

A Quality Matters Event

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Faculty Perspectives on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) in Online Teaching

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Background

- COVID-19 pandemic has caused the rapid acceleration in the use of online technology to facilitate teaching and learning, coinciding with renewed attention to systemic racism and intersecting forms of oppression in the United States
- Online instructors must address learners' access needs and social contexts, design engaging and equitable course activities, ensure diverse perspectives are represented in course materials, and seek professional development on equity and diversity in the online classroom
- ***Access the Google Doc to contribute recommendations and questions (link in chat)***

Research Question

How do online instructors across disciplines experience and approach IDEA issues within their online teaching?

IDEA (Tan, 2019) defined as:

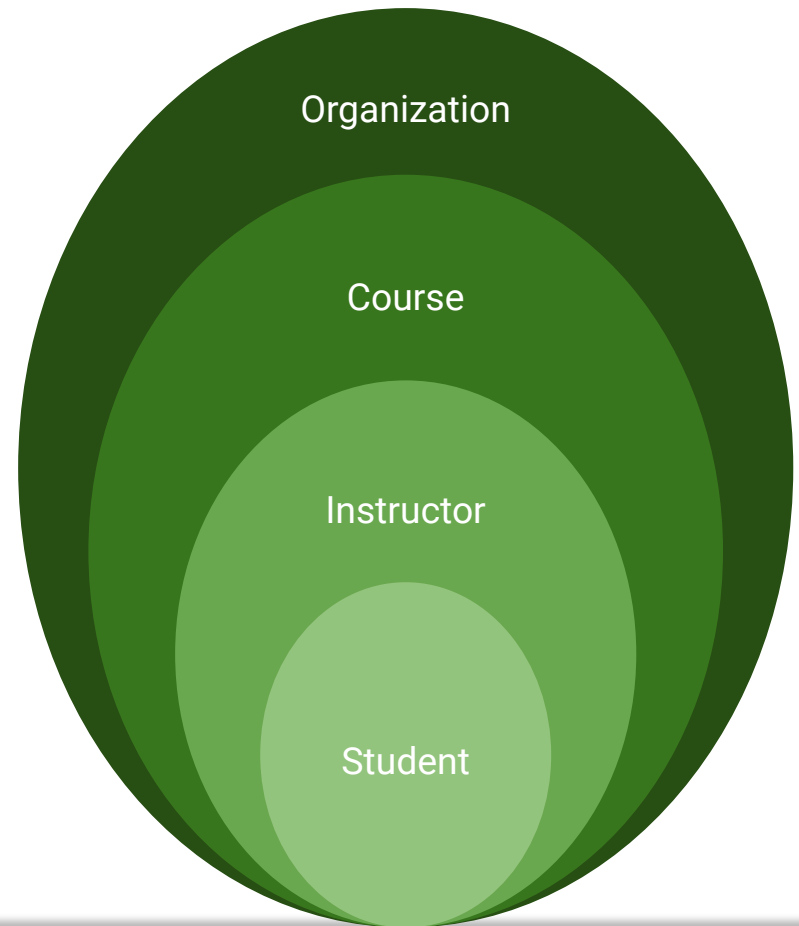
- **inclusion** (multiple perspectives voiced)
- **diversity** (specific social identities, categories, and groups addressed)
- **equity** (disparities in opportunities and outcomes)
- **access** (whether and how individuals can engage)

Literature: IDEA in online teaching & learning

- While instructors can rely on a robust body of literature about online teaching (see Martin et al., 2020), IDEA issues within online teaching are not sufficiently understood or highlighted
 - +
- Relatively few higher education scholars publishing in top-tier higher education journals have focused on online teaching and learning, and even among these examples, an explicit focus on equity and diversity issues is not always present; exceptions include studies documenting.

Literature: IDEA in online teaching & learning

Themes in online learning scholarship can be classified in several levels (Martin et al., 2020), a framework we use in this study to understand how instructors navigated IDEA issues in their teaching.



Literature: IDEA in online teaching & learning

Organization

- Access, Culture, Equity and Ethics
- Leadership, Policy, Management
- Institutional Support

Course

- Course Program Design and Development
- Course Assessment
- Evaluation and Quality Assurance
- Course Technologies

Instructor

- Course Facilitation
- Instructor Characteristics

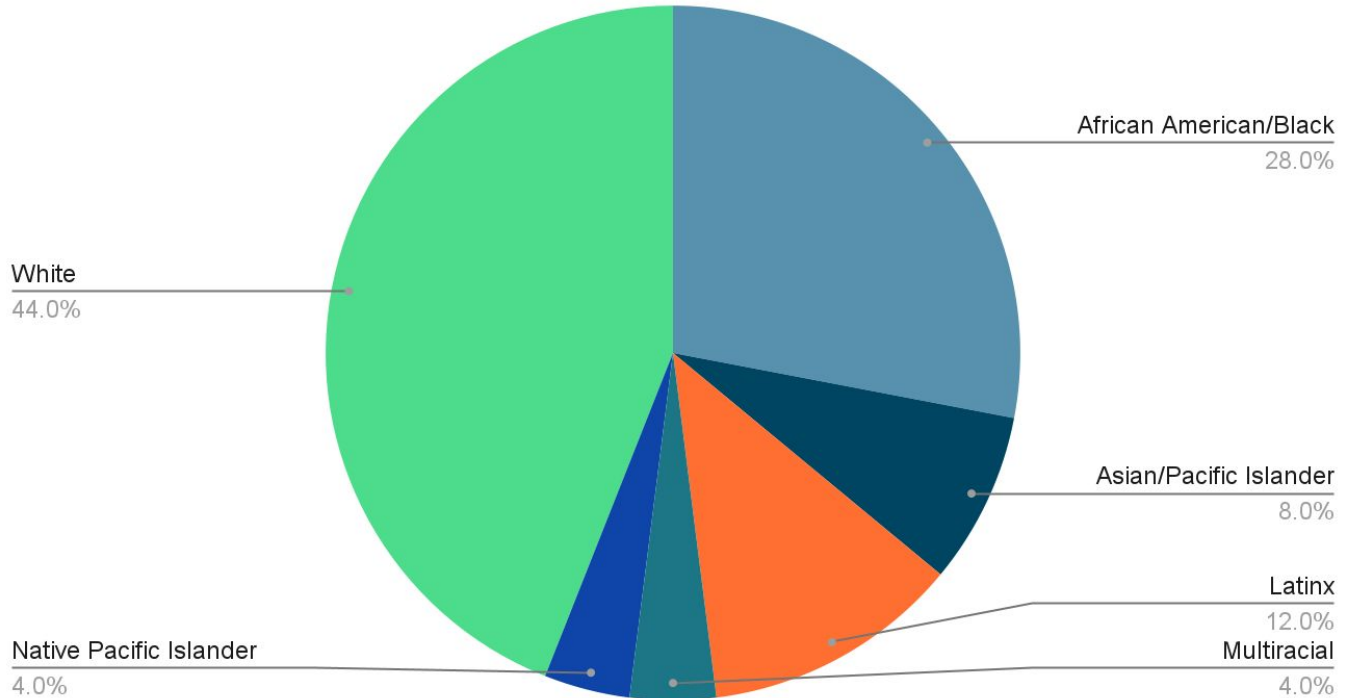
Student

- Learner Characteristics
- learner Outcomes
- Engagement

The current project

Instrumental case study to explore and document how online instructors across disciplines experienced and approached IDEA issues within their online teaching

Semi-structured one-on-one interviews with 21 faculty members



Findings Overview

Online teaching and IDEA are conceptualized as distinct

- Viewed as stand-alone areas of expertise
- Tensions in applying F2F IDEA strategies online
- Difficulty applying IDEA in asynchronous teaching

Faculty prioritized access and inclusion over equity and diversity

- Focus on access as a baseline expectation
- Relationship building as a challenge to inclusion
- Equity and diversity translated (or not) from F2F

Online teaching and IDEA conceptualized as distinct

+Viewed as stand-alone areas of expertise:

“The diversity summer symposium was mainly to address what those issues are, not related to how you would teach them. And then I don't see a lot of like programs with the center for teaching and learning in terms of how to teach [diversity content]. I do see a disconnection between ... you have people talking about diversity and [people] talking about online teaching, but they are not necessarily working together.”

– James (Languages, Latinx, Cisgender Man)

Online teaching and IDEA conceptualized as distinct

+Tensions in applying face-to-face IDEA teaching strategies online:

“It's not like teaching in person, where I can see if the students are understanding it and intervene or see who's talking to who or which topics may connect with someone in class. It's quite frustrating having none of that type of feedback. I feel, frequently, that my teaching online is much more generic than it would be in person since students rarely reach out for office hours. They rarely speak up in class, they rarely ask questions.”

--Oliver (Chemistry, White, Cisgender Man)

Online teaching and IDEA conceptualized as distinct

+Difficulties applying IDEA strategies in asynchronous teaching:

“If I was asynchronous, I wouldn't trust to say like, “Let me show you this image and then you can put it into the discussion board and then I'm going to come back later and see what it means.” No. To me, it's too critical of a moment to not help them process immediately on the way. And I also want to be there to facilitate the discussion of it as people lay out ideas because it's just one of those things where in real time.”

-- Ivy (Sociology, African American/Black, Woman)

Faculty prioritized access and inclusion over equity and diversity

+Focus on access as a baseline expectation:

“I know a lot of my students and I know a lot of them don't have reliable broadband Internet connections or have access to the resources that we would have on campus you know so they don't they don't have time to try to do a Zoom tutoring session, whereas the same student may be quite active and going to tutoring on campus.”

-- Oliver (Chemistry, White, Cisgender Man)

Faculty prioritized access and inclusion over equity and diversity

+Relationship building as a challenge to inclusion:

“Students are having issues and were having bad experiences not because there were incompetent students, but the instructors were not ready to teach online...rapport building and trust and intimacy is eliminated online.”

-- Ivy (Sociology, African American/Black, Woman)

Faculty prioritized access and inclusion over equity and diversity

+Equity and diversity strategies translated (or did not translate) from face-to-face teaching:

Liam (Education, Native Pacific Islander, Man), a faculty member with experience teaching online, discussed how, “diversity and online teaching is something that I struggled with” in transitioning some course content online especially as it related to accessibility concerns.

Discussion & Recommendations

- Need for instructors to possess *IDEA and* online teaching expertise

52% of the participants indicated that they began teaching online in direct response to the global health pandemic and the necessity of moving courses online

- Online instructors prioritized access and inclusion, particularly during a period of emergency remote instruction
- Enhanced professional development is needed for instructors to further develop these competencies

Discussion & Recommendations

- Asynchronous teaching offers flexibility and access, yet instructors struggled to fully integrate inclusion, diversity, equity in this mode (e.g., discussions of controversial topics)
- Future research can address perspectives of students, instructional designers, novice vs. expert teachers, administrators' support

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Organizational Recommendations

Need for Policies and Evaluation Criteria

Faculty expressed that policies and evaluation criteria around faculty reporting structures would increase consistency of application of IDEA in online settings.

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Course Recommendations

Faculty expressed the importance of...

- Instructor Commitment
- Soliciting student feedback
- Assessment Design
- Engaging different types of learners
- Providing inclusive grading criteria

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Instructor Recommendations

Professional Development

Professional learning network

- Instructional designers”
- CTL
- Colleagues
- Evaluations
- LGBTQ organizations
- Diversity Institute

Research & Training

- IDEA
- Publications
- Webinars
- Mental health
- Active-learning
- Self-motivated

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Student Recommendations

Student inclusion and success

- Structure...and flexibility
- Drawing on students' experiential knowledge and backgrounds - creating opportunities for disclosure and engagement
- Students looking for representation in course materials, visuals, faculty members, peers
- Inviting feedback throughout the course
- Expansive views of diversity - transfer students, veterans, parents, full-time employees, rural and urban students
- Continuing realities of Covid - see ASHE report:

<https://www.ashe.ws//Files/Position%20Taking/2023.01%20ASHE%20Statement%20on%20The%20Impact%20of%20COVID-19.pdf>

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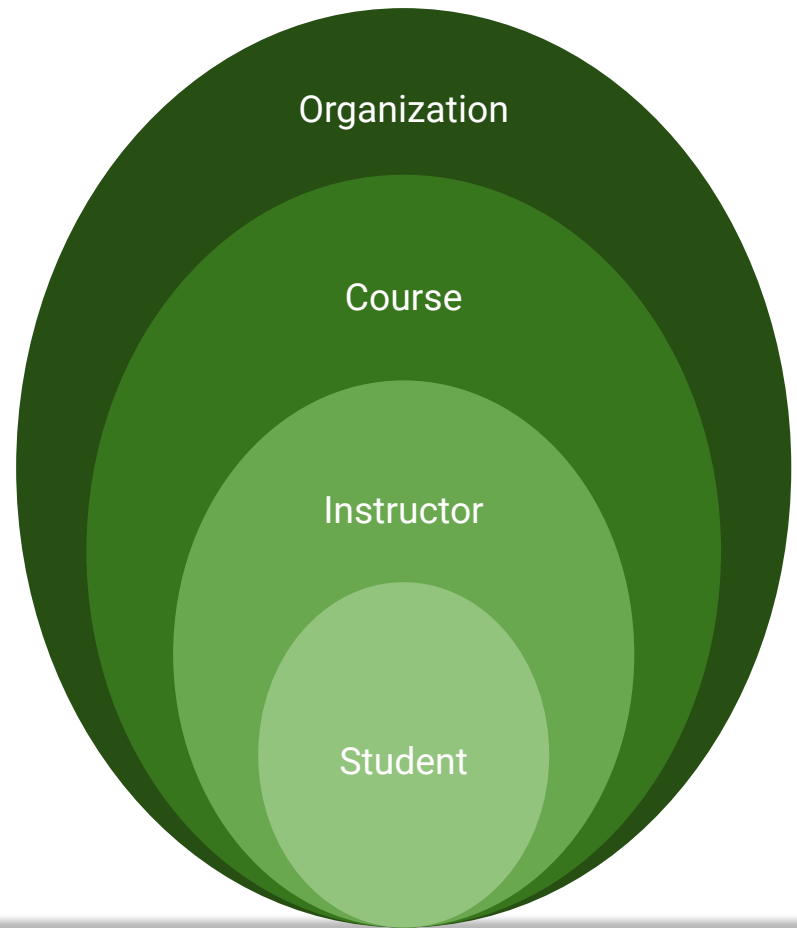
Advice and Reflection

Advice from faculty

- Provide student orientations for success in online courses and programs (or, within a course, a module or “week zero”)
- Instructors doing our “homework” - self awareness and reflection on our own identities; willing to make mistakes
- Develop a local community of practice with colleagues
- Vary instructional modes/tools to maximize student opportunities to succeed
- Get to know your students and ask what they need - informal assessments prior to and during courses
- Continual improvement - ask who’s missing? What’s missing?

Reflection

1. Thinking of your own context — your organization, your role, the students and colleagues you work with — how prepared are you to address IDEA issues in online teaching and learning?
2. What strengths and opportunities exist within your context?
3. What is one idea you can try out?



Thank you!

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Active/Applied Research on Online Learning and Quality Assurance

February 17 | Online