

**Imagining Nations, Imagining Regions:
The Making of Cultural Diversity in Australia and on the US-Mexico Border.**

This is a collaborative course for students studying Liberal Arts at Victoria University and students enrolled in the Entering Students Program at the University of Texas El Paso. Both the VU and UTEP courses coordinate along the themes of national identities and multiculturalism. Together students at both universities are exploring the unique context of their nations and sharing these ideas with each other. Students are collaborating in new and exciting ways through the communication possibilities offered by Web 2.0 Learning System technologies (Ning.com is the platform being used).

This pilot project titled the Global Learning Community is part of a long term partnership between the two universities. It is also the first offering of a VU Liberal Arts course to students residing overseas, and as such is a model for further development and dissemination

The aim of the collaboration is to learn globally through developing a dynamic e-learning community across borders liberating learner experience from the traditional classroom context. The course embraces new pedagogical practices that centre on group oriented online dialogues for sharing ideas. . It is an ever changing learning space where teachers upload lectures, presentations and resources and students engage collaboratively in discussion and assessment in relation to teacher and student course inputs. The site now holds student discussion, viewpoints, videos and other responses. VU and UTEP students are being offered valuable learning and cultural experiences as well as the opportunity to forge international friendships.

The first teleconference, attended by students and teachers, gave rise to a rich discussion about living in El Paso and Melbourne and resulted in the making of new friends and an eagerness to learn collaboratively. There will be two further video-conferences to support the online learning and collaboration. Dr Effy George from VU's Liberal Arts course and Dr Irma Montelongo from UTEP's Entering programs course along with their students are forging new ground with their students in this exciting collaboration.