

Supervising students working remotely: Lessons learned from COLIBRI and guidelines for EPIC

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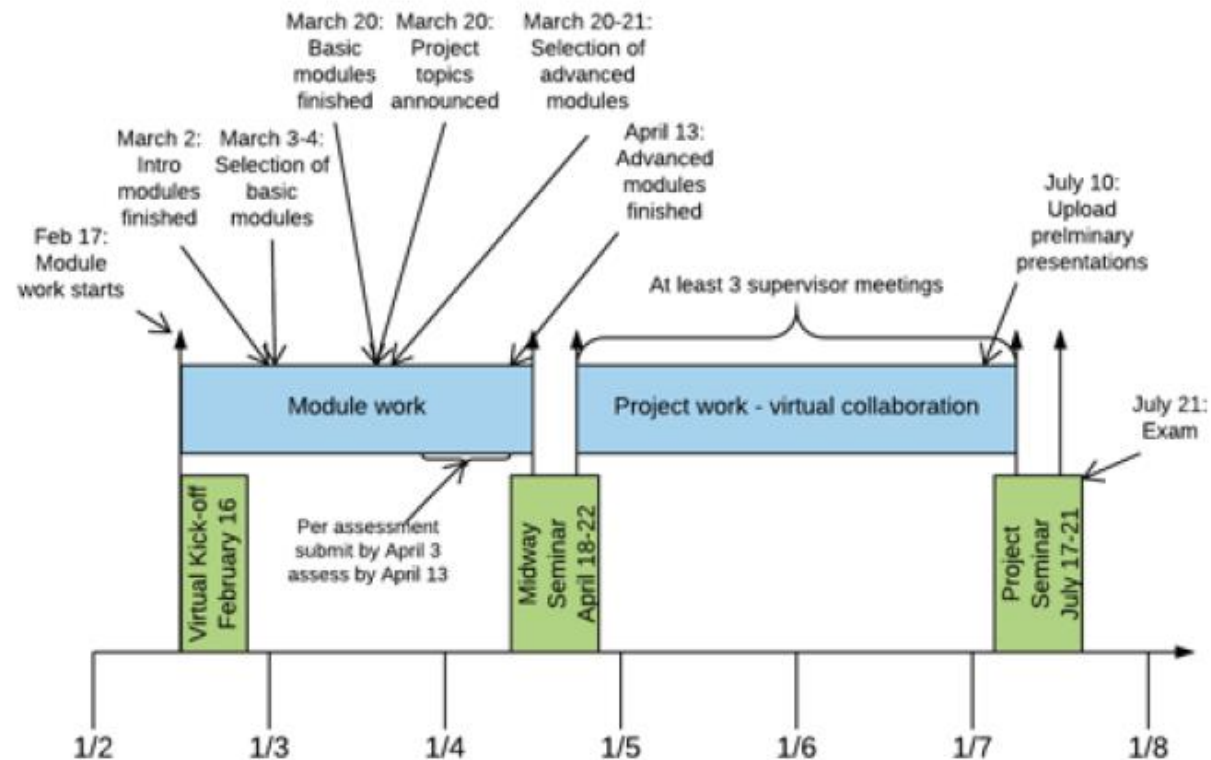
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About the COLIBRI course

- COLIBRI was a Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership, which lasted from 2014 to 2017, driven by a consortium of seven universities and three companies (most of them now in EPIC)
- One of the students key activity in COLIBRI was running a project, working in groups across disciplines and countries – mixing virtual and physical mobility
- In 3-year project duration with three iterations (once per year) of the course, the consortium accumulated a lot of experience in ***supporting International collaboration among students***
 - Making students work efficiently in a virtual collaboration was the most challenging part, but we succeeded! And this is what we want to transfer to the EPIC project

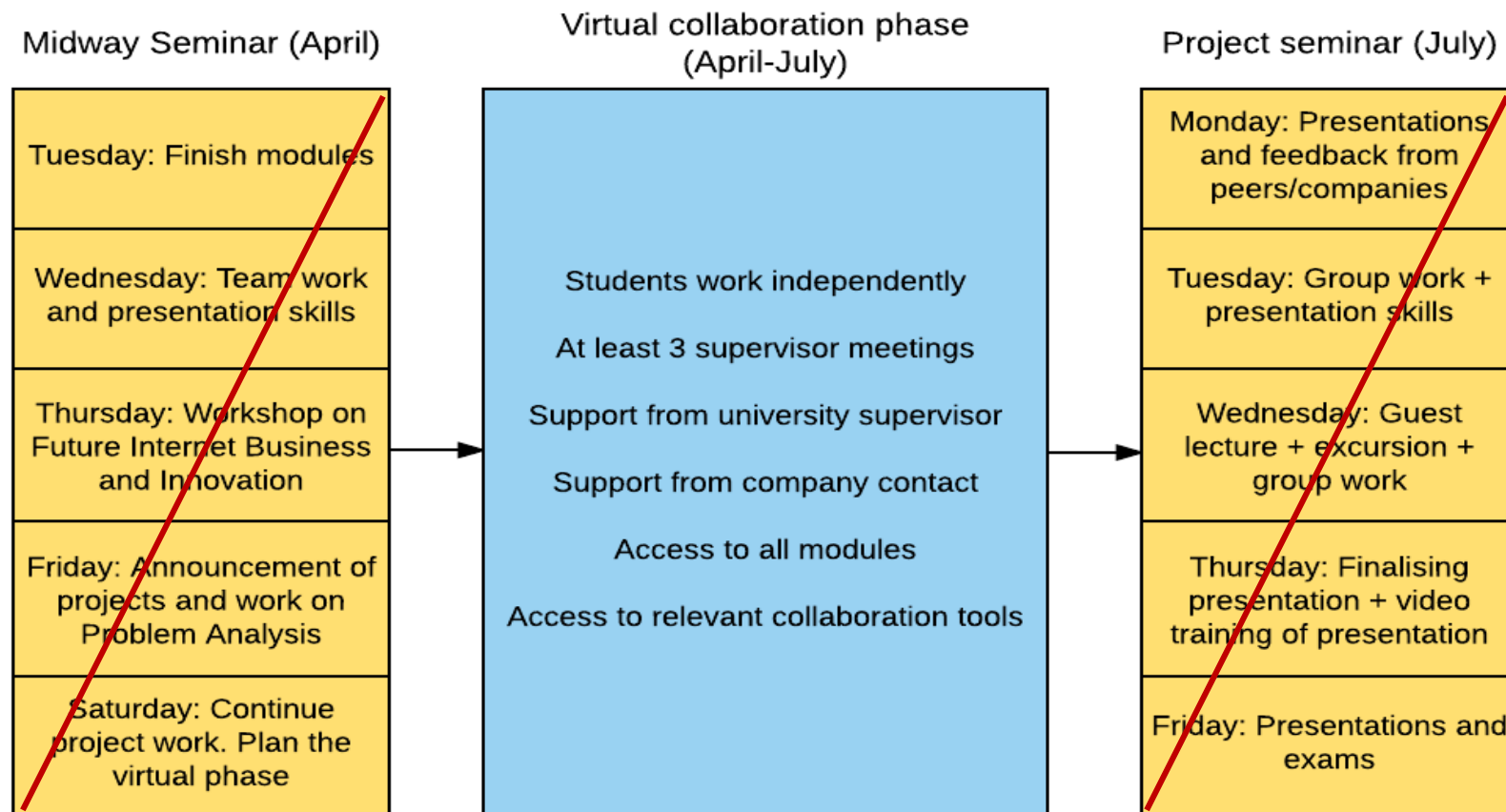
Overview of COLIBRI course (last year)

- In COLIBRI this phase was preceded by a midway seminar and followed by a project seminar



The virtual collaboration phase in COLIBRI

- Focusing in the virtual collaboration phase, which will be the most important in EPIC, COLIBRI experience tell us that:
 - During its 3 years, the perceived efficiency increased from 50% to 85%



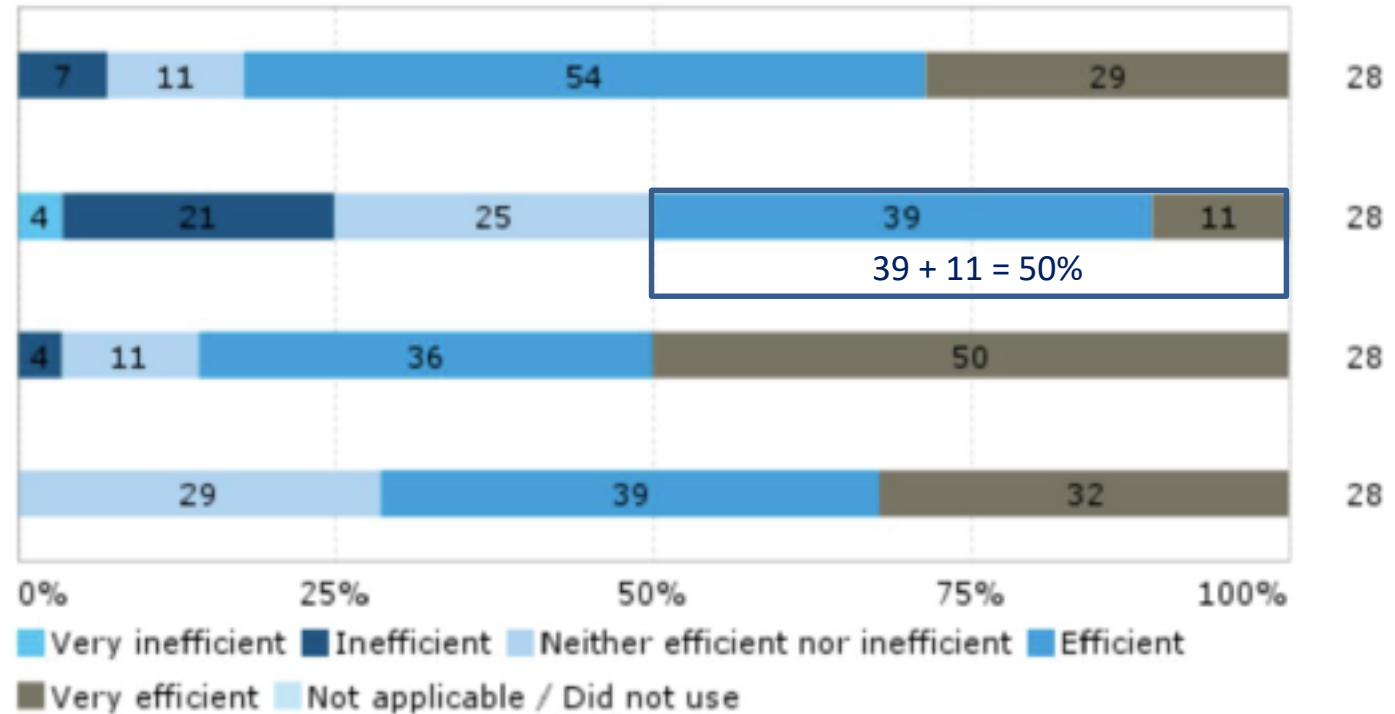
Year 1: evaluation of learning efficiency

The project overall

The virtual collaboration in the group
between midway and project seminars

The physical collaboration in the group
(midway and project seminars)

The use of blended learning overall (mix
of virtual and physical mobility)



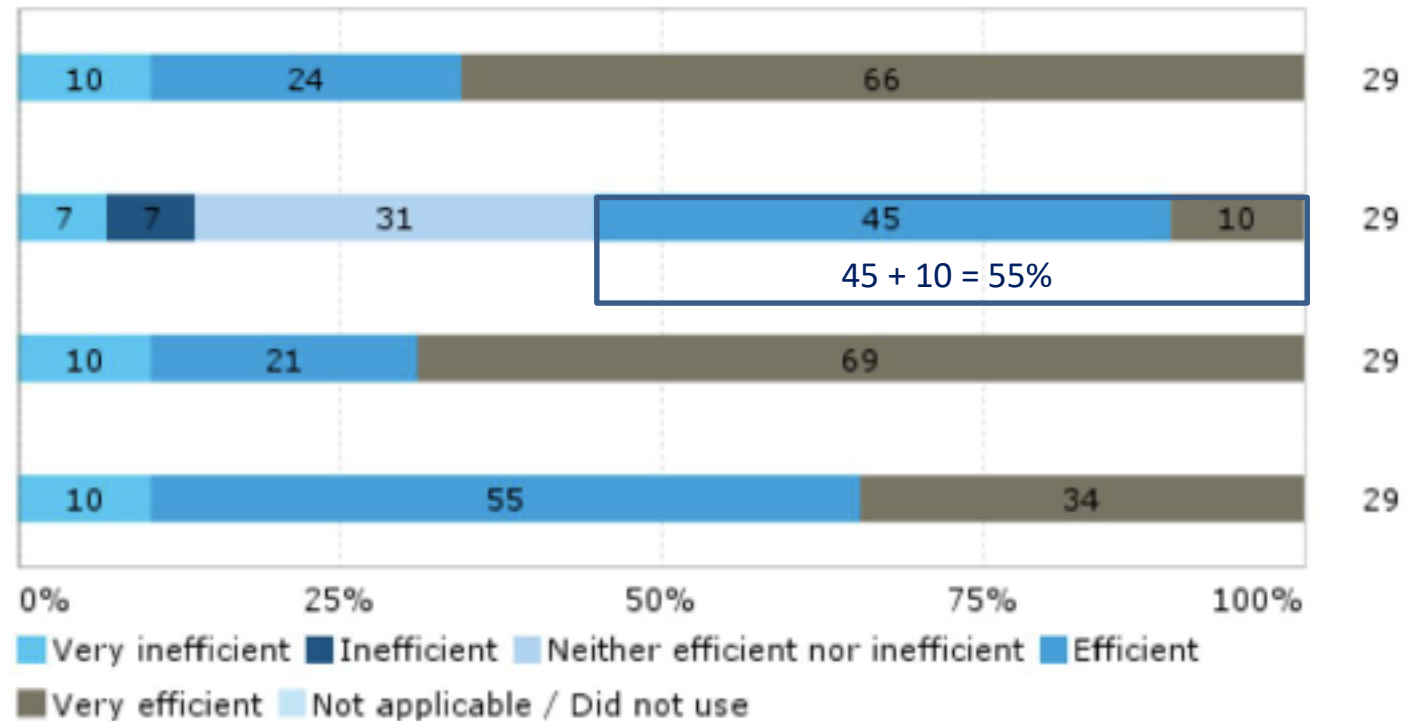
Year 2: evaluation of learning efficiency

The project overall

The virtual collaboration in the group
between midway and project seminars

The physical collaboration in the group
(midway and project seminars)

The use of blended learning overall (mix
of virtual and physical mobility)



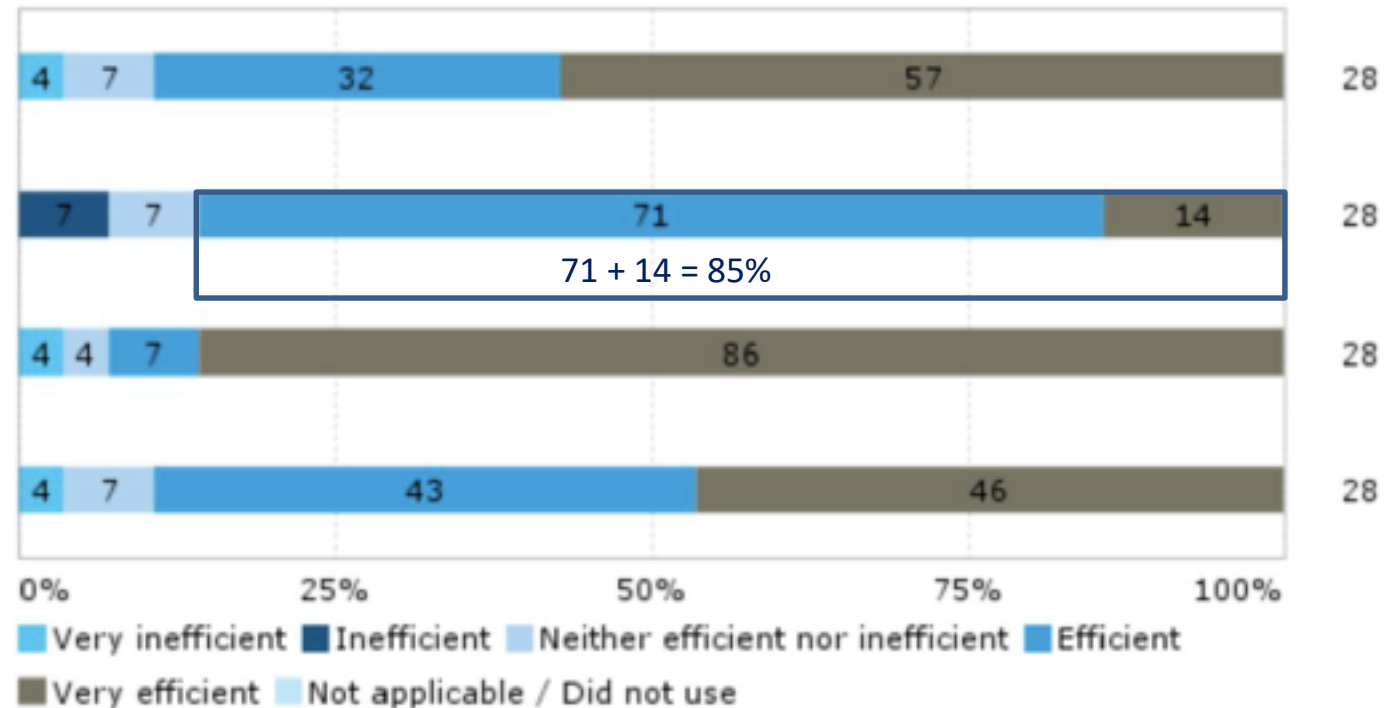
Year 3: evaluation of learning efficiency

The project overall

The virtual collaboration in the group
between midway and project seminars

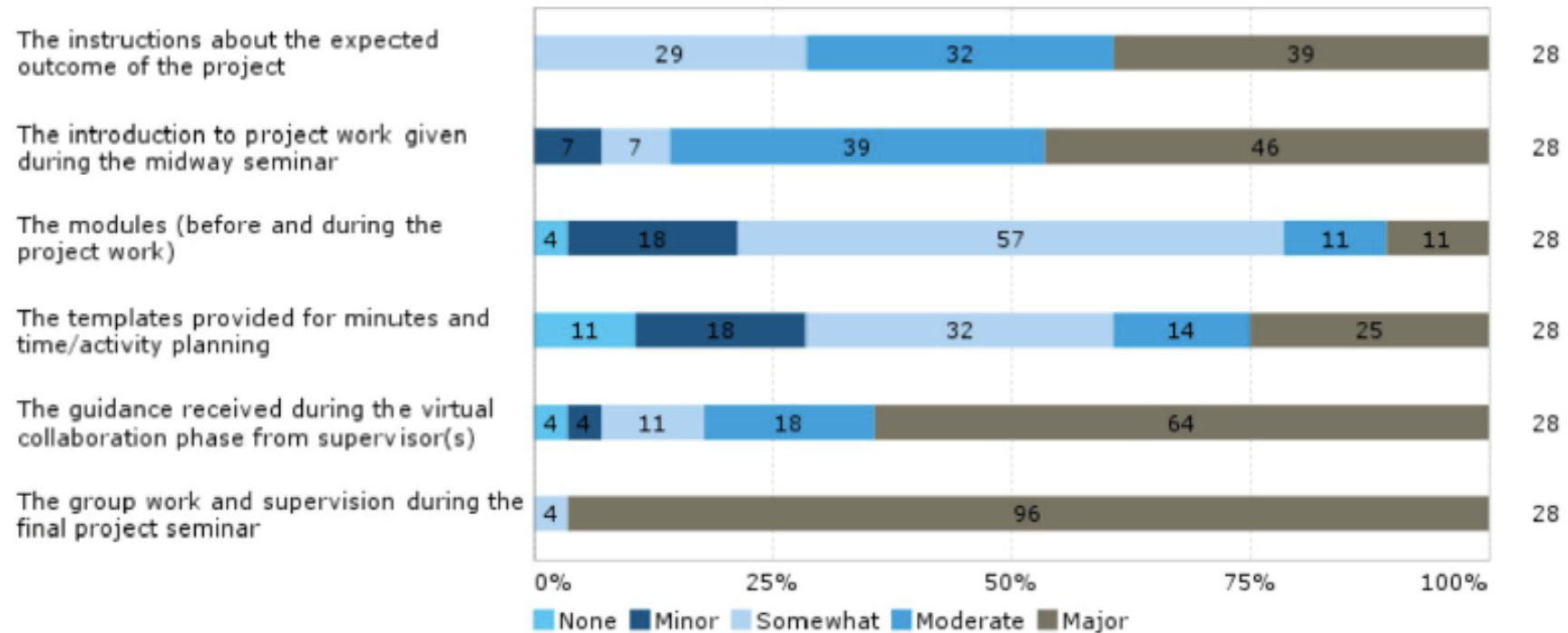
The physical collaboration in the group
(midway and project seminars)

The use of blended learning overall (mix
of virtual and physical mobility)



- It is noticeable that in Year 3 the overall satisfaction with the virtual collaboration increased significantly compared to the two previous years
 - This is reflected in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the different components of the project, both overall and with respect to the physical collaboration in the groups during the seminars
 - However, the virtual collaboration was still the weakest link

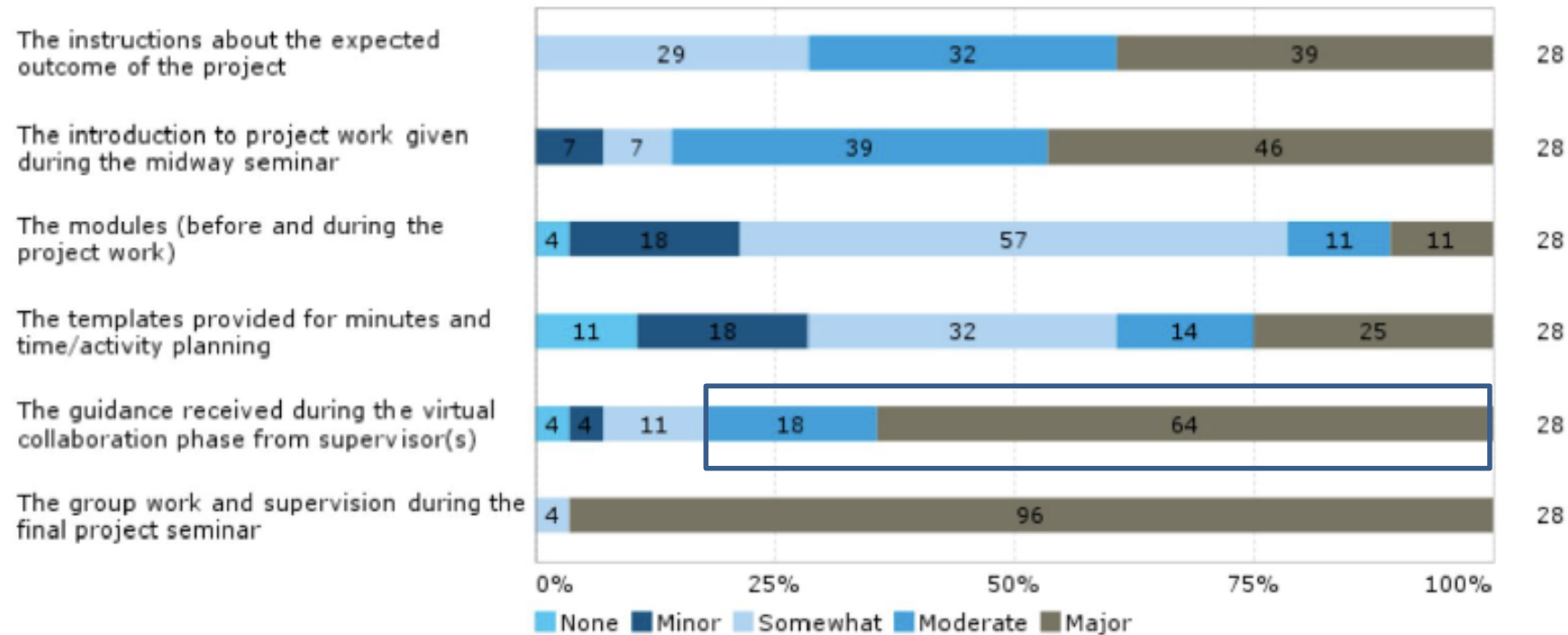
Year 3: quantitative evaluation



Students' evaluation of learning effectiveness of different elements of the project - year 3.

- According to the students, multiple elements contributed differently to support the project work: Something worked for some students, other things worked for others...

Year 3: quantitative evaluation



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How was this achieved?

- All in all, COLIBRI achieved a good progress making the virtual collaboration among students more efficient, how?
 - Providing a much more structured approach to the students, while still ensuring that the projects were student driven

Preliminary guidelines for EPIC

- In EPIC, where virtual collaboration has a higher relevance, the consortium aims to keep and increase COLIBRI achievements
- From COLIBRI, we can extract a set of preliminary guidelines
 1. “for supporting International collaboration among students” and
 2. “for instructing and supervising students”

EPIC – The yearly cycle

1. Planning

- Projects and collaboration between universities and companies

2. Preparation of

- Project work for students
- Topics for the teacher seminar
- Training materials + guidelines
 - The seminar

3. Five-day project planning seminar

- Students work on projects
- Teachers work on PBL concepts

4. Project Work

- For students together with supervisors and companies
- Possible blended mobility for students

5. Evaluation & Reflection

- Of the former project circle
- Drawing conclusions for guidelines and teacher training

6. Preparation of

- The conference
- Dissemination of results
- Material for teacher training & guidelines

7. Conference

- Presenting + discussing results with external guests
- Input from other experts

Guidelines for supporting International collaboration among students (i)

- Make the project assignments as earlier as possible, making it compatible with the universities registration periods, but the sooner the better
- During the “Project planning seminar”
 - Bring together the groups, so the students have time to know each other from the beginning
 - Assign the group activities and collaboration also to the students with the same project assignment
 - Increase the number of supervision meetings, not only by requests from the students, but by panel discussions where students could ask questions on their projects

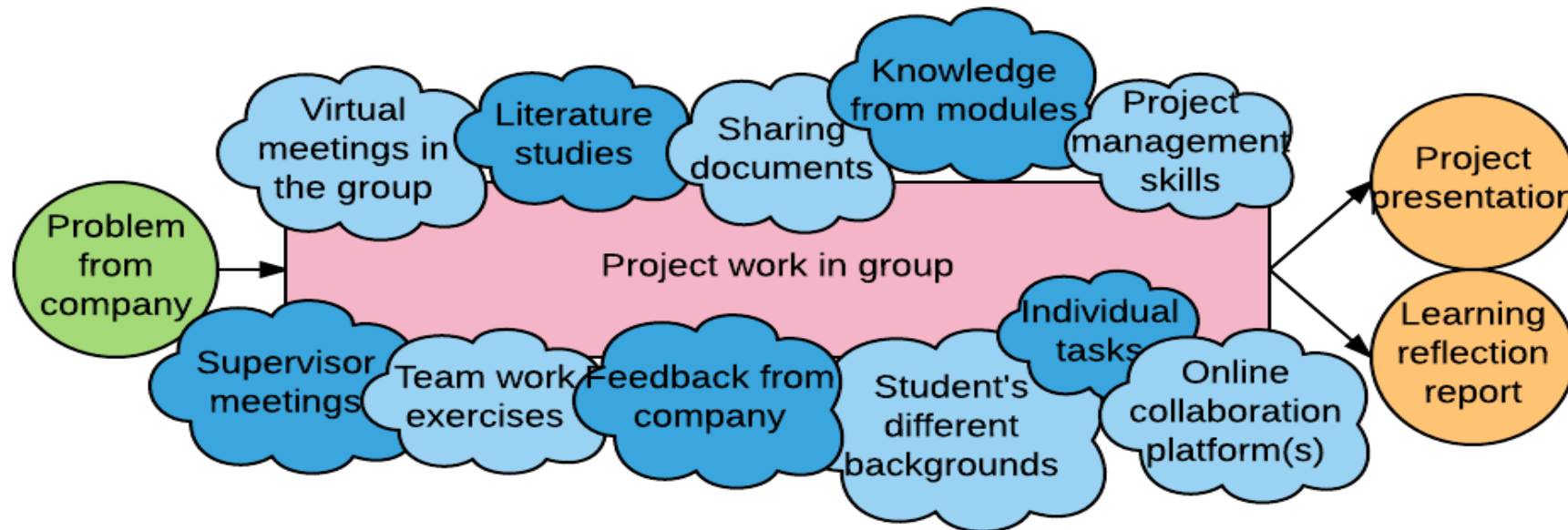
Guidelines for supporting International collaboration among students (ii)

- About “Panel discussions”, the idea is that
 - Students achieve a good problem understanding , and that
 - Supervisors can also exchange their knowledge and experience on how groups have a good start on the virtual phase
- For the panels, it is also a good practice, appoint teachers representing a broad spectrum of expertise

Guidelines for supporting International collaboration among students (iii)

- Help the students to better structure the work during the virtual collaboration phase
 - Request the students to prepare specific plans – including virtual meetings (with and without supervisors attendance), and milestones
 - To do this, the students have to be provided with templates to be used for task descriptions, meeting minutes and time plans
 - It is also a good practice that during the virtual phase, supervisors ask the groups to periodically (e.g., every two weeks) submit a short report on status of the project

The teaching methods (projects)



Guidelines for instructing and supervising students (i)

- Help the students to get an explicit, joint understanding of the project goals, and be aware that words and concepts have different meanings for different students.
- Elaborate a working plan (meetings to hold, work to be done and milestones / deliverables to deliver) for the virtual collaboration phases, which have to be detailed enough:
 - Including what is expected from each team member
 - Providing templates for meeting agendas, minutes, specific tasks and milestones / deliverables to support all these items

Guidelines for instructing and supervising students (ii)

- Throughout the project, follow up the plan with short intervals (adjust as needed, but don't be laissez-faire)
- Support the students in working very structured!
 - For example, recommending to assign roles to the members of the group (leader, responsible of communications, documents editor, etc.)