

# Exploring collaborative research opportunities with VE/COIL partners: insights of the experience of Ecuadorian and US American researchers

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## ABSTRACT

Virtual Exchange for Collaborative Online International Learning (VE/COIL) initiative develops student intercultural competence (Moore & Simon, 2015; Gibbons & Laspra, 2017) yet not being the only gain of this initiative. COIL projects provide professional opportunities for networking with members of the partner institutions; however, some institutions no longer maintained any international partnerships (ACE,2017). Despite the increasing demand for international and interinstitutional collaborative research and their reported benefits (Kyvik & Larsen, 1994), researchers struggle to find research partners in other universities. The purpose of this poster is to narrate the journey of a group of researchers when contacting VE/COIL partners towards the exploration of interinstitutional and collaborative research projects.

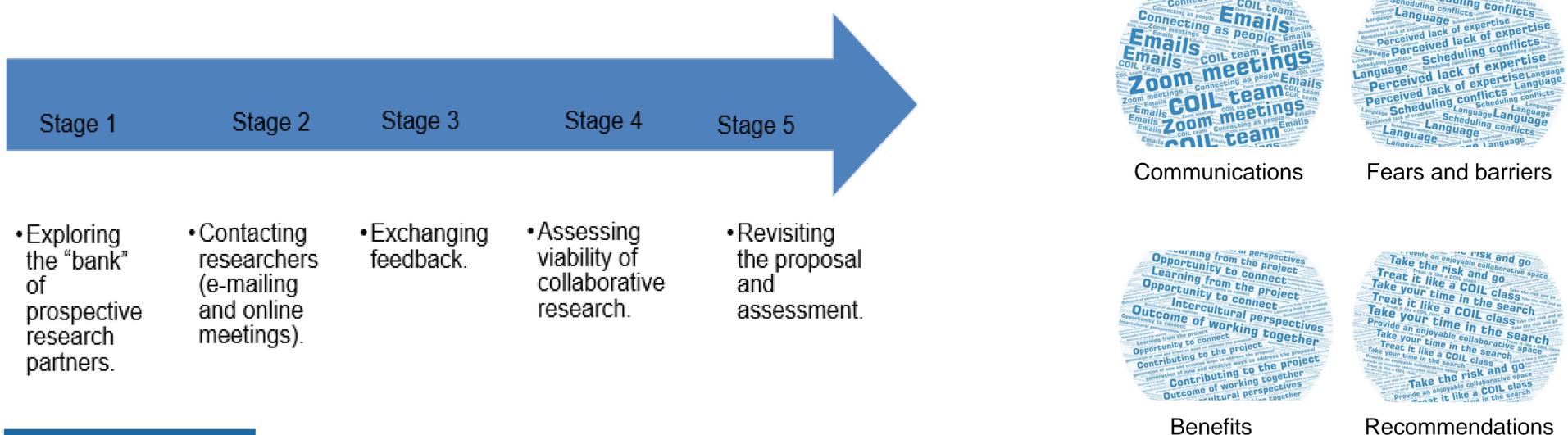
## METHODS

5 Open-ended questions      Participants      4  
2  
Languages

The questions and responses were sent through e-mail. The analysis of the responses followed a thematic analysis approach aiming to seek emerging themes (Hickey & Kipping, 1996).

## RESULTS

Five stages served to lead researchers to explore prospective partners among their COIL teams. The insights resulted from the analysis of the responses conclude with practical recommendations for other researchers.



## CONCLUSION

Having the opportunity to interact with researchers of partner universities was an unexpected benefit that derived from being part of a VE/COIL group. The experience broadened the views of both parties. Furthermore, the intercultural exchange allowed to understand the shared and non-shared realities of the researchers in two different countries and institutions which permitted the provision of feedback to the research proposal from another cultural angle. Some insights of this experience suggest similar findings to those reported experiences of virtual collaborative teaching and learning projects (Godwin-Jones, 2019) whereas some differences could be found in the negotiation of interactions, time management, interests, expectations, and perceived benefits. Therefore, virtual interaction with researchers from other VE/COIL universities in interdisciplinary research projects is proposed to enhance the internationalization of HEIs which belong to the expanding VE/COIL community.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the ACE committee for their feedback and recommendations in the presentation of this poster.

We also thank the partners of the UT Austin COIL/VE team for their participation in this experience.