

*Navigating a slippery slope: Blending two types of discussions to meet the unique needs of emerging online learners*



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# Chat with emerging online learners

A word cloud of terms related to emerging online learners. The words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern on a white background. The largest and most prominent words are 'immediate feedback' (red), 'value social interaction' (blue), and 'authentic interactions' (pink). Other words include 'collaborative learners' (green), 'live on-campus or near' (purple), 'young' (green), 'diverse' (yellow), 'want to talk and discuss' (yellow), 'desire flexibility' (blue), 'tentative' (red, vertical), 'connections' (pink, vertical), and 'interpersonal skills' (orange).

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# Chat with the experts

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Possible Solutions</b>
Low rates of persistence (Xu & Jaggars, 2011)	Synchronous video conferencing perhaps is the answer to more authentic interactions (Paulsen & McCormick, 2020)
Limited opportunities for student-to-student interaction (National Center for Ed Statistics, 2016)	Blending asynchronous & synchronous tools (Leeds et al., 2013)
Dissatisfaction with text-based discussion boards because lack real-time interaction (Kaufmann, 2015)	Multimodal asynchronous tools – text, audio, and video (Ching & Hsu, 2013)

# Solutions\_Discussion Boards

<u>Discussions</u> (before)	<u>Discussions</u> (after)
“Minimum”	Increased engagement (students and faculty)
“Last” minute on deadline days with required # of posts	Occur over multiple days
Text-based	Multimodal (text, audio, video)

# Solutions\_Virtual Learning Communities

<b><u>Virtual Learning Communities</u></b> <b>(before)</b>	<b><u>Virtual Learning Communities</u></b> <b>(after)</b>
Confusion over “purpose” ,expectations, and roles	Clarity through the explicit inclusion of purpose statement, expectations, and roles
Confusion over formatting of “summary”	Clarity through the introduction of a template
Inconsistency in grading-tool many layers	Clarity in grading

# What do our emerging online learners have to say?

<b>VLCs</b>	<b>Discussion Boards</b>
<p>"I am loving the VLCs. I did not think I would like them at all but they are so much fun and way better than a boring discussion board. Love getting to talk with my peers."</p>	<p>"I like being able to post a quick video or audio to the discussion board instead of typing up a post. It is less stressful to not have to worry about spelling and grammar and what my peers might think."</p>
<p>"My peers are extremely supportive, and I really enjoy the VLCs. I find that when I have to post to discussion boards, sometimes I just piggyback off of what others have posted. During the LVC, you are honestly forced to engage."</p>	<p>"I don't really like discussion boards but love learning communities. But if I can post a video instead of writing a post, then discussion boards aren't as bad."</p>

# What do you have to say?

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