

The second intervention - weekly check-in

The second intervention, a series of weekly check-ins, was organised two times, each lasted for four weeks. Students were put into fixed groups and checked-in with each other using discussion material provided by the organisers. The first series of the weekly check-ins was very much guided. Every week a topic was discussed, from motivation to identifying underlying self-sabotaging thoughts. The second series of weekly check-ins was less guided. The facilitators, education and research staff, provided some check-in questions for the students. The detailed set-up can be found in table 6.

Table 6: The design rationale of the second intervention

What	Where	Who	Why	How	Value
4 x 2 series of weekly check-ins:	Announced the intervention: Newsletter, brightspace, e-mail, WhatsApp groups different masters, Facebook group IDE everyone; Sign-up: google form to sign up Place of meeting: zoom as meeting place. MS teams as proposed communication channel for the groups Miro as online whiteboard where students could work with our pre-made templates	Participants: students Facilitators: Recent alumni, research and design staff	To connect students to each other during their graduation and to provide a more structured format to frequently connect them to each other.	Every session consisted of a plenary check-in (10min). A group discussion in break-out rooms. (+/- 40min) A plenary round off (+/- 10min) Consisted of reflective activities and peer coaching. The themes were identified in the surveys, workshops etc. Session 1: Checking in Session 2: Learning and performing Session 3: Motivation Session 4: Iceberg model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating a group with a bond of trust. - When you share you feel you belong and you feel motivated. - You get further by building on each other's ideas. - Coaching others helps you to feel better. - Peer planning simulates structure.

The weekly check-in template

Version 1

1. How are you doing?	2. What are the challenges you are facing? Do you need help?	3. How did last week go?	4. What is your plan for next week?	5. Make a pledge for next week

Version 2

1. How are you doing?	2. How do you stay motivated in these times?	3. How did last week go? What went well? What was challenging?	4. What is your plan for next week?	5. Make a pledge for next week

Extra questions

- What are you most afraid of with regard to your graduation project? And why?
- How is your motivation this morning?
- What was your reason to do this project?
- These are just some examples, feel free to come up with check-ins questions yourself

Instructions

What: A weekly check-in template. This template can help you with organising check-ins with your (self formed) community of graduating students.

The goal: to share how you are doing, how you are experiencing graduation and reach out to your teammates if you need help. Sharing what you plan to do this, might actually help you to really do it.

How: You can start by answering all the questions for yourself and then share with each other. You can also go question per question.

TU Delft

Figure 19: Weekly Check in template

Testing and learning

Evaluation first series of weekly check-ins:

What we learned from the first series of weekly check-ins was that students appreciate these organised moments. They help to start the week, to let them reflect on the pressure to perform, motivate them and give a feeling of being part of a community (figure 20). However, these check-ins asked quite some preparation time from our project team. It was decided to run another series of weekly check-ins but without providing topics to discuss. So, the second series consisted of just five check-in questions for students.

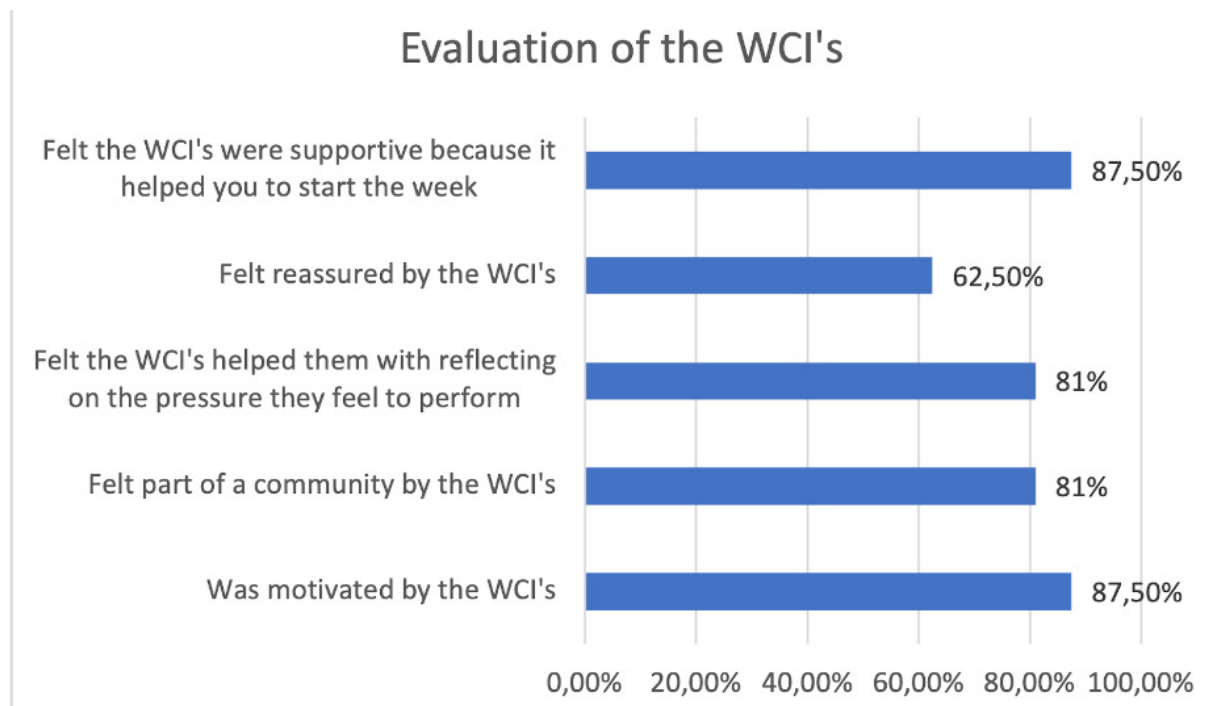


Figure 20: Evaluation of first series of weekly check-ins

For most students, it was helpful to see that others struggle as well and made them realize that they are not alone in this journey.

It was interesting to see that multiple WhatsApp groups and a Slack channel were created by some students and that this contributed to their sense of community feeling. These different initiatives from students that arose from our first intervention are good examples of what is called 'design for emergence' where designers do not design the end product but design for things to emerge from the design (source, 7).

To hear the experience of a few students you can watch the summarizing video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HiDajgmmQY>

What could we improve the next time?

The attendance of the students reduced over time. The sign-up number was quite high, however, two-third of the students showed up. This is a challenge because it is often so that those people who need it the most end up not coming. We have to look into how we could involve them as well. Next to this, the number of participants dropped a bit every week. This is no big problem, but we do have the advice to think about how to better manage the attendance since students were quite disappointed when their group members were not there.

The students who were further in their graduation project often found themselves in the situation of giving advice to those who still needed to start or were initiating their project. This was something we took with us to explore within the third intervention.

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When it comes to the use of different media we used zoom for the meetings, Miro to facilitate the break-out room discussions and a team in MS Teams for interaction outside the weekly check-ins. We found that all media were sufficient enough in use, only the team channel in MS teams was not used by students. Students did set up their own groups on other media. What could be tested in the future is to use the Brightspace page from the graduation project.

What do you think of this weekly check-in?

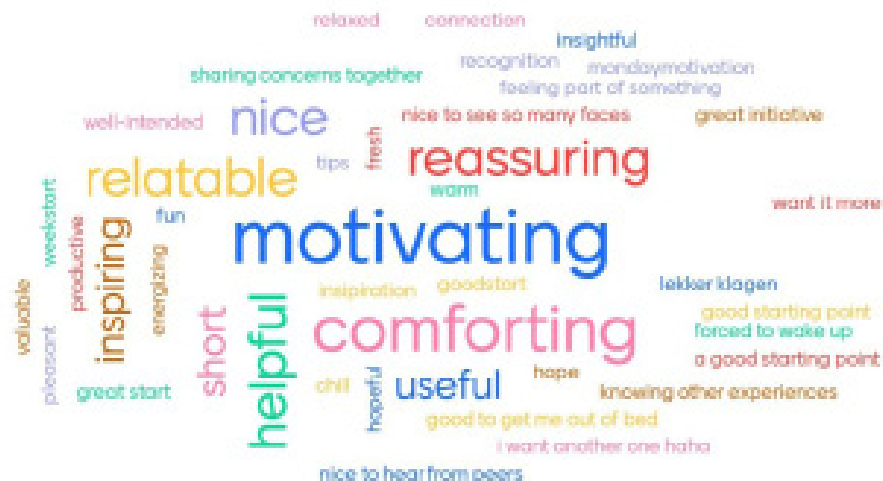


Figure 21: Evaluation of second series of weekly check-ins

Evaluation second series of weekly check-ins:

The second series of weekly check-ins consisted of the same format and five check-ins questions which students could discuss in their break-out room.

The students who participated in both sessions had no particular preference for one series or the other. They shared that first of all their experience with the weekly check-ins was very much dependent on the people who were in their group. Secondly, they said that a preference for one series is also dependent on their mood. They shared that when they feel down or worried, they just need a more informal conversation with peers like in the second series. When they felt good, wanted to reflect on themselves or learn new things they preferred the format and content of the first series.