GCP was the same as COIL and it enabled collaborative online learning linking universities across different Asian countries such as Afghanistan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (PCS Global Campus Program, 2007). This program still continues until now and it has been 16 years since the launch of the program.

It is pointed out that it is confusing that there are many similar terminologies representing practices of online international collaborative learning (Rubin, 2016). According to O'Dowd (2018), the term "virtual exchange" seems to be used at the center of this type of learning and there are other terms such as tele-collaboration, online intercultural exchange or e-tandem and "COIL" is one of them. Activities also vary including subject-specific learning such as foreign language learning or business studies (O'Dowd, 2018).

O'Dowd mentioned one thing about the classification of terminologies that it is needed to differentiate "virtual exchange" which includes COIL and "virtual mobility" which enables students to "take courses at a distant university" (O'dowd, 2018, p. 4).

COIL is often compared with the exchange programs with physical travel, especially in the era of the pandemic since university staff members wanted to find alternatives for opportunity losses of students joining study abroad programs. Although both COIL and study abroad programs contribute to the internationalization of higher education by cross-cultural learning, each has its characteristics. Two main characteristics of COIL would be: it requires a lower level of psychological barriers; a much less financial burden for students than physical exchange programs. Regarding the psychological barriers, it can be considered that students get stressed when they visit and stay in another country with a different cultural background regardless of the country in general. On the other hand, COIL enables students to experience cross-cultural interactions over the Internet while they are staying at their home university. In the past, it was considered that the means of COIL turned out to be the alternative to going abroad not only for students but also for instructors. It was observed that instructors had fear of terrorist activities and other threats to security outside the US in the 2010s (Rubin, 2017). COIL contributed to linking students and instructors with partners overseas without physical travel. It can be considered that a low level of mental stress would contribute to more effective learning. As per a less financial burden than a physical exchange program, it is apparent that participating in a physical exchange program incurs costs including airline tickets, accommodation, insurance, living expenses, and so on. Not everyone can receive a scholarship and/or financial support and it turns a difficult option for those who cannot afford it. It is also mentioned by Rubin (2017) that even for instructors, it helps them to materialize international experiences without an extra budget. Meanwhile, it can be said that a study abroad program is a learning opportunity with full of experiences being exposed to a different culture and living in another country. Therefore, COIL cannot be the exact alternative to study abroad programs but COIL and study abroad programs can be supplemental to each other.

### 3. Related Concepts

*Multiculturalism and Conflict-resilience.* These are the concepts of the abilities that TP-COIL hopes to equip students with through COIL-type education. The concept of multiculturalism in the project was originally shown as "Tabunka-shugi-teki-kansei (多文化主義的感性)" in Japanese. One of the definitions of multiculturalism is "a judgment of existence: in a same physical or conceptual space, different people coexist, from different cultures" which involves "not only the right to share a territory, but also the obligation to live in it according to the cultures of those various groups and communities" (Sarmiento, 2014, pp. 606-

607). It can be recognized that this concept embraces coexistence. Similarly, multiculturalism in TP-COIL is defined as the ability to make coexistence possible in a different culture with sensitivity to diversity in cultures, societies and gender (TUFS & ICU, 2018). In multiculturalism, intercultural competence would be the key which can be defined as “the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with people from other cultures” embracing four dimensions such as “knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviors” (Perry & Southwell, 2011, p. 455). More concretely, it is related to “a tolerance for ambiguity, behavioral flexibility, communicative awareness, knowledge discovery, respect for others and empathy; each of these dimensions has a cognitive, emotional/attitudinal and behavioral dimension” (Hiller and Wozniak, 2009, p. 455).

Conflict-resilience consists of two words: conflict and resilience. According to Galtung (1965), conflict can occur between groups or individuals who have incompatible goals. It is also pointed out that conflicts are not necessarily a bad thing, it can facilitate personal and/or social change and can foster creative solutions to a problem (Keashley and Warters, 2000). Whereas, resilience can be defined as "the ability of a system to absorb shocks, to avoid crossing a threshold into an alternate and possibly irreversible new state, and to regenerate after disturbance" (Resilience Alliance, 2007, p. 1). Therefore, it is defined in TP-COIL that conflict resilience is related to the ability to negotiate with others in a respectful manner, cooperating with each other and arranging various opinions while not discarding his/her own opinions towards a goal (TUFS & ICU, 2018). As conflict is along with human nature and it always happens as long as there is a conflict of interest, how to solve it without crossing a threshold comes to a focal point in human relationships, especially in an environment with various cultures.

*Program evaluation and logic model.* TP-COIL is an education project. Hence, it is needed to gauge the effectiveness of the project for students' development. For this purpose, the concepts of program evaluation and logic model are useful. The history of program evaluation for education and public health started at the beginning of the twentieth century and the application of rigorous social methods started in the 1930s by sociologists and psychologists (Rossi et al., 2004). The main purpose of program evaluation for an education project would be to gauge the effectiveness of a project to see if it works for learners' development and if there is any part that should be improved in project implementation (Davidson, 2005). In addition, program evaluation is needed to examine program appropriateness for administrative purposes, for responding to a funding agency and for testing hypotheses of a program model to reach a goal (Rossi et al., 2004). Program evaluation can be defined as “the systematic assessment of the operation and/or the outcomes of a program or policy, compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to the improvement of the program or policy” (Weiss, 1998, p. 4). As program evaluation interrelates with

the life of a whole program, program evaluation questions include several stages: 1) needs assessment, 2) determination of goals, 3) program design, 4) program implementation, 5) program outcome, 6) program efficiency, and 7) program improvement and sustainability (Ikeda, 2010, pp. 48-53; Rossi et al., 2004, pp. 39-41; Fukuda, 2017, pp. 70-71).

There are various program evaluation models proposed by different organizations. Amongst those, the concepts of process evaluation and outcome evaluation would be helpful to design program evaluation. Process evaluation focuses on the implementation of a program by examining "how consistent the services actually delivered are with the goals of the program; whether services are delivered to appropriate recipients; how well service delivery is organized; the effectiveness of program management; the use of program resources and other such matters" (Patton, 2002; Rossi et al., 2004, p. 57). Whereas, outcome evaluation focuses on an impact of a program on recipients by documenting "whether or not the program caused an improvement among the participants in certain areas of interest" (Chinman et al., 2004, p. 115). Matthews (2004) identified that domains of outcome evaluation on an individual would be 1) cognitive, related to memory, knowledge and ideas and 2) affective, denoting self-efficacy or confidence.

To help with outcome evaluation, the concept of logic model is helpful (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998). The logic model helps "to assess the impact on learners by spelling out the logical sequence of the program from the starting-point to the goal" (Fukuda, 2017, p. 78). W.K. Kellogg Foundation (1998) proposed that there are mainly three types of logic models: "outcomes model" showing a sequence of a program flow from the starting point to the goal; "activities model" focusing on activities held in a program; "theory model" depicting a theoretical hypothesis of a program (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998, pp. 36-37). It is recommended to combine more than two logic models to gauge the impact of a program. In this study, the outcomes model and activities model are applied to conduct program evaluation.

#### 4. Introduction of the TP-COIL Project

As mentioned, TP-COIL is one of the Inter-University Exchange Projects for the educational Reform Strategy funded by MEXT (JSPS, 2018). TUFS and ICU jointly wrote the proposal and it was accepted in the Japanese academic year of 2018. TP-COIL started then. The full title of TP-COIL is "Trans-Pacific Collaborative Online International Learning for the Multiculturalism and Conflict-Resilience". It has partner universities in Japan and the US. On the Japanese side, TUFS and ICU are the leading institutions and Aoyama Gakuin University (AGU) is a cooperative institution for this project. On the US side, the partner universities are University of California, Los Angeles; University of California, Riverside; University of California, Irvine; California State University, Northridge; The University of California; University of

California, Santa Barbara; The University of Southern California; The State University of New York at Albany; The State University of New York at Stony Brook; San Diego State University.

TP-COIL conducts COIL-type education such as joint online classes and activities between Japanese and US universities and promotes study abroad programs on both sides. Through the activities, it aims at nurturing students' abilities such as "language proficiency" in Japanese and English, "knowledge about Japan, East-Asia, and the Trans-Pacific region", "multicultural mindset" and "independent capability to take action, coordinate and resolve conflicts" (TP-COIL, 2022). TP-COIL has four themes to conduct COIL-type education programs to develop students' abilities. The first theme is related to the Japanese culture: "pluralistic perspectives on Japanese history and new reflections on Japanese culture", the second is related to human security: "human security in East-Asia and the United States", the third is related to gender studies: "comparative gender issues in Japan and the United States" and the fourth is related to studies of hazardous situations: "hazard studies through literature - topics related to natural disasters and disaster prevention, and to nuclear power in disaster-prone areas" (TP-COIL, 2022).

COIL-type education of TP-COIL has a wide variety. TP-COIL categorizes its COIL-type education into three types: 1) "COIL class (credit given): connecting classes internationally", 2) "COIL class (credit given): opening a class to an international partner university" and 3) "COIL activity (non-credit): extracurricular activity". The first two are credit given COIL classes and the last one is the non-credit-based extracurricular COIL activity. Although the second type "COIL Class (credit given): opening a class to an international partner university" might be better categorized as "virtual mobility" which is differentiated from COIL according to O'Dowd's definition (2018), this paper would consider this type as COIL-type education since it was surely developed as a result of promoting COIL-type education of TP-COIL.

At TUFS, nine classes were conducted by "COIL Class (credit given): connecting classes internationally" and two classes are conducted by "COIL Class (credit given): opening a class to an international partner university" in the academic year 2021 within TP-COIL. Amongst these, several classes were conducted jointly with ICU and AGU, inviting one or more US partner universities. Some of the topics dealt with in TUFS COIL classes were film; understanding Japanese culture related to the first theme, the Pacific War; the Japan-US security treaty related to the second theme, war-time sexual violence; sexuality related to the third theme and the Fukushima disaster related to the fourth theme. Regarding the "COIL activity (non-credit): extracurricular activity", there were language exchange, planning virtual Japanese tours, online internships and online study tours. The format of conducting COIL education also varies depending on a class or activity. In the types of "COIL class (credit given): connecting classes internationally" and "COIL class (credit given): opening a class to an international partner university", there were both synchronous

and asynchronous formats. In the synchronous format, "zoom" was used as the online platform. For the asynchronous sessions, "Discord" and "Slack" were mainly utilized. All COIL-type education put emphasis on activating interaction among participants in Japan and the US.

## 5. TP-COIL Logic Model and Evaluation Format

To conduct the TP-COIL project and its evaluation, the logic model was developed as below. The recipient of this project is shown in "For whom" in the leftmost row as "Students". Those students who plan to go for and complete study abroad programs are the target group. "Activities" are shown on the immediate right. COIL-type education is conducted along with the four themes from COIL1 related to the Japanese culture to COIL4 related to studies of hazardous situations. When students join study abroad programs, especially in the case of medium- to long-term study abroad programs, they experience internship programs onsite. The next row shows "abilities to develop". As mentioned above, TP-COIL aims for students to equip knowledge regarding society, politics, economy and culture of related countries/regions which can be categorized as the cognitive domain, multiculturalism and conflict-resilience as the affective domain and language proficiency both in Japanese and English.

The rightmost two columns show the evaluation method for both COIL-type education and study abroad programs. As the context and contents of each COIL class/activity and study abroad program differ, it was a challenge to set the standardized evaluation format throughout COIL-type education. Therefore, it was decided to focus on the change in students before receiving a COIL class/activity/study abroad program and after completing it. For this purpose, the pre- and post-surveys are prepared to gauge changes in students. The evaluation method equips the functions: drawing students' attention to the abilities of TP-COIL aiming at; helping students' learning by revealing what students want to learn and what they actually learned. An interview is conducted occasionally and supplementary especially for those who experienced study abroad programs. Importantly, this evaluation method including pre- and post-surveys was authorized by the ICU Research Ethics Committee.

The questions in the questionnaire are as follows. For "knowledge" in "abilities to develop", the changes are gauged by open-ended questions such as a question of a pre-survey "what knowledge do you mainly have with regard to this course (study abroad)" and a question of a post-survey "what was the most interesting knowledge learned in this course (study abroad)". For "multiculturalism", there are both multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions. The multiple-choice questions are the Likert scale related to cultural intelligence. The open-ended questions are "what would you think of or come up with when you think about 'diversity', 'multiculturalism' or 'interculturalism'?" in a pre-survey and "what



did you think about 'diversity', 'multiculturalism' or 'interculturalism' in this course (study abroad)?" in a post-survey. Regarding "conflict-resilience", these are the open-ended questions: "what kind of capabilities do you think you would need when negotiating with people having different background? Do you think you have shortages in those capabilities?" in a pre-survey and "did you learn any capabilities in this course (study abroad) to negotiate with others having different cultural background or conflicting opinions while you also express/assert your own opinions?" in a post-survey. For "language", the TOEIC test is used.

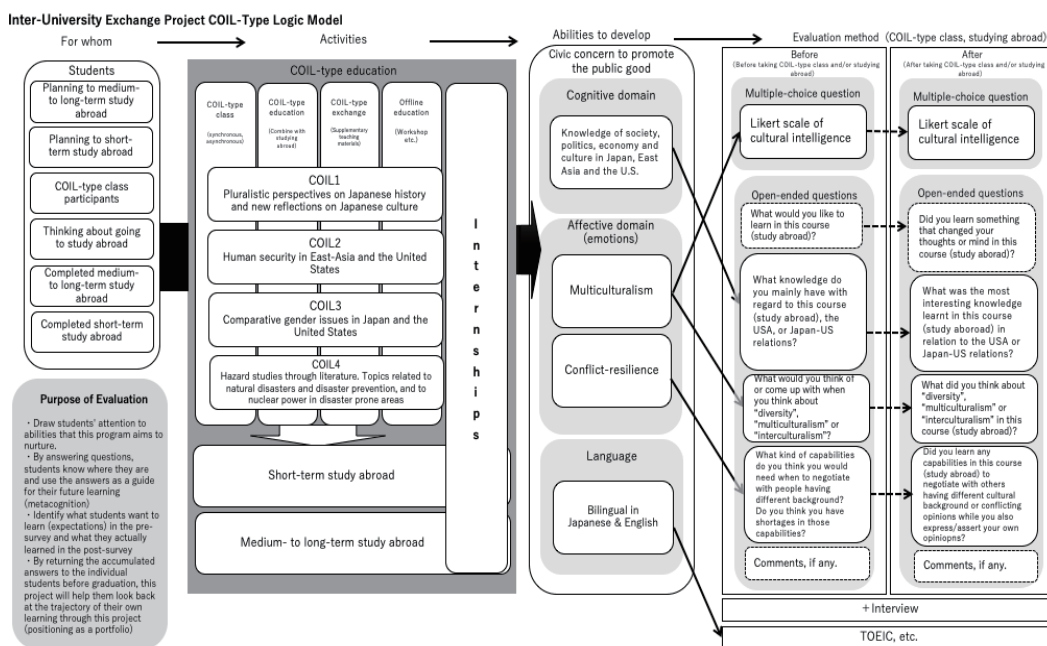


Figure. The TP-COIL logic model (TP-COIL, 2022)

## 6. Conclusion

For TP-COIL to maximize students' learning, the logic model and evaluation method were developed. The formative evaluation has been conducted by COIL classes based on the logic model. In the last year of the funding project, the summative evaluation should be conducted which is an evaluation of the whole project. COIL-type education has the possibility to contribute to a mutual understanding among participants across borders without huge financial burdens and a high level of mental stress for students. The university students are the next generation to shoulder the world. Therefore, my hope is, especially in this current situation with increasing intense divides in the world, this type of educational effort will contribute to the future world by promoting mutual understanding and confidence-building among people with different background.

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