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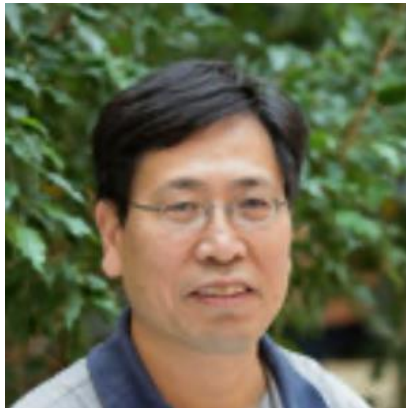
Engaging Diverse International Students: Promising Online Teaching Practices

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About Us



- **Dr. Clayton Smith** is an Associate Professor at the University of Windsor in the Faculty of Education. He has spent 30-years engaged in higher education administration at four post-secondary education institutions across Canada and the U.S.
- **Dr. George Zhou** is a Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor where he works with chemistry and physics teacher candidates to help them learn to appreciate science through a process of argumentation. His research focuses on science education and educational technology.

About Us



- **Michael K. Potter** is a Teaching and Learning Specialist in the University of Windsor's Centre for Teaching and Learning. Michael's teaching experience spans disciplines and age levels, from high school students to professors nearing retirement, always with an eye toward grounding his approach in interdisciplinary scholarship.
- **Fatme Ammar** is a third-year University of Windsor Outstanding Scholar and nursing student, and a member of our Teaching International Students Research Group. She has worked on related projects and serves as the student conference coordinator for this event.

Abstract

With COVID-19 forcing post-secondary educational institutions to shift to open and online learning, understanding the needs of international students is more important than ever before. This paper will explore the connection between the promising practices for teaching online linguistically and culturally diverse international students with international student satisfaction and perceptions of learning. The study collected data through 15 individual interviews. Data analysis identified the teaching practices and individual characteristics that resonate with international student satisfaction and perceptions of learning. Recommendations for professional practice are discussed, along with potential areas for further research.

Keywords: Online, Open Learning, International Students, Student Satisfaction, Student Perceptions

Introduction



- Online learning is the new norm... **90% of all learning will be online during the pandemic**
- Even before the pandemic, there has been a rise in online education
- Studies conducted by Grayson (2008), He & Banham (2011), and Kim et al. (2015) have found gaps in academic performance between international and domestic students.
- Some reasons this may occur: **language difficulties**, culturally related learning differences, **academic support issues**, and **poor adjustment** to new educational systems
- This leads to: **poor satisfaction** with experience and **less engaged classrooms**

Theories Guiding This Study

Tinto's student retention model: students who are involved both socially and academically are more likely to graduate (Tinto, 1993).

Darby and Lang's research: the personality of the professor can affect learning (Darby & Lang, 2019).

Framework for Teaching and Learning for International Students: discusses the importance connecting with academic and social experiences, developed by Tran (2020).

It is also influenced by the research conducted by Smith et al. (2019) on best practices for teaching international students.

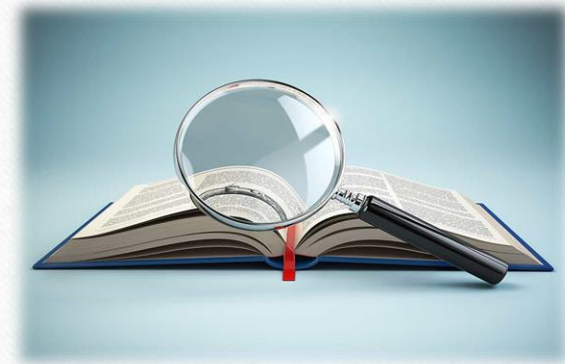


Research Questions

- How satisfied are international online students with the online teaching strategies presented and what are their perceptions of learning with these strategies?
- What personal characteristics do international students feel improve/hinder their learning experiences online?
- What personal characteristics of their instructors do they feel improve/hinder their learning experiences online?

Literature Review

- After reviewing the literature on ways to improve international student learning, two main themes were identified which:
 1. The importance of **communication**
 2. Ensuring instruction is **student-centred**



Literature Review

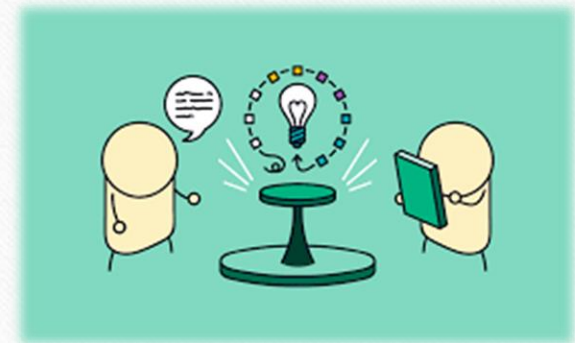
Theme	Literature Review
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build community and encourage socialization/interaction• Communicate outside of the classroom to build teacher-student relationships• Know the difference between basic proficiency and academic proficiency• Verbal skills: paraphrasing, summarising, and repeating difficult concepts• Visual components to included during lectures: diagrams, charts, and pictures
Student-Centred Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce students to western education practices• Understand the needs of each student in the classroom• Encourage students to come to class prepared• Differentiated instruction such as the use of multi-modal instruction

Gaps in the Literature

- Challenges that first time online students face
- Effectiveness of strategies for supporting online students outside of the region of the institution
- Impact of differing course loads
- Effectiveness of online courses for non-English speaking students

Methods

- **Qualitative** research design
- **15 individual interviews** at a mid-sized, comprehensive university
- Graduate students: 53%, the remaining were undergraduate students
- STEM majors: 8/15 of the participants, the remaining students were in non-STEM majors



Results

- Mix between being satisfied and unsatisfied
- Many expressed their appreciation for their instructor's hard work
- **60% felt that online learning was not a suitable replacement**
- The three factors that altered online learning: **communication, sense of belonging, and assessment practices**

Results

Factors Altering Online Learning	Student's Perception of Learning
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shift from in person to digital was difficult• Concerns with the communication during lectures and assignment feedback• Most students were satisfied with communication received on classroom expectation
Sense of Belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of community within the online classroom• Most connection was through discussion boards, but many did not use this feature• Isolated and stressful, students felt alone• No discrimination. Students enjoyed group work because it helped them get to know their classmates
Assessment Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drastic differences in grades between members of the same project• Not enough variety... mostly just multiple-choice questions• Marking done by graduate assistants was unorganized• Some believed grading was fair

Results: Overview



Communication was the biggest change, with one student explaining how her online learning experience was unsatisfactory because of the drastic change in communication



Almost all participants agreed that **there was a lack of community**



Assessment practices changed for the worse and many students believed these **changes were unfair**

Discussion and Conclusion

- The literature stated the importance of clear communication, building community within the classroom, and fair assessment practices
- We noticed that the **negative perception of online learning was due to the lack of these practices**
- The following teaching practices should be used: clarifying classroom expectations, being aware of diversity and inclusion, fostering a positive online learning environment, and focusing on student-centred teaching
- It is important that professors, teachers, and institutions **continue to provide supportive environments and use best practice to teach international online learners!**

Thank you for listening!

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