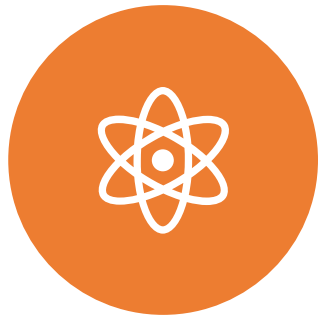


Spin-offs Collaborative-Online-International-Learning (Coil)

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Program



INTRODUCTION OF THE
COIL OSLO-AMSTERDAM



SPIN-OFFS ON STUDENT
LEVEL



SPIN-OFFS ON
INSTITUTION LEVEL

International exchange projects: Nice or useful?

The international exchange and the immersion in a different ECEC setting are assumed to trigger a break away from deep-seated patterns and to stimulate **transformative learning** (Anderson & Fees, 2018).

However, outcomes may vary among programs, also for COILs. 'Virtual exchange and engagement with "other" knowledges and perspectives is not always an easy path for students or teachers', according to Helm (2020), and 'the outcomes are not predictable' (p. 321).

Similarly, Bedenlier and Marín (2020) conclude in their mapping review that the virtual projects may yield student engagement, but may also result into students' disengagement. Intercultural learning in COILs is thus not self-evident.

Nice or useful? It depends.

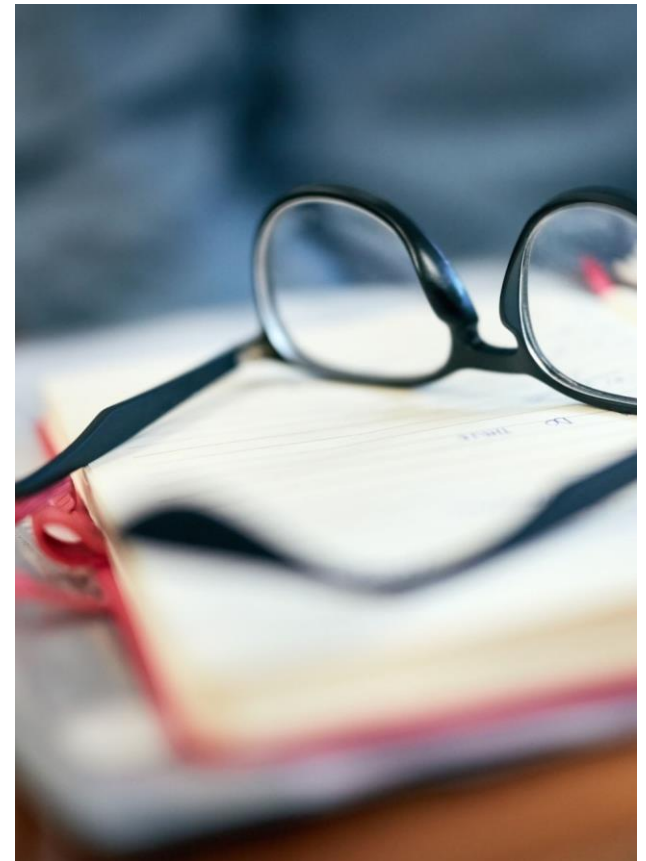


Lessons learnt from the literature

Students do not develop multicultural competences automatically once they access the internet (Jørgensen et al., 2020). Teachers, but also students must take a proactive approach to ensure that a COIL project results into students' intercultural learning. Teachers should encourage **critical intercultural reflection** to ensure that the learning experience becomes meaningful for the students. By **providing multiple perspectives** they may **contextualize the curricular content**, **show the culture boundedness of single perspectives**, and **widen the horizon for students**.

It is important to avoid an **instrumentalist perspective on the technical part of COIL** (Cummings, 2021). **Neglecting the cultural context** and **focusing solely on academic content** is not productive for intercultural learning.

The social dynamics of COIL play a crucial role in intercultural learning (Bennett, 2017). It is, therefore, essential to encourage **group work and relationship-building** among international students **while providing guidance** and support to facilitate the process. Instructors should, therefore, broaden the focus of cognitive, academic learning with an explicit intercultural focus by **providing in-depth cultural knowledge, and stimulating discussion and reflection**. This reflection should not be restricted to traditional classroom themes such as musical tastes, travel, sports and so on, but should be linked with the curricular focus of the COIL.



Participants

- HvA: Pedagogy students with an internship in Early Childhood Education-

Free choice course: Groundbreaking Pedagogy 3 ETC

-focus: theory about culture, intercultural learning. Based on online cooperation and a study trip the students make an international comparison and critical self-reflection and deepen their vision of pedagogy. Learning objectives: practice an open minded attitude, dealing with intercultural dilemmas/conflicts, broaden the vision of a good pedagogical professional.

- OsloMet: Early Childhood Teacher Education students (BA-education) -Free choice course: Outdoor education 30 ETC
- focus/ pre- knowledge: theoretical perspectives and skill within; use of nature and the outdoors as a pedagogical space - movement and physical activity play, outdoor play- children's motor learning, exploring the nature and get familiar with / learn to be in nature and be able to use it in the pedagogical profession.

Why did we choose that theme?

Combining our strengths to make sure all the students are expert in a topic & learn from each other:

- Oslo: experts about working with nature, outdoorplay, risky play
- Amsterdam: experts about inclusion/diversity, intercultural learning, urban education

Theme: Children's Play & Nature connection-opportunities in the city

Joint assignment: Make A dream -inclusive public outdoor area for children's play and nature contact within the city.



Learning Objectives Coil Oslo-Amsterdam



1.You have extended knowledge of working in an inclusive way with children outdoors in urban environments and in nature and of professional ethical challenges that are related to this (micro and meso).



2.You have knowledge and can reflect on which impact play in green spaces have on children in a diverse society (micro, meso, macro)



3.You can listen, observe, and interpret from an open-minded attitude in an international context, and you know how to take different perspectives (micro).



4. From an international comparison, you have a vision of what good public outdoor playgrounds in the city should contain, and the accompanying role of the educator in it, in a global perspective (micro, meso, macro)

Duration and content

Phase 1: Introduction – why coil ? separate; at each partners institutions

Phase 2. (two week): Online

- Introduction – content and duration (schedule)
- Activity 1. Get to know each other – ice breaking task - collage of yourself
- Activity 2. comparing childcare systems- student task
- Activity 3. Students academic assignments shared/presented to each other
- Online – two lectures (by teachers)

Phase 3. (one- two weeks)

- Activity 4: work on joint assignment and reflection (and supervision).
Design an inclusive public playground in the city

Phase 4. Student presentation of common final assignment

Phase 5: Physical meeting- Oslo week (OsloMet students being a host for the HvA students) Evaluation and reflection



Theory and models used

- Developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (Six stages of Bennett scale)
- Terms: diversity, inclusion, superdiversity,

Outside criteria:

- Susan Herrington- the Seven Cs
- Woolley (2008): Watch this place
- Storli, & Hagen, T. L. (2010).

Play- risky play:

- Sandseter, E., B. (2009) Play, outdoorplay, risky play
- In addition the students had to use literature from own syllabus.

Bennett's Model of Intercultural Development

Defense	Minimization	Acceptance	Adaptation

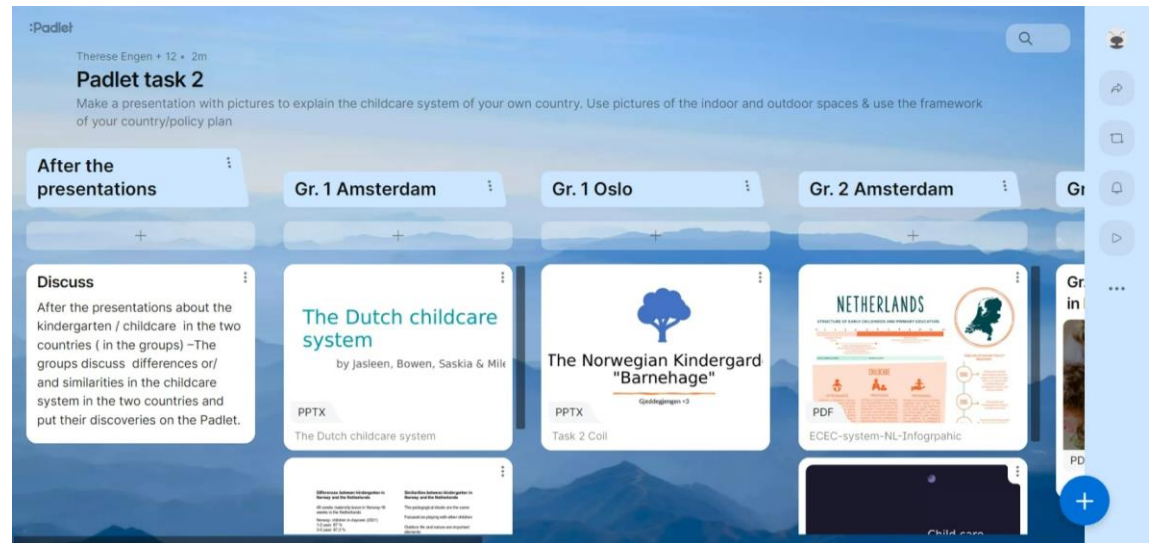
INTRIC STAGES

ETHNORELATIVISM

Coil Activity 1: Make a visual collage present yourselves

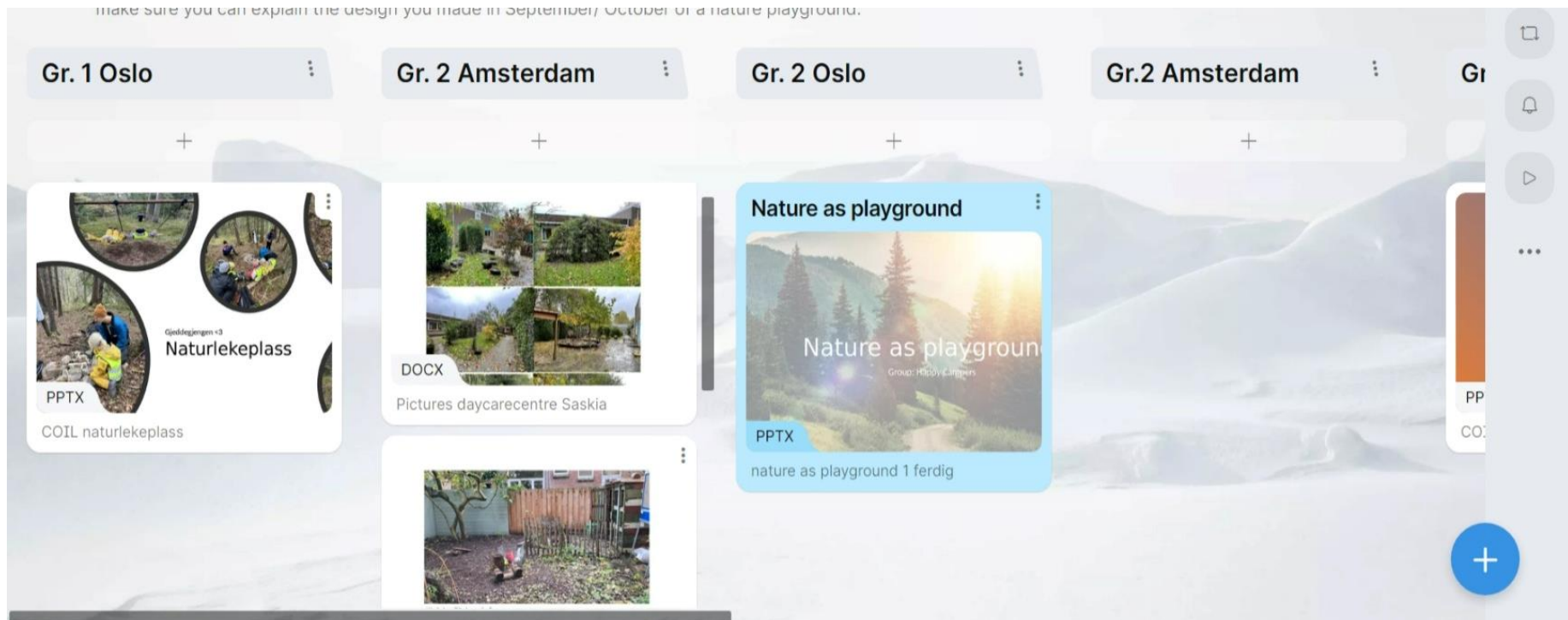
- Show in your collage something you want to talk about yourself.
- Show in your collage which was your favorite play as a child (was it inside or outside play? Or both?) and what you like to do nowadays
- Show what your connection is with nature.

Coil activity 2:
Explain the
childcare
system of your
own country;
find differences
& similarities



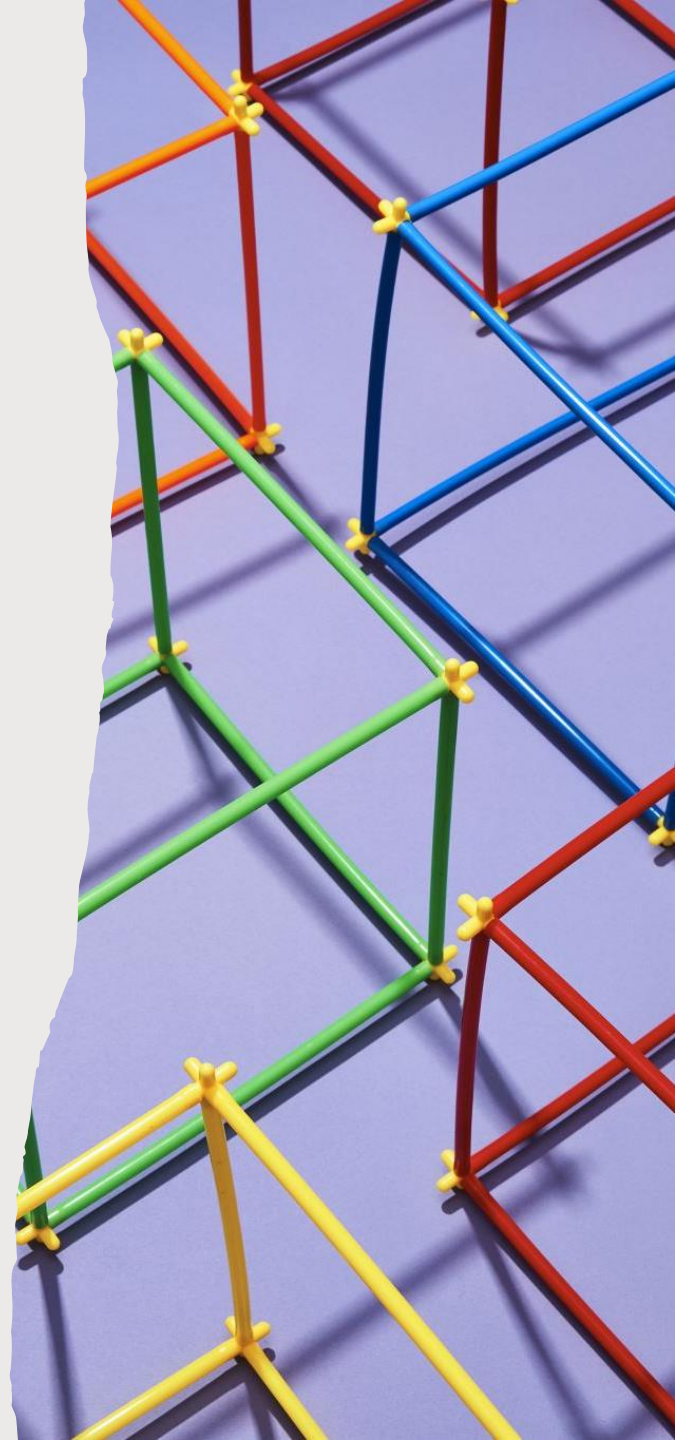
Coil activity 3:

- Dutch students: make pictures of the outside playground & discover how the pedagogues at your internship stimulate child's play: what is stimulated? How do they stimulate it? How do you stimulate the children to use the outside playground?
- Norwegian students: make sure you can explain the design you made in September/October of a nature playground; prepare a presentation about it; what did you design? What is stimulated by it? How do you stimulate the children to use the nature playground? Which security measures to consider and to be followed.



Activity 4: Joint assignment: Make A dream -inclusive public outdoor area for children's play and nature contact within the city.

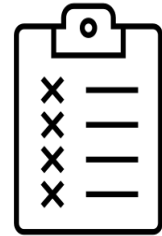
- Outline objectives – learning outcome; what do you want the children to gain from playing in the park-playground?
- Which feature in the park – playground can offer what to the children? (e. g. motor development, motor challenges, play, - risk play, exploration, nature contact, use of senses sociality and fantasy)
- Access universal design: how do the playground/park focus on inclusion – access for all?
- Show which age range the park- playground can offer good play or/ and learning opportunities.
- Safety measures?
- Give reasons based on theory/literature.





Criteria for playground
(Coffin & Williams, 1989,
in Woolley, 2008, s. 503)

- Space for children to meet and socialise
- Opportunities for climbing and balancing
- A chance for children to test themselves and each other
- Somewhere to explore and take risks
- A place for solidarity
- Excitement, movement and colour
- Equipment or landscaping that permits fantasy or imaginative play
- A space in which to be noisy, boisterous and energetic
- Items to play with, rather than on
- Different textures, materials heights, levels planes.



Activity 4

Focus group interview with the students from Oslo & Amsterdam-with interview guideline based on the learning objectives of the Coil:

- Extended knowledge of working in an **inclusive way** with children **outdoors** in urban environments and in **nature**
- Extended knowledge and ability to reflect on which **impact play** in **green spaces** have on children in a diverse society
- Intercultural competences
- Knowledge about countries, politics, education systems
- Language skills
- The spark-Gaining interest in internationalization and the world
- General spin offs

Findings about
working in an
inclusive way with
children **outdoors** in
urban environments
and in **nature**

Oslo

- Universal design in outdoor playgrounds
- knowledge about children with special needs, integration, and adaptation to different needs

Amsterdam

-The students developed a deeper appreciation for outdoor play in nature, recognizing its benefits beyond physical activity

-“My view on the usefulness and application of nature has really changed; it's about the connection with nature. That's where it starts, then you create a more peaceful society”

-“When it comes to learning about the importance of nature, the combination of learning theory, talking with students from Norway, and seeing it in practice works”.

-“the link between theory and practice was educational, first hearing about it online, discussing together and then seeing it in practice”.

Findings: Extended knowledge and ability to reflect on which impact **play** in **green spaces** have on children in a diverse society & knowledge about risky play

Oslo

- Discussion about -The dilemma's that can arise i.e. - access – safety and challenging environment
- Play and risky play- what and how children were allowed to use the playground.

Amsterdam

- Shift in approach to risk-taking play; recognizing the importance of letting children experience their limits.
- They realize the importance of creating a balance between safety and allowing children to explore and learn from their environment.
- They now intervene less frequently during children's play, trusting their abilities to manage risks
- Reading about risky play, conversations with students, and seeing it in Oslo made them aware that children in the Netherlands are much more protected
- “there is a lot of fear that something might happen. This way, children also do not learn the limits of what can and cannot be done.”

Findings Intercultural competences-cooperation & communication

Oslo

New experiences:

Being the host – created reflection

-How to find the balance between the distinctively Norwegian and the more everyday practice; Example- Not everyone is in the woods every day or different views on risky play etc.

Greater sensitivity towards : "Children, parents and colleagues we meet that have different experiences and knowledge and views on what constitutes a good childhood–

-Self reflection - They believe they had an open mind – were curious and they did not feel that they were skeptical or negative of each other.

- “I think it is an interesting project because we learn elements from each other's countries. By applying the positive elements, we can increase inclusivity and it becomes diverse”.
- “it was nice to learn and see how they do it in the Netherlands. see the diversity of culture on how they work with children’s”.

Bennetts modell: They did not fully see how the Bennet's model could be useful tool/ knowledge in this context – denial and rejection were not an issue in the groups.

Amsterdam

- Addressing dilemmas by asking questions about the rationale behind actions or perspectives; easier in live discussions than online.
- It's educational to work with students from another country, but in terms of cooperation skills, it felt just like working in your own country.
- **“Contact is easy because we all share the same interest.”**
- Comparing online and live interactions; initial discomfort online resolved during physical meetings. Online interactions helped understand differences, while live meetings allowed more natural one-on-one conversations and more in-depth conversations to understand ‘the why’ behind a different approach.
- International contact (live or online) helps really start thinking actively and understanding why they find certain aspects so important
- “They thought we were too focused on safety and keeping children in ‘cages’. By talking to each other, you can discuss ‘the why’ of it. The lesson where we could list prejudices about each other also helped in this. “
- “We all want what’s best for a child which helped us to be open to each other’s perspective”

Findings: Knowledge about countries, politics, education systems

Oslo

- Knowledge of - the differences between the systems in the two countries. This created discussions and reflection on one's own and others' organization of society.
- Greater differences on the structure level- than on the personal view / approaches to children learning and play.
- “That you need to not judge, rather reflect about pedagogical ways together”.

Amsterdam

- Gaining awareness of different systems abroad, emphasizing the need for more outdoor activities, explaining phenomena in nature, and instilling respect for nature. Encouraging survival skills and questioning the overprotection of children in NL.
 - Absorbing information for personal growth without necessarily adopting foreign systems.
 - “You don't have to adopt it, but you do take it back to your own workplace”
 - Knowledge has definitely increased; more openness to the way of thinking in Norway and more consideration on how to apply these ideas in the Netherlands
 - “online I felt the Norwegians could learn something from us about safety and structure, but having seen it in person, I thought we could learn more from them”
 - “Noticing their attitude makes you think about these matters. Also, their view on the function of childcare, that it is very good for children's development. And that the Norwegians saw our beds as ‘cages’. You then start to think about what you think yourself because they have an opinion on it.”
- It's good to see what you have in your own country and how things could be different. You don't usually think about there being different systems abroad, which prompts you to ask questions and look at what we can take from other countries and give to others to ultimately do the best for children



Findings: Language skills

- Although the Dutch students did not always know each other beforehand, speaking the same language immediately created a connection. Helping each other with English also contributed to this.
- the exchange led to more self-confidence when it comes to mastering English and becoming aware that your English improves very quickly
- For others, the exchange had no effect on language skills, except for learning some more technical or pedagogical vocabulary.
- There were no language barriers experienced. It was fun to notice sometimes that certain words in their own language looked similar.
- Online conversations are a bit awkward at first.
- “After the COIL, I can say more in English in pedagogical terms. English was a challenge, but a fun challenge. It has led to more confidence in my English and in presenting in English”



Findings: The spark-Gaining interest in internationalization and the world

- -Some experienced a lowered barrier for international activities, increased interest in other countries for childcare practices.
- -For some, no change; for others, the threshold for engaging in an international activity has been lowered. And if it had happened earlier in the studies, it might have led to the student doing an internship or a minor abroad
- -It also increased the interest in looking at childcare in other countries. If that interest had been sparked earlier, the students would have had a broader view of the surrounding countries throughout the rest of their studies
- “Instead of being a tourist, I felt more included, I got a broader view than if you just visit the country.”
- “I learned that it doesn't have to be difficult to cooperate with others from a different country. 'We'll make it.'”
- -Exchanging substantive information, hearing how things are done there, expands your frame of reference.

Findings: General Spin offs

- Three out of the 15 Dutch students influenced in choosing their thesis topic ("Risk-taking play and nature").
- 5 students mentioned: Tangible effects on workplace behavior, incorporating more nature-based activities and riskier play, and altering overall perspectives about outdoor & risky play; asking more questions when they see children being restricted in their physical development by being too restrictive.
- “intervene less quickly with children and trust that the child knows what they can handle”
- Only one OsloMet student reported that she will use the experiences in her BA- assignment.
- Parents cooperation: greater awareness towards parents/ families’ that have different approach in regarding outdoor play and forest trips.



Findings: Online, physical or combination?

-“When it comes to learning about the importance of nature, the combination of learning theory, talking with students from Norway, and seeing it in practice works”.

-“The link between theory and practice was educational, first hearing about it online, discussing together and then seeing it in practice”.

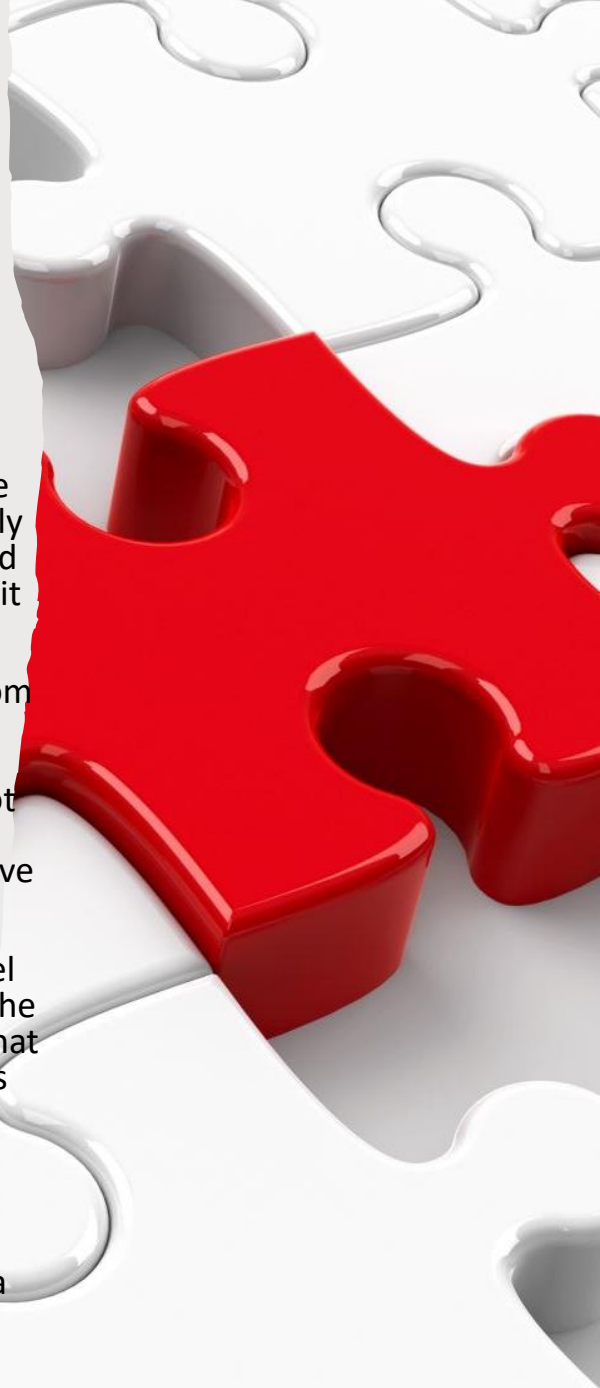
- One student notes that especially the visual, seeing it in practice was educational
- “From being defensive, I moved to acceptance when I saw the methods in Norway. Online, I was still in a defensive mode thinking ‘we also do good things’”
- In the beginning, online, I felt like I had to defend our Dutch methods. It's a pity that we often stuck with our own group online and didn't have many joint meetings or mix with other groups. You learn together; you learn from each other. You're in the same boat.
- It's easier to ask questions when you're speaking with students in person than online; it leads to deeper discussions

Evaluation – sum up (teachers view)

- **Participating partners:** 2 institutions and this was fine, because its easier to find time to meet each other. But we would recommend to involve more lecturers of each institution. It is too vulnerable with 1 teacher, but also difficult to get awareness for Coils among your colleagues in this way.
- **COIL theme** It helps to look at what each university of applied sciences has a lot of experience in so that each institute build upon topics/ themes the students are familiar with.
- **Learning objectives** Not too much, but always put a learning objective about intercultural learning in the Coil. Look at the learning objectives the module in your local curriculum and connect the learning objectives of the Coil to that. We didn't add a learning goal about digital learning, perhaps that would have helped to motivate them more to learn about this part.
- **The number of students** of each country must be a bit comparable
- **Digital platform** Better to use one platform all the time
- **International and intercultural aspects** Using the Bennett model was difficult, getting to know each others childcare system in the beginning helps to become interested in the other country.
- **Academic approach** It would have helped if we had thought about this in advance, by mentioning more to the students what is expected of them when working in a group.
- **Blended** was good, because it motivated the students during the digital part to know they were going to meet each other.

Evaluation – sum up (teachers view)

- **Student's role** The students worked in mixed groups from the start. The stayed in the same small group during the whole Coil. This worked really well; In the groups where the collaboration was less successful, it would have been useful to make the role expected of the student more explicit and to discuss it in the meantime.
- **Teacher's role** It is recommended to have an equal role as a teacher from each country, so that students from both countries also see the Coil as equally important and know 'we speak the same language'. Based on experience with a previous Coil, we had agreed that teachers would not be present in the break-out rooms for most of the groups this worked well. It would have been useful to also divide the role well during the live week and discuss it in advance.
- **Didactical models** It was hard to make the students aware of this model during the process. This would have required meetings supervised by the teacher meanwhile. However, some comments by the students were that the Bennetts model was more about personal level, but the differences they faced was more on the structural level, so they didn't find the Bennetts phases very useful for their discussions.
- **Organization of interactions** As a teacher, it is advisable to meet your class live again between the online meetings to be able to answer questions and reflect on the progress of the collaboration. This is also a great opportunity to reflect on the intercultural experiences.



Revising the curriculum

How can we make lasting changes after a project?



Challenges

- The institutions/countries have different rules for revising curriculum
 - Who can revise a course plan?
 - How difficult is it to get the changes accepted?
 - Is there a national framework plan setting limits to the work?
 - How long does it generally take to make the changes?
 - Is changing a course plan realistic at all?

Important points when we start working

- Cooperating with key lecturers
- Cooperating with management
- Being realistic about what we can do
- Giving each other ideas, inspiration and feedback
- Being patient, these things take time



Finding the right level of ambition

Make a joined course/module?

Make a new course/module locally?

Implement a coil in a course plan?

Implement the possibility for a coil in a course plan?

Implement didactics and working methods inspired by coil in a course plan?

Include knowledge about coil as a learning objective in a course plan?

More examples.....



- Thank you