

Instructor Reflections on Pedagogical Control and Learning Visibility in COIL-Based Project Work

A practice-based report from the Online International Student Conference

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INTRODUCTION

The programme

The Online International Student Conference



oisc.site

Student-led

20 groups

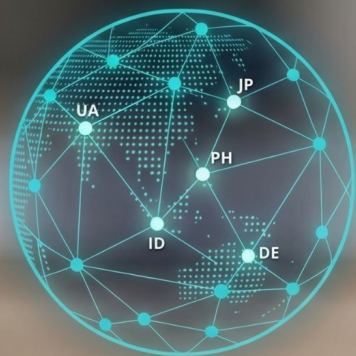
11 institutions

5 countries

110 delegates

12 advisers

5th year



OISC

Online International
Student Conference

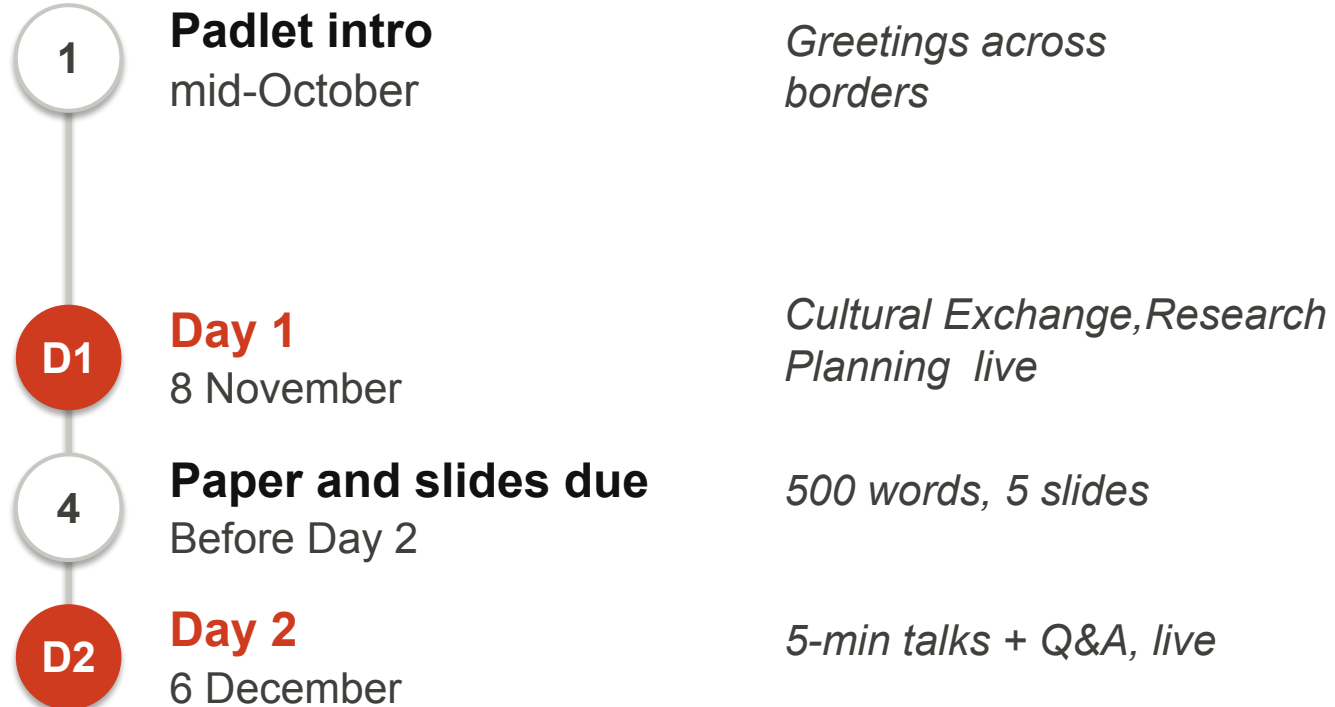
INTRODUCTION

How it runs



Two live days, seven weeks of work in between

03



Between the two days, students work out of our sight



Pairs of classes, and rarely the teacher

1 Students, not teachers

“Much of the literature has bypassed the role of the teacher.”

O’Dowd et al., 2020, p. 3

2 Two institutions, not 11

58% had one partner (Helm, 2015); 14 of 16 were bilateral (EVOLVE, 2020)

Research forgets the teachers.

- Helm 2015
- O’Dowd 2018
- Dooly & Sadler 2013
- Dooly & Vinagre 2022
- Dillenbourg 2013
- EVOLVE 2020
- **O’Dowd et al. 2020**
1 of 7 mentions it

We explore the teacher’s view.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS



Four questions

RQ1 Pedagogical control

What forms did control take, and how was it experienced as being lost?

RQ2 Learning visibility

How did instructors handle not being able to see the students working?

RQ3 Assessment

How was assessment addressed across institutional boundaries?

RQ4 Critical friendship

What did instructors' critical friendship with each other consist of, and what did they do?

Four sources, ten months



914 messages



11 minutes



40 recordings



3 interviews



May 2025

Sep

Jan 2026

May

METHOD

Unit of analysis



914 messages

227 episodes

(median 3

turn-taking)

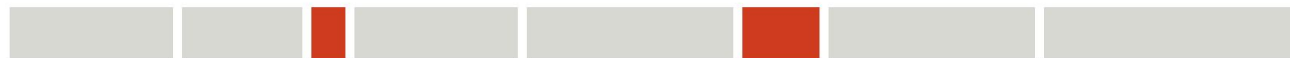
From messages to episodes

07

914 messages



227 episodes



RESULTS

sentence-based

Coding: When we

talked

Our chat spiked around the two conference days

17

students in their own channels

Day 1

Day 2



RESULTS

sentence-based

coding



Coordination was most common,¹⁸

agreement

Operational coordination  **31 of 58** κ 0.49

Collaborative research  7 of 58 κ 0.51

Critical dialogue  7 of 58 κ 0.61

messages given the code, mean of three coders (line: range)

PC-05 Operational coordination

finding meeting times, folder permissions, applications, moving students

RESULTS

episode-based
coding



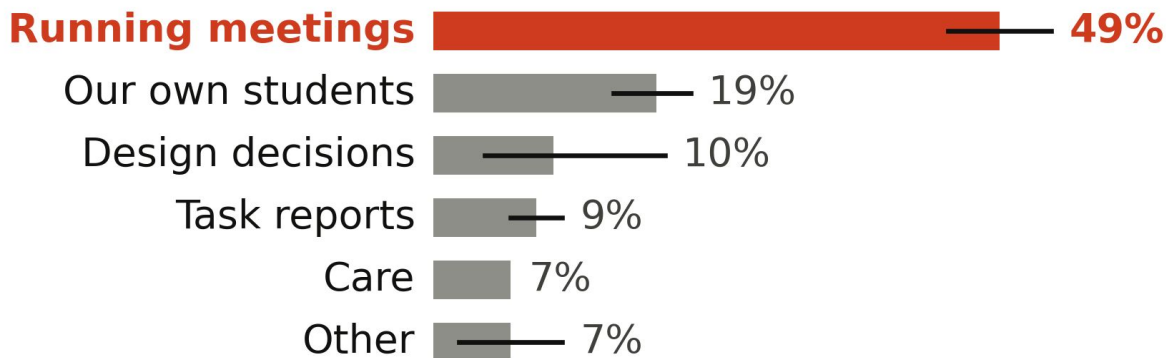
227 episodes

11 codes

45 sampled

3 coders, alone

Episode by episode: half was running meetings, a fifth was about our students



share of 45 episodes; bar = mean of three coders, line = range

Agreement among three coders: .26 to .46 coding alone, .64 after one discussion of definitions and re-coding.

Control was lost in three ways

RQ1

What forms did control take, and how was it experienced as being lost?

FA1

What the role meant

meaning

“Facilitator” = leader in one country, helper in another

FA2

What we could reach

access

Folders locked us out; one wrong enrolment, one group with no facilitator

FA3

How much came in

volume

Big cohort: more updates than one adviser could follow

Three problems, three different fixes

Visibility lost, then rebuilt

RQ2

How did instructors
handle not being
able to see the
students working?

Day 1

8 Nov

Everyone in the
room

Project

9 Nov to 5 Dec

Students in their
own channels

Day 2

6 Dec

Half the rooms go
quiet

During the project

reported on each other's
students
disagreed about looking in

On Day 2

9 of 20 rooms went quiet
advisers went in

Should we look in? We disagreed

RQ2

During the project:
how did instructors
handle not being
able to see the
students working?

FA1

Stay out

no standing in private
channels

FA2

**Observe, do not
act**

awareness, not surveillance

FA3

Ask the students

accept partial information

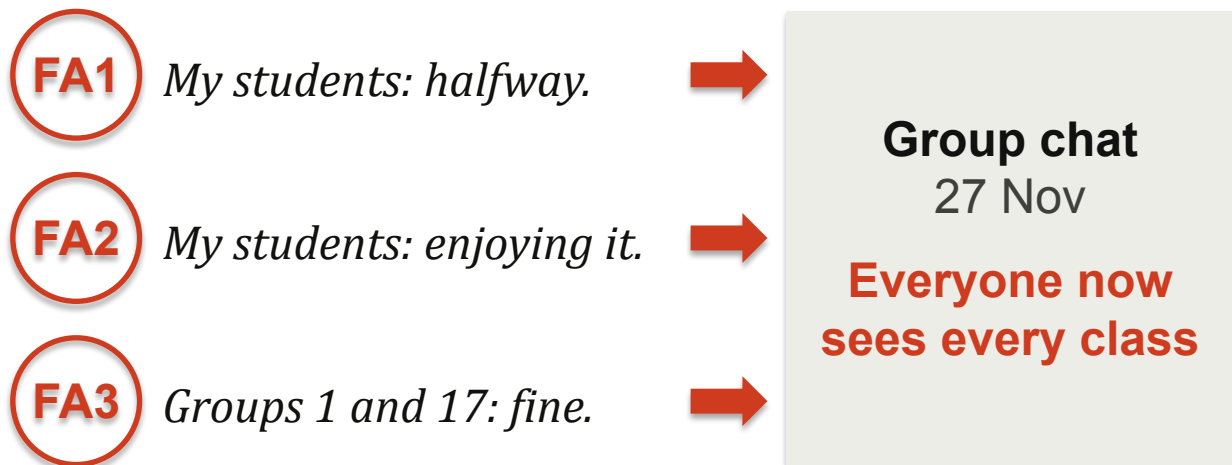
Reported, not resolved

RESULTS

RQ2

During the project:
how did instructors
handle not being
able to see the
students working?

Visibility came from each other, not from a tool



no tool · no request · no plan

Each reports own students → all see the whole picture

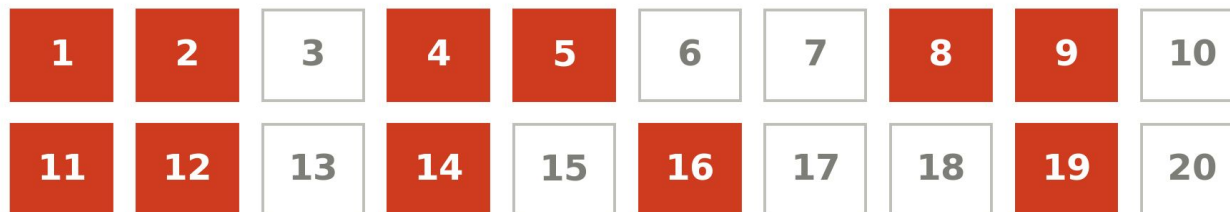
RESULTS

RQ2

On Day 2: how did instructors handle not being able to see the students working?

Day 2: nine rooms went quiet, so advisers went in

13



11 active **9 quiet**

Debriefing minutes, 22 January 2026

It has been good to have one of the faculty members to assist the facilitators who are in need.

What worked without us



RQ1 · RQ2

What held up when
control and visibility
were gone?

Control

Students ran the rooms

“my worries were useless”

Trust replaced control

“I trusted the system”

One fix, one meeting

advisers in rooms on Day 2

Visibility

Padlet weeks: all visible

“they learned a lot”

We saw via each other

27 Nov, nobody asked

Learning showed up later

in student reflections

Less control did not mean less learning

RESULTS



RQ3

How was
assessment
addressed across
institutional
boundaries?

Grading was done separately, criteria never compared

0 of 914 messages mention grading

0 of 3 interviewees had compared criteria

Criteria never compared

effort-based, graded at home

Rules explain part

not why the conversation never happened

Two Documents: The informal one held us together

RQ4

What did instructors' relationships consist of, and what did they do?

In the minutes

Joint research plans

Formalising the network

Open requests for help

In the chat

Care in the typhoon

Replies under missile attack

Thanks, humour

DISCUSSION

Pedagogical control



Coordination lived in the back channel, not in the minutes

20

The group chat

Which room?

Who has the link?

Move it to Thursday?

Who tells the students?

half of the chat

The minutes

Decisions: written

Dates: written

Who does it: nothing

no item, no name

Not recorded → not recognised → not resourced

DISCUSSION

Learning visibility



Visibility was made possible not systematically but manually

1 Careful Checking

Watched each other's students

2 Cost unknown

Is that a support, or extra labour?

3 Privacy is the limit

O'Dowd et al. 2020: "get access to students' social media",

Record and report

Our team's question: should we be looking at SM at all?

Separate grading.
Informal ties did the sustaining

Assessment: two possible readings

respect for each institution, or simply never raised

Critical friendship: kindness held us

none of it appears in the minutes

Inclusion was deliberate, and it worked

“even seven people felt like one team”

Four questions, four answers



- RQ1** What forms did control take, and how was it lost?
meaning of a term, access to folders, volume of the conference
- RQ2** How did instructors handle not seeing the students?
Seen through each other.
- RQ3** How was assessment addressed across institutions?
Separate grading
- RQ4** What did our critical friendship consist of, and do?
Trust and kindness held the team

IMPLICATIONS

For running an
OISC-like activity



Implications for Teaching and Operating the Conference

- 1** Having mutual understanding and flexibility, staying constructive and positive as a team
- 2** Have your backup ready when students have troubles.
- 3** To develop your own system, for example, an App using the AI agent.

OISC 2026

You are welcome as
an observer.

Day 1 · 7 November 2026

Delegates, partner institutions, and colleagues welcome

oisc.site

OISC.



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Thank you for Listening

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Today's Slides

