

# After COVID: Seeking the best of both worlds

## Description of Project

Anthony Appleby and Dr. Roswita Dressler  
Werklund School of Education

### Context and purpose of Teaching Across Borders (TAB)

bring students from partner countries to our faculty of education to:

- Learn about Canadian culture ,
- meet local students,
- visit local schools,
- study pedagogical topics (often with English language support)

### Overall structure

- guest speakers in the online classes
- service learning volunteers (local students) participated in
  - asynchronous activities (discussion boards)
  - some online classes
- **Class delivery:**
  - 3 classes x 3 weeks (Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday)
  - 3 x 2 hr classes (Evenings 6:00 to 8:00)

### Delivery

- **Synchronous class time:**
  - ESL topics and preparation for guest speaker, followed by guest
  - combination of whole group lecture, review of homework tasks, and break out room activities and tasks
- **Asynchronous tasks:**
  - Optional home study tasks (worksheets and web destinations)
  - “pen pal journals” (discussion boards shared with Canadian student volunteers)
  - Student produced vocabulary list (whole class discussion boards)
- **Online content available on D2L**
  - Curated lists of web destinations related to class content
  - worksheets

### Design considerations

- Content guided by guest speakers
- Second language online delivery can be harder to understand
  - provided very specific language
  - conceptual support
- Focus on scheduling first & plan lessons afterwards

**“The content of the course is very rich. Each time different guests share different things and their profound teaching philosophy with us.”**



**“Classroom activities make the communication between students, teachers and students more close and understand each other better.”**



[anthony.Appleby@ucalgary.ca](mailto:anthony.Appleby@ucalgary.ca)  
[anthonyjappleby@gmail.com](mailto:anthonyjappleby@gmail.com)  
[rahdress@ucalgary.ca](mailto:rahdress@ucalgary.ca)

# After COVID: Seeking the best of both worlds

## Results

Anthony Appleby and Dr. Roswita Dressler  
Werklund School of Education

### Requirements for success

- institutional resources:
  - funding for instructor
  - technical training
  - administrative support
- Student volunteers
- Strong relationships within the university and partners
- Live transcription features in video conferencing software

### Challenges

- Online format challenges learners not fluent in English
- Guest speakers don't always know the level of knowledge and language ability of students
- Students may be shy to ask questions if content and language level is too hard

### Implications

1. Use multiple modes of connection (emoticons, chat, breakout rooms, etc.) to increase engagement
2. Take the time to find volunteers (speakers, peers, etc.)
3. Consider scheduling in "off hours" to help with finding volunteers.
4. Provide language supports before class and during class
5. Request agenda from guest speakers before presentation
6. Leverage student volunteers model "typical" online class behaviour (asking questions, interacting, etc.)
7. Use live transcription features (PowerPoint and Zoom)
8. Communicate content of presentation, and level/ interest of students to guest speakers
9. Encourage guest speaker format as a mixture of lecture with dialogue
- 10.Coach students to feel comfortable asking speakers questions

### Benefits

- Convenient to attend from home, no travel cost & time.
- Wider outreach: More students from more universities
  - a global sharing of various educational practices
  - Student loved comparing CDN contexts to their country,
- Student feedback:
  - Combining grammar/ language with content training was helpful
  - Guest speakers and breakout room tasks were helpful
  - positive reactions to "Pen pal journals" (student to student to volunteer)



**"The instructional approaches helped me to strengthen my English listening, learn a lot of grammar knowledge, and understand many educational topics."**



[anthony.Appleby@ucalgary.ca](mailto:anthony.Appleby@ucalgary.ca)  
[anthonyjappleby@gmail.com](mailto:anthonyjappleby@gmail.com)  
[rahdress@ucalgary.ca](mailto:rahdress@ucalgary.ca)