DESIGNING DISORIENTING DILEMMAS IN AN ONLINE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE COURSE

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This design case follows the transformation of a language and culture course for first-year international students from face-to-face to online. It focuses on creating and managing disorienting dilemmas in an online environment as students are given the opportunity to pursue transformative learning. Design decisions about creating community, course structure, and turning challenges into learning opportunities are investigated through an in-depth look at three weeks of the course. This design case explores the successes, challenges, dilemmas, and what I came to realize—as faculty and designer—through reflecting on the course and how it was transformed.

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INTRODUCTION

"How in the world am I going to move a language and culture course online?" was the question I found myself asking in June of 2020. The course is about the English language and American culture, designed to help first-year international students immerse themselves in and adjust to life on an American campus. Due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the students would be taking it from the comfort and familiarity of their home culture, where it is likely English is not widely used in daily life. I am an instructor and instructional designer for a Language and Cultural Exchange (LACE) course for international first-year students at Purdue University. I am also a Ph.D. candidate in the Learning Design and Technology program at the same university. The course, ENGL 110, is designed to immerse first-year international students in language and cultural experiences to help them work through the new questions, challenges, and experiences that come with study abroad and come out on the other side with skills and tools to be more successful in their sojourn as international students in the U.S. This curriculum is very personal for me, because I have spent years living and working abroad throughout East Asia as a white women foreigner, and I understand some of the challenges that these students face when they arrive in the United States. The curriculum was designed to incorporate the people, places, and experiences students encountered on campus, and the department had no interest in pursuing online versions of the course.

Face-to-face course sections are capped at 16 students to promote community, and personalized learning, and provide plenty of room to explore the experiences that students have on campus. The language activities are carefully embedded into the cultural activities to give students opportunities to develop and apply sophisticated language skills that move beyond grammar and vocabulary drills. The syllabus is peppered with immersive cultural experiences involving field trips, guest speakers, curated experiences, and group work. Yet, due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the vast majority of international students were unable to get a visa or travel to the United States, which meant that

this course focused on English language and intercultural competence had to be reimagined and transformed into.

I was not alone in needing to transform courses as a result of the pandemic. I knew the design of the course would have a significant impact on student learning outcomes (Tsang et al., 2021), and this course had to be something more than the emergency remote teaching of March 2020 (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). The kind of learning experience I was looking for needed to include "inquiry-based learning, problem-centered learning, and integrative learning" (Schultz & DeMers, 2020, p. 143) to promote deep learning. I also had to contend with the challenges for students, such as internet connectivity, readiness for online learning, and the personal and family challenges they might be facing (Maqableh & Alia, 2021). And so, with these things in mind, I found myself facing a major disorienting dilemma, which "begins when we encounter experiences, often in an emotionally charged situation, that fails to fit our expectations and consequently lack meaning for us, or we encounter an anomaly that cannot be given coherence either by learning within existing schemes or by [rote] learning new schemes" (Mezirow, 1991, p 94), of my own. This design case will focus on the disorienting dilemmas I encountered while transforming a LACE course from face-to-face to online, creating opportunities for disorienting intercultural dilemmas, and highlight the successes, challenges, and my reflections along the way.

CONTEXT

ENGL 110 is the first part of a two-semester sequence to help students "develop the academic, linguistic, and cultural competencies needed to participate in university life and to compete for graduate school and employment opportunities" (Language and Cultural Exchange, n.d.). In particular, ENGL 110 focuses on the individual student, their experiences, goals, interactions, and transformation within a new linguistic and cultural context. It is a 16-week, 3-credit course that fulfills a humanities degree requirement. This course has always been taught in face-to-face contexts, and department discussions about developing an online version always ended with some variation of "online courses do not fit the goals of our program, and it would be too difficult and take too many resources to try to recreate it online. Students will probably not have a particularly good or effective experience." Students are enrolled in ENGL 110 if their language test scores fall below a particular level (e.g., 100 or lower on the TOEFL exam). The curriculum is based on Mezirow's (1978) theory of Transformative Learning. This theory has been through a number of versions and iterations in the last 40 years (Taylor 1998), so this course specifically utilizes the seven-phase version in Beer (2019), outlined in table 1. ENGL 110 was first offered in the fall of 2014, and the classrooms are typically student-centered and integrate language instruction and practice into activities to build intercultural competency.

PHASE 1	A disorienting dilemma
PHASE 2	A self-examination of affect
PHASE 3	A critical assessment of assumptions
PHASE 4	Exploration of new roles
PHASE 5	Planning a course of action
PHASE 6	Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementation
PHASE 7	Trying out new roles

TABLE 1. Seven phases of transformative learning.
Note. From "Designing a Rubric to Measure Elements of Transformative Learning in Online Learning: A Case Study of a FutureLearn MOOC," by N. Beer, 2019, p. 4. Copyright 2019 by Journal of Interactive Media in Education.

I have been an instructor with this program since its inception in 2014 and am one of 17 instructors currently with the program. Instructors have a variety of cultural backgrounds, with current instructors providing perspectives from American, Chinese, Korean, Lebanese, Russian, and Dominican cultural backgrounds. During the years I have worked with the program, the curriculum has developed and changed quite a bit, although it was always exclusively face-to-face. As the program evolved, it became clear that there was no single textbook that combined language and culture in the ways that our students needed. I worked with the assistant director for curriculum and instruction to write a textbook to guide students through the course. This gave us the opportunity to center transformative learning as the theoretical framework for the course and to structure the curriculum so that it heavily emphasized community, the value of multiple perspectives (even if some are different from your own perspective), and a recurring theme of students being a sojourner and explorer in their study abroad journey. The *Guidebook* and course structure highlight was finding experiences that are personally meaningful, identifying specific goals, and creating opportunities for cultural exchange rather than simple adaptation.

COURSE STRUCTURE

ENGL 110 is divided into three units, each culminating in a unit project rather than an exam. A course map (figure 1) guides students through the LACE process and zooms in on a particular section of the map in each unit. Each unit also has several guiding questions and key terms/ideas (Appendix A) that provide focus and structure to the unit.

Unit 1—Learning Spaces

Unit one zooms in on the limited view section of the course map (figure 2) and sets the stage for the rest of the course. The main idea is that everyone starts with a limited view of the world, and it takes a lot of hard work and
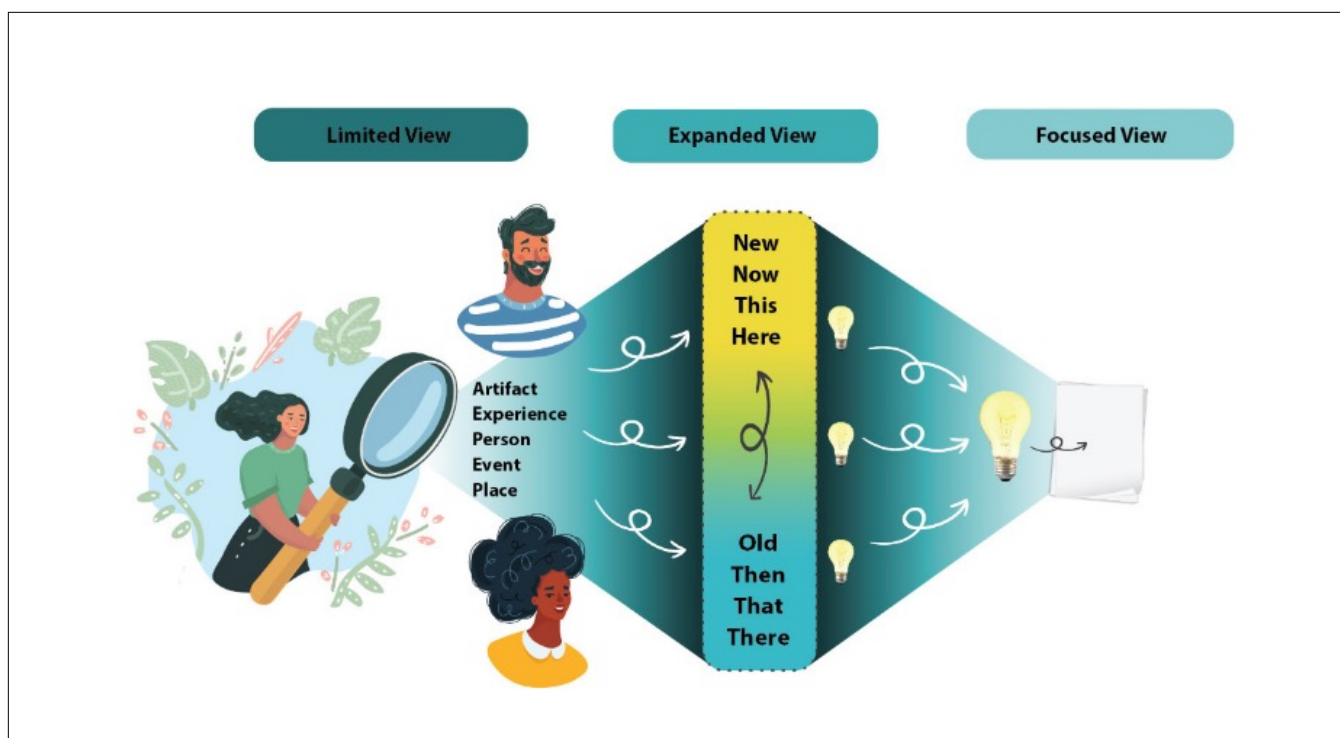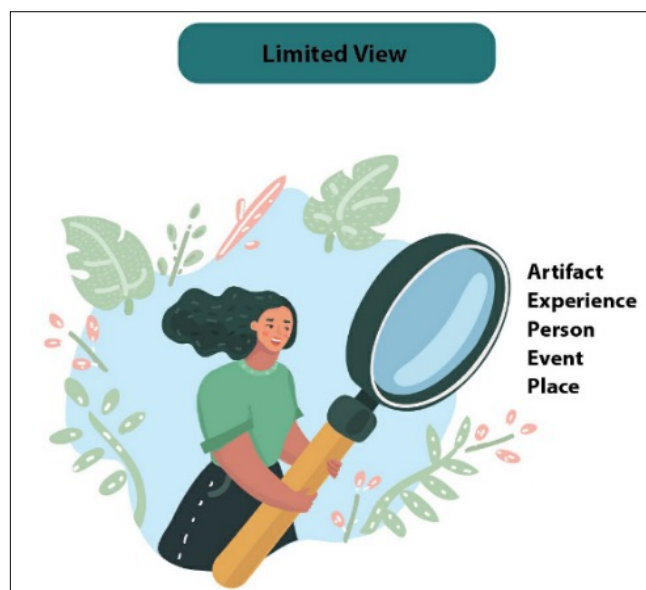
FIGURE 1. ENGL 110 Course Map.
Note. From "Language and cultural exchange: A guidebook for international students (Vol. 1)," by M. C. Allen and S.E. Fehrman and S.E. Fehrman 2019, *TopHat*, Copyright 2019 by TopHat.

self-understanding to develop an expanded view. Living cross-culturally is a constant onslaught of disorienting dilemmas in the form of new perspectives, experiences, and expectations, so it is important for students to have a plan for how to deal with these dilemmas as they encounter them. Key academic themes in this unit include self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 1990), zones of comfort, learning, and danger (Vygotsky, 1978), and utilizing/balancing knowledge, skills, and attitude (Weinstein & Underwood, 1985). The unit project requires students to create a self-regulated action plan on how they will work on a SMART goal related to language/culture over the course of the semester. This unit typically lasts three or four weeks, depending on instructor preference.

Unit 2—Intercultural Learning

Unit two is where the majority of course time is spent, with most instructors devoting five or six weeks of the semester to this unit. The zoomed-in course map (figure 3) shows students expanding their view by experiencing a number of new inputs in the form of cultural artifacts, experiences, people, etc. and learning how to productively switch between multiple perspectives.

The main instructional element of this unit is the Describe-Analyze-Evaluate (DAE) Model, which is adapted from Nam and Condon (2010). This unit also introduces group work with a particular focus on language and cultural skills to

FIGURE 2. Zoomed in Unit 1 Course Map
Note. From "Language and cultural exchange: A guidebook for international students (Vol. 1)," by M. C. Allen and S.E. Fehrman 2019, *TopHat*, Copyright 2019 by TopHat.

navigate cross-cultural group work. These skills include understanding about stereotypes and generalizations, creativity, appropriate and inappropriate collaboration, and shifting perspectives. The final project for this unit requires students to go on an intercultural field trip (approved by
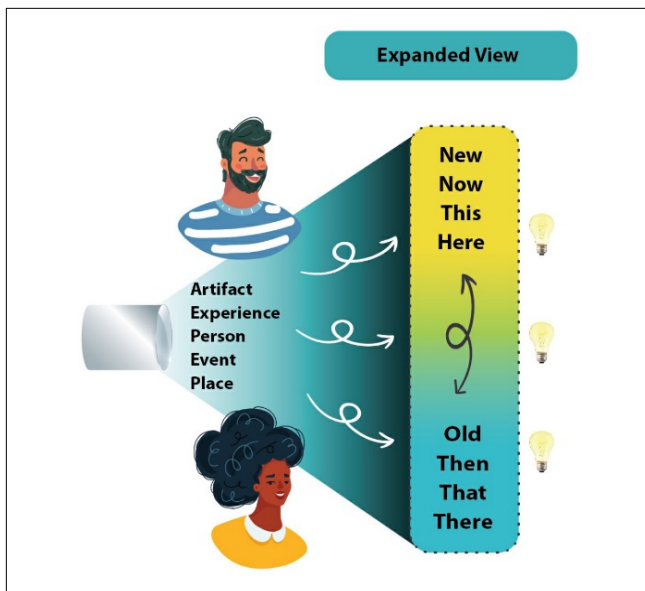
FIGURE 3. Zoomed in Unit 2 Course Map.
Note. From "Language and cultural exchange: A guidebook for international students (Vol. 1)," by M. C. Allen and S.E. Fehrman 2019, *TopHat*, Copyright 2019 by TopHat.

FIGURE 4. Zoomed in Unit 3 Course Map
Note. From "Language and cultural exchange: A guidebook for international students (Vol. 1)," by M. C. Allen and S.E. Fehrman 2019, *TopHat*, Copyright 2019 by TopHat.
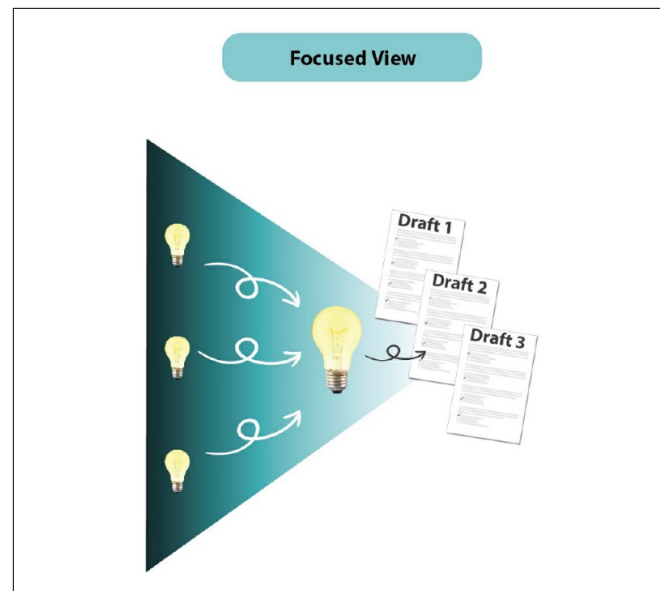
the instructor) to apply the DAE Model and give a formal presentation about their learning process.

Unit 3—Transformative Learning

The final unit of this course asks students to take all of the input from their semester and focus it on a unit project, Telling My Story, that they can share with others (figure 4). Students have the opportunity to practice reflection as they zoom in on their story of language/culture growth and development throughout the past semester. Students learn about culture shock concepts focused on telling a complex personal story, and adjustment, reflection strategies, and language Most instructors choose to devote three or four weeks to this unit and reserve the final week of the semester for presentations. Students present their unit project of a digital story to the class in the form of a portfolio, movie, or Pecha Kucha presentation.

THE TRANSFORMATION

Because of its immersive cultural/linguistic nature, ENGL 110 was never supposed to be an online course, yet I found myself staring at a blank design document, still feeling the shell shock from moving the course online in the middle of the spring 2020 semester, trying to imagine how in the world I could transform this course to be effective when it was fully online. I knew there would be several key elements missing from the online experience. Since they were removed from the language and cultural experiences of daily life in the U.S., students would have fewer opportunities to practice their English, they would have less exposure to students from other cultural backgrounds, and there would

be fewer opportunities for students to encounter disorienting dilemmas, the necessary first step for Transformative Learning (Beer, 2019). With all of this swirling around in my head, the first thing I did was sketch out my goals for the course, based on departmental requirements and personal teaching philosophy, and make a note of the constraints that I was dealing with (Table 2).

Next, I thought about the experiences, expectations, and challenges instructors and students might face teaching and learn in an online environment. At this point, I consulted a colleague, Susan (pseudonym), who had done some curriculum work on ENGL 110, an instructor who has more than 30 years of teaching experience and has been with the program for about four years. She provided a helpful perspective by reviewing the course after it was designed, flagging areas that needed additional clarity, and providing an additional perspective on student and instructor workload. As I was talking to her about maintaining transformative learning throughout this design process, I quickly realized I was facing three disorienting dilemmas of my own.

Disorienting Dilemma 1: How can I convert a physical course into an online one in a way that is manageable for instructors with various levels of online teaching experience and comfort?

The course needed to be easy enough for instructors who had never taught online to manage. I needed to consider the workload for online teaching, remembering to factor in the probable increase in email volume. I also had to think about assignments that would allow instructors to give personalized feedback (a program requirement) when they

GOALS	CONSTRAINTS
Build classroom community: help students feel comfortable with challenging/personal material; fight some of the isolation of studying online while social distancing or being under lockdown/quarantine.	**Time zones:** I had students on four continents, spanning 14 time zones. There was simply no good time for anything synchronous, so the required elements of the course had to be asynchronous.
Scaffold well: help students develop the skills to complete this course, but also prepare them for the second course in the sequence whether they were on campus or not.	**Varying levels of English:** While all students had basic English proficiency, some students might be stronger at some skills than others and need additional language support, and I needed to figure out how to incorporate speaking practice into the course.
Prepare students to come to campus: Regardless of what happened this semester, or even next semester, at some point students would come to campus and have to deal with advanced coursework AND a completely new environment.	**Language development:** Even though students were not immersed in an English language environment, I still had to help them develop complex, sophisticated, and subtle communication skills.
Meaningful learning: I wanted to avoid boring, busy-work filled online coursework and make activities engaging and purposeful.	**Program requirements:** Even though the course was moving online, there were still certain program requirements about assessment, content, etc.
Disorienting Dilemmas: Students experience any number of Mezirow's (1978) Disorienting Dilemmas when they are on campus in a new culture/environment, so I wanted to try to create similar opportunities in the online course.	**Cultural development:** Students still needed to learn how to navigate American cultural norms (e.g., academic integrity) without becoming overwhelmed or losing their own cultural identity, yet students were not in American culture.

TABLE 2. Goals and Constraints for the ENGL 110 Online Redesign.

may not feel like they knew students as well as they were used to from face-to-face environments. I, like most other instructors in the program, had never taught a fully online course before, so this was a huge challenge. To make matters more complicated, the university was in the middle of transitioning to a new Learning Management System (LMS) in the middle of the pandemic, and the upcoming semester was going to be the first time the instructors had used the new system.

Disorienting Dilemma 2: How can I create a valuable, immersive online learning experience for students without overwhelming them with the unique tools and expectations of online learning?

The majority of ENGL 110 students were in their first semester of their first year of college, and they suddenly had to figure everything out by themselves, awash in the glow of their computer screens. There are common challenges that all new college students face, such as managing study load, time management, and balancing personal, academic, and social responsibilities and activities. This is challenging enough when study is happening in a mode that students are familiar with, but many students had never taken a course online. Suddenly, they had to take 4-6 college courses fully online, in a different time zone, in their second language. Based on my experience with students from switching online in the middle of the last semester, I knew I needed to be sure that I made the course easy and intuitive

for students to navigate and gave them sufficient tools to quickly figure out how to succeed in an online course without overwhelming them with tools, resources, or extras.

Disorienting Dilemma 3: How can I design and scaffold an entire course to create opportunities for disorienting dilemmas and transformative learning?

My final disorienting dilemma was as an instructional designer. It was a daunting task to look at the goals, constraints, program requirements, needs of various groups, and blank LMS and figure out how to turn it all into a functioning online course. I had designed for some online modules and activities, but it was my first time designing a fully online course. I knew I had to figure out how to scaffold everything before the course started without being able to see how students were responding to the content. That meant I had to design in a way that accounted for a variety of language skills, background experiences and starting points, and outcomes, and I had to figure out how to create and leverage opportunities for disorienting dilemmas to be a potential catalyst for transformative learning.

TELLING MY STORY

The final project in ENGL 110 is called "Telling My Story", and it gives students the opportunity to explore how they have grown and developed with their language skills or cultural understanding during the semester. It involves intentional

reflection and framing a student's personal experience in a way that reveals something to themselves and their audience. This design case is my story of the decisions I made and the successes and challenges of the course design.

Structural Decisions

As much as possible, I needed to deliver a complete course to other instructors so that we could all focus our energy on the students rather than on trying to develop the course as we went. I created a design document template that would help me account for as many of these variables as possible and see how the entire course would fit together before I started building things in the LMS (Appendix B). This was helpful because I was able to quickly go back and modify things as the course design progressed. I was also able to share this document with Susan to get feedback on things like student time-on-task, instructor grading load, scaffolding, and course activity ideas.

Community Structure

One of the first things I thought about was how to create an environment where students could have some sort of community and be exposed to different cultures and perspectives. I hoped that having an active classroom community would help students deal with this challenging season but also provide opportunities to closely interact with students from other cultural backgrounds. In the past, I asked students to exchange contact information with two other students on the first day of class to have an informal support network if they had homework questions or missed a day of class. I decided to modify this idea slightly into the idea of having semester-long Pen Pals. I liked this because it gave students a reason to contact each other and start building friendships with their classmates. I assigned students to Pen Pal pairs (with a group of three if there were uneven numbers in the class) and they were required to interact in course activities at least once a week, starting in week three. The Pen Pal component also had the advantage of building in some peer accountability to keep students engaged with the course as they were studying independently in their home countries and provide one more resource to help students succeed in an online learning environment.

Weekly Structure

I thought it was important to have a consistent weekly structure (figure 5). Students would know where to look for everything each week, and instructors could find a good workflow for managing grading and reviewing course activities. The Schedule & Details page was where students could get an overview of the tasks for that week, including reading assignments, due dates, and anything else that was relevant to the week. The Preparation page highlighted reading strategies to help provide language support, including an approximately 10-minute introduction video
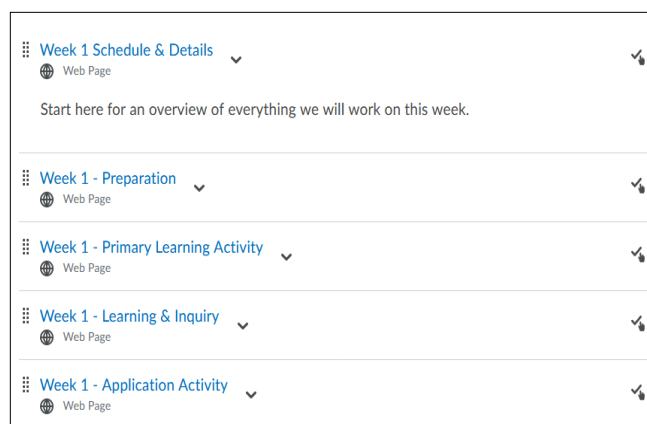
FIGURE 5. Screenshot of Weekly Course Structure.

FIGURE 6. Primary Learning Activity Graphic.

FIGURE 7. Learning and Inquiry Activity Graphic.

FIGURE 8. Application Activity Graphic.

from the instructor, and was a place for students to submit any assignments that fell outside of the three main course activities. Most weeks had three repeating assignment categories, each with their own graphic to provide a visual

cue to students. The assignment categories were the Primary Learning Activity (figure 6), Learning and Inquiry Activity (figure 7), and Application Activity (figure 8).

Primary Learning Activity

The Primary Learning Activity (PLA) was where students spent most of their time and effort for the week. PLAs required students to use a number of language skills, including reading, writing, and speaking. They were also designed to help students explore course concepts and move beyond passively reading from their computer screens. For instance, the PLA for the first week was a course scavenger hunt. Students had to identify 20 key elements of the course and copy/paste text or images to orient themselves to the course structure and resources. Students were allowed to drop the lowest PLA from their final grade to give everyone some flexibility due to the unusual circumstances of the 2020-2021 academic year.

Learning and Inquiry

The Learning and Inquiry (L&I) area was required by the program. Students completed five journals and eight video blogs to help them explore course themes, practice reflection, and develop language skills. The journals were often an extension of the work students were doing in their PLAs, with an emphasis on developing complex ideas and using sophisticated language to express those ideas. Journals were explicitly not graded on grammar unless the language was so confusing that it obscured the meaning and provided an excellent venue for instructors to give personalized feedback. Video blogs, completed through FlipGrid, gave students a chance to practice speaking and listening skills.

The video blogs were typically connected to the reading assignments in the course to help provide motivation and accountability to complete the reading. Students were usually required to reply to their Pen Pal's video blog, and to choose one other student in the course to respond to. The video blogs were mostly graded on completion. If students were specifically struggling with language issues that made them particularly difficult to understand, or if there was some sort of problematic pronunciation error, instructors could give private written or recorded feedback to students to help them improve their language.

Application Activity

The final weekly activity was the Application Activity (A.A.). This was the second part of my plan to create a culture of community and cultural exchange in the online classroom. A.A.s were primarily a student space where they could interact with each other, share their experiences, and recreate some of the natural relationship building that typically happens in the chatter before class in a face-to-face environment. To keep things from being overwhelming, I chose to limit A.A.s to one of three categories (table 3). I recommended that instructors grade A.A.s based on order to preserve the student-centered space. A.A.s asked students to share photos, stories, and memories connected with their home cultures, and really complete and interact with students mostly in the PLAs, L&Is, and through assignment feedback, in helped create an atmosphere of cultural exchange and connection around the globe.

Weekly Announcements

The final way to help promote community and keep students on track was to strategically use announcements. I decided that three announcements a week would be a manageable number for instructors and students. I suggested that instructors use their Monday announcement to provide important information about the upcoming week, their Wednesday announcement to check in, comment on what was happening in the class, respond to frequent questions, etc., and use the Friday announcement to wrap things up and include a key cultural highlight. This could be something more generally American (such as information about Thanksgiving traditions) or something that was specific to campus life, like local attractions. This predictable structure allowed me to do some work in advance, like drafting Monday announcements and suggesting things that could be highlighted on Friday to help reduce the workload for instructors, and create additional low-cost opportunities for students to explore American culture.

Technology

One area I had to constantly catch myself was with technology. I wanted to be careful to not overwhelm instructors or students with new technologies. There were several core technologies that were required, including the course LMS, FlipGrid for video blogs, and TopHat, the digital textbook platform. Students were required to meet with their instructor at least once during the semester, and the university used Zoom for video conferences, and they needed to use PowerPoint or something similar to create presentations for their projects. I originally had multiple ideas to incorporate various additional technologies but created a rule for myself that I was not going to introduce a technology unless students would use it for at least two assignments in the course. With this rule in mind, I also added a Canva Classroom infographic tool and Circuit, an online peer review tool.

THE DESIGN PROCESS

After making these initial decisions, I moved on to the actual design phase. I want to zoom in on three weeks in the course, one week from each unit, to more fully explore the ups and downs of transforming ENGL 110 for an online context.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
HERE AND THERE	This is a way to help replicate the conversations students might have before a face-to-face class starts. Each of the topics is designed to give students the opportunity to share a part of their life, culture, and perspective (the "here" part) with their instructor and classmates (who are "there").
RESEARCH AND REPORT	Students will have a prompt or topic to explore. They should follow the steps in the topic to explore it more fully as they talk to other people, look at other websites, watch other videos, and consider other perspectives. After they have explored further (that's the research part), they need to come back to the course page and tell the class what they found (by reporting on their activities).
GOLDILOCKS EXPLANATION	In the story of Goldilocks, the main character tries three different versions of food, chairs, beds, etc. until she finds the one that is "just right"). In this activity, students will need to explain the same thing in three different levels or lengths, in order to find a "just right" understanding. This activity pushes students to think about and communicate their understanding of concepts in different ways, and to control language in precise ways.

TABLE 3. Application Activity Categories.

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
PRIMARY LEARNING ACTIVITY—BIG IDEA ROUNDUP INFOGRAPHIC	Students read about four Big Ideas in the Guidebook (self-regulated learning, setting goals, managing energy, and knowledge/skills/attitude). Students were required to do some online research and find at least one source that added something new to the information in the Guidebook and then create a personalized infographic that incorporated all four Big Ideas to answer Guiding Question #2 (how can I be responsible for my own learning?). Students needed to include the additional resource they found through their online search and share the infographic with their classmates in the LMS.
LEARNING AND INQUIRY ACTIVITY— JOURNAL #1	This journal helped guide students through the process of meeting their Pen Pal for the first time. There were two parts to this journal. The first part asked students to do a self-evaluation of their learning spaces after two weeks of online coursework and consider what was going well, what was challenging, and brainstorm some possible adjustments. I also asked students to think about what they wanted to share with their Pen Pal, and what they hoped to gain from interacting with their Pen Pal. Then, students had to set up a video call with their Pen Pal. I provided a set of questions and tasks that students needed to complete in this video call. The second part of their journal asked students to summarize their conversation with their Pen Pal and identify at least one thing they learned from talking with their Pen Pal.
APPLICATION ACTIVITY—HERE AND THERE	The .A.A.A. this week was focused on goals. For the unit one project, students had to write an action plan based on a SMART goal, so this was their opportunity to practice writing SMART goals and get feedback before their project was due. Students had to write a SMART goal about how they could learn about American culture from their home country, and then identify how their goal was Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-based.

TABLE 4. Description of Week 3 Learning Activities.

Week 3—Exploring Big Ideas

This week was part of unit one, and students were exploring different types of learning spaces, including physical, virtual, mental, social, linguistic, and cultural learning spaces. I chose to highlight this week because it was the first time students interacted with their Pen Pals, and because I asked students to revisit the work that they did this week in week 11 (see below). I wanted to see if I did a good enough job answering my third question about design and scaffolding. Students completed their three typical learning activities (table 4) and started preparing for their first unit project, writing an action

plan and SMART goal about developing their language and intercultural competency during the semester.

Successes

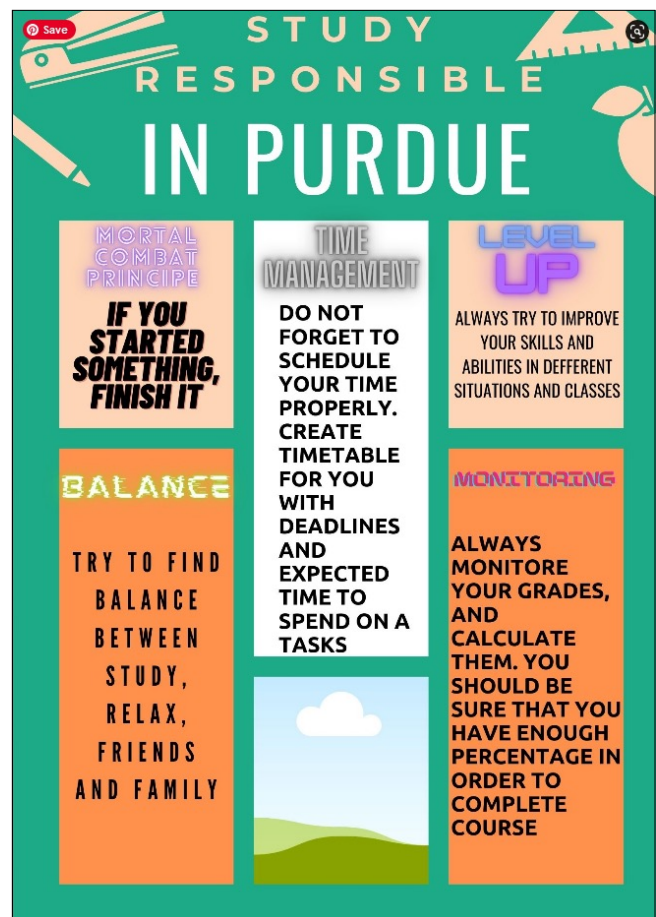There were several things that worked really well this week. When I first taught this course in the fall 2020 semester, students loved having Pen Pals. It was consistently one of their favorite parts of the course, and I heard from a number of students that their Pen Pal became one of their good friends, and they texted and video-called on a regular basis. Students said they were setting up spontaneous study groups, texting
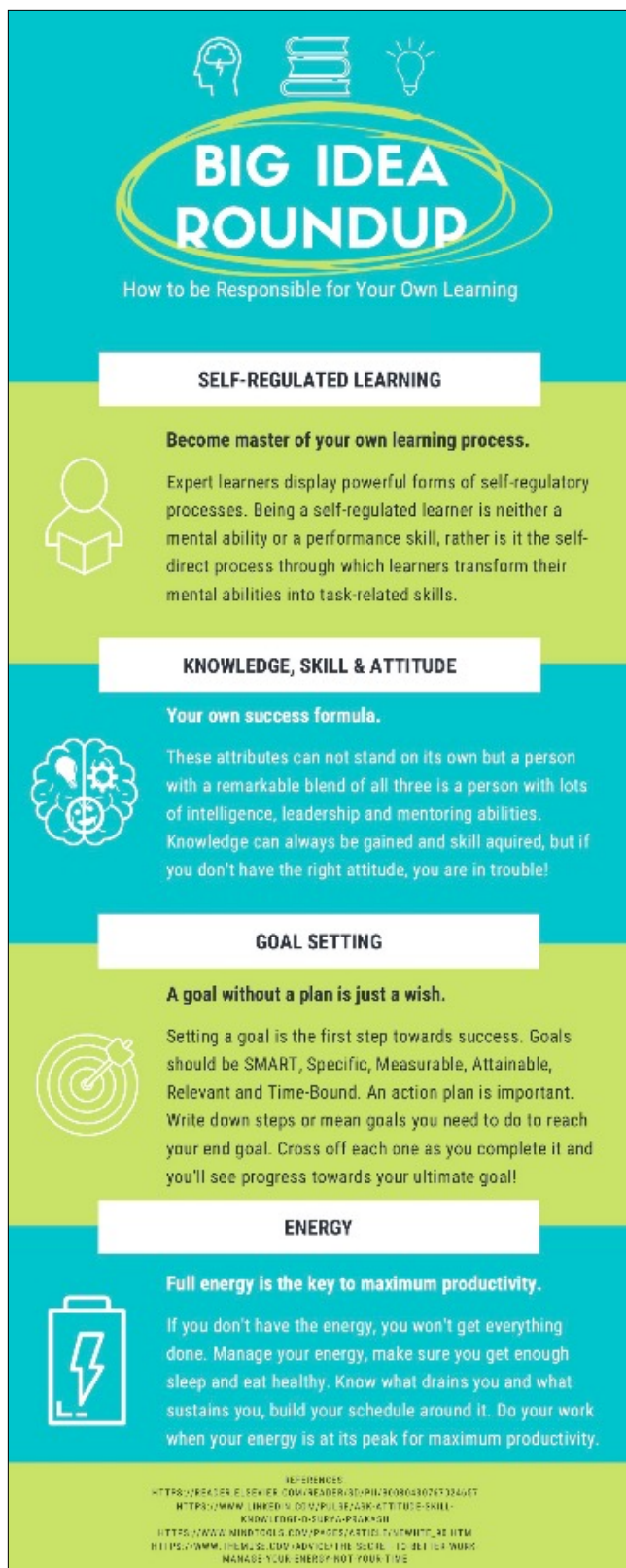
FIGURE 9. A comprehensive example of the PLA.

FIGURE 10. A minimal example of the PLA.

to ask questions about the course, and were relieved to have at least one friend when they came to campus. It was a specific way of helping students cope with the challenges of online learning and addressing my second question. Students also commented in their journals that they were glad to have a specific set of tasks and questions to focus on when they initially met their Pen Pal, because it was a little awkward at first. It was my hope that the Pen Pal component would help create a possible disorienting dilemma as students interacted with someone from a different culture, and this generally seemed to be the case for most students.

Giving students a chance to practice their SMART goals before their assignment worked well too. In the face-to-face version of the class, we would spend at least one class period working on how to write good SMART goals, so the .A.A.A. helped replicate some of that practice. Instructors were able to keep an eye on what students were doing and reach out to students who were struggling to write appropriate or complete SMART goals.

Challenges

There was some confusion about the PLA for this week. Students were not clear about how many additional sources they needed for their infographic, and I made a note to clarify this for the future (Appendix C). Some of the infographics that students created were comprehensive and interesting

(figure 9), and some of them were more minimal and depended too heavily on the textbook (figure 10). Students also struggled with how to include outside sources in their work. Overall, this assignment worked because it exposed students to each of these four ideas, but it was not the most interesting or engaging assignment in the semester. It would have been better if it were more personalized or required more synthesis of the ideas. From an instructor perspective, this was a manageable assignment that incorporated several key themes of the course into a single activity, and so it was a helpful response to my first question.

The final challenge is related to the Pen Pals. The first time I taught this course in fall 2020, the Pen Pal component worked perfectly. There was one student who had to drop the course, and her Pen Pal was reassigned, and everything went smoothly from there. I taught this course again in spring 2021, and there were significant challenges with the Pen Pal component. There was a higher-than-average group of students who were non-responsive when their Pen Pals tried to contact them, stopped participating in the course entirely, did not submit assignments for their Pen Pal to interact with, and generally did not engage.

It was still a good experience for the students who actively participated in the course, but it also caused frustration for students who ended up in challenging groups. I spent a lot of time throughout the spring semester managing Pen Pal issues. Typically, the spring semester includes a mix of students who are spring admits, transfer students, single-semester study abroad students, and students who did not successfully complete the course in the fall semester. Due to the unique challenges of studying online the previous semester, there were more students who were repeating the class because they failed it last semester than is typical. I suspect this was part of the problem with the Pen Pal component, and despite the challenges, I plan to try it again the next time I teach this course online. I might try groups of three to try to keep interaction going if one student stops participating.

Week 5—Illustrating Values

Week five was the first week in the second unit, where students were introduced to a variety of intercultural learning frameworks. Instead of trying to teach students "typical" American behaviors, the curriculum emphasizes that there are many different cultures and cultural norms within American culture, but there are some common values that many people in America share. I wanted to create opportunities for students to reflect on their own cultures, think deeply about several American values, and participate in a cultural exchange that went beyond learning about America. I also

wanted to leverage the challenge of students being in their home culture and turn that into a learning opportunity, so I decided to incorporate the student's friends/family into the activities for this week (table 5), and hopefully have another opportunity for a disorienting dilemma as students tried to see their home culture and American culture from multiple perspectives.

Successes

It turned out to be a really good idea to have students interact with their friends and family in the PLA for this week. Students who found online learning difficult experience a welcome break in having an assignment that involved their physical surroundings. Several students noted that they lived with the relative they interviewed, and their relatives were always interested in their American studies, but the students had struggled to bridge the gap they felt between their life at home and their studies in America. I also found that giving students the opportunity to explore and analyze something they were familiar with before attempting to analyze the relative newness of American culture produced deeper and more thoughtful responses than I typically see from students in a face-to-face context.

While the PLA worked as I hoped, I was amazed by how well the .A.A.A. worked. Students responded extremely well to this assignment. The instructions indicated that their video needed to be at least three minutes long, and they were not required to submit a peer response for this assignment. Students had so much to say that the average video length was 4:37, and there were more peer comments on this assignment than there were on the assignments with comment requirements. I think that the simple line-drawing format of the example (figure 11) helped students feel confident in exploring ideas, even if they did not feel they were very capable artists. Several students also mentioned that completing the PLA first helped them to think about this assignment in more complex ways than they would have been able to on their own, so it seemed like my decisions about the weekly structure were working, and I was finding successful answers to my third question.

Challenges

One of the assigned readings for this week dealt with the role of creativity in intercultural learning. Creativity is often necessary because there are some intercultural situations where there is a lack of personal experience, and must imagine a new way to respond or a different meaning to an experience. In the face-to-face course, this content has often had a significant impact on how students experience their sojourn in the United States and often comes up in their final

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
PRIMARY LEARNING ACTIVITY— VALUES INTERVIEW REPORT	This PLA had three parts for students to complete. First, they had to conduct an interview of someone from their home culture who was over the age of 65. The interview focused on what their interviewee thought were the most important values in their culture. Students were also supposed to present some key American values from a course reading and see what their interviewee thought about those values. Then, students needed to analyze what their interviewee said and decide if they agreed or disagreed, if there were values that they perceived as important that were missing, etc. The final part was to report to the class what they had learned. They needed to cite information from their interview and from the course readings to support what they were saying. Students were instructed to follow the PEAS (point, evidence, analysis, so what?) writing model presented in their course readings for that week to write their report.
LEARNING AND INQUIRY ACTIVITY— JOURNAL #2	The second journal asked students to review a series of cross-cultural critical incidents that appeared at the end of unit one in the Guidebook. Students needed to apply course concepts to identify what they thought the core problem was. They then had to analyze the situation and offer a way to resolve the problem that was acceptable in their home culture, and one way that was acceptable in American culture, based on their understanding so far.
APPLICATION ACTIVITY— HERE AND THERE	Students had the opportunity to use their creativity in the A.A. A Chinese artist, Yang Liu, who lives in Germany created a series of simple illustrations to compare Chinese and German cultures (figure 11). Students had to create their own graphic to illustrate one of the cultural values discussed in the reading assignment in their home culture and American culture. They had to use FlipGrid to make a video explaining their graphic to their classmates.

TABLE 5. Description of Week 5 Learning Activities.

projects. As a designer, I struggled to find a good way to incorporate this content into this week in a meaningful way. I tried to apply creativity to the A.A., and in my introduction video and Monday announcement I tried to connect the dots for students, but it was significantly less meaningful than in the face-to-face course. Perhaps it is because students in their home cultures have fewer opportunities for this kind of intercultural creativity. I am still not entirely sure how to overcome this challenge. I tried to revise what I said in the introduction video and weekly announcements when I taught this course for the second time, but it still produced a much weaker response than this content has ever produced in a face-to-face setting. I continue to ponder how I can help my students connect to the role of creativity in intercultural learning.
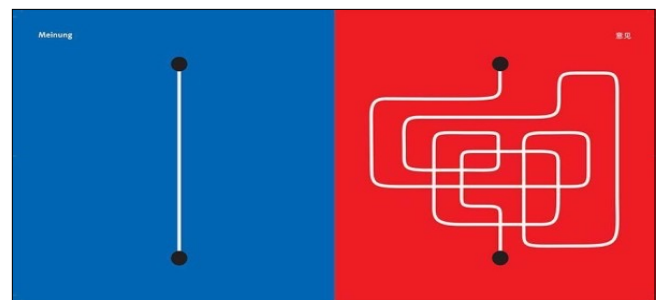
FIGURE 11. Cultural Comparison of Expressing Your Opinion in the West (Blue) and East (Red)
Note. From "East Meets West: A book by Yang Liu," by Y. Liu, 2015, *Herman Schmidt*, Copyright 2015 by Herman Schmidt.

Week 11—Transformative Learning

The final week I want to look at comes near the beginning of unit 3. This is the point in the course where students are explicitly taught about transformative learning and where they begin the process of intentionally and critically reflecting on their learning journey throughout the semester so far. The main component of unit three is preparing students for their final project, Telling My Story, which brings together all of the themes, ideas, language components, and experiences of the entire course, including anything students have encountered outside of the world of ENGL 110. At this point in the semester, students are often exhausted and overwhelmed, so my goal for this week was to find a way to introduce students to the kind of work they would have to do to successfully complete their final project in a fun and lighthearted way that did not feel too overwhelming to

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
PRIMARY LEARNING ACTIVITY— BIG IDEA DISCUSSION	In order to provide a soft introduction to reflection, I asked students to go back to the work that they did in the week three PLA and review their Big Idea Infographic. Since they had more experience with how to be a college student now than they did in week three, I asked them to apply some of the reflection tools from their reading assignment to what they had learned since they first made their infographic. Specifically, I asked them to choose one of the four Big Ideas and reflect on the advice they would have given themselves back in week three (about how to be responsible for their own learning) based on what they knew now.
LEARNING AND INQUIRY ACTIVITY— VIDEO BLOG #6	For this video blog, students needed to work with their Pen Pals and at least one other student in the course. They were given a worksheet (Appendix D) and had to record their answers to the questions as their initial video blog post. Then they had to watch other videos and talk about the similarities/ differences they noticed in their classmate's response.
APPLICATION ACTIVITY— RESEARCH AND REPORT	One of the themes this week was learning about different personality types so that students could have helpful vocabulary to use in their final reflections. I wanted to give students a chance to participate in a bit of American pop culture and do something fun, so I introduced the idea of celebrity doppelgangers (figure 12) and asked students to find their personality celebrity doppelganger. We examined several different personality type classifications, but for this assignment I asked students to find their Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) doppelganger. They had to search online and report to the class about two celebrity personality doppelgangers—one that they were excited about, and one that they were surprised and/or unhappy about. They had to practice using the new vocabulary by describing the similarities/differences between them and the celebrity's public image, and also write about their response to the match.

TABLE 6. Description of Week 11 Learning Activities.

them (table 6). I thought there was a possibility for disorienting dilemmas to appear if students saw they had the same personality as someone unexpected or notorious, but my primary hope was that they would see themselves somewhat differently as they looked back at their early work, and the difference between who they were and who they were becoming would create opportunities for transformative learning.

Successes

Students really enjoyed the .A.A.A. this week. They had lots of things to say about their celebrity personality doppelgangers, and I saw them incorporating the target vocabulary into their work more than I ever did in the face-to-face version of this course. I observed students using this language more than usual in their final projects as well, so it was a highly effective vocabulary tool. Students also connected with each other in the comments of the discussion board. Students who had not interacted with each other much all semester had threads back and forth when they discovered that they had the same MBTI, and these connections were another answer to students feeling lost or overwhelmed in an online learning environment.

The PLA this week also provided students with the opportunity to practice reflection skills. Students actually seemed to engage more with the four Big Ideas this week than they did when the ideas were originally introduced in week three and

FIGURE 12. Benedict Cumberbatch Doppelganger
Note. From "Someone collects celebrity doppelgangers and here are 30 of the best ones," by J. Grinevičius and M. Balčiauskas, 2020, Bored Panda, Copyright 2020 by Bored Panda.

we're able to make connections across the semester as they gave advice to their former selves. I debated about having them give advice to their former selves and give advice to the next group of incoming first-year students. In the end, I decided that giving advice to their former selves would do more to prepare them for their final project, so I went with that. A few students chose to incorporate their project one action plans and SMART goals into their reflection, and that seemed especially helpful. In the future, I will be sure to include that as a suggestion in the instructions.

Challenges

Students really enjoyed the A.A., but it did not see to create many opportunities for disorienting dilemmas. Students focused more on the social aspect of this assignment and did less analysis than I expected.

The video blog prompt was not as successful as I hoped it would be. I adapted this activity from one I did in the face-to-face class. In the face-to-face version of this activity, students typically become engrossed in conversation with their partners as they discover similarities and differences, identify how culture influences what a student considers "normal" or "unusual", and find new connection points for friendship. In video blog format though, the dynamic conversation was lost. The initial answers that each student posted were good and detailed, but the responses that students gave to each other were shallow and repetitive. Students produced a lot of comments like "I thought it was interested that you said something different than me" without providing much depth. The friendship, engagement, and exploration were completely lacking in this video blog. I think the questions are still helpful as students are exploring their growth and development/adaptation, but this did not seem to be the best format for exploring them. It also created a significant grading load for instructors without providing significant educational value to the online classroom.

REFLECTIONS

At the end of the day, the online version of this course was far more successful than I thought it would be. Students were somewhat distanced from the normal array of cultural experiences, shocks, ups, and downs of study abroad, but there were still differences that they had to work through. In many ways, studying online helped emphasize the cultural exchange aspect of this course rather than focusing primarily on American culture. While students did not have as many disorienting dilemmas in their daily lives, as a designer, I was able to create the possibility of a disorienting dilemma in almost every week of the semester. Different students experienced these dilemmas in different ways, and some not at all, but when final projects were submitted, it was clear that students had still recognized their own growth and development, and they were prepared to take on new roles as they progressed in their academic careers.

When the dust from the semester had settled, I returned to the disorienting dilemmas and questions I had identified at the start of the design process. As an instructional designer, I think I was able to successfully try new things, explore new roles, and end up with a transformative understanding of what ENGL 110 could be. In fact, when the pandemic is over and I return to my regular classroom, there are components of the online course I want to keep because they were more effective than what I was doing in the face-to-face version. Other instructors in the program felt the same way, and in

June of 2021, I am staring at a new design document to figure out the best way to incorporate the best elements of online and face-to-face into a hybrid course.

There were some aspects of the disorienting dilemmas for instructors and students that I underestimated. While having three main activities each week provided consistency and depth, it was a lot to grade each week. I misjudged just how much time it would take to keep track of how many peer interactions each assignment required, or what the time limit was for video A vs. video B, or which student had a pandemic-related situation that required some sort of accommodation. I spent more hours working while teaching online than I do in a typical face-to-face semester. A few other instructors identified the grading rhythm as a challenge as well. Instructors were able to grow fairly comfortable with teaching online with the rhythms and patterns of each week, and generally found the course to be manageable. For future versions, I will try to make requirements more consistent across similar assignment types and cut down on the number of graded assignments, particularly in the weeks after students submit their unit projects.

The end-of-semester evaluations for multiple sections of ENGL 110 were full of comments about how much students appreciated the organization of the course and knowing exactly where to find everything each week. The structure of the course and announcements did help answer part of the student dilemma, but I underestimated just how much stress the students were under. I incorporated several weeks where students did not have to complete all three of the typical assignments into the original design, and I allowed them to drop their lowest grade for their PLAs and their A.A.s. I hoped that would relieve some of the pressure and give them wiggle room to deal with all of their other courses in the midst of the stress of studying online in a pandemic. Based on feedback in final evaluations, it would have been helpful to give students a bit more breathing room and modify some of the course schedule, particularly in the week leading up to a unit project.

CONCLUSION

For a course that was never supposed to be online, ENGL 110 online was a resounding success. Two other instructors in the program were able to implement this course design and reported having a successful semester full of student engagement. I was able to identify activities and content that will continue to strengthen the program no matter what the mode of instruction is in the future. There were ups and downs, and several assignments required modification for the second iteration (Appendix C). I have not yet figured out how to translate the power of creativity in intercultural learning to an online context, and I am also trying to condense the course so there are fewer assignments for students and instructors. But in the end, students learned

the content, encountered disorienting dilemmas, new ideas, and challenging perspectives, developed more sophisticated language, and felt better-equipped for when they were able to come to campus.

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APPENDIX A

Guiding Questions and Key Terms

UNIT NUMBER	GUIDING QUESTIONS	KEY TERMS
1	1. "How can I find my optimal learning spaces?" 2. "How can I be responsible for my own learning?" 3. "How can I optimize my language development?" 4. "How can I balance pressure and performance?"	action planning, goal setting, time management, self-regulated learning, zones of comfort, learning, and danger, knowledge, skills, and attitude, and assorted advanced language concepts.
2	5. "What should I do to have meaningful intercultural interactions and experiences?" 6. "How can I work with people who are similar to or different from me?" 7. "How can I present my intercultural knowledge?"	stereotypes and generalizations, shifting perspectives, creative thinking, collaboration and group work, the DAE model, and assorted complex language concepts.
3	8. "How do I recognize growth and change in myself?" 9. "How do I deal with culture shock and adjustment?" 10. "How can I tell an engaging story about who I am and who I am becoming?"	reflection, culture shock and adjust-ment, digital storytelling, personality, perspective, stages of competence, and various sophisticated language concepts.

APPENDIX B

Sample Page from Design Document

Week 1: 8/24-8/29 - Unit 1					Student time on task
Big Idea	Understand how to navigate the course and use required technology; Understand what LACE is and how to participate it in whether they are "here" or "there"; Writing email and language for online interaction				
Performance Objective(s)	**PO 4:** Students will apply course concepts to record and explore their experiences with language and culture in their learning spaces (i.e., journals, video blogs, etc.)				
Materials for Brightspace This Week	Week 1 Checklist; Getting Started page (*Tips for Online Learning (infographic); Video tour of course; Professor's welcome video*); Syllabus; Video Blog Guidelines; "Application Activity" Guidelines; Course scavenger hunt; Email assignment requirements; Here and there Guidelines; Ask an instructor, ask a peer forum; Writing Lab Virtual Tour; Student information form				
Assessments	Video Blog; Course scavenger hunt; Students send appropriate email using Brightspace email function; PLA #1				
Readings	Guidebook Introduction; AP 2A; Syllabus; Writing Lab Virtual Tour Video				2 hours
Items for teachers to build/modify	Syllabus/Navigation Quiz; Welcome video from professor; Video tour of the course; Video Blog #1; Scavenger hunt tasks				
Primary learning activity – course scavenger hunt	Students will have to complete a scavenger hunt for key items in the course and key resources at Purdue. This will include them taking screenshots of things and writing answers to questions. It will ensure that students know important course policies, understand the expectations of the course, and know where to find everything. There will be a Word document with their tasks, and students have to put in the correct information and submit it to Brightspace at the end of the week. Include things about writing lab, syllabus, BS, and TH.				2 hours
Video Blog Prompt	Create a 3-5 minute video in which you introduce yourself to your new classmates. You are required to watch and reply at least 2 of your classmates' videos. Video Suggestions: Name (tips for pronunciation, nicknames, meaning of your name, etc.) Home city and country (where you have lived, studied, etc.) Area of study (what you are studying (major), classes you are taking, etc.) Other facts or information (hobbies, places you've traveled, special skills or talents, pets, favorite TV shows, etc.) NOTE: Be sure to turn ON the English closed captions. Also, you can adjust the audio speed by selecting settings.				1.5 hours
Application Activity – Here and There	Share a picture of one place in your hometown that you think everyone should experience. It can be a park, store, restaurant, experience, or anything else you really enjoy, and tell us why you picked this place. Then, do some research online, and tell us about one place you are most excited to visit when you are at Purdue, and why you want to go to that place. You can find a place on campus, or you can look at parks, restaurants, stores, etc. in Lafayette and West Lafayette.				30 min
Student Actions					Total
Read	**Write**	**Speak**	**Listen**	**Submit**	**6:45**
1) Guidebook Introduction, AP 2A 2) Syllabus	1. Here and There response	1. Video Blog #1 & Replies	1. Professor's Intro/tour video 2. Classmates' Introduction Videos 3. Video Blog #1 & Replies	1. Syllabus/Navigation Quiz	

APPENDIX C

Revision Notes Made During the Course

ENGL 110 Semester Schedule – Spring 2020

Week	Date	Theme	Preparation – do this first unless there are other instructions. GB indicates a section from the Guidebook.	Primary Learning Activity – See Brightspace for detailed information and important deadlines	Learning & Inquiry– Journal or Video Blog. Journals are due on Brightspace at 11:59 pm on Saturday, and Video Blogs are due on Wednesday at 11:59 pm with comments due by Saturday at 11:59 pm.	Application Activity - Due on Brightspace at 11:59 on Saturday unless there are other instructions	Submissions – Due on Brightspace at 11:59 on Saturday unless there are other instructions
Unit 1						
1	8/24	Introduction to course	Syllabus, GB Introduction, AP 2A, Writing Lab Virtual Tour	Course Scavenger Hunt	Video Blog #1 ✓	Here and There	Student Information Form, Buy Textbook
2	8/31	Introduction to Learning Spaces	GB: Guiding Question 1 (all sections)	Learning Spaces Exploration	Video Blog #2	Here and There *use Rework. zones?*	Vocabulary Size Test
3	9/7	Four Big Ideas	GB: Guiding Question 2 (all sections)	Big Idea Roundup *Clarify sources*	Journal #1 *(group work)* ✓	Here and There	KSA Skills Survey, *Energy Graph Worksheet*
4	9/14	Optimizing Language Development	GB: Guiding Question 3 (all sections), Guiding Question 4 (all sections) and Learning Checkpoint #1	Goldilocks Explanation *Require sample w/ release cond. written only.*	Video Blog #3	Here and There	*Prep*
Unit 2						
5	9/21	Intercultural Learning & Frameworks	GB: Unit 2, GQ 5, 5A, 5D *American Ways* Ch. 1 *(on Brightspace)*	Values Interview Report	Journal #2 *Clarify journal prompt. & use GB instructions*	Here and There ✓✓	Conference Sign Up, Project #1
6	9/28	DAE Model	GB: 5B, 5C *American Ways* Introduction *(on Brightspace)*	DAE Experiences *Rework format. Require all experiences*	Video Blog #4	Here and There	Conference Worksheet *(only if your conference is this week)* *Revise for OL*
Conference with Professor – Week 6						
7	10/5	Stereotypes & Generalizations; Group Work	Guiding Question 6 (all sections), 7C Thomas Frank Video *(on Brightspace)*	Lost at Sea *students love! More group work!*	Journal #3 *change. Too repetitive*	Research and Respond ✓	Conference Worksheet *(only if your conference is this week)*
Conference with Professor – Week 7						
8	10/12	Field Trips & Presentations	GB: Guiding Question 7 (all sections) Learning Checkpoint #2	Action Plan Peer Review *Don't we Circuit?*	Video Blog #5 *Adjust sticker instructions*	N/A	Conference Worksheet *(only if your conference is this week)*
Conference with Professor – Week 8						
9	10/19	Deep Culture & Values	N/A	Deep Culture Dive	N/A	N/A	Project #2 Action Plan (Monday) Conference Worksheet *(only if your conference is this week)*
Conference with Professor – Week 9						

6

Your instructor will let you know if this schedule changes. Last updated on 8/7/2020

How Adaptable are you? Worksheet

1. Have you had to move house several times? How did you feel about this change?
2. Have you had to change schools several times? Did you find it difficult to adapt to a new school?
3. Have you traveled to different countries? Which ones? Did you enjoy this experience?
4. What is the longest time you have lived outside of your country?
5. Do you think you are open to different ideas and different cultures?
6. Would you go and live in a country if you did not speak the language?
7. Do you know what culture shock is? Explain.

Adapted from the TEFL skills section in www.onestopenglish.com.