



**Circle U.**  
European University Alliance

**DIVIMEC**

Digital and Visual Media Cultures in South Asia and Beyond



# A short introduction to COIL

## Collaborative Online International Learning

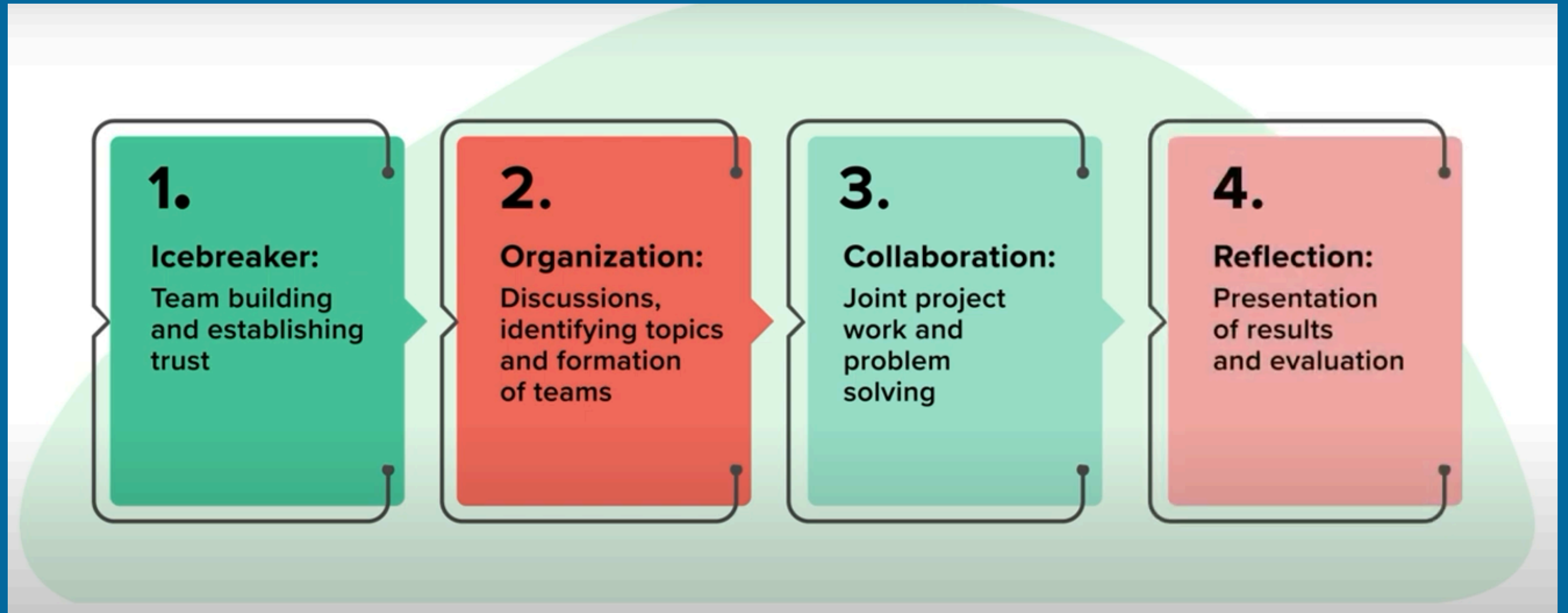
# Overview

- What is COIL?
- Four phases of COIL implementation
- COIL & Area Studies: Connecting Classrooms, Cultures and Continents
- Some Practical Examples
- Are COILs effective?
- Potential challenges and solutions
- References and useful links

## *What is COIL?*

- Lecturers from different (international) institutions **collaborate** to create an engaging **COIL project** which is offered to students at both (or even more) universities.
- Students **collaboratively** solve tasks in mixed teams from both institutions, thus engaging with people from different disciplinary, methodological and especially cultural backgrounds.
- By using diverse tools for working together **online**, COIL projects help overcome the geographical distance. Thus, creating an **international** multimodal learning and working environment.

# Four phases of COIL implementation



# Recommended phases of COIL

- The **team building phase** includes introductions and icebreakers.
- The **organization phase** involves discussions and organizing the project teams and tasks students will be working on.
- The **collaborative project phase** is focused on the main activity for the collaboration. This is the time when students apply their knowledge and create something together.
- The concluding **reflection phase** involves the presentation of completed work and joint reflection on the content of the module and the intercultural aspects of the collaboration.

# COLL and Area Studies – Connecting Classrooms, Cultures and Continents

- **Place-based knowledge exchange**  
local contexts take center stage in global dialogue
- **Interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspectives**  
bringing diverse academic and cultural lenses together
- **International and multilingual collaboration**  
reflects the core ethos of Area Studies
- **Digital mobility, real-world connections**  
linking students to peers, case studies and materials across regions.
- **Critical reflection and engagement**  
exploring knowledge systems, power dynamics and diverse cultural contexts

# Three examples of COIL projects initiated by the Department for South Asian Societies and Cultures at IAAW

**in collaboration with teachers and students from JNU Delhi:**

- Hindi-German language exchange (winter term 2024/25)
- Critical examination of online archives from different regional and disciplinary perspectives & experiences (summer term 2025)

**in collaboration with Circle U partners:**

- COIL for BA and MA students in the final phase of their studies, with a focus on the writing process and thesis (winter term 2025/26)





**Are COILs effective?**

**Collaborative online learning can have a significant positive effect on:**

- individual knowledge acquisition
- group efficacy
- social interactions
- problem solving abilities
- emotional and motivational aspects of the learning process
- individual wellbeing of students



# Key concepts driving these positive effects

## Transactive Communication

Building on others' ideas to deepen mutual understanding, including cultural backgrounds (Hänze & Jurkowski, 2021)

## Knowledge Balance

Mix of shared and unique expertise between COIL partners (Hänze & Jurkowski, 2021)

## Cognitive Demand

High-transactive actions are effortful and should be actively encouraged

## Team Climate

Group cohesion & psychological safety (Edmondson & Lei, 2014) boost transactive engagements

# Potential challenges and solutions

**Different time zones: scheduling live activities can be tough across time zones**



Use asynchronous activities (discussions, recorded content) and schedule at least one flexible time for live sessions

**Diverse communication styles may cause misunderstandings.**



Provide intersectional awareness and encourage open discussions on different communication preferences

**Technology Access: Unequal access to tech can hinder participation.**



Explore possibilities to offer tech support

# References and useful links

Chen, Juanjuan, et al. "The role of collaboration, computer use, learning environments, and supporting strategies in CACL: A meta-analysis." *Review of educational research* 88.6 (2018): 799-843.

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<https://online.suny.edu/introtocoil/suny-coil-what-is/>

<https://www.uni-potsdam.de/de/coilup/lehre/praxisbeispiele>

<https://coil.suny.edu/professional-development/>

## Content and layout

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More information about the DIVIMEC project:

<https://www.iaaw.hu-berlin.de/de/suedasien/digital-and-visual-media-cultures-in-south-asia-and-beyond-divimec-circle-u>