

**Teaching Culturally and Linguistically Diverse International Students in Open and/or
Online Learning Environments: A Research Symposium**

Helping Students Build Learning Communities

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Abstract

Building learning communities and providing ways of engagement in a fully online course is important to keep students motivated and help them with their learning. However, finding effective ways to build learning communities in fully online courses can be challenging due to the flexible nature of the courses and the diversity of student cohorts. In 2021, a term-long group project was introduced into a large, fully online, general education course to help provide students with peer-learning opportunities and teach them how to effectively work in a group. Dynamic ongoing projects, such as these, give insights into how students understand concepts and when is the perfect time to add interventions and scaffolding when they are struggling. Moving away from individual assessments to a group project also adds value, as the students are naturally more inclined to become competent at a task as mastery occurs together.