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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE TEACHING PRACTICES AMONG FACULTY AT A RESEARCH-INTENSIVE INSTITUTION

Adeola Christianah Ogunade
University of Kentucky, xtiemira@gmail.com
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Dr. Jane Jensen, Director of Graduate Studies

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE TEACHING PRACTICES AMONG FACULTY AT A RESEARCH-INTENSIVE INSTITUTION

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Education
at the University of Kentucky

By
Adeola Christianah Ogunade
Lexington, Kentucky
Director: Dr. Jeffery Bieber,
Associate Professor of Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation
Lexington, Kentucky
2023

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE TEACHING PRACTICES AMONG FACULTY AT A RESEARCH-INTENSIVE INSTITUTION

The increasing enrollment of diverse students in the US higher education institutions has given rise to discussions on how to meet the academic needs of minority students. Non-faculty members have implemented programs and initiatives that indirectly improve minority students' educational outcomes. Less explored is the role of faculty in ensuring that minority students thrive academically. This phenomenological qualitative study explores the general orientation of faculty toward inclusive and equitable teaching (IET). Specifically, it looked at how faculty define and experience IET, factors that motivated their use of IET, and barriers to implementing IET in higher education. Eight faculty from different disciplinary orientations, who are reputable for teaching inclusively and equitably, were interviewed. Findings revealed that faculty IET experiences revolved around including diverse authorial voices in literature, encouraging diverse voices in class discussions, and practicing the ethics of caring. However, faculty uncovered personal, organizational, and societal barriers to implementing IET in higher education.

KEYWORDS: Inclusive and equitable teaching, minority students, sociocultural backgrounds, teaching beliefs, higher education, social constructivist theory

Adeola Christianah Ogunade

04/25/2023

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By
Adeola Christianah Ogunade

Dr. Jeffery Bieber
Director of Dissertation

Dr. Jane Jensen
Director of Graduate Studies

04/25/2023
Date

DEDICATION

To my two amazing daughters, Tomi and Moni. You can reach and go beyond the skies.

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My utmost gratitude goes to the Almighty God, the giver of life, strength, and a sane mind. It is in Him that I live, move, and have my being. Without His loving arms wrapped around me, I could not have pulled through this phase of my life. To Him be all the glory, honor, praise, and majesty.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context

Higher education has seen a growth in college enrollment of diverse students, and the composition of its student body is rapidly reflecting the demographics of the US as a country (NCES, 2019). From 2000 to 2016, college enrollment rates increased for students who were Black (30% to 36%), Hispanic (21% to 39%), and Asian (55% to 57%) (NCES, 2019). Aside from the increasing variability in racial composition, students come from varied dimensions of socio-economic status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, ableism, and language, among others. More importantly, students also have intersected identities across the dimensions. As a response, different key players, ranging from students and their families, higher education administrators, faculty, social justice advocates, and policy makers, are increasingly discussing how to create a safe space that is welcoming for students from all walks of life (Harper et al., 2009).

As higher education institutions continue increasing the diversity of their student bodies, different programs are created to improve student success (Hurtado, 2007). These include academic support programs, wellness and recreation services, and service-learning programs (Whittaker & Montgomery, 2014). These student-centered programs are supported at the institutional level and thus find the root of thriving in higher education. Such programs have been found to foster cross-cultural and diverse peer interactions among participating students (Hurtado, 2007). This line of reasoning is supported by studies that have been able to explain the importance of such interactions (Chang, 2002; Pascarella et al., 2001; Terenzini et al., 2001). For instance, diverse peer interactions have been linked to student outcomes such as taking the perspectives of others, having a

pluralistic orientation, and perspective-taking abilities (Gurin et al., 2002; Hurtado, 2006). These studies have focused on interventions that indirectly improve minority student academic outcomes and are usually implemented by non-faculty members (Whittaker & Montgomery, 2014), thus presenting a study gap for direct interventions implemented by faculty members. For example, the classroom is an interaction site where faculty members directly interact with students, through teaching, toward reaching students' academic goals. The role of faculty members in fostering minority students' academic success is critical (Hurtado et al., 1998). However, the existing research on the role of faculty in addressing increasing student diversity and meeting the academic needs of minority students is inadequate (Baumgartner et al., 2015). It appears, then, that the role of faculty in enhancing the likelihood of success for minority students in higher education is worthy of additional exploration (Baumgartner et al., 2015). A significant aspect of students' college experience occurs in the classroom, the primary site for teaching and learning. In this site, faculty increasingly encounter culturally diverse students, especially in 4-year institutions (Gopalan & Brady, 2020). As such, it is imperative for faculty to embrace diversity as a resource by being inclusive and equitable in their dispositions, instruction, and selection of instructional materials (Gay, 2018; Paris, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

What is clear is that studies on teaching a diversified student population have established that inclusive and equitable teaching is essential to the academic growth and, in turn, all-round development of minority students (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billing, 2015; Paris, 2012). However, there are lingering questions on how best to teach and manage diversified classrooms in higher education institutions where minority student enrollment is rapidly increasing (Han et al., 2014; Hockings, Brett & Terentjevs, 2012; Sleeter, 2011).

Faculty members have also reported feeling ill-equipped regarding approaches and practices for teaching a diversified classroom (Sleeter, 2012).

Hockings (2011) wrote that there is a difference between valuing diversity in the classroom and infusing diversity as a resource in teaching practices. Maruyama and Moreno (2000) reported that faculty's positive views about diversity have not necessarily influenced changes to their teaching practices. Sleeter (2011) also mentioned that teachers, and faculty members who espouse diversity views and try to practice them, may have oversimplified the concept of teaching inclusively and equitably by engaging in token activities.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Given that inclusive and equitable teaching (IET) practices that address minority academic experience in higher education are less studied in the literature, the purpose of my study is to explore how faculty who are reputable for teaching inclusively and equitably do so in teaching a diverse classroom. This study looked at approaches used by faculty who are reputable for teaching in an inclusive and equitable manner. The objectives of this study were to enhance our understanding of faculty perceptions of IET and their general orientation toward it in college classrooms. Therefore, the following research questions guided this study:

1. How do faculty with a reputation for inclusive and equitable teaching define inclusive and equitable teaching?
2. Why do these faculty perceive their teaching practices as inclusive and equitable?
3. What do these faculty perceive as factors that encourage or discourage the use of equitable and inclusive teaching, and how do those factors exert an influence?

The first research question aims to elicit from faculty who are reputable for teaching inclusively and equitably how they explicitly define the construct "inclusive and equitable teaching" in their individual teaching practices. Understanding IET as practiced by these faculty gives room for other faculty who may be interested in adopting IET to have direction on how to start. Because this study centers on the experiences of faculty who are reputable for IET, it is important to understand how these faculty evaluate their own teaching as inclusive and equitable. The second research question encourages a self reflection that helps faculty to become critically aware of their own teaching. To promote adoption in higher education, it is beneficial to explore the factors that might influence or discourage IET adoption among faculty. The third research question serves to bring to the surface examples of such factors from the experiences of faculty who are reputable for teaching inclusively and equitably. Understanding these factors and their impact on faculty life is critical to a transformational and sustainable adoption of IET in higher education.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study will continue the dialogue on the influence of culture and identity on students' learning (Freire, 1970; Vygotsky, 1975), faculty's general orientation about IET practices, and possibilities of adopting these practices (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002) in higher education. This dissertation helps address the current inadequate research in this area of study and has practice implications for faculty, as well as higher education administrators looking to not only enroll minority students but ensure they thrive academically on their campuses. The underlying assumptions for this study are that (1) minority students' cultural heritages influence their dispositions and attitudes toward learning and what is learned (Gay, 2018) and (2) faculty

have a critical role to play in the academic success of minority students when they arrive in higher education.

The premise for the first argument of this study holds that it is necessary that faculty adopt IET as one of the ways to improve the educational experience of culturally diverse learners in higher education and one that is sensitive to their cultural and social heritages (Banks, 1991; Gay, 2018; Hutchison & McAlister-Shields, 2020). The importance of inclusive and equitable teaching is explicit in Boykin's (1994) explanation of the connection between culture and education. Boykin (1994) emphasizes that the American education system is characterized by a profoundly ingrained school culture prescribed by European and middle-class norms. As such, minority students' sociocultural backgrounds and prior experiences are often not in congruence with the norms in higher education (Gay, 2018).

Minority students come into higher education with their internalized approaches to life. These internalized approaches are fundamentally induced by cultural socialization from childhood to adulthood (Vygotsky, 1978). Minority students, compared to their counterparts, may not have the advantage of bridging their prior knowledge to the new knowledge to be learned (Gay, 2018). This is because minority students' funds of knowledge may not be legitimized in the Eurocentric norms, thus limiting their access to cultural capital in the higher education social space. Emphasizing the different cultural capitals that individuals might possess, Bourdieu (1986) wrote about cultural capital in social spaces existing in three forms (embodied, objectified, and institutional). Of these three forms, the embodied form is most central to this proposal.

Embodied cultural capital refers to individuals' disposition to life, knowledge, beliefs, and values that are inherited and, more so, valued and legitimized in the broader social space (Bourdieu, 1986). Students occupy unique spaces in the classroom depending on the cultural capital they possess. Variations in cultural capitals may include low familiarity with the higher education system in developed countries for international students from underdeveloped countries or, when considering higher education in a particular country, accent variations among different racial and ethnic groups. Bourdieu argued that the norm at play in any given space is not random but dictated by those with the most cultural capital. Collins (2002) similarly explained social identity as a construct that either marginalizes or privileges individuals based on societal structures. The determining power of social identity begs the question of how different facets of higher education can be transformed to be inclusive for all students, irrespective of their cultural capital. Such a transformation will ensure that higher education is not reproducing inequitable experiences present in the broader society within its walls (Hurtado, 2006).

In line with Vygotsky (1978), I referred to culture in this study as a way of life, including the style of language and communication, ways of knowing, how we relate with others, behaviors, relationships with others, etc. To this end, individuals or groups belonging to a culture perceive it as "nature, necessity, logic, rationality, norm, tradition, appropriateness, rightness, standard, moral integrity, godliness, and so on" (Matusov & Marjanovic-Shane, 2017, p. 311). It is also noteworthy to state that cultural diversity, in this proposed study, is operationalized beyond ethnicity and race, including but not limited to gender, age, ableism, religion, and nationality (Freire, 1970).

The pedagogic benefits of diversity in higher education include critical and creative thinking abilities (Chang, 2002), better problem-solving abilities (Terenzini et al., 2001), a self-determined mindset towards academic growth (Pascarella et al., 2001), and positive cognitive outcomes (Gurin et al., 2002). Students are also more likely to succeed when they feel connected with others in their pursuit of academic outcomes (Gay, 1975). Gurin (1999), however, points out that diversity will not lead to pedagogic benefits if there is no intentional commitment to educating the classroom on issues relating to minority students.

In previous paragraphs, I established the need to transform higher education in response to the growing diversity of the student body. Reactions to the ever-increasing diversified student body often take the deficit approach of focusing on minority students or "non-traditional" students (Paris, 2012). In the deficit approach, historically marginalized and underrepresented students are expected to conform to the dominant worldview in education (Paris, 2012; Gay, 2018). Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (2019) noted that "although individuals are also responsible, they are not solely responsible for their academic success" (p. 57). Other contextual factors such as teacher-student relationships, classroom dynamics, curricular readings, and course contents (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2019; Giroux, 1992) shape minority students' motivation toward academic success.

Following the above, the second argument of this study suggests that faculty have a critical role to play in supporting minority students in higher education (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009). Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2009) also described that academic success can be enhanced by faculty awareness of and response to minority students' cultural heritages. Research, teaching, and service are the three critical roles of faculty in the higher education domain (Finkelstein, 2006). Finding balance across these three roles

can be challenging to the individual faculty member to faculty life. As faculty try to teach two to three classes in a semester, they are also required to advance knowledge through research activities and grantsmanship. They serve on committees in the interest of institutional governance and in academic administrative roles in service to their institution. Of the numerous hats faculty wear, this study's second argument is concerned with their teaching role. Teaching is an avenue for promoting an inclusive experience for minority students as student composition in higher education continues to change. Teaching is defined as "an intentional activity concerned with student learning" (Brown & Atkins, 2002, p. 2), and as such, faculty are change agents critical to promoting inclusive learning experiences (O'Leary et al., 2020). In their report, May and Bridger (2010) ascertained different dimensions for implementing inclusiveness within higher education: institutional commitment, curriculum design and content, instruction, and evaluation of students' work. In their role as teachers, faculty are more involved with instruction and student assessments. Given the growing diversity in higher education, faculty can embrace a transformative change by modifying core instructional practices across students' differences (Powell & Rightmyer, 2011; Gay, 2018). Dismantling the dominant norms or standards in teaching practices bridges the cultural divide that may be present between faculty and their students, thereby improving minority students' motivation for learning (Carjuzaa & Ruff, 2010; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2019). To bridge cultural divides, faculty must embrace inclusive and equitable practices in instruction, student assessment, and student-teacher relationships. Faculty themselves may possess different levels of cultural capital based on their educational background, social class, and cultural experiences (Bourdieu, 1986). Just as students' sociocultural backgrounds can influence

learning, faculty's identities can also impact how they teach. Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital helps us to examine the social dynamics at play within higher education institutions, not only pertaining to students, but also faculty. According to Bourdieu (1986), sociocultural identities can lead to complex dynamics of privilege and disadvantage that may affect faculty from different cultural backgrounds in unique ways. Fostering inclusive and equitable classroom experiences, therefore, prompts a consideration of how sociocultural identities of faculty and students are at play within the academic context. Recognizing the role of culture in shaping teaching and learning ensures that students have equal chances of academic success (Hurtado, 2006; O'Leary et al., 2020) and that faculty are self-aware of how their identities shape their teaching (Oleson & Hora, 2014). With the continuing discussion around diversity issues in higher education, it is essential to look beyond the gatekeeping ideas that ensure representation of minority and disenfranchised groups; there is a need to focus more on how these groups thrive once they successfully gain admission into higher education institutions.

1.4 Definition of Key Terms

1.4.1 Culture

A way of life, including the style of language and communication, ways of knowing, how we relate with others, behaviors, and environment (Vygotsky, 1978).

1.4.2 Faculty Members

I define faculty in this study as educators in higher education institutions appointed through a candidate search and teaching a course that has been assigned an academic credit. Faculty in this study broadly include lecturers, senior lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors on tenure or a non-tenure track. Non-tenure track

or tenure track assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors with no teaching appointments will be excluded from this study. Research assistants, teaching assistants, and instructors are not considered faculty in this study.

1.4.3 Inclusive and Equitable Teaching

I define inclusive and equitable teaching for the purpose of this study in terms of the explanation offered by Gay (2018) on culturally responsive teaching. IET is defined as when minority students, irrespective of their sociocultural backgrounds, identity, and the resulting intersection of their identities, feel they are part of the classroom culture (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billing, 1995).

1.4.4 Minority Students

These are students from the traditionally disenfranchised group in higher education in the United States. They belong to historically underrepresented groups with limited access to education. For the purpose of this study, minority students do not only refer to racially and ethnically diverse students, but gender, nationality, ableism, and other forms of diversity as embodied by students in the classroom.

1.5 Limitations of Study

This study is explorative and relies on the self-reported perspectives of faculty members on inclusive and equitable teaching, and the scope is limited to one research-intensive university. Therefore, this study has limitations that should be considered by readers when interpreting the findings presented in the following chapters. This study employed qualitative research methods, and the aim of a qualitative study is not to generalize. As such, the findings of this study are those interpreted from the views of study

participants alone. Faculty who participated are from four different disciplines, and it is possible for their disciplinary views to have influenced the findings of this study.

Chapter 1 introduces the overall concept of this study, the purpose of the study, and the significance of the research questions posed. Chapter 2 explores central themes around inclusive and equitable teaching in higher education. Chapter 3 presents the research design, data collection, and data analysis. The study findings will be presented in Chapter 4, and discussions of the findings in Chapter 5. Implications of findings for research and practice conclude this dissertation in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explores the intersection of different forms of human diversity and education and scholars' responses to the challenges posed by these forms of diversity in the classroom. First, I presented a sequential perspective on the era of research on diversity and education within higher education. I then conclude this chapter by discussing the theoretical framework that guided this study with the inclusion of relevant works of literature.

The increasingly diversified student body witnessed in higher education has drawn questions on how to meet the unique needs of students (Young, 2002). Students have different social identities, including sex, race, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, and gender. More importantly, students' identities intersect with education and thus may present a unique need. One area that has received attention is how learning needs can be met through the teaching process when there is evidence of multiculturalism or diversity in the classroom (Gay, 2018).

2.1 Historical Synopsis of Diversity in Higher Education

In 1890, the second Morrill Act was passed to address racial disparities in college admissions. This act demanded land-grant universities show fairness in access for aspiring students irrespective of their racial identities. The Morrill act also allowed states to start other land-grant institutions that would serve racial minorities faced with inequitable access to Predominantly White Institutions (Allen & Jewell, 2002). These other land-grant institutions are often referred to as Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Similar to the objective of the second Morrill Act, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed to prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in programs that

receive federal funds (Guy & Fenley, 2014). The act was expected to improve access to education, especially for those who have been discriminated against in the past.

The GI bill of 1944 paved the way for women to co-educate with men in universities. Before the passing of this bill, Oberlin College in Ohio in 1837 became the first higher education institution to enroll women on their campus (Gordon, 1997). This college did not discriminate against students based on race or gender even before the second Morrill Act was enacted (Gordon, 1997). The GI bill also paved the way for individuals who otherwise would not have access to higher education due to socioeconomic status. Nowadays, women increasingly enroll in higher education institutions but are still underrepresented in masculine-gendered disciplines (Xu & Martin, 2011).

After World War II, the U.S. government increased funding for advancing university science research programs (Akanwa, 2015). Increased funding for research programs attracted students from varying nationalities to universities in the U.S. The 2018 Open Doors report of the U.S. Institute of International Education revealed that the number of international students had increased significantly to more than one million (Institute of International Education, 2018).). International students have remained integral in the cosmopolitan era of higher education, contributing to the economy and increased diversity witnessed in U.S. universities (Reddin, 2014).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Civil Rights Movement championed by African Americans staged several protests demanding equal opportunities across every institution in the U.S., including education (Banks, 2013). Other minority groups in the U.S. also requested similar opportunities. In 1964, the Civil Rights Act was enacted to prohibit educational, civic, housing, and employment discrimination based on race, color, religion,

sex, and nationality. Affirmative action was also initiated to improve access to education and employment for African Americans, Hispanics, women, and other minority groups (Okechukwu, 2019).

In the aftermath of these historical movements and actions, higher education witnessed an increased enrollment of minority students. To respond to dissimilarities in student identities, it is vital to challenge dominant structures that served a more homogenous student body in the past and focus on embracing "others" in the present. Dominant in the U.S. education system is the White male elitist knowledge and way of knowing (McIntosh, 1992). Challenging this Western ethnocentric normativity in teaching, what is taught, how it is taught, and by whom, becomes important for marginalized students' voices to be heard (Giroux, 1992), and in universities' attempt to accommodate the ever-increasing diversified student population.

With the continued discourse around diversity and inclusion in higher education, it is essential to look beyond the increasing structural diversity and focus on equitable academic experience for all students irrespective of their identity dissimilarities. For instance, looking at the relationships between student identities and academic experience, the literature is extant on the cultural adjustment difficulty faced by international students (Ruble & Zhang, 2013), the deficit mindset of teachers on the need for minority students to learn normative cultural knowledge if they are to succeed (Yosso, 2005), and the gender biases often experienced by women in educational spaces (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). These examples call for a collective change process that will address the academic needs of diverse students.

Structural diversity does not guarantee pedagogical diversity benefits in higher education (Hurtado, 2007). Instead, the pedagogical benefits of diversity can be maximized in spaces where students can engage in meaningful interactions, such as the classroom (Gurin et al., 2002). Gurin et al. (2002) shared that this form of diversity "includes learning about diverse people (content knowledge) and gaining experience with diverse peers in the classroom" (p. 333). To this end, higher educational institutions must move toward inclusion and equity in all aspects of students' academic experiences, including teaching and learning.

2.2 Multicultural Education and its Subsets

Most institutions of higher learning are increasingly embracing equity and inclusion and improving students' access in their admission processes. Scholarships are currently considering multiculturalism when allocating slots to student applicants. Unfortunately, most institutions engage in conversations to champion solutions through quick fixes such as recruitment from different backgrounds and diversity programming (Arellanes & Hendricks, 2022). Several colleges respond to diversity issues by emphasizing their commitment to protecting all students due to controversial topics in the broader society, such as the death of George Floyd in the year 2020. Other responses that often follow such issues involve creating offices around DEI and hiring diversity officers to show solidarity (Patton et al., 2019). Predominantly, academic institutions fail to address the foundation of the widespread monolithic cultures and exclusionary systems firmly embedded within the educational environment in the United States. As a result of the rapidly growing pluralistic society, higher education is also diversifying worldwide, and the United States is no exception (Arellanes & Hendricks, 2022).

The various manifestations of diversity seen in higher education continue to give rise to discussions about how to incorporate minority students from underrepresented backgrounds in the teaching and learning process (Kobuladze & Berandze, 2021). Various scholars have identified teaching theories and practices in an attempt to ensure the academic success of minority groups (Heinz et al., 2022; Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012; Grant & Sleeter, 2009). Multicultural education is the foundation on which these scholars built their theories of inclusion and equity in teaching (Gay, 2002; Banks & Banks, 1995). Multicultural education is a "set of beliefs and explanations that recognize and value the importance of ethnic and cultural diversity in shaping lifestyles; social experiences; personal identities; and educational opportunities of individuals…." (Gay, 2002, p. 33).

Grant and Sleeter (2009) reviewed multicultural education literature and proposed five approaches for infusing multiculturalism into teaching: Teaching the Culturally Different, Human Relations, Single Group Studies, Multicultural Education, and Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist Education. Teaching the culturally different focuses on encouraging "students to succeed in learning the traditional curriculum in traditional classrooms and to be successful in the existing society" (Grant & Sleeter, 2009, p. 12). The human relations approach emphasizes creating effective connections between people from various cultural backgrounds. By encouraging intercultural communication and collaboration between people from many cultures, healthy connections can be formed. The human relations approach frequently combines intergroup discourse, cross-cultural communication techniques, and conflict resolution techniques. Grant and Sleeter's (2006) third approach, single group studies, emphasizes the study of one culture or identity group.

It goes beyond the exceptional and culturally distinct approach to education, urging educators to go deeper into an identity group rather than relying on simple stereotypes. This approach enhances social conditions for a certain set of individuals. The goal of the fourth approach, multicultural education, is to challenge hegemonic practices in the classroom, calling on educators to confront issues of power and privilege in those settings. Lastly, multicultural and social reconstructionist education empowers students to contribute to the creation of a society that is free from oppression, a world that satifies the demands of all of humanity's variety. According to Grant and Sleeter (2006), this approach calls for democratic education and the fostering of critical consciousness through the evaluation of injustice in relation to students' lives. These five multicultural education approaches provide various viewpoints and tactics for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in educational settings. In order to build inclusive and equitable educational environment that respect and value diversity, educators can select and mix various approaches based on situations. The end goal is to promote an equitable experience for marginalized students and reconstruct society by promoting structural equity through education. However, Sleeter and Grant (1994) mentioned that the acceptance of multiculturalism among educators is mostly rhetoric and not incorporated into instruction.

In the following sections, I discuss some early and recent teaching theories by educational pluralists as they relate to the broader field of multicultural education and how they were defined. One common theme among these theories was that student identities were regarded as a resource and not as a deficit to the learning that occurs in the classroom. As such, faculty are responsible for understanding students' unique and cultural backgrounds and using a teaching approach "that is consistent with their cultural

characteristics" (Banks & Banks, 1995, p.76). Although some of the teaching concepts I discuss focus heavily on racial and ethnic diversity, their tenets have implications for a robust view of diversity and can be expanded to include other forms of student identities (Gay, 2018; Grant & Sleeter, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

2.3 Early Multicultural Teaching Theories

Early anthropological researchers (Au & Jordan, 1981; Cazden & Leggett, 1981; Jordan, 1985; Mohatt & Erickson, 1991) studied the connections of culture, language, and education to improve academic experiences for ethnically and linguistically diverse students. They all suggested that students who can make cultural connections to what they are taught in school will have a better comprehension of the subject matter being taught. These researchers recognized cultural mismatch between educators and students as a tension that might hinder their academic achievement. A cultural mismatch between educators and minority students also tends to lead to stereotypic views that blame such students for their low academic status (Ryan, 1971). This stereotypic approach to teaching that blames minority students for lower academic achievement because of their sociocultural upbringing explains the cultural deficit paradigm (Paris, 2012).

To challenge the cultural deficit approach to teaching, researchers explored linkages of culture and education. They used terms such as cultural congruence (Mohatt & Erickson, 1981), cultural appropriateness (Au, 1980), culturally responsive (Cazden & Leggett, 1981), and culturally compatible (Jordan, 1985), among others, to describe their work on teaching diverse students. It is important to note that their foundational works focused on the acculturation of minority students in the dominant culture demanded by schools.

Jordan's (1985) applied research program termed Kamehameha Elementary Education Program (KEEP) targeted Polynesian-Hawaiian students, who were, at the time, the lowest academic achievers among U.S. minority groups. The low academic achievement status was attributed to "mismatches between the expectations and demands of the school and the culture of the children" (p. 107). Teachers were able to assist pupils in performing at higher than projected levels on standardized reading tests by allowing them to employ talk-story, a language interaction technique popular among Native Hawaiian youth (Ladson-Billings, 1995). It became apparent that the education experienced by the students had to be *culturally compatible* with their culture for it to be effective. Cultural compatibility was defined as using students' cultural backgrounds to guide educational program practices. A distinctive argument of Jordan's (1985) work is that educational practices should neither be completely in tune with students' culture nor agree with them. In essence, educational practices only need to employ the least culturally compatible change that results in the academic achievement of culturally diverse students. Another downfall to this approach is that it still uses the existing cultural norms of school rather than introducing new educational practices.

Au (1980) reported that Hawaiian students did not respond verbally like their counterparts in the classroom because the context of learning was deemed inappropriate to their cultural backgrounds. A contemporary classroom norm was to invite students to recite or make contributions subjected to class critique; this was, however, deemed culturally inappropriate for Hawaiian students who preferred to keep their opinions away from the classroom gaze. Through her research on the Hawaiian students in the KEEP's program, Au (1980) posited *culturally appropriate* learning contexts would increase culturally

diverse students' responsiveness and, ultimately, their reading achievement. Culturally appropriate learning context is one that students and educators find comfortable and effective for academic achievement (Au, 1980). In her paper, Au recommended using culturally appropriate learning contexts at early learning stages, such as in Kindergarten, rather than using them later as minority students proceed from one grade to another. Au was concerned that minority students would not be able to accrue the economic, social, and educational capital necessary for their success in mainstream society early enough. Her recommendation asks minority students to conform to conventional school norms later rather than sooner. Au's culturally appropriate approach still exerts the dominance of traditional school norms as the ideal and thus supports the cultural deficit approach she and others set out to disrupt. The works of Au (1981) and Jordan (1985) on *cultural appropriateness* and *cultural compatibility*, respectively, both subtly advocate for educator and student adaptation to traditional school norms. Cultural compatibility focuses on the content of educational programs as the site for linking education with culture. In contrast, cultural appropriateness views the context of learning as the channel for infusing culture into instruction.

In 1981, Cazden and Leggett defined *culturally responsive education* as student learning styles and preferences for interactional learning contexts. They noted that students generally have different cognitive styles, which vary in their thinking, how they process information, how they remember, and their use of information learned. The sensory modality strength is one of the cognitive style dimensions that was found to be influenced by cultural differences. The sensory modality strength is grouped into auditory or visual sensory modality strength. Some students learn more by seeing, while others learn more

by hearing (Cazden & Leggett, 1981). The authors reported, for instance, that Chinese and Native American children significantly ranked higher on visual sensory modality strength when compared to children from other cultural groups. Even further, a micro-level illuminates the differences between children who would be considered to be from the same cultural background.

In an earlier ethnographic work, Cazden (1976) observed differences in the sensory modality strength of two Mexican American children. One could learn words through his eyes, and the other responded to sounds. The author's central argument is that students who cannot comprehend or use the language of instruction are disadvantaged. Cazden and Legett (1981) recommended using diverse multisensory teaching styles to enable rich learning experiences for such students. The work of Cazden and Leggett helps us to affirm that cultural differences in how students learn transcend beyond differences in minority and majority groups but emphasizes differences between and within the same minority groups.

Mohatt and Erickson (1981), in an examination of the native Indians in Odawa, Canada, found that native Indian children continued their community's social performance norm in the classroom. The native Indian social standard does not support verbal performance in public. It conflicts with the required verbal interaction necessary for a successful classroom engagement. Their learning styles, primarily observational, differed from the school's expectations. Interactional activities in the classroom were *culturally congruent* with the White children's social norms and culturally incongruent with native Indian children at the school. The authors then argued that students' classroom dispositions need to be assessed in the context of their cultures. Like Au (1981) and Cazden and Leggett

(1981), the authors explained culturally congruent in terms of the interactional learning environment in the classroom.

These earlier works broadly identified the influence of culture on the academic success of minority students. However, they did not offer solutions to educators on how to engage in teaching practices that recognize the influence of culture on students' academic outcomes. In contrast to their works, Banks and Banks (1995), Ladson-Billings (1994), Gay (2002), and Paris (2012) focused on preparing educators to effectively teach students whose racial and cultural backgrounds do not match their own.

2.3.1 Equity Pedagogy

Banks and Banks (1995) proposed one of the core components of multicultural education that they called "equity pedagogy." Equity pedagogy will help minority students attain the education necessary to participate actively in a pluralistic society. A tenet of equity pedagogy regards the dominant canons as not the only knowledge or skills students need. Banks and Banks (1995) argued that "it is not sufficient to help students learn to read, write, and compute within the dominant canon without learning also to question its assumptions, paradigms, and hegemonic characteristics" (p. 152). A faculty using equity pedagogy continuously seeks various strategies that will facilitate the academic success of minority students (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Banks, 2013). Banks (2013) also referred to this approach to teaching as culturally relevant or culturally responsive.

2.3.2 Culturally Responsive Teaching

Gay theorized culturally responsive teaching (CRT) as a subset of multicultural education (Gay, 2018). The focus is to use ethnically diverse teaching materials

(curriculum, course contents, textbooks, and other teaching-related resources) to teach fundamental literacy skills (Gay, 1975; Banks, 1991). Gay (1975) posited that minority students would learn when they can establish connections between school and their sociocultural environment. As she evolved in her work, Gay (2002) moved beyond using culturally and ethnically diverse teaching materials as motivators for culturally diverse students learning. She focused on educators' role as change agents arguing that educators need to be sensitive to the cultural diversity in their classrooms.

Furthermore, educators need to work with the premise that culture influences what students know and how they know (Gay, 2002), and there is no such thing as learning in a culturally neutral way (Gay, 2018). Gay (2002) defined culturally responsive teaching as "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (p.106). Calling for dismantling homogenous and Eurocentric educational practices in her book, Gay (2018) discussed eight descriptors of CRT: validating, comprehensive and inclusive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, emancipatory, humanistic, normative, and ethical. In summary, Gay (2015) argued that educators who acknowledge the role of culture in learning must legitimize the contributions of minority students that do not follow the mainstream ways of knowing. Educators practicing CRT must design instructional materials, create teaching contexts, and prepare activities related to minority students' cultures.

2.3.3 Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Ladson-Billings (1994) theorized culturally relevant pedagogy from her research on eight teachers who successfully taught African American students. Ladson-Billings'

work was based on the inequitable academic experiences of African American students in the US school systems, recognizing that there are gaps in their educational outcomes compared to their counterparts. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) noted that successful African American students traded their cultural identities with dominant cultural identities to become academic achievers.

In her study, Ladson-billings thought about the question: what are successful teachers of African American students doing differently? Ladson-Billings proposed that educators, especially those dissimilar to their students' cultural identities, might be able to incorporate successful practices to foster academic achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Therefore, she argued that teachers who are committed to ethnically and linguistically diverse students' academic success must embrace culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP). CRP is "a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, pp. 16-17). Educators who practice CRP focus on diverse students' academic achievement and support them to accept their cultural identities as assets. There are three main theoretical foundations of CRP: (1) It focuses on academic achievement or student learning, (2) it encourages students to develop cultural competence, and (3) it helps students to recognize and critique current social inequities.

Academic success within the confines of CRP is operationalized as the knowledge and skills that students need to be able to navigate intellectual, social, and political spaces in a democratic society (Ladson-Billings, 2005). Educators who practice CRP extend the definition of students' academic success beyond scores on standardized assessments by demanding and instilling the drive for academic excellence. It recognizes that students are

capable of learning beyond the outcomes revealed by standardized test scores. Essential to this concept is the importance of what students can do differently and how it could be documented as an achievement.

Cultural competence is the use of students' culture to facilitate learning. In addition to academic success, cultural competence requires accepting and maintaining minority students' cultural identities. It requires that students learn at least one culture other than their own in their schooling experience. Being culturally competent also requires educators to turn negatively affirmed stereotypes of students' culture into opportunities for learning. One of the eight successful teachers of African American students in Ladson-Billings' (2005) research used rap music to teach figurative meanings of lyrics. Another teacher in the study exposed her students to other cultures by inviting students' families into the classroom space.

CRP's first and second theoretical foundations are primarily of private values to students. The third is a resultant effect on the public, and it argues that educators who practice CRP empower their students to critically reflect on how social inequities are produced. By extension, students are invited to "engage the world and others critically" (Ladson-Billings, 2005, p. 162) through the learning that has taken place and thus become active participants in social equity discourse. Becoming an active participant in social equity discourse is called critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 2005) or conscientization (Freire, 1970).

2.3.4 Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

Culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) emerged from the growing concerns about how resource pedagogies that challenged cultural deficit approaches to teaching have been simplified and often misconstrued (Paris, 2011; Paris, 2012). Regrettably, educators reduce resource approaches to celebratory acts much more consistent with tokenism. For example, a display of wall arts including students from different cultures and hanging of flags of different countries on classroom walls in K-12 to sharing cultural foods with other students at a designated class time at the post-secondary level. Extending Ladson-Billings' CRP more so than Gay's CRT, Paris (2012) problematized the simplification of CRP. He attributed the simplification of CRP to the unidirectional view of the relationships between social constructs such as race, ethnicity, and cultural identity. To this end, Paris (2012) focused more on culture's fluid and changing nature and how it continues to intersect with other social identities and students' school experiences. The pedagogical shift that warrants recognizing the changing nature of culture was termed CSP. CSP "perpetuate and foster-to sustain- linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling" (Paris 2012, p. 95).

CSP embraces the pluralist nature of society and recognizes the value of every culture and language in both minority and majority communities. One main difference between CSP and Gay's and Ladson-Billing's theories is the inclusion of both the dominant and minority youth as necessary elements for reaching educational equality among students. Just as CRP, CSP argues the need for supporting the existing cultural heritages that minority students embody and bring to school. It also challenges monocultural and monolingual school norms rooted in white middle-class communities.

Another distinction from CRP is that CSP encourages educators to be sensitive to newer cultural differences as society continues to become diverse and to engage with the intent to understand what minority students and their communities want to *sustain*. An example is a call to sustain Native American cultures and languages displaced by colonization in Native American Schooling (McCarty & Lee, 2014). CSP also moved the conversation of equal academic experiences beyond Ladson-Billings' initial focus on African American students. It highlights the need to understand another type of culture that is not racial or ethnic but intergenerational. Paris (2012) iterated this as learning the youth culture and how it presents itself in the classroom.

Although the works of these authors on culture and education were implemented in K-12, it has implications for understanding the interaction of culture and education within higher education. Language, culture, and social interaction all have a significant impact on the social process of learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Through social interactions, children construct meanings about who they are and how the outside world treats those who share or do not share their identities (Skinner & Meltzoff, 2019). Educators in K-12 are part of the early interactions a child experiences and through such interactions, make meaning of the experience (Skinner & Meltzoff, 2019). The observations of authors in the early works I shared are similar to what is evident in higher education in terms of students' experiences. College students are linguistically and ethnically different, have disabilities that impact their learning, and have varying communication styles, among other socioculturally formed identities (Hutchinson & McAlister-Shields, 2020).

Because this study draws from theoretical conceptions of culture and education in K-12, it is important to then distinguish between teaching in K-12 and higher education

through the concepts of andragogy and pedagogy. Knowles (1970) explains that pedagogy is the "art and science of teaching children' (p. 40). Knowles (1980) defines andragogy as the "art and science of helping adults learn" (p. 42). Malcolm Knowles, in distinguishing both terms, changed the role of the educator from "teaching" in pedagogy to "helping to learn" in andragogy. In other words, in pedagogy, students are dependent learners in a traditional authority-oriented environment where the educator primarily plans and evaluates what is taught (Draper, 1998). The educator's main role is to instruct the students on what they need to know (Torff, 1999). Transmission of knowledge through the "banking model" characterizes the pedagogical approach and students are in a passive state (Freire, 2011; Holmes & Abington-Cooper, 2000). The andragogical approach assumes that adults and children learn differently (Taylor & Kroth, 2009). In this model of teaching, students are adults, who are autonomous and self-directed and are able to participate as co-creators of knowledge (Kerka, 2002). Students are active participants and are the core "players in the teaching-learning transaction" (Forrest & Peterson, 2006, p. 114). Although Knowles distinguished andragogy from pedagogy, educators who have cross-applied both concepts with children and adults found a mix of both is beneficial to students' learning (Knowles, 1980). Knowles (1980) shared:

> …an increased number of teachers in elementary and secondary schools (and a few in colleges) began reporting to me that they were experimenting with applying the concepts of andragogy to the education of youth and finding that in certain situations they were producing superior learning. So, I am at a point now of seeing that andragogy is simply another model of assumptions about learners to be used alongside the pedagogical model of assumptions, thereby providing two

alternative models for testing out the assumptions as to their "fit" with particular situations. (p. 43).

This present study is concerned with the sociocultural dynamics at play in education and understanding how teaching can be, more so, inclusive and equitable in higher education. Following Knowles' (1980) position on encouraging educators to test both andragogical and pedagogical approaches to determine their fit per situation, the focus of this study is to consider the mix of culture with either or both approaches. This study is not concerned with the particular teaching approach (i.e., andragogy or pedagogy) of faculty but with how faculty introduce inclusivity and equity in their teaching approach.

2.3.5 Inclusive and Equitable Teaching

This study focused on the practices of multicultural teaching in a higher education institution through the lens of the teaching concepts earlier discussed. i.e., culturally responsive teaching, culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and equity pedagogy. These approaches, from here on, are referred to as inclusive and equitable teaching (IET). I chose the term, IET, to communicate to readers that I do not prefer one teaching concept over the other. Rather, I used the term to include the differing approaches the authors took in explaining their concepts, albeit pointing to the same cause. i.e., towards an equitable academic experience for minority students. A recurring theme in these teaching approaches is social transformation through education. To this end, I frame the definition of IET for the purpose of this present study around Gay's definition of CRT and Ladson-Billings' principles of CRP. Both frameworks propose visions supported by a solid commitment to social justice education, even though the concentration unit may vary (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Gay's and Ladson-Billings' concepts were also built on the

foundations laid through the works of educational pluralists earlier discussed and are the most cited for social justice education as it relates to teaching and pedagogy, respectively (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). In synthesizing CRT and CRP, Aronson and Laughter (2016) looked for elements of culturally relevant education (Dover, 2013) in Gay's and Ladson-Billings' works and arrived at four markers. I adapted these four CRT and CRP markers as the operational definition of IET in this study to reflect the context of IET in higher education:

1. Faculty who practice IET use constructivist methods to build links between students' cultural knowledge and academic concepts. The cultural knowledge and assets that students bring to the classroom are built upon by inclusively and equitably minded faculty in their teaching.
2. Faculty who practice IET encourage students to reflect critically on their own lives and societies. They use activities and curricula that support the analysis of all the represented sociocultural identities.
3. Faculty who practice IET facilitate students' cultural awareness and competence. In their classroom, students can learn about their own and other people's cultures while fostering pride in both cultures.
4. Faculty who practice IET actively uncover and dismantle oppressive institutions by critiquing power discourses. Culturally competent teachers actively pursue social justice for all societal members outside the classroom.

I believe that these four markers characterize IET as a teaching approach that is not only based on theoretical conceptions but tangible enough to mitigate the negative effect of its trivialization in practice (Sleeter, 2012). Gurin et al. (2002) contended that students

would not have access to quality diversity experience just by attending colleges with a diverse student body. Instead, students will have quality diversity experiences in the classroom by learning from and about others who share different sociocultural backgrounds from their own (Barrington, 2004; Gurin et al., 2002). For faculty, this means facilitating discussions and revisiting teaching approaches through social justice lens to combat systemic inequities that may be implicit or explicit in the classroom (Gay, 2018). Teaching through diversity involves acknowledging the differences that exist in the classroom. Teaching through inclusion requires embracing differences by involving all learners in relevant and effective ways to achieve academic, social, and emotional growth (Kift et al., 2010). Teaching through equity involves validating other worldviews and ways of knowing and recognizing others as stakeholders with whom knowledge can be co-constructed (Freire, 1970).

The concept of IET, as described by researchers who focused on K-12 (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Erickson, 2004; Au & Mason, 1983), can be used to think about IET in higher education. The main tenet of IET is that it recognizes culture and prompts educators to consider culture and students' multifaceted identities in curriculum and instruction. IET practice in K-12 lends us a starting point to think about its implementation in higher education but it does not account for contextual differences. Students in higher education are adult learners who have freedom and make choices on their education. Faculty in higher education have little to no preparation in teaching strategies unlike their K-12 counterparts who go through teacher preparation program (Ake-Little, 2018). There are standardized assessments, independent of educators, used in K-12 to measure student academic outcomes (Ake-Little, 2018) while individual faculty determine assessment

strategies in higher education. Despite these contextual differences, building critical consciousness, ensuring academic success, and fostering cultural competence among students are IET tenets that are also applicable in higher education (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009). Gay (2018) contends that inclusive and equitable instructional practices are not to be viewed as a step-by-step guide; rather, such practices represent an avenue for IET to be embraced in dynamic ways. This current study presents an opportunity to understand and present IET implementation in higher education from the experiences of faculty who are reputable for its use.

2.4 IET in Higher Education

The main dream of public higher education during its formulation was to increase opportunities for the working class to move to the middle class. Educating students would provide grounds for eliminating poverty by preparing them to participate in better job opportunities and ascend the corporate ladder. The US higher education system has constantly been undermining the rights and privileges of the minority population through the provision of unexclusive education (Lesnick & Cook-Sather, 2009). Likewise, the Covid-19 pandemic has presented specific disparities in the US higher education system that disproportionately harms students from some ethnic communities and a particular race at the expense of their counterparts (Heinz et al., 2022). The Strada Education Network survey revealed that 50% of Latino and 43% of Black students canceled or altered their academic plans due to the Covid-19 Pandemic (Valtierra & Siegel, 2019). In comparison, only 26% of non-Hispanic white students had their educational programs canceled for the same reasons (Birney & McNamara, 2022). These statistics reveal the true picture of how the higher education system in the USA is compromised.

Higher education institutions should reasonably be expected to champion the inclusion of minority students in their academic curricula by advocating for IET and learning opportunities. However, equal treatment in higher education cannot be compared to fair teaching practice (Kobuladze & Berandze, 2021). Equal treatment focuses on providing equal opportunities to every student for their success. In contrast, IET offers individual students the opportunities to acknowledge and resolve some disadvantages and challenges they face. Creating an equitable and inclusive environment for minority students goes beyond getting them in the door and entails the consideration of the experiences of the students from underrepresented groups and how they impact their social life, university culture, and the course curriculum (Kobuladze & Berandze, 2021). Creating an IET environment acknowledges how minority groups have been excluded from higher education teaching practices and develop interventions that can be used to prevent similar instances from happening in the future (Heinz et al., 2022). Inclusive and equitable teaching and learning offer students valuable, responsive, and legible intellectual experiences without considering their race, ethnicity, gender, or ability status (Heinz et al., 2022). IET enables higher education professors to reflect on their practice and their interaction with students from minority groups and offer them equal opportunities for expressing their experiences in the classroom without prejudice (Hutchison & McAlister-Shields, 2020).

In their study that looked at how faculty can promote inclusive teaching practices, Macdonald et al. (2019) described three dimensions of IET: (1) fostering a sense of belonging, (2) Building students' identity, and (3) promoting student success. A sense of belonging is one of the human psychological needs necessary to enhance their motivation

toward a positive outcome (Gopalan & Brady, 2020; Walton & Brady, 2017). The dimension of IET described by Macdonald et al. (2019) speaks to student dimension and outcomes. Historically underrepresented students in higher education reported a lower sense of belonging when compared to their counterparts (Strayhorn, 2012). A growing literature suggests that the lower sense of belonging reported among minority students can negatively impact their academic success (Gay, 2018; Aguilar et al., 2014).

The faculty dimension of IET, according to Drewsbury and Brame (2019) positions faculty as change agents in distinct ways. In implementing IET, faculty must develop self-awareness by understanding their own voices and biases first before trying to understand students' voices (Drewsbury and Brame, 2019; Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1995). This means that faculty's relationship with students is influenced by their accumulated social and personal experiences and thus understanding faculty as social beings is necessary for promoting an inclusive and equitable classroom environment. IET is also characterized in terms of classroom relationships, calling for faculty to develop empathy (Drewsbury & Brame, 2019). Empathy is achievable through a dialoguing process that allows faculty to know students and their backgorunds (Drewsbury & Brame, 2019). The empathic characteristics of IET places faculty in emotional and academic, yet ethical, partnerships with studens (Gay, 2018). Another dimension of IET is centered on classroom environment (Drewsbury & Bramer, 2019; Freeman et al., 2007). A welcoming environment in the classroom where students feel valued for their contributions can be created by an instructor who treats them with warmth and respect. The diverse ways faculty show warmth and respect for their students will reflect their individual personalities and background experiences (Brame, 2019). Pedagogical choices made by faculty are also

integral to promoting IET. This suggests that choices should be based on the classroom experiences of the students and the evolving conversation between faculty and the students. A pedagogical choice can be appropriate in some circumstances and inappropriate in others (Drewsbury & Brame, 2019). The choice of inclusive pedagogy "requires choosing options based on all the components that promote educating the whole student" (Drewsbury & Brame, 2019, p. 4).

Faculty as change agents are responsible for implementing teaching strategies that will address belonging uncertainties among minority students and thus promote their academic success (Macdonald et al., 2019). Building students' identities involves exposing them to scholars in their field of study that they can relate to (Gay, 2018; Banks, 2013) and thus encourages them to persist in their disciplinary path (Macdonald et al., 2019). Supporting students' success involves faculty's sensitivity to different learner types and adjusting teaching practices to encourage the active participation of all students, including those who are not already engaged (Tanner, 2013).

To ensure the provision of more inclusive and equitable experiences in STEM courses, faculty representatives were encouraged to incorporate the use of tools and assessments to enhance the efforts of providing inclusive and equitable educational opportunities to students from minority groups (Valtierra & Siegel, 2019). Various pedagogical training interventions that are used in creating inclusive and equitable classroom environments focus on increasing the educational awareness of both the student and the instructors. Pedagogical training often centers on the implications of social identity and explores barriers that affect IET, like implicit bias, stereotyping threats, macroaggression strategies, and a fixated mindset (Lesnick & Cook-Sather, 2009).

Multiday and off-campus immersion workshops that will help motivate faculty to adopt IET teaching strategies can foster its implementation in higher education (Cochrane et al., 2017).

Various higher education centers strive to support and increase their faculty capacity to offer IET practices (Lesnick & Cook-Sather, 2009). However, to attain a fully implemented IET practice within higher education institutions, certain strategies must be adopted based on equity and social justice within the faculty environments. In a review by Valtierra and Siegel (2019), it is apparent that the most crucial step in achieving IET begins with redesigning the curriculum to conform with the social justice perspective that recognizes that all individuals are not equal and that certain minority groups might feel neglected and discriminated by the policies and regulations used in the certain curriculum (Valtierra & Siegel, 2019; Gay, 2018; Banks, 2013). Faculty should strive to formulate their course content to promote inclusivity and equity that will consider the cultures of marginalized groups, making them feel included in the education process (Gay, 2018).

Faculty should focus their efforts on leveraging the pedagogic benefits of diversity for all students in higher learning institutions (Valtierra & Siegel, 2019). Results from documented studies indicate that postsecondary careers in STEM subjects, including Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, show significant disparities in the representation of ethnic minority students, with Black/African American, Latin/Hispanic, American Indians, and Alaskan Native students being underrepresented as opposed to their non-Hispanic white counterparts (Edwards, 2019; Mcdonald et al., 2019). Faculty should establish strategies that can realign the enrolment into STEM courses by enhancing their efforts of recruiting and training diverse students from various minority groups into the

STEM majors to foster an IET-viable environment (Edwards, 2019). Likewise, classroom instruction can be redesigned to be more inclusive and equity-minded to offer all students equal opportunities for success, persist in their major fields, and attain the certification needed for their enhanced life outcomes (Gay et al., 2018). Improving the awareness of faculty members on the impacts of implicit bias in collaboration with a commitment towards adopting self-affirming attitudes regarding students' growth mindset are among the key strategies that can be used to provide an IET and learning experience (Edwards, 2019). IET strategies will establish a positive classroom environment that closes the existing achievement gaps and results in equitable academic and democratic outcomes (Pascarella et al., 2001; Terenzini et al., 2001).

In various higher learning institutions in the US, multiple student-focused strategies have been adopted that can enhance the success of minority students through the provision of equitable and inclusive learning opportunities (Valtierra & Siegel, 2019). Some of these strategies include engagement in programs meant to broaden and deepen the access of minority students to college and university programs (Jett et al., 2016). Likewise, modernized advisory practices have been formulated that put into perspective the implications of minority rights and have also been used to advocate and restructure faculty efforts to address inclusive and equitable teaching and learning opportunities. Also, campus students have been engaged in cohort-based student retention programs (García-Barrera, 2022). Other curriculum resilience programs, like those delivered in student learning centers and communities, have offered campus students inclusive and equitable learning opportunities (Cochrane et al., 2017). It is imperative to note that most of these strategies are centered on improving student outcomes (Chang, 2002; Gurin et al., 2002; Pascarella

et al., 2001; Terenzini et al., 2001). However, they focus on the student and are run by administrative staff who have limited knowledge of the importance of inclusive and equitable learning opportunities (García-Barrera, 2022). The role of faculty is mainly neglected, which is the promotion of a learning environment in which students can succeed regardless of their background affiliations, including race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and sexual orientation (Baumgartner et al., 2015). Faculty play a vital role in supporting and enabling the academic success of all students regardless of their background and minority status (Banks, 2014; Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009). However, the negligence of faculty to include students from minority backgrounds in their programs underutilizes faculty as a resource for advancing the mission of higher education (García-Barrera, 2022) and places the blame for academic underachievement on students only (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009).

As we think of faculty role in promoting student academic success through the adoption of IET, it is important to also note that faculty do not operate in a vacuum (Hermanowicz, 2012). There are institutional and societal factors that may impact their implementation of IET. Like any other social being, they make decisions to engage or not engage in a behavior by weighing the cost and benefits associated with a proposed change (Bonner, 2022). If the benefit associated with a change is more than its cost, the change may be considered, and vice versa (Bonner, 2022). At the institutional and individual level, the benefit associated with a change might be monetary or non-monetary; likewise the costs. It is essential to recognize that there are non-monetary factors such as academic freedom, professional development, institutional reward, and time that faculty may assess using cost-benefit analysis. Non-economic factors may also be considered by looking at

the social cost-benefit of the proposed change (Bonner, 2022). Having now considered faculty role in implementing IET, I now turn to discuss studies on IET's implementation.

A review of the literature on how IET has been studied heavily relies on educators' self-reports through surveys and interviews. The self-report measures often focused on educators' attitudes toward cultural diversity as indicators of IET behavioral intentions in the classroom (Whipp, 2013; Bauml et al., 2016; Bonner et al., 2018). Researchers also worked on validated measures by testing the psychometric properties of items that operationalize teaching in a culturally and ethnically diverse classroom (Siwatu, 2007; Siwatu, 2011). These studies generally focused on IET within K-12, how teachers approach IET, and the implementation of IET in the classroom. Teachers that reported IET implementation in K-12 cited the use of diverse authored books, students' cultural artifacts, and native language instruction to support minority students (Orosco & O'Connor, 2014; Durden, Escalante, & Blitch, 2015). Others reported having high expectations for their students (Aronson, 2020), connecting with students' cultural backgrounds through their families (Hilaski, 2020), and engaging in dialogic teaching (Rigney et al., 2020).

In their study that synthesized the literature on the trends of IET in higher education, Lawrie et al. (2017) discussed the scholarship advancement of IET since Hockings (2010) conducted a similar literature review of prior studies. They report IET themes around inclusive curriculum design and delivery, inclusive assessment, and the role of higher education institutions in promoting its implementation among faculty. However, they noted that while a complete culture of IET across higher education institutions cannot be attained, it is essential for university stakeholders to unite to explore ways to further its implementation holistically.

In line with Gopalan and Brady (2020), Ashraf and Uzair-ul-Hassan (2020) studied ways IET implementation in higher education can be strengthened and the equity pedagogical practices reported by faculty. They found that IET fosters a culture of belonging, respect, and acceptance and encouraged faculty to continue using formal and informal strategies to promote an inclusive and equitable culture in the university community. Time was a significant constraint reported by faculty. Faculty asserted the need to be unburdened from other activities that would prevent them from implementing IET.

Other studies found that IET implementation in STEM disciplines encouraged minority students to have a science identity, resulting in their persistence in STEM disciplines (Goering et al., 2022; York et al., 2021; Mcdonald et al., 2019). These studies highlight how STEM faculty implemented IET by encouraging active participation in class in response to gender and other demographic imbalance in participation. The IET strategy used was a deliberate and proactive faculty reflection on identifying who is participating and intentionally creating space for other students to learn together and for their voices to be heard (Goering et al., 2022). Goering et al. (2022) noted that all students could not excel in content knowledge courses but that this gap can be filled by introducing an informal curriculum.

2.5 Theoretical Framework: Social Constructivist Theory

The theoretical underpinning for this study was the social constructivist theory by Vygotsky (1978). According to the theory, students reconstruct their knowledge, experiences, and understanding of their immediate world through reflection and interaction with other students, which fosters positive learning experiences (Alanazi, 2016). Vygotsky (1978) postulated that learning starts from childhood in relation to the environments in

which a child has been before school, meaning that it is socially constructed. As a result, individuals construct knowledge based on their social interactions within a particular environment. Another central idea of the social constructivist theory is that learning is co-constructed and that individuals connect with others to make sense of their world. As such, students within the campus environment can learn from each other through formal and informal interactions.

The social constructivist theory illustrates how IET can be fostered within the classroom by intentionally including students from minority groups for an overall enhanced academic experience for all students (Alanazi, 2016). Minority students in the classroom can co-construct knowledge with other students using their prior experiences instead of trying to fit into the dominant Eurocentric norms. This theory highlights how instructors in higher education institutions can provide equal educational opportunities to students from minority groups and the strategies that can be used to achieve IET in the classroom (Ardiansyah & Ujihanti, 2018). Since constructivism is based on activity learning, students from minority backgrounds can be included in activity-based learning with their unique needs considered. Various principles of the social constructivist theory can be used to explain how IET and learning opportunities can be fostered in the classroom through the following three assumptions:

2.5.1 Learning is an Active Process

The theory of constructivism reviews the act of learning as an active process where learners are expected to construct their understanding by engaging with the world around them actively with real-world problem-solving experiments. Minority students with various disparities can be paired with other students to foster active learning through

interaction and shared experiences (Ardiansyah & Ujihanti, 2018). The social constructivist theory calls for minority students to be allowed to make meaningful connections between past knowledge and existing knowledge and finally link the knowledge obtained with the entire learning process, either actively or passively. Since learning is an active process, social constructivist theory necessitates redesigning the teaching approaches used on campuses to follow the IET model.

The main idea of constructivist theory is that learning is actively constructed and that students can learn by building knowledge from past experiences and adding these experiences to pre-existing knowledge forms (Alanazi, 2016). This experience knowledge will then form grounds for the newly learned experiences. This principle of constructivism rejects the notion that knowledge can be passively received (Ardiansyah & Ujihanti, 2018). This principle of social constructivism theory can be used in higher education institutions to foster IET for minority groups by actively connecting to their past experiences to form new foundations (Gay, 2018).

2.5.2 All Knowledge is Socially Constructed

This principle highlights the process of teaching and learning to involve the sharing and negotiating of socially created knowledge. This principle reiterates how learning is achieved through interactions with other people and thus necessitates active collaboration to enhance effective learning (Ardiansyah & Ujihanti, 2018). Faculty can use this principle that all knowledge is socially constructed to enable interactions and information sharing between minority and other students through active collaboration that fosters IET and learning opportunities.

2.5.3 Learning Exists in Mind

This principle expounds on how learners develop their unique mental perceptions of the natural world through their unique worldviews (Suhendi & Purwarno, 2018). This principle is in line with the attributes of constructivism, which highlights that knowledge exists in mind and that knowledge does not ascribe reality to the real world. According to this principle, learners usually modify their mental perceptions of the real world to picture the new information and perceptions gained to formulate a new understanding of their reality (Alanazi, 2016). Faculty can use this principle to champion learning among minority groups by encouraging minority students to develop their unique mental perceptions of the real and the ideal world where there is no discrimination. Minority students' perception of the real world and what they come to understand may result in cognitive dissonance. According to the social constructivist theory, cognitive dissonance is expected as individuals try to determine what seems right when faced with two or three conflicting thoughts. The mind can process the viability of new knowledge before it is accepted and retained. Thus, faculty need to exhibit the patience necessary for minority students to move from the phase of cognitive dissonance to knowledge retention.

Theories continue to advance in explaining how the interactions between students from diverse backgrounds, including those from varied ethnicities, racial affiliations, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic classes, impact the educational practices used within higher education institutions (Birney & McNamara, 2022). However, these theories usually focus on various variables that result in multicultural indifference or a deficit mindset, highlighting various reasons IET could be challenging to realize (Kobuladze & Berandze, 2021). Scholars have agreed on the need to successfully implement some

institutional changes (Addy et al., 2021). Institutional changes range from reforming the scope of the curriculum to informing teachers on the teaching materials that can foster multicultural education through IET, and faculty attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors that champion IET among higher education students (Addy et al., 2021). From the research that was undertaken, it was evident that most higher education institutions had limited conceptions of the meaning and demands of IET (Sleeter, 2011). Some perceived it as a strategy to change traditional canons or restructure the curriculum such that it reduces or erodes academic quality (Marquis et al., 2016). In this regard, IET needs to be well understood in higher education. Its scope and dimension must be adequately defined, conceptualized, and researched (Valtierra & Siegel, 2019). An in-depth exploration of IET through the experiences of faculty who are reputable for its use promises to offer helpful insights into filling the knowledge gap. Hutchison and McAllister (2020) stated that examining current IET practices allows faculty in higher education to see examples of IET and evaluate whether higher education is fulfilling its mission to all students. In the next chapter, I describe the methodological approach to studying how faculty who are reputable for practicing IET do so.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to explore faculty members' general orientation toward inclusive and equitable teaching (IET) practices, factors influencing IET, and barriers to the same. According to Cochrane et al. (2017), the significant demographic shift in the student population, ranging from race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, gender, etc., warrants an effective educational response, including changes in teaching practices. This demographic shift has left higher education institutions planning on how to respond to an increasingly diversified student body (Cochrane et al., 2017). Faculty members, in turn, are faced with teaching a diverse classroom while learning about the heterogenous nature of background experiences students bring with them to the classroom. I write about this study's research design and methods in this chapter. I also address my positionality as a researcher and data analysis approach. In concluding this chapter, I discussed ethical considerations in this study and ended with a chapter summary.

3.1 Research Design

In this study, I sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do faculty with a reputation for inclusive and equitable teaching define inclusive and equitable teaching?
2. Why do these faculty perceive their teaching practices as inclusive and equitable?
3. What do these faculty perceive as factors that can encourage or discourage the use of equitable and inclusive teaching, and how do those factors exert an influence?

These research questions focus on how faculty members who are reputable for teaching inclusively and equitably ensure that students, regardless of their minority identities, succeed in higher education. According to Gay (2018), IET, as it relates to cultural diversity, involves attending to all students, both majority and minority, differently toward an equitable experience for them all. That is, inclusion brings about equity, and to be equitable, educators need to see diversity as an asset that informs structural strategies and classroom climates (Gay, 2018). IET encourages a student-centered approach whereby students and faculty members learn together and from each other. IET opposes and dismantles traditional instructional practices that privilege dominant groups by being critically conscious of the oppressed group (Gay, 2018; Hurtado, McCarty & Lee, 2014).

This study aimed to explore how IET is defined by faculty members and how these faculty report that they manifest IET in the classroom. In conducting research, the researcher must assess and choose the appropriate method to answer the research questions (Speziale & Carpenter, 2007). I approached this study using a qualitative method because the research questions I posed aimed to describe and interpret a particular phenomenon, IET, from the understanding of faculty members experiencing it. According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative approach is used to explore, understand, and define a phenomenon and to foster an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. An in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon and its contextual aspects then serves as the foundation for future inquiry into the phenomenon (Yin, 2002). Because little is known about IET in the cultural diversity context of higher education, an exploratory qualitative approach was employed in this study. I chose a qualitative approach to see how IET is understood by faculty members who were noted to be reputable for teaching inclusively and equitably.

I established that this study is a qualitative study that explored the understanding of IET in higher education and faculty members' general orientation about IET. Qualitative research focuses on how people understand the world through their life experiences (Yin, 2015). I found phenomenological qualitative approach best suits the object of this study. IET is the object of this study, and it is a pedagogical practice that requires educators to reflect critically on who they are (Gay, 2018). The call for educators to reflect on who they are suggests that educators, by default, teach through their own background experiences (Gay, 2018; Cochrane et al., 2017). Therefore, a phenomenological approach allowed me to explore faculty's understanding of IET through their own experiences. The phenomenological research approach acknowledges that individuals have unique experiences that will come to bear on their understanding of a phenomenon (Finlay, 2002). That is, there is no such thing as a neutral or uniform experience (Finlay, 2002). The premise is that there are various ways to interpret the same experience and that reality is what each person interprets reality to be (Ary et al., 2019). I view the world through the constructivist lens and thus believe that there are multiple realities and that realities are influenced by contextual factors that may or may not be specific to an individual.

Husserl, who is considered the originator of phenomenology, defines it as "the science of essence of consciousness" (Husserl, 1970, as cited in Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). Phenomenology is concerned with the correlation between an object of interest and acts of consciousness (Giorgi, 2012). The object of interest can be examined in terms of the act of consciousness that correlates with it (Giorgi, 2012). It is the "study of experience as it is lived and as it is structured through consciousness" (Friesen et al., 2012, p. 1). To this end, a phenomenological researcher aims to describe the phenomenon being investigated in

relation to those who or who may embody the phenomenon. A distinctive feature of Husserl's phenomenological research method is that it casts a transcendental view solely on the object of study with no interference from the researcher (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). Husserl's position on separating the researcher from what and who is studied is in tension with one of the affordances of qualitative research. In my opinion, Husserl held a slightly positivist view by arguing that the researcher should be entirely bracketed from the object of study. Husserl argued that it is by this means that a researcher would be able to "describe the phenomenon in its pure, universal sense" (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007, p. 173). Husserl's stance does not agree with my subjectivity as a researcher in this study. For this reason, I embraced the perspective taken by Heidegger (1962) on what he called hermeneutic phenomenology.

Heidegger (1962) modified Husserl's model and called it hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology. Heidegger (1962) argued that it is impossible for individuals to separate themselves from contextual elements that influence their experiences. The description of individuals' lived experiences is constructed through contextual factors such as culture, politics, and social identities (Campbell, 2001). The bearing of contexts on how individuals understand the world is referred to as a fore-structure of understanding (Heidegger, 1962). This means that individuals come to an agreement and interpretation of the world through prior knowledge and their sociocultural backgrounds (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). Heideggerian phenomenology also acknowledges that researchers cannot wholly bracket out their previous understanding of the phenomenon being studied, and their interpretation is likely to be influenced by their sociocultural background (Friesen et al., 2012). I found interpretive phenomenology well-suited for this study. This interpretive phenomenological

qualitative study (Embree, 1997) allowed me to explore deeply and analyze patterns in experiences (Holloway, 1997; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). Unlike Husserl's phenomenological approach, Heideggerian phenomenology also allowed me to use external theoretical frameworks to bear upon the description and interpretation of IET (Friesen et al., 2012).

3.2 My Role and Positionality

My role in this study included conceiving the research idea presented, generating data through interviews, analyzing data, and interpreting my findings (Creswell, 2012). I acknowledge that my background and who I am as an individual could have influenced how I approached the roles. Therefore, I must share my positionality as a researcher with the readers of this work before presenting the methods I employed in this study.

I am an immigrant graduate student in the US. My classroom experiences as an international graduate student in the US motivate my research interest in IET within the context of higher education. The first day of my class as an immigrant student in the US came, and I remembered sitting at the back corner of the classroom. The professor walked in, and after some housekeeping announcements, students were tasked with presenting course contents to the class. I was picked first to lead class presentations. This came as a shock to me. In my home culture, students play a passive role in learning. The expectation is to sit and allow faculty to call on you to respond to questions. I saw an opportunity but also thought I did not get the chance to understand the U.S. graduate class first. In my classes, I did not find contextual explanations for topics relatable due to my different socio-cultural backgrounds. I continued in the program struggling with metaphors and examples used in the classroom to reinforce our understanding of the concepts discussed. At the time,

I often wondered whether I was making the most out of the class as a graduate student. My experience sparked my curiosity to learn how faculty members teach students from different walks of life in the classroom in a way that is relevant to them. At the same time, I knew students like me are obligated to get acclimatized to and benefit from the new learning environment, but is the onus on them alone? The more I learned about social justice issues in the United States and how I may have inherited existing prejudices and stereotypes in my new environment, I became convinced of the relevance of studying IET in the college classroom for my dissertation.

With the assumptions that humans do not experience the world in isolation and that those experiences are situated in context (Yazan, 2015), I approached this study with the lens that I view the world as a Black woman, a higher education professional, and an immigrant who went through the process of learning across cultural borders. My identities shape the foundation for my inquiry into IET in the college classroom. I first heard about IET within cultural diversity in one of my graduate classes. Further readings introduced me to scholars who interpreted IET in terms of cultural variations of students as witnessed in the classroom and others who named the concept differently. Notable among my readings are the work of Geneva Gay and Gloria Ladson-Billings on culturally responsive teaching. It is with these identities that I approached and conducted this study.

While understanding that my positionality may have influenced all aspects of this study, I avoided my personal beliefs to the extent I could. I constantly reflected on how my sociocultural positions and preconceptions might have impacted data collection, analysis, and interpretation. I previously studied minority graduate students' perception of the ideal teaching practices of a culturally responsive faculty in one of my graduate classes. The data

I collected from these graduate students may function as a preconceived notion. For this reason, I ensured that I asked the questions that I had in my interview guide as they were and presented the study participants' voices. I kept a reflexive note in which I recorded my experiences and observations during data collection. I acknowledge that I am unable to eliminate my preconceptions about IET completely.

3.3 Methods for Generating Data

I followed the five steps highlighted by Creswell (2012) for generating qualitative data:

1. Determining the sampling approach for site and participant selection.
2. Gaining access to participants and sites.
3. Determining the types of data to be generated.
4. Choosing the procedures that will be used to record data.
5. Considering ethical issues in the data generation procedure.

3.4 Site Selection, Description, and Gaining Access to Participants

The population for this study is all faculty members in higher education institutions across the United States. However, my intention in this qualitative study was not to generalize findings (Creswell, 2012) to all faculty members in higher education institutions. To this end, I used purposeful sampling to select the study site and participants. Purposeful sampling is used to "intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2012, p. 206).

3.4.1 Identification of Study Site

This study was conducted at a public university in the southeastern region of the United States. Carnegie classifies the university as a research-intensive institution. I

purposefully chose this research-intensive institution because it is more heterogenous in student and faculty population compared to the other types of institutions in the state where it is located. The research-intensive institution where I conducted this study also boasts a huge number of academic programs when compared to other institution types in the state it is located. As a research university, it offers a full complement of undergraduate programs and, as a function of its size, is likely to be more heterogenous than other institutions in the state it is located. I also chose the university because it was convenient in terms of access to faculty. Also, being a graduate student at the university allowed me to conveniently access study participants. According to institutional research, analytics, and decision support, the university has a total enrollment of roughly 30,000 students at the time of writing this dissertation. Of the total students enrolled, 15.5% were reported to belong to an underrepresented minority group, and 4.3% were international students. The university has a total number of 3,061 faculty members. Of this number, 23.9% are the underrepresented minority and nonresident alien faculty members. Faculty members at the study site are engaged in different variations of teaching, research, and service responsibilities. The university has general education requirements for undergraduate students. The general education requirements ensure undergraduate students take courses in domains such as written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, arts and creativity, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and cultural diversity.

3.4.2 Identifying Academic Departments

Having identified the site for this study, I adopted the maximal variation sampling technique to narrow down the specific departments I included. Maximal variation sampling accounts for the difference in the perspectives of study participants relating to the

phenomenon of a study (Noy, 2008). Because a qualitative study aims not to generalize findings (Creswell, 2012), I did not randomly select faculty to participate in this study. Rather, I purposefully selected faculty from different academic disciplines. According to Biglan (1973b), disciplines can be grouped using three dichotomies (hard/soft, life/non-life, and pure/applied). Of the three dichotomies, the hard-soft and pure-applied dichotomies have been widely used in research studies for their persistence in adding contextual meanings to research looking into the world of faculty (Simpson, 2017).

Biglan's two most frequently used dichotomies were further conceptualized into three groups in studying teaching and curriculum development: the sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities (Lattuca & stark, 1995, 2011). I used the three groupings defined by Lattuca and Stark (1995) to select the departments I included in this study. In doing so, I chose four academic departments: English, History, Political Science, and Mechanical Engineering. These four disciplines satisfied Lattuca and Stark's (1995) disciplinary classification as follows:

- English and History - Humanities
- Political Science - Social Sciences
- Mechanical Engineering - Sciences

I chose two disciplines in Humanities because they are considered to be low paradigmatic consensus fields and, accordingly, are more flexible than fields with high paradigmatic consensus on teaching and research activities. I chose Political Science because I believed that faculty members in the department could possibly bring a unique perspective to this study. I thought their perspectives could contextualize inclusive and equitable teaching in an era of controversies around such issues as political partisanship,

critical race theory, etc., prevalent at the time this research was conducted. Mechanical Engineering is an example of a high paradigmatic consensus field that offers more structure around teaching and research activities.

Although the disciplines I chose satisfied the academic classification of disciplines into the humanities, social sciences, or the sciences by Lattuca and Stark (2011), I do not generalize findings reported in this dissertation to each disciplinary classification or faculty member outside of the ones I interviewed. I chose the four disciplines reported in this study because I anticipated that there might be variations presumably rooted in disciplinary classifications.

To be included in this study, a participant had to be (1) a faculty member in any of the four disciplines of choice (Political Science, English, Mechanical Engineering, and History) and (2) have a teaching appointment. I defined a faculty member in this study as an educator at the site of this study classified as a lecturer or senior lecturer, an assistant professor, associate professor, or a full professor on tenure or a non-tenure track appointed to teach a course that has been assigned an academic credit. Non-tenure track or tenure track assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors with no teaching appointments were excluded from this study. Research assistants, teaching assistants, and instructors were not considered faculty in this study.

3.4.3 Gaining Access and Recruiting Study Participants

In recruiting participants for her groundbreaking study on successful teachers of African American students, Ladson-Billings (1994) used what she termed “community nomination” for selecting study participants. In her case, educators were not nominated by

their peers, instead, they were nominated by parents. I used a similar approach called a "two-level peer nomination." I found peer nomination more suitable for this study because peers frequently interact with one another over extended periods and in various settings. According to Rubin and Cohen (1986), individuals belonging to the same social group are often familiar with how their peers interact within the group. They can observe covert behaviors inaccessible to someone outside the social group (Rubin & Cohen, 1986). I, therefore, used a peer nomination method to identify faculty who are reputable for teaching inclusively and equitably. To allow for different viewpoints in the nomination process, I embarked on using two levels of nomination.

In the first level of nomination, I chose directors of undergraduate studies (DUSs) as first-level nominators. I chose DUSs as the first level nominators because they have the advantage of having students as a reference group and can judge faculty behavior based on this advantage. Before using DUSs as first-level nominators, I engaged two DUSs in an institution similar to my study site. I asked them if they could nominate faculty who are reputable for teaching inclusively and equitably. Both DUSs were able to nominate faculty, and they attributed their judgment to what they had heard from students about their nominees. I used academic department websites to identify DUSs in the four disciplines I selected. I reached out to the four DUSs and invited them to identify faculty members in their departments who are known, by reputation, for teaching inclusively and equitably. I achieved this by sending each of the DUSs an introduction letter (**see Appendix A**) that gives a high-level description of my study. The four DUSs identified at least four names in their respective departments. To give all nominees an equal chance to participate in my research, I scheduled an email invitation (**see Appendix B**) to go out to them

simultaneously. I then scheduled an interview date with the first nominee, who indicated a willingness to participate in my study. In my initial plan, I had hoped to ask DUSs for two names each, but the IRB review suggested that I open it up so that I do not refrain DUSs from including a potential participant. As a result, the number of nominees in the first nomination level varied from one department to another.

I used a snowball recruitment method in the second-level nomination. The Snowball sampling technique is when a researcher reaches other potential study participants through existing research subjects (Creswell, 2012). I asked the first nominee interviewed in each of the four departments to nominate other faculty members who are reputable for teaching inclusively and equitably. Because the number of nominees at the first level of nomination varied, I cross-checked the name of the second-level nominees with those in the first-level nominations to see whether there were overlaps. I contacted second-level nominees whose names overlapped with the first nomination level. For the departments where there was no overlap, I scheduled an email to go out at the same time to second-level nominees. I interviewed the first person to indicate the willingness to participate in my study. Once all nominees willing to participate in my research were identified, I sent them a consent letter through another email explaining my study in detail (**see Appendix C**). Overall, the resulting sample for this study included eight faculty members across four disciplines. According to Ary et al. (2017), "interviewing multiple individuals, typically purposive samples of 3 to 10, is the typical data-collection approach" (p. 410) in phenomenology. Figure 1 below shows the sampling frame I used in recruiting faculty who participated in this study. Table 1 highlights how faculty were nominated in

the first and second level of nominations. I interviewed the first faculty to respond to my request at each nomination level.

Figure 3-1. Sample Frame for Departments Selected

Table 3-1. Participant Selection

Department	**1st Level Nominees**	**1st Interview**	**2nd Level Nominees**	**2nd Interview**
Political Science	A	C	E	F
	B		F*	
	C*			
	D			
English	A	B	E	F
	B*		F*	
	C			
	D*			
	E			
Mechanical Engineering	A	B	A*	A
	B*		G	
	C		D	
	D		F	
	E			
History	A	F	B	E
	B		C	
	C		E*	
	D			
	E			
	F*			
	G			
	H			

Note. * Indicates the nominees who first communicated their willingness to participate in this study. The shaded boxes indicate the nominees whose names reoccurred at the second nomination level.

This study was approved to be implemented by my dissertation committee in the Spring of 2022. I sought and received IRB approval in July 2022 and then proceeded to generate data in August and September of the same year. I conducted this study towards the tail end of 2022, about two years since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. When I was generating data, I did not ask study participants to give their opinion on whether the COVID-19 pandemic influenced how they responded to my research interview question. At the time, students in the university where I conducted this study had returned to campus for in-class instruction for two semesters. I, however, acknowledge that COVID-19 pandemic may have influenced the data I generated.

3.5 Data Generation Process

Data are often generated through interviews in phenomenological research methods (Ary et al., 2017; Friesen et al., 2012). There are three primary forms of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured approaches (Creswell, 2012). I generated data using a semi-structured one-on-one interview process. Giorgi (1985) explains that the semi-structured interview process allows researchers the flexibility of covering study participants' naturalistic descriptions beyond focusing on interview questions only. Hora (2014) used a semi-structured interview protocol in his study exploring faculty beliefs about students' learning. Semi-structured interview protocol allows participants to "explore new ideas tangential to the questions posed to them" (Hora, 2014, p. 44), thus creating a foundation for an in-depth analysis of generated data. Study participants' description and lived experiences of the phenomenon investigated may be understood through attentive listening in a one-on-one interaction process (Husserl, 1970). Thus, my choice of one-on-one interview as a data generation strategy.

3.6 Interview Process and Protocol

All interviews were conducted on Zoom primarily because of COVID-19 distancing guidelines. At the time, I, as the researcher, due to health implications, was unable to meet with participants face-to-face. Interviews were scheduled to fit into participants' availabilities which required adjustments as the need arose. Prior to conducting each interview session, I familiarized myself with Zoom features that would enable me to have a seamless interview. I ensured I was in a quiet space to ensure that I maintained the privacy and confidentiality of study participants. I started each interview by first obtaining a verbal consent from participants to proceed in the interview and to be video recorded on Zoom. Each study participant consented to proceed and gave permission to be video recorded. I then asked demographic questions (Bieber & Worley, 2006), such as the number of classes study participants teach and their years of teaching. These preliminary questions served as icebreakers to engage study participants. After the ice-breaking questions, (Patton, 2002) encourages the researcher to first ask participants about their understanding of the phenomenon under study - in this case, IET. I developed a set of interview questions by adapting Ladson-Billings' (1994) interview protocol used in her research on successful teachers of African American students. I also added new interview questions guided by the leading research questions I sought to address in this study. I used probing comments and pauses to allow study participants to give detailed descriptions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The interview protocol (**see Appendix D**) included questions such as, "How will you describe your understanding of inclusive and equitable teaching?", "You were nominated for this study because of your reputation for teaching in an inclusive and equitable manner. In what ways do you think your teaching is inclusive and equitable?", "If at all, how have your background experiences shaped the way you teach?" The interview protocol was designed

to ensure that participants understood the question. Two of the study participants asked me to clarify one question each on the protocol before they gave their answers. All interviews were conducted online through Zoom and were video recorded.

3.6.1 Pilot Testing of Interview Protocol

I pilot-tested interview questions with two faculty members in a similar university as the site of this study. The first tester has taught Animal Science for five years, first at a Historically Black Colleges and Universities institution, and now teaches at a research-intensive public institution. The second tester is a DUS at the same institution as the first tester. This second tester is invested in research relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion within higher education. Both testers reviewed and provided comments on the interview protocol. Finally, my dissertation committee also reviewed the interview protocol and made suggestions for improvements.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

In phenomenology, researchers study human experiences about a phenomenon and illuminate the essence of the experiences (Embree, 1997). As in a typical qualitative study, I am the analytical tool (Creswell, 2013). I, however, approached the data analysis phase by avoiding my preconceptions as the only primary lens for describing and interpreting data but focused mainly on my study participant and IET in its appearance (Friesen et al., 2012).

Data analysis began during the interview phase through active listening and keeping reflexive notes (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Next, I listened to each interview recording to evaluate transcribed notes provided by Zoom. I corrected the wrong auto translations as I

went through the transcribed documents. Once that was done, I made copies of the transcribed notes to give me a chance to develop clusters of meaning.

I read and re-read transcribed notes to identify units of meaning and phrases relating to how faculty members experience IET using a process Ary et al. (2017) labeled as horizontalization. I achieved this by highlighting units of meaning that illuminated my research questions on each transcribed note line. I attached codes to the units of meaning identified during horizontalization and kept descriptive textual notes as I moved along with the analysis.

Thematic analysis was done by looking for common properties among the codes previously identified (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) concerning my research questions. I looked for themes across the codes. My analytical process also involved looking at within-case and cross-case codes to identify patterns (Huberman & Miles, 2002) peculiar to each discipline. It is important to mention here that there were instances in the data analysis process where I renamed and rearranged codes before categorization into themes.

Finally, I moved toward describing IET by making assertions on themes as they relate to my research questions. External conceptual frameworks also allowed me to deeply explore and discuss patterns in faculty members' IET experiences (Friesen et al., 2012; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003; Holloway, 1997). Interpretive phenomenology explains data analysis as not just describing the phenomenon of study but interpreting the data (Friesen et al., 2012). The data interpretation process involved telling the participants' accounts based on their experiences and using an external framework to analyze the data (Friesen et al., 2012).

3.8 Ethical consideration

I sought Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval immediately after my dissertation committee members approved my proposal. The IRB approval was obtained at the site of this study. To ensure voluntary participation, I sent out two letters to study participants: an introduction letter and a consent letter. The introduction letter intimated participants of their nomination as someone reputable for teaching inclusively and equitably. The consent letter highlighted the details of this study, what was required of participants, and participants' rights.

In considering ethical issues related to the interview process, I mentioned to participants at the beginning of the interview that the data generated would be used solely for the purpose of the study (Patton, 2002). I also adhered to the ethical conduct of keeping participants anonymous and their data de-identified. I ensured data confidentiality by deleting already transcribed audio-visual files. I embodied an ethic of care throughout my interaction process with participants. For instance, one of the participants unavoidably had a family member present during the interview. All participants in this study voluntarily indicated their willingness to participate and gave verbal consent at the beginning of the interview meeting.

3.8.1 Trustworthiness

In any type of qualitative research, trustworthiness refers to the credibility, transferability, and dependability of research processes and findings (Guba, 1981; Creswell, 2013). In quantitative research, trustworthiness is regarded as reliability and validity (Guba, 1981). Creswell (2013) highlighted some techniques for establishing trustworthiness, including but not limited to peer debriefing, member checking, making

research procedure and bias explicit, and a thick description of findings. The hermeneutic attribute of phenomenological research (Heidegger, 1962) emphasizes member checking, that is going back and forth with study participants to confirm their accounts of the phenomenon of study. During the interview session, I shared my preliminary understanding of what each participant said with them at intervals. In such instances, study participants confirmed my interpretation of what I heard or provided additional information to understand what I heard during our discussion accurately. To ensure transferability, I provided a detailed description of research procedures and choices made throughout this research process (Creswell, 2013).

In this chapter, I described the methods and approaches I used in answering the research questions that guided this study. I wrote about my position as a researcher and how I am connected to IET, the object of this study. I also outlined the procedures I used in generating and analyzing qualitative data. In chapter 4, I described the study participants and presented the study findings.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS

In this study, I explored faculty's general orientation toward inclusive and equitable teaching (IET) and illuminated how IET is being implemented in the college classroom. More specifically, I approached this study by interviewing faculty who their peers nominated to be inclusive and equitable in their teaching. I then answered the three main questions that guided this study by coding the units of the analysis found in the interview data and presenting them in themes. This chapter presents an overview of participants' characteristics and the findings of my interview sessions with the eight faculty who participated in this study. I present the data that address the three research questions that guided this study:

1. How do faculty with a reputation for inclusive and equitable teaching define inclusive and equitable teaching?
2. Why do these faculty perceive their teaching practices as inclusive and equitable?
3. What do these faculty perceive as factors that can encourage or discourage the use of equitable and inclusive teaching, and how do those factors exert an influence?

4.1 Description of Participants

The eight faculty members who participated in this study were all from the same university but from four different departments. I interviewed two faculty from each of the four departments. The university in which this study was conducted is a public land grant research institution, located in a big metropolitan city. All eight participants were interviewed with an average interview time of 40 minutes. Each participant shared their experiences, challenges, motivations, and philosophies in teaching their classes in an

inclusive and equitable manner and their accounts gave rise to the findings described in this chapter. Table 2 below highlights an overview of the participants' characteristics.

Table 4-1. Overview of Participants' Characteristics

Pseudonym	**Department**	**Gender**	**Years Teaching**	**Classes/ Semester**	**Position**
George	Mechanical Engineering	Male	3	Two	Associate Professor
Mike	History	Male	3	Two	Assistant Professor
Tom	Mechanical Engineering	Male	9	Three	Lecturer
Jodi	Political Science	Male	15	Two	Professor
Ashley	History	Female	13	Two	Associate Professor
Riley	Political Science	Male	24	Two	Associate Professor
Bran	English	Male	17	Two	Professor
Katlyn	English	Female	12	Two	Associate Professor

4.2 Research question 1: How do faculty with a reputation for inclusive and equitable teaching define inclusive and equitable teaching?

When I asked participants about their general orientation regarding IET, responses to this question were conceptualized in terms of faculty behavior, student demographic characteristics, and disciplinary contexts. While some of the participants were readily

approaching the interview question knowing how to frame their description of IET, others started with silent moments or phrases suggesting they had not consciously thought of it and how it could mean different things to different faculty. In his opening, Mike mentioned, "I'll say it often seems, uh, it's often a confusing term or set of terms, because no one seems to agree on what that means." As he continued, he shared that he had come up with his own definition to guide his IET practice, "So for me, I kind of craft my own definition. And so for me, I think it means being aware of the challenges that different students bring." Ashley highlighted her thoughts on how it was interesting to consciously reflect on the way one teaches inclusively and equitably and that this interview brought the opportunity to do so. She explained, "Let's see. Until I landed this position, I don't think I thought about this very consciously." Similarly, Katlyn also shared that this study's interview process allowed her "to be more deliberate and self-reflective" on her own practices.

Faculty described their general orientation by expressing what they believe IET is and sometimes delineated their conceptions using their disciplinary norms and their shifts over time. Faculty explained their conceptions by suggesting that their disciplines influence the way they understand and explain IET. Some faculty went as far as comparing their conceptions of IET in their disciplines with other disciplines to drive home their points. For instance, George started by saying, "umm, yeah, I think, you know…this is something that's quite challenging in Mechanical Engineering because we're probably one of the least diverse majors." Bran highlighted the shift from non-inclusive and non-equitable to IET in his discipline:

> There's been a significant change in what's called the literary canon or the literary tradition of the United States. Twenty-five years ago, it was not as inclusive, and

> so it was a literary tradition that was dominated by essentially white male authors, any of the so-called founding fathers of the United States who are all white and property owners. But over the course of 20 years, literary tradition has opened up, and there are writings by women, Native Americans, African Americans, and writers of Spanish descent who are in North America.

Bran continued by affirming that the kind of teaching that was done in his discipline 25 years ago is still in existence today, but not ideal for today's classroom. Referring to the literary tradition that was dominant in his discipline, he continued, "that's just not for me, that's just not my teaching practice; that's something that has defined the entire field of American literature and culture."

For Katlyn and Ashley, IET is about recognizing that students arrive in the classroom with differing expectations and a wide range of academic rigor and preparedness. For these reasons, Ashley and Katlyn explained that IET focuses on individualized student improvement in the classroom. Ashley explained that IET ensures that every student is "able to get something away from the class" regardless of their starting points. Similarly, Katlyn shared that IET is "meeting every student where they are and seeing an arc of improvement over the course of the semester." Faculty shared their general orientation and conceptualization of IET in explicit terms under the following three themes: inclusion of diverse voices in course materials, the inclusion of varying assessment strategies, and inclusion of diverse voices in class discussions.

4.2.1 Inclusion of Diverse Voices in Course Materials

Faculty reported the importance of recognizing and including diverse voices in course texts and materials as one of the characteristics of IET. Diverse voices in course materials were defined by faculty in terms of the gender, nationality, real life experience, and race of the authors of their course materials. Stating the implication of the significant change in his disciplinary canon on teaching in an inclusive and equitable manner, Bran highlighted, "there are [sic] just much more diversity content that you're giving to students. So, they are not just reading from one narrow group of people who happen to be dominant in that society." He went on to discuss the importance of including diverse voices in expanding learning beyond the traditional norms and how this process has evolved in his discipline. He stated, "what we now know and what historians have pointed out over the last 20 years is obviously women experience, for example, women experienced slavery in many different ways than men did and so when you choose to put a woman writer on your African American literature, syllabus, you're actually now being more inclusive." In the same manner, Jodi iterated the need to connect diverse voices with students' social backgrounds.

> We want students reading assignments that are from diverse people, like diverse literature or sources. So, you can't all be pure peer review journal articles. We want to get readings from the NGO and government communities. We want those diverse voices. When we are thinking about the peer review articles, we want those diverse voices. If you just go to the top journals, you're going to get a lot of Americans and some Europeans scattered in there, so you've got to be more diverse.

Jodi's orientation about IET supports the work of Shaw (2020) and Banks (1991) who argued that Eurocentric course materials can pose inequities in the classroom and thus explained the importance of a wide representation of course materials in the learning process. He shared how he introduced diverse voices in his civil war class:

> If I want to teach how natural resources influence the onset of civil wars, I mean the leading scholar there is a white man. I know him, and I drank beer with him, but you know, we also want to hear from somebody that actually lived in Sierra Leone and knows what war is like and what that climate looked like.

Also emphasizing the importance of a wide representation in course materials, Katlyn mentioned:

> I could put books by entirely white male canonical authors on my syllabus if I choose to do so, but I don't do that. I really try to think very carefully about representing different literary traditions, different experiences of authors, and the world they are creating. So, a diverse collection obviously from different races, different genders, and gender identities and experiences, maybe national backgrounds, including the works by immigrants who are within the larger American literary tradition.

4.2.2 Inclusion of Varying Assessment Strategies

Faculty reported how utilizing different assessment strategies contributes to teaching inclusively and equitably. When I asked Riley about his general orientation toward IET, he explained, "well, as a matter of good teaching, I don't grade students only in one way. You know, so I don't only have them fill in the bubble multiple choice tests."

Jodi similarly stressed the importance of not limiting students to one type of assessment even when factors like class size may be discouraging: “You can’t all be multiple choice questions, right? So my class is even a huge one, they are writing assignments where I guide the students through each.” Riley also mentioned that he explores different ways to evaluate students “through more participatory means, more creative means and one of the things I do that I think makes me a better college teacher than most is I have this diverse sort of methods of evaluation.” Juxtaposing his methods of assessing students’ work with traditional teaching styles, Riley went further:

> Now, you’ll recognize, though, that one of the reasons why conventional teaching fails students of some populations or the other is because the teachers are often only evaluating students one way. For some types of students, it’s good for them, and for other types of students, it’s bad for them.

Jodi similarly owned to the argument that students’ success is dependent on being able to discern assessment types that work for different students. He reported creating a varying avenue for students to demonstrate what they have learned using sectionalized essays. Mentioning an example from one of the classes he teaches, he said, “so there’s four parts: lit review, intro, lit review theory, and then research design, right? And that’s in my big intro class.”

For Ashley, IET includes assessing students’ learning as a negotiation that involves students as active participants in the process. She mentioned that assessment styles are sometimes favorable to some and unfavorable to others: “there are students who are here, every single day but don’t necessarily do very well in, you know, assignments and stuff like that. The attendance is what pulls their grade up. But for, you know, smart students

who miss a lot of classes, it pulls their grade down right." She explained that inequitable scenarios like this prompted her to introduce a new strategy she referred to as "ungrading." The ungrading strategy, which I later explain in this chapter, does not connect grades with attendance and students agreed with the option. Citing another example of how she had changed student assessment to be inclusive and equitable, Ashley illustrated:

> They do a final paper, a fake memoir. So, they take one moment from the history that they have learned and use all these historical documents. But they insert themselves into it and write a 10-page fake memoir…and we had a conversation about grading. We tried to talk about what grading could look like. We had a conversation.

While Ashley was engaged in a participatory process for identifying assessment strategies with her students, Jodi did not bring his students into the conversation but focused on the strategy he believed was suitable among the different assessment strategies available to him. For instance, Jodi shared that he "always prefers essay questions" in assessing students' knowledge and that he meets "with students about what they wrote" and explains what they need to fix in their essays. He further shared that he does not like multiple-choice questions or group work. He shared, "I don't like multiple-choice questions." He went on to explain his dislike for group work saying, "I'm not a huge fan of group work. The normal complaint on group work is that you get some jackass white man that takes things over and makes people feel small."

In the case of Riley, being able to do things differently from the traditional assessment methods was an essential element of IET which is integral to disadvantaged and underrepresented students' academic success. He said, "one of the things I do that

makes me a better college teacher than most faculty is that I have this diverse sort of methods of evaluation… by having these various ways students can succeed." Explaining the importance of adopting different assessment strategies, he mentioned that he is able to "catch the hard work or the talents and abilities of different groups of students, and so it's an indirect way to promote diversity." For Riley, having one form of assessment conforms to the traditional instruction norm, where students are expected to conform to normative standards. Instead of teaching students the importance of literacy for their lives, the main goal of such traditional style of instruction is to teach them how to comply with class materials so that their responses will be accurate (Powell & Rightmyer, 2011). Assessing students' work in such traditional style of instruction then follows the objective pattern that frowns at their inaccuracy in digesting and reproducing course materials. Hence, what is taught, how it is taught, and how learning is assessed become more incongruent with some students than others. Riley shared that the conventional style of teaching that evaluates students one way, "fails students of some population" and prevents them from academic success. Riley's ability to use different evaluation methods allowed him to recognize students with abilities that could have gone unnoticed.

4.2.3 Inclusion of Diverse Voices in Classroom Discussion

Another salient point of IET made by faculty was the need to engage all students in classroom discussions, a practice that Bran and Riley referred to as a "student-centered classroom" and "a clientele-oriented approach," respectively. Bran mentioned the necessity to include students in classroom conversations, distinguishing between a student-centered and a teacher-centered classroom, saying, "I have to get as many people involved in the conversation as possible, and so I think a student-centered classroom is very different

than a teacher-centered classroom." Bran believed one way to ensure "a positive learning experience for students" is to get them involved in conversations because he does not "believe that the professor is the source of knowledge about the subject." Riley defined a clientele-oriented approach as "teaching with a mind toward diversity and inclusivity" and that it "involves actively designing things that will bring in disadvantaged or underrepresented groups." Speaking further about some possibilities of including students who might be quiet in the classroom, he shared:

> Some students just don't feel comfortable talking in class, and they don't get the benefits of participation. They may do it so they don't get a bad grade, but they hate it. And so, the hope is to have this other method of interacting with their peers, not just the two or three they know or sit by, but their peers who are going through the learning experience more generally. I'm hoping this [other methods of interaction] will bring in the ones who are shy, who aren't as comfortable talking on the spot because they like to plan their thoughts a little more than a classroom lets them do: they like to control their language, or they take a little longer to formulate their thoughts.

In his observation of students who are often the first to raise their hands in the classroom, Jodi commented that the students are usually "the white men in the back of the room." While Jodi explained that he is used to the men at the back of the room speaking up first in the classroom, he described his response to such contributions as, "whatever, that's fine! It's not going to bug me." With his eyes wide open like a surprised look, he continued:

> The first time that a woman raises her hand to speak up, I am not going to go over the top, but I am going to make a deal out of that and express that it is okay, that it is a really smart comment, and I expand on that comment and spend a few minutes on it. I then make sure the next time somebody speaks, I am like, yeah, that sounds a whole lot like what Emily just said.

As evidenced in study participants' quotes, the inclusion of diverse voices in the classroom was defined by faculty as making an intentional effort to encourage students who otherwise may be silent in the classroom to speak. In the case of Mike, he makes the extra effort to get minority students involved in classroom discussions by striking up a conversation with them. Mike commented, "I will go to the students of color who never talk right and say, how are you doing? Do you have a question? Is this working, okay? What can I help with? So, I think just those little things really matter and students seem to respond to that." Similar to Mike's strategy, Tom mentioned following what research says in grouping students for class discussions. He said:

> Research has shown that students, especially minorities, feel more comfortable or more supported if they are not isolated. So, for example, if you have a group of three, it's good to have two black students together rather than just a single black student…I usually pay attention to students who I consider to be maybe weak, minority, or students who will need support in any way. So, I usually pay attention to those students during class discussions and make sure that I detect anything that would indicate you know maybe they are not participating.

Explaining why he encourages contributions from different students, George explained that he gets to know his students and by doing so, he incorporates his knowledge of their

backgrounds into class discussions. Not only does this strategy help minority students to speak in class but "I think having a diverse group of students makes for a much more interesting discussion, because if everybody has the same experiences, we're all going to be talking about the same thing, and that's not very exciting," he said. George, however, mentioned that it was challenging to ensure that all voices were accommodated, and that one group was not favored over another. He suggested that faculty should be thoughtful about whose voice is heard and whose comment is followed up on in the classroom.

4.3 Research Question 2: Why do these faculty perceive their teaching practices as inclusive and equitable?

On several occasions, faculty in this study characterized their teaching as inclusive and equitable because of their caring attitude. According to Gay (2018), students are more likely to be engaged in the classroom when taught by faculty who exhibit a caring attitude. Faculty perceived caring attitudes as a characteristic of IET. In answering my second research question, I share the themes that reflected how faculty conceptualized a caring attitude. These themes reflected how faculty reported the reasons they tagged their teaching as inclusive and equitable. Faculty further described their conceptualization of a caring attitude as connecting with students and accommodating students' unique needs.

4.3.1 Embodying the Act of Care: Making Connections

At the heart of IET experiences shared by faculty is the practice of caring by connecting with students academically, socially, and emotionally. Faculty defined caring as creating an environment where students feel comfortable and safe, listening to the needs of students, and being responsive in class. Sharing his opinion on a caring attitude, Jodi said it is about making connections and "making sure students know I care and I'm never

going to embarrass a student." He explained that faculty who "genuinely" desire to connect with their students would actively seek ways to learn about IET by reading journal articles about the topic. Katlyn expressed that she is "always thinking about how to create a safe space in the classroom, especially for the most marginalized members" of the university community. She cited this example of how she cares by creating a safe and inclusive space:

> I'm teaching a class right now, a 400-level literature class for English majors…we're beginning with *The Great Gatsby* today. We've done some other reading prior to this. Most of them, like ninety-nine percent of them, have read this in high school. It's something that's frequently taught in high school literature curriculum, and it would be really easy to ignore the racial subtext of this novel. I would be willing to bet that they have not discussed this in their high school classrooms. To ignore that would not only be irresponsible, but it would also do damage. Some of the students in the classroom are accustomed to having these issues just glossed over and not confronted and discussed. So, that's an example of what I am talking about when I am saying I am trying to do all these things to create a safe and inclusive space.

For other faculty, it is about making minority students feel a sense of belonging in spaces where they feel otherwise. Riley shared an example from his previous teaching experience as evidence of how a caring attitude led to a positive experience for a minority student in one of his courses:

> One of my favorite teaching evaluations I have ever received, and I know who wrote it because I knew her handwriting. She was an African American woman from Chicago. I knew she had grown up in an area that was neither heavily, like

> overwhelmingly, white nor overwhelmingly black, but kind of close. She had come to Harvard, and it wasn't comfortable. It wasn't a comfortable environment for her any more than it was for me… she wrote on my teaching evaluation in all capital letters, very large letters, 'VERY UN HARVARD LIKE and I mean that as a compliment'.

Riley explained that the elite way of teaching in an "ivory tower city on a hill" is the type that does not cater to the need of minority students. A caring faculty knows that there is a lot of diversity within any social group, including the classroom. The awareness then influences a caring faculty's teaching to be shaped by "the unnaturalness of an elite ivory tower city on a hill," said Riley.

Faculty's description of why they feel their teaching is inclusive and equitable described how they connected to their students by evaluating the power dynamics in the classroom. For instance, Ashley alluded that faculty can decide how they would grade students' work. She wanted to involve students in the grading process by introducing an "ungrading" assessment technique that involves students submitting "what they think they deserve [for a grade] in the class and make an argument for it." In classes where Ashley had tried the technique, she noticed that students were very honest about what they deserved. Sharing how useful the experience was for her, Ashley continued:

> You know some of them said, 'I deserve an A because x, y, and z' and I feel like they did. [Others said,] 'You know, I think I'm a C in this class because of these issues,' or 'I think I'm a B because I learned these, but I think I could have done better in this area, or I feel like I didn't quite get this part'.

Ashley attributed the success of her technique to the contract negotiation conversation she had with the students at the beginning of the semester, which made the students feel like they had a voice. She further shared that her technique gave students "agency which also means that it also gives them responsibility." She believed students had agency in how they were assessed because it was "something that they agreed to do on their own. It was not like, 'Oh my gosh! I have to do this because the professor told me to do so.'"

Another close look at a caring attitude raised by one of the faculty in this study relates to how information is delivered in the classroom. Riley built his lesson out of a narrative by catering to the needs of some students from a more storytelling culture, as referenced in his interview. Riley recalled his experience using argumentative storytelling to teach in one of his classes:

> Now, I won't necessarily be arguing. Sometimes I argue with myself. Some students respond well to the contrast that an argument brings out, and that's how they understand the stakes. So, I did, for example, the Israel-Palestine conflict one time, and I literally argued with myself. I stood on one side of the desk, and I gave what was an informative but very pro-Israeli interpretation of what has been a long time one of the conflicts, and then I ran over to the other side of the desk, and I said 'He lied.' And then, I gave a sort of Palestinian perspective rebuttal of what I just said. I moved back and forth from one side of the desk to the other, arguing with myself.

In the end, his use of this technique allowed two students, one from an Arab American family and the other from Israel, to thank him for how they were able to connect with the lesson. Riley referred to this incident as "one of the greatest teaching successes" he had.

4.3.2 Embodying the Act of Care: Making Accommodations

Most of the faculty perceived their teaching as inclusive and equitable because they accommodated students' challenges as they pursued their academic goals. It was not surprising that faculty reported granting accommodations to students. Faculty's justification for giving these accommodations was rooted in their understanding and willingness to empathize with students leading diverse lives and who, at the same time, were committed to their academics. Expressly, faculty referred to this group of non-traditional students as those who are a minority, first generation, international, and older than traditional college students. Take, for example, the following reports of Tom and Mike empathizing with these groups of students:

> We usually have about twenty percent of students in the class who are first-generation, several years older than the others, or are minorities or students who have transferred from other universities in the state… Non-traditional students have different life commitments that make them a bit more vulnerable. They are not like the rest of the group…I try to do my best to make sure that whatever I am offering is helpful for all of them. (Tom)

> I think sometimes we forget about the day-to-day stuff, like being flexible with deadlines, for example, when students have disabilities or work two jobs to help their parents pay the rent. They will not have much time to finish assignments, so I tell students to let me know what's going on in their lives as much as possible so I can be flexible with class requirements. (Mike)

Riley also shared similar thoughts about non-traditional students by sharing that he often reaches out to groups of students who do not respond well to his course. He shared that he does "not view students as a burden and their varying needs as increasing the burden" of teaching. He again characterized these students as "a group we normally would not think about when we worry about diversity or inclusivity."

Bran realized that some students are often uncomfortable engaging in classroom discussions. In his quest to include diverse voices in classroom discussion, he shared that he has two tactics he uses all the time, i.e., free writing and small group sharing. He does not approach the beginning of the semester ensuring every voice is heard in the discussion. Because "people come from different places, there's different age in the classroom, there are different backgrounds, and so many different experiences," he allows students "to learn how to get comfortable with each other" by starting with free writing. He explained that free writing is a common concept in writing classrooms. He continued:

> I give them a prop. So, for example, let's say we are reading a particular poem, and there's a symbol of a house, and I say, 'Okay, you know this house can mean any number of different things, what does it mean to you? When you start the act of free writing, the principle is that you are supposed to write quickly. You are not supposed to stop. You're not supposed to edit yourself.' I tell them to keep their pen moving. 'If you get stuck, you just write, "I'm stuck! I'm stuck!! You want to write quickly without thinking because it's our conscious mind that inhibits our writing and our thinking.' So that's what I mean by free writing. It helps in terms of making people feel more comfortable getting into a discussion in class.

Bran does not stop there. Rather, he builds the conversation in the classroom by encouraging students to share what they have written in groups. He tells the class to "turn to a partner, share what you have and then the extra step, join together with two more, that's a group of four talking to each other. It does help them feel comfortable talking in class."

Ashley shared that she experiments with different techniques each semester to meet the diverse needs of students. For instance, she shared that some students attend her history class but do not necessarily do very well in assignments. For such students, attendance pulls their grades up, but for intelligent students who miss lots of classes, attendance pulls their grades down. For this reason, Ashley introduced the fake memoir technique she learned from a junior colleague. She explained that the fake memoir involves taking "one moment from the history that they have learned" and using "historical documents" relating to the historical moment of their choice to write a fake memoir. The assignment is a fake memoir because students are expected to insert themselves into the historical moment of their own choosing and write as if they are themselves a part of the history.

As I read more about fake memoirs, I discovered that it is a technique that writers use to create another identity for themselves to write about topics they would not have been able to with their real identities. Hemley (2011) reviewed a fake memoir and mentioned that the author of the work "claimed that no one would have wanted to read her stories if they knew who she really was" (p. 120). One crucial point about the fake memoir technique to draw from is that fake memoirs "are saying something about life that is authentic; it's the form that's deceptive" (p. 124). In negotiating a final assignment contract with her

students, Ashley allowed them to write about what they had learned in her history class but in a deceptive way.

A noteworthy discrepant case under this theme was George's experience with a non-traditional student in his class just at the onset of COVID-19. Alluding to the importance of accommodating students with different needs, George shared his regret in not giving the support he would have loved to give to the student as he tried to balance his teaching responsibilities with a caring attitude. George's experience raises the question of how much faculty can display a caring attitude without compromising their teaching responsibilities. He reported that a student at the top of his class had to "take on other responsibilities beyond what an average student took on" at the onset of COVID-19. Because the student he referenced did not grow up in the school area, he could not "move back with his parents, and so he struggled logistically with how to attend class and ultimately didn't pass even though he was a solid student." Reflecting on this experience, George felt he could not help the student because he did not know all about the student's challenges. He continued to share:

> That was one instance where I felt like I did not know his entire back story. I knew bits and pieces about his heritage and his personal situation, and I knew that he was coming from a very different place than my average students. He faced challenges that other students did not, and I felt terrible failing him in class.

Although faculty in this study regarded embodying the act of care as IET, I found that a focal point under this theme is that a caring attitude is built on a deep understanding of who students are and the challenges they face. When faculty do not have this understanding, it might be challenging to exhibit a caring attitude. George's lasting thought on his

experience with the student in his class confirms the importance of understanding who students are:

> I feel, in a way, I failed him, and maybe some of that failure was a lack of understanding of where he was coming from, and that's one thing I think about all the time. I think a student's background being so different from mine really hurts them.

George did not only connect his inadequate knowledge of the student's experiences as a failure on his part, but he raised it as a dimension of care that faculty must be aware of. He suggested that a mismatch in students' and faculty backgrounds may hinder the act of care.

4.4 Research Question 3: What do these faculty perceive as factors that can encourage or discourage the use of inclusive and equitable teaching, and how do those factors exert an influence?

Faculty discussed factors that affect IET implementation in higher education in negative tones. Factors that negatively affect IET use include the influence of political situations in the broader society, the pervasive threat of large classrooms, and other organizational factors such as faculty reward systems and teaching resources. Some faculty focused more on the importance of incentivizing IET. Faculty also detailed the influence of unearned privilege as it relates to faculty identity as one of the factors that can affect the use of IET.

4.4.1 Influence of Contemporary Societal Issues on IET

Faculty cited how contemporary societal issues, such as changes in the political climate, could affect their use of IET in higher education. When sharing their experiences, faculty referred to three notable social justice incidences in the broader society that drew

the attention of the public: the critical race theory controversies, the Atlanta Spa shooting of Asian women in the year 2021, and more recently, the Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, ending federal abortion rights in the year 2022. Faculty drew from these incidences and reflected on their influences on teaching inclusively and equitably in higher education.

Ashley explained that broader societal issues could potentially pose difficulty in using IET. She juxtaposed how issues in contemporary society can either serve as a teaching resource for her especially in classes that are self-selected or, on the other hand, make IET difficult in classes that students need to take as a core requirement. She said, "you know, the society is becoming so divisive right now in United States, and I wonder if that is going to affect conversations in the classroom." Reflecting on the overturn of Roe v. Wade, she further explained:

> Something that's been on my mind for the last month or so is the Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe versus Wade…What would this do? Would there be maybe less female students? Would there be less open-minded students? I mean, if I were 18, and if I had a choice, I would not want to live in a state where elected representatives are taking away many rights from many people, and so I've been wondering how that might change the kind of students that we would start to see in the classroom.

As Ashley continued to reflect on her teaching by narrating her experience in her Asian American History class, she explained that the students in this class were those interested in the course and thus chose to be there. She relayed how a contemporary societal incident added contextual meanings to her class: "The Atlanta Spa shootings helped them during

the class, and so I brought it up." Using the incident as a teaching moment, she asked her students to "pause and think about sort of the gendered violence and gender-based discriminations that Asian women have experienced in the United States." Ashley mentioned how she loves to connect history to the present when she teaches. She said:

> I want everything to be connected to the present because the way I think about history is like, why are things this way now? Let's go back to the past to figure out why and that's the way I try to teach my classes, which means that everything is always connected to the present. This [i.e., the past] may rub people in the wrong way depending on where they are coming from, and I'm increasingly worried about that because of the current political situation.

Mike, who felt that IET is about making the classroom equitable, welcoming diversity, and protecting the most marginalized students, shared that implementing IET is "becoming, I think, increasingly difficult because of the backlash to equity and diversity efforts." Speaking on his fear, he relayed how dangerous it can be to implement IET due to political influences:

> A lot of backlashes from increasingly, you know, right-wing and reactionary forces. Any effort to do that now is seen as, quote and unquote, "woke," as hostile to White students, and as hostile to predominantly male spaces. So, my fear is that we now have the tools, and we have the knowledge to implement a lot of these efforts, but then it's becoming politically dangerous. It's making us targets; it's making instructors targets.

George shared that he is concerned about having certain discussions in class because of the controversies surrounding critical race theory. Like Mike and Ashley, George believed that the current political environment is gradually challenging the way faculty practice IET, "you know there's been pushback from certain groups about critical race theory and all sorts of panic-inducing things that for whatever reason, anytime we try to have a discussion about race or gender or sexual identity, people get accused of grooming." Mike and Ashley, both faculty in the History department, shared similar thoughts on how political climate can potentially affect their use of IET.

Jodi believed it is increasingly hard to balance teaching in a way that ignores contemporary societal issues in the US and globally. He stressed that navigating specific topics that correlate with students' identities is difficult. Using the case of gender equality and national terrorism as examples, he shared, "so obviously I'm not going to say all Muslims hate women, but I will say there are Muslim-dominated countries where women are very unequal." He further shared that international terrorism is almost going to be discussed in connection to Islam. He explained, "…international terrorism is going to be fundamentalist Islamic militants, so how do we talk about national terrorism in a way that tries to also respect some religion?"

Even though the faculty interviewed were enthusiastic about teaching inclusively and equitably, they experienced challenges that now make them rethink their teaching approaches. In the case of Riley, the challenge he faced stopped him from teaching one of his favorite classes. His main concern was how to continue to teach a race, ethnicity, and politics course as a White male. Before he stopped teaching the class, he often used humor and out-of-touch phrases (e.g., referring to the hubcaps on a car as rims) to engage his

diverse classroom audience. He reported that he had comfortable interaction with his students at the time. Sharing his thoughts in an emotional and vulnerable moment, he said:

> I'll be honest with you; I don't want to teach that course anymore. I haven't taught it in years, and I don't think I'd feel comfortable teaching it anymore because the environment is so much more poisonous when it comes to that sort of topic, so, unfortunately, I've dealt with the challenges. I've become more cowardly. I no longer would feel comfortable teaching that course, given my demographic.

Another concern raised by Riley focused on how it is becoming increasingly difficult to find neutral languages that everybody is comfortable with in the classroom. The difficulty is due to the politics of language induced by society, which feels like a "minefield" to faculty. In sharing his experiences, Riley noted that the politics of language had given rise to the disruptive student who can be combative in class: "Usually they are kind of from the Trump wing, but not always. There have been a few cases of radical students on the left who were equally disruptive in their classroom." He further attributed the rise in the number of combative students to the broader society: "I know that the number of those problematic students has increased because of the combative nature of the society, and we have to spend more time learning how to deal with the disruptive students."

4.4.2 Influence of Institutional Factors on IET Implementation

While implementing IET in higher education classrooms might be attractive to the faculty in this study, there are institutional challenges beyond their control that, if resolved, could further strengthen IET use. The themes I found around such challenges were related to faculty rewards/incentives, teaching resources, and the business model of higher

education that leads to large classroom sizes. As faculty in this study shared their experiences, they were inclined to advocate for resources necessary for them to make their contribution to meeting the diversity and inclusion goals of their institution.

4.4.2.1 Faculty rewards/incentive, and teaching resources

In my exploration of factors that negatively affect faculty's use of IET, I found that faculty expect university administration to connect rewards to teaching now more than ever. With their perception that IET is part of the broad diversity mission of most universities, faculty were worried that IET, just like other diversity initiatives without a reward system attached to it, might discourage faculty from implementation. Riley shared that university administration should start sending a top-down message that success at "this sort of thing," referring to IET, brings reward. Jodi was more concerned about faculty who have taught the same way for years. He mentioned that such faculty may not be interested in changing the ways they teach unless their effort is rewarded: "getting faculty to do anything different than they were doing 20 years ago is very hard, so it's got to be incentivized."

Tom noted that "there is no incentive on the part of the university for a faculty to spend time on developing their teaching skills through professional development." Tom, who had taught part-time and spent some years in the industry before entering academia, gave an example of how faculty may not see the need to learn more about IET through professional development opportunities.

> I am not sure of other colleges, but professional development is only worth one percent of the overall evaluation points in our college. So, one percent basically

> means nothing. If you don't do anything under that side, nothing is going to happen. One percent means nothing, … if it's for 10%, then it would affect my overall rating.

Speaking further on why he uses IET, Tom's disappointment with the lack of incentives was evidenced in a long pause. He noted, "I'm really enthusiastic about these issues; otherwise, there's not much incentive for me to do that." For this reason, some faculty will expect to see a matching reward structure with IET that signifies an institutional commitment to teaching inclusively and equitably. In a similar comment, Jodi said:

> The biggest thing is matching the reward structure to good teaching. Professors are dinosaurs. We don't like to change...until the reward structure incentivizes people to care, I think it's going to be harder to get people to change. So, there is a natural resistance in Academia to move slowly, if at all; there is a whole bunch of people who don't believe in any of this. They will not do it unless you incentivize them through their next raise or promotion."

Faculty, who, unlike Tom, are not intrinsically motivated might need to be extrinsically motivated to use IET; otherwise, they will not change their current teaching practices.

Mike's experience highlights the need for professional development opportunities and financial resources for faculty to implement IET. Sharing his experience, Mike said with excitement in his tone:

> I'm going to be part of a program this Fall and Spring through the [teaching resource center], and they are providing some funding and technology, like giving

> me an iPad. We are going to have a conversation on how best to approach teaching in an equitable manner…I wish there were more of that.

Speaking on how universities have included IET as a key component in their diversity strategic plans, Jodi explained that universities do not "attach raises and promotions to teaching inclusively." In another comment, Jodi expressed that professional development resources are available to faculty to learn and practice IET, "So, today, I can go to a Zoom workshop once a week for the rest of my life if I want to learn how to be better and inclusive in teaching. Five, ten years ago, those things did not exist." Mike and Jodi alluded to the importance of making professional development opportunities available to faculty to learn about IET. These faculty improved their IET practices and continue to do so by recognizing the opportunities that can sharpen their practices.

Faculty reported that professional development opportunities would help develop the skills needed for IET use. However, the time dedicated to professional development opportunities needs to be incentivized, says Tom. One discrepant case was Riley, who questioned the effectiveness of professional development. He believed that professional development would only take away the time faculty should spend preparing teaching materials, resulting in resistant and reluctant faculty. Riley continued to share what goes through his mind before a professional development workshop:

> The people who usually give that training… are they going to be very good at it, or are they going to be very motivated at it? I haven't had a real good track record with watching the delivery of those sort of things. So, I am really suspicious of these direct attempts to train faculty to deal with diversity and inclusion.

Faculty also shared that inadequate resources, such as infrastructure and student support services, can be a limitation to engaging in IET. Bran noted that not only were institutions not providing enough to encourage faculty into using IET but that the resources available are inequitably distributed across colleges within the same campus. Comparing his college and another, Bran said, "it is our college that students learn some of those foundational skills of living in a diverse and inclusive society." He further continued with an emotional tone in his voice:

> It's like that's happening in our college, but since I've been here, our college has often been the poor kid on the block, always in dire need of resources. The university is such a large and profitable institution, and it seems that its profitable centers are elsewhere. Its profitable centers are the college of business, the medical school, and the law school. It's not English, philosophy, history, and geography. So, we're constantly fighting for relevance, and our academic values are not widely shared by a university that privileges entertainment and recreation.

Bran's experiences with institutional barriers to IET use suggest that some disciplines, such as English and philosophy, which he believed are at the forefront of promoting change in their classrooms and challenging students to be aware of their pluralistic society, are not recognized. He continued to share that he is concerned about the lack of investment by universities in such disciplines and believed it would eventually lead to students not becoming critically conscious of the pluralistic nature of society.

The inadequate support services for students who are non-native English speakers were raised as a concern in this study. Riley expressed that the business model of the operation of universities has influenced the influx of international students, who are

considered a "cash cow." He said that he has observed how universities continue to increase this type of diversity but not necessarily "doing the hard work needed to serve the diverse students." This negligence on the part of the university makes it hard for faculty to implement practices such as IET. He went on to cite an example of how this negligence has affected his teaching:

> If I'm grading English language papers and somebody doesn't know much English, that directly affects the education and they [referring to the university] did nothing to help us…So, for example, I've taught an intro American government class to students that were mostly international students, but how I'm going to approach teaching intro American government to people who grew up in Albania is not at all how I ought to approach teaching intro American government to people who grew in the United States. They [referring to the university] did nothing to connect students, based on their background, with the best way for them to be taught or to give teachers the resources to be able to teach well.

With a tone of disappointment, Riley concluded my interview session with him wishing he had the resources to meet the increasingly different academic needs of non-English speaking international students. He concluded, "I don't have a solution for this, but the last thing I wanted to tell you is, I think the university has pumped up its diversity numbers, pumped up its international students because they're a cash cow."

4.4.2.2 Time is not enough

Even though the faculty in this study were reputable for teaching inclusively and equitably, most shared that they wished they had more time to implement IET during their

interviews. Most faculty expressed that teaching inclusively and equitably takes time due to conflicting research and service demands. Ashley mentioned in her interview, “we all need to engage in not just teaching, but our own research and service.” Similarly, Katlyn said that it takes time to learn how to teach inclusively since she had no training in teaching at all. She shared:

We didn’t get any training. We were thrown into the classroom and just started figuring it out. We didn’t get any theory or research on best practices, and that has continued to this very day. If we can, we read up as well as we can while also maintaining our own area of research or attending a workshop here and there as we can, on top of all these other responsibilities, and there’s never enough time. My background has shaped my practices of inclusivity.

Tom also believed that embracing IET takes extra skills that faculty will need to learn. He, however, mentioned that “for faculty to learn new things is usually a challenge.” He stressed that some faculty will not want to learn new things because they feel they “don’t have time to spend or don’t feel the need to spend extra time.” For faculty in this study, the burden of time pushed them to go out of their way to create the extra time needed to teach inclusively and equitably. Riley shared that he had to ensure his classes were inclusive, and to do so, he had to take time to communicate his approaches to students in his classroom. He shared, “I’m forced to carve out more time to address language issues to ensure students understand why I am approaching things the way I am, so they don’t feel excluded.”

On the other hand, Mike shared that time is not a barrier for him when implementing IET. He felt his “department and college do a really good job of providing the time and

space" needed to embrace IET. He attributed the time he had to his teaching load. He shared, "time is not a huge factor for me when compared especially to some of the teaching loads elsewhere; this is fairly reasonable." Faculty in this study chose to teach inclusively and equitably, barring the consequence of spending the extra time needed to sharpen their IET skills.

4.4.2.3 The business model of higher education

Another factor that faculty perceived to exert a negative influence on their use of IET revolves around large classroom sizes, especially in the lower-level, undergraduate classes. When asked to share his experience, Bran explained that universities are not helping faculty to adopt IET because of their increased focus on fiscal prudence: "the university is being organized by fiscal prudence. It makes more financial sense to put a lot of students in front of one professor…and that's the main obstacle" to implementing IET. He further relayed those budgetary decisions made by universities are constantly making small classrooms obsolete, and most college students do not get a student-centered experience until they are seniors. Bran argued, "small classrooms are essential at every step in the way," and "when I'm asked to deliver a lecture for a course that meets twice a week and there are 150 people, I don't see that as a positive learning experience for the students." Riley, who thought similarly, shared that classroom size matters in using IET and often decides whether a faculty uses a one size fits all approach. He reported being unable to use IET in a way he would have loved. Speaking from his experience teaching a large classroom, he said:

So, there are students who say they don't like lectures. But one reason they don't like lectures or professor presentations is because they are usually boring, badly organized,

and badly expressed. I think I am disadvantaged with a large classroom where there are 200 people in there; it has to be only one way.

George similarly described that as much as he wants to make sure "that everybody has an equal voice, everybody feels heard," he often had to approach graduate and undergraduate classes differently due to classroom size. He noted, "the undergraduate courses are 100 people in a big lecture hall while the graduate student classes are usually 10 people in more of a discussion setting and so I think the way I approach it [i.e., IET] in those two settings is quite different." Speaking on how it is challenging to implement IET in a large classroom, George shared:

With the 100-student classroom, it's really difficult to get to know each student. I try to get to know as many students as I can, but it's often limited to the students that come to my office hours such that if they come to the office hours, I can interact with them one-on-one and I get to know them. But you know, in a class of 100 people, it's kind of impersonal, and it's mostly me standing upfront talking. So, it's difficult to tell if my lecture is calibrated in a way that's maybe fair to one group or another.

Also discussing how a large class can be challenging to implement IET, Tom shared that he "divides a large class into groups at the beginning of the semester, and this partitioning is based on diversity." He further shared that he makes "sure that students within the groups are non-homogenous." While Bran and George brought to light how large classroom sizes negatively affect the use of IET, Jodi attempted to convey that IET is doable in a large class. He shared that he still implements IET through his assessment strategies: "even though my class is a huge one it can't all be a multiple-choice question."

4.4.3 Influence of Faculty Sociocultural and Background Experiences on IET

In my exploration of faculty's perceptions of factors that influence IET use in higher education, I found that faculty referenced how their sociocultural backgrounds in one form or another influenced their use of IET or posed a challenge. Some faculty were concerned that their identities were beneficial to some students and others shared that they worried about students who might be disadvantaged because of the influence of faculty identities on how they teach. Overall, faculty's expressions of their identities' influences span across race, immigration status, prior teaching experiences, nationality, socioeconomic status, location, and gender.

4.4.3.1 Sociocultural backgrounds of non-native faculty and IET

Immigrant faculty shared similar experiences on factors that influenced their use of IET. Reflecting on how her sociocultural background influenced her use of IET, Ashley grew up as a child who had to navigate living in her home country and the United States. She expressed how difficult it was for her "coming to the United States as a child" and to move back and forth at some point in her life. She expressed that her experiences in adulthood were characterized by a constant reminder of how she felt like an outsider. While explaining her difficulty navigating spaces where she felt she did not belong, she expressed, "I do feel like I've been an outsider in many ways, in various stages of my life." One instance was during her K-12 education, "I was enrolled in the Catholic school -- all White -- filled with a hundred percent of students who have lived their entire lives in their own community." Another instance was as a college student when she tried to fit into her academic department:

You know, trying to fit into the art history department with my interests and becoming a historian with no training in history, there have been many opportunities or occasions where I felt like I did not fit in. Trying to navigate spaces in which I often felt like I didn't quite fit in helps me think about where the students might be coming from.

Mike and Ashley's experiences are similar in how their identities as immigrants influenced their teaching inclusively and equitably. Mike also moved to the United States as a child with his family. He firmly believes that students experience the classroom differently, especially marginalized students, and that faculty need to be aware of the challenges faced by these students. Drawing from his experiences as an immigrant student, he stated:

My own experience has definitely shaped the way that I teach. I was undocumented myself for many years. I came from a working-class family, and my parents were migrant farmworkers. I was undocumented since I was a child who moved to the US until the age of 19, so I get how difficult it is. I was not really on track to even go to college, let alone teach in college.

Tom, who reported a similar experience, said he was once an international student in the United States. He also shared that being from a different country has made him more aware of the impact of international students' culture on their classroom experiences. As a result, he brings this awareness to his teaching as evidenced in this statement: "myself being from a different country; obviously, I have been more open-minded and receptive of the different cultures and the impact on education." Speaking further, he said, "that by itself has helped me to be more sympathetic towards the needs of students."

4.4.3.2 Sociocultural background of native-born faculty and IET

Faculty who are native-born in the United States were also self-conscious of their own identities and their impacts on how they teach. George recognized that his identity as a white male from Kentucky had influenced his teaching so much that he feels many examples he cites in his teaching emanated from Kentucky, where he was born and has lived for years. He, however, recognized that those teaching examples might not make a lot of sense to students who have not had his type of exposure as a Kentuckian. He noted that students' non-familiarity and cultural incongruence with faculty's social identity and its accompanying experiences challenged him to be more aware of IET. He said:

I'm not a very diverse person. I'm from Kentucky; I'm a white guy. I don't have the diversity of background that a lot of my students do, and that's challenging…And in some ways, I think people from certain backgrounds have an inherent advantage because they have a collection of experiences that may be more relevant to what we're talking about.

Like George, Riley also referenced that the city where he was born had something to do with his approach to teaching in an inclusive and equitable manner. He said that "diversity is the spice of life" and that he was from New Orleans, a place where people celebrate "diversity in lots of different forms." As he pondered on the different forms of diversity he had witnessed in the classroom, he made emphasis on the poverty dimension of diversity. With a pause in his voice, he continued calling out his background identity: "You know, I come from a fairly poor, not poor by international standards, but lower status by American standards." He said his city has helped him with traditional diversity and

inclusion issues and changed his mindset such that he is "not viewing students as a burden." Speaking further on how his city shaped the way he teaches, he narrated:

I grew up in a fairly diverse place. New Orleans was moving toward being a majority Black city at the time I lived there. My parents had moved to a relatively white suburb, but still, it was not diverse in a Black versus white sense. For most of my early life, there was still diversity in other ways. I had a Filipino and an Italian friend in school. There's ethnic diversity among the white population, at least. You go down the house, there's the Irish guy, the German guy, and the Italian. A real advantage for me is that I have been accustomed to diversity from a very young age and therefore, it's comfortable to me.

Riley then continued to explain that having lived diversity rather than philosophized his way into believing in diversity made it easier for him to deal with students from all walks of life. In Riley's opinion, there are two approaches to being inclusive and equitable in teaching. One, to have lived diversity, and two, to have philosophized one's way into believing diversity. He constantly shared that his cultural background influenced his teaching, suggesting that IET almost comes naturally to him. Riley also claims that his success in teaching inclusively and equitably was not achieved through "any philosophical attempt to include Asian students or include African American, female students or include trans students." Instead, he attributed his success to the respect minority students get from him and his involvement with them "on a case-by-case basis." According to Riley, a philosophized belief in diversity is lived, not taught. He shared, "I don't need to be taught that there is a lot of diversity within a social group because I've already lived it." A "tacit philosophy" in higher education is believing that "students have different needs" without necessarily committing to a deep sense of respect for students. Speaking further on how

diversity is philosophized in higher education, Riley shared that faculty now have a section in their merit evaluation process that asks them to write diversity statements:

We are going to get judged based on how well we write up two paragraphs about our commitment to diversity. I do not think that does anything to promote diversity and inclusion. If I am going to get rewarded for success, what I want is for my chair to see the line of diverse students waiting to talk to me, not my two paragraphs.

Riley said that his commitment to IET was not without a price. Speaking on the price he is paying for his passion for teaching, he said, "I don't know if you noticed: I'm still only an associate professor. I'm stuck on the career ladder, and part of the reason is because I'm a little too dedicated to the teaching part of my job as opposed to the research."

Due to the inherent privileges that come with specific identities, attempting innovative teaching practices becomes easier for some faculty than others. Faculty relayed that some social identities more than others affect the use of IET. Such is the discrepant case of Jodi who had previously taught bilingual elementary school students. He viewed his identity as one that allows him to teach as he pleases. He explained that not all faculty could choose to opt for non-traditional teaching practices because of their racial identities:

This is where the privilege comes in. I can do whatever the hell I want to, and at the end of the day, I am a white man. So, if I try to do something new, creative, and more inclusive in the classroom and if it works out, great, I get an award for being awesome. If it doesn't work out, then whatever; he was at least trying. I'm always going to get the benefit of the doubt, so I mean the hinder comes to people like you [participant was

referring to me] to be honest with you. Because you know if you did the same thing I do and it bombs, you are not a good teacher.

Jodi, in his exposition, painted a picture suggesting that minority faculty are treated differently when they try new teaching techniques and they do not work. He believes that more than others, white male faculty have the luxury of trial and error as much as possible with no fear of poor evaluation. He suggested that inequitable treatment or biased rewards can hinder the use of IET in higher education. He continued by saying, "it's kind of awesome being a white man; no matter what we do, we can be rewarded for it; it's going to be looked at favorably." Jodi explained that privilege comes along with his identity as a white man, which gives him a lot of latitude to be inclusive and diverse in his teaching with no fear of retribution. For this same reason, when reflecting on sociocultural identities, George stated that his identity as a white male makes it challenging to understand whether his reputation as a faculty who uses IET is due to his racially induced privileges. He shared:

I think my own experience as somebody that isn't a minority in any way. I think it is easy to become comfortable with your advantages and your privileges. As I mentioned earlier, I am certainly aware that there are privileges that are sort of intrinsically granted to me because of the way I look. Still, it's difficult to acknowledge those because it's saying maybe you're not as great as everybody thinks you are.

Aside from the privileges that come with certain racial identities, Riley explained having to remain unshaken by the "elite world of higher education" that could threaten his approach to teaching inclusively and equitably. He communicated the difference between faculty like him, who came from a poor background, and those who had more money while growing up. He said, "I think my lower status background as someone that is not from a

wealthy community makes it easier for me to resist some of the ways and assumptions that upper-middle-class professionals usually bring with them into an institution like this." Riley continued to explain that his other identity as a first-generation college student who later went on to earn a doctorate degree inoculated him from "self-loving and pompous attitudes in higher education."

In the case of Katlyn, the motivation for teaching inclusively and equitably can be traced to where she grew up as the "only Asian American in the entire school and probably in the entire county." Growing up in a racially homogenous community, one of the things she noticed in her childhood memories was what she saw in class readings that did not sit well with her as a little girl. She relayed her struggle to speak up on those things she saw as they relate to class readings:

I started noticing some things in our readings. This I couldn't articulate but you know it did not sit well with me, and I didn't have a way of expressing or putting language around what I was experiencing, and the teachers at the time didn't care what we thought; they had this pedagogy of sort: 'You're going to do this! You're going to follow my instructions!' So, of course, when I started giving unsolicited feedback, I started getting in trouble, like when I was critiquing our syllabus. Long story short, the only recourse was for me to leave a particular class and then relinquish AP credit. Katlyn explained of making up her mind to carry this childhood experience with her and to be like a "pedantic know it all who doesn't listen or respond to students." She went on to share that her experience led her to keep a pulse on "where students are and what they're going through." She explained the source of her using IET, "on so many levels, I think that came from not being listened to way back when in high school or not taken seriously."

4.4.3.3 Faculty academic background and relationships

Faculty in this study mentioned that previous and current academic relationships such as peer learning, mentorship, and academic training can influence the use of IET. While some had formal and informal training which prepared them to teach inclusively and equitably, others had no training. When asked about the factors that informed his choice of IET, Jodi was appreciative of the roles his academic mentors played in helping him, "so mentorship would be a personal one for me. I will mention my advisor but also have a couple of outstanding colleagues that are like my age, but they still mentored me just in terms of understanding diversity and other models."

Similar to Jodi's reference to his academic mentors, Bran pointed out the teaching training he received as a graduate student and how he was paired with mentors and other graduate students. Together, they read about different teaching strategies. He shared, "the emphasis in that training was not how to lecture your students but was how to get them to enter into a dialogue and articulate their ideas and respond to each other respectfully." He referenced that he received the training "over the course of 5 or 6 years" and that it underlies everything he does in the classroom. Suggesting that faculty in the humanities may be more exposed to teaching training than those in the sciences, Jodi relayed that faculty in the sciences spend their graduate careers working in a lab or being a teaching assistant for one of their professors. As such, they do not "have that sort of pedagogical training that many PhD students in English do."

One discrepant case was Katlyn who did not have any background training in teaching. She underscored the importance of background training on how to teach inclusively and equitably sharing that most faculty had "very little or no teacher training at

all," hence underprepared to embrace IET. Referring to her own experience, she shared, "I started teaching in 2000 when I was in graduate school, and regrettably, we didn't really get any training. We were kind of thrown into the classroom, and we just started figuring it out." Reflecting on whether her experience as a graduate student more than 20 years ago had changed, she said, "we didn't get any theory or research on best practices, and that has continued to this very day."

In the case of Ashley, her junior colleagues were the ones who recommended some of the IET practices she had adopted in her class. Ashley portrayed herself as someone who embraces change. She mentioned that an essential aspect of IET is getting to know students. One of the practices she had adopted in getting to know her students was distributing "a little piece of paper at the beginning" for students to hand back to her at the end of each class. Ashley expects that students will write their names, what they know about the topic treated, questions they may have, and the biggest takeaway from the class. One reason for using the paper is "to get feedback from the students, and if students misunderstood what I was trying to say, then I can make adjustments," says Ashley. Ashley also cited the piece of paper as one of the opportunities she had created for students to informally engage with her because she needed "to know who they are to figure out how to teach them." Thinking about how she came about the practice of handing out the little piece of paper to students at the beginning of class, she said:

> That little piece of paper, I started doing it about five years ago, and now and then I tell people, and they're like, 'Oh, that's a great idea! I'm going to steal that from you." And I can't remember why I started, but I remember thinking, 'Wow, this is a great idea; I'm going to do this for each of my classes.' I have learned quite a bit

> from younger colleagues and some friends. I feel like many have thought more about inclusive teaching...I did go to some pedagogy workshops where my younger, thoughtful colleagues would come up with the ideas that they came up with.

Similarly, George revealed that having conversations with colleagues from other races, countries, and socioeconomic backgrounds helped him to be aware of the diverse needs of different students. He said:

> Just sitting down with a colleague that has a different background from mine and talking about the unique challenges that they face because I think a lot of them have been screaming this for a long time. They just don't feel like anybody is listening. And so, I know certainly well that it's not their job to educate me, but I've found that it is something they're willing to discuss. And so, of all the different things that I've tried, I think that's been the most enlightening.

Mike recognizes that marginalized students are faced with different challenges, and he expressed his desire to be inclusive and equitable in his teaching to help these students. He highlighted that his optimism could be traced back to how some of the educators he encountered from K-12 to college made him feel inclusive. Reflecting on his feelings as a young college student, he recalled:

> I remember the instructors, the teachers, and then the professors who cared and also those who didn't. So, for me, I try to replicate all the things that did help by being so supportive and understanding that the challenges that some students face are unique and that others don't face those kinds of challenges.

Mike's experience of educators who cared is embodied in his teaching practices, and he seeks the avenue to pay it forward to his students. He spoke further on how difficult it was for him to get into college after his immigration issues were sorted out but that he owed his successful navigation through college to his academic mentors:

I found supportive mentors and professors and instructors who really cared and who wanted people like me to succeed. And so, I remember that and what they did, how they did it, how much time and effort they spent helping me succeed, and what an impact that made.

All the faculty I interviewed reported being intentional in using IET practices. They defined IET in terms of diverse representation of course materials, encouraging students' participation in class discussions, and using various assessment strategies. They shared their experiences about using different techniques to ensure that students actively participate in the classroom and that minority students feel comfortable in the classroom. In this study, diverse voices include those of students who are disadvantaged due to racial and gender identity. Faculty who shared their experiences in including diverse voices did so by intentionally amplifying racial and gender minority voices in their classrooms. Faculty also mentioned other strategies they had used to ensure that minority students participated in classroom discussions, such as the concept of group sharing through Perusall, a software that "creates a way for [students] to talk to each other as they do their reading." Incorporating different instructional styles resulted from their deep sense of care for students and commitment to their teaching responsibilities. Most faculty also mentioned they had academic experiences that prepared them to teach inclusively and equitably. Faculty also shared that their social and cultural backgrounds influenced their teaching in

the classroom and ensured that different student needs were met. Although faculty shared their recent experiences implementing IET, there were concerns regarding the future and how current political climates may negatively influence continued IET implementation in higher education.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

I approached this study to explore the general orientation and practices of faculty who are reputable for teaching inclusively and equitably in higher education. The work of Ladson-Billings (1994) in demystifying the teaching practices of those she called successful teachers of African American students motivated me to conduct a replicate study in higher education. This study did not focus specifically on racial diversity but on the different forms of diversity that may be present in the higher education classroom. Like Ladson-Billings, other studies on IET and its derivatives focused on teaching in the k-12 setting. The paucity of studies of IET in higher education that consider faculty experiences also informed my study.

I adapted Ladson-Billings' (1994) method of community selection to identify faculty who participated in this study. Ladson-Billings (1994) relied on nominations from parents of African American students to identify teachers who participated in her research. I relied on two levels of peer nomination from faculty to identify study participants. I hoped that the study would provide a deep understanding of how faculty who are reputable for teaching inclusively and equitably envision IET in higher education classrooms. The research questions that guided this dissertation are as follows:

1. How do faculty with a reputation for inclusive and equitable teaching define inclusive and equitable teaching?
2. Why do these faculty perceive their teaching practices as inclusive and equitable?

3. What do these faculty perceive as factors that can encourage or discourage the use of equitable and inclusive teaching, and how do those factors exert an influence?

I presented my findings in Chapter four according to the themes that emerged under each research question that guided this study. In this current chapter, I discuss my findings by grouping them into the following sections 1) this is what IET means, 2) they are not like the rest of the group, 3) who they are is how they teach, and 4) IET is not up to me alone. I discuss the findings in each section according to what is already known in the literature. I then used concepts in the literature to expand upon my discussion.

5.2 This is what IET means

Teaching inclusively and equitably, according to Hockings (2012), involves designing pedagogy, curricula, and assessment to meet the academic needs of students in a way that is "meaningful, relevant, and accessible" to them (p. 1). Following the definition of Hockings (2012), faculty in this study conceptualized IET in terms of inclusive course materials, assessment of students' work, and student participation in class discussions. However, their conceptualization did not completely assume a differentiated approach for a particular student identity. As they explained their understanding of IET, some faculty emphasized that their approach was relevant and inclusive to all students and not just to those considered minority students. Hockings's (2012) position on IET also underscores the need for faculty to engage all students and not only a group of students. This finding is antithetical to Gay's and Ladson-Billings' positions on teaching inclusively and equitably. Gay (2018) and Ladson-Billings (1995) argued that educators should not hope to help minority students through a collective undifferentiated approach; a neutral approach to

teaching all students is not beneficial to minority students. While some faculty reported instances of differentiated approach, others were quick to suggest that their approach was inclusive to all students.

Although some faculty shared that their IET practices were relevant to all students, they were aware of the differences that students bring into the classroom and they designed their courses such that students have different options in terms of three aspects of the curriculum: course materials, assessment strategies, and classroom engagement activities. These three aspects consider the curriculum as one that relates to content and classroom structure and informed by students' experiences. Similarly, Fraser and Bonsanquet (2006), explain the curriculum can be understood in four ways: content of a course, structure and content of a program of study, the learning experience of students, and the flexibility of teaching and learning process. A common understanding of the curriculum is in terms of course content and the structure of a program of study (Bovill & Woolmer, 2019). Faculty in this study defined IET in terms of curriculum changes relating to course content, assessment, and student active participation in the classroom. Curriculum is flexible and it evolves depending on student teacher interaction within different environments (Grumet et al., 2008). As such, faculty reported being aware of students' identities and making changes to some aspects of the curriculum to ensure relevance to students.

Faculty's awareness of the identities students bring into the classroom legitimizes the consciousness of students' identities as an element to be considered in implementing IET. Ladson-Billings (1995) emphasized developing a critical consciousness of others as one of the foundational tenets of successfully teaching a diverse classroom. Discussing IET, Dewsbury and Brame (2019) wrote that it is "not a style, but a philosophy that forms

the basis of pedagogy that recognizes the whole person." Beyond becoming critically conscious of their students, faculty also ascertained that students would respond differently to their teaching strategies based on their identities. Specifically, there were instances where faculty highlighted how students reacted differently based on their race and gender. According to Gale and Mills (2013), some students need particular kinds of support different from others, academic and non-academic. The inability of higher education to accommodate such students results in inequity perpetuated by the education system. Historically marginalized students will continue to enter higher education with their funds of knowledge. To support students' learning, pedagogic work will need to continually draw from their funds of knowledge (Gale & Mills, 2013). With the foundations of identity awareness and critical consciousness of students reported by faculty in this study, I now discuss the three themes through which faculty defined IET.

5.2.1 Inclusion of diverse voices in course materials

The findings of this study indicated that faculty describe the inclusion of diverse authorial voices in course syllabi as an integral part of IET. Researchers who are proponents of IET agreed that different dimensions of human diversity need to be accommodated in the classroom, including diverse representations in texts and reading materials to improve the academic experience for minority students (Neumann, 2014; Gay, 2015; Banks & Banks, 2004). Faculty in this study believed they were teaching inclusively and equitably by intentionally including diverse authorial voices. Faculty shared that a broad representation of authors from different backgrounds combats the inequities of Eurocentric and elite normative standards in higher education (Shaw, 2020). By intentionally including diverse voices, faculty thought it was easier for students to connect

with lessons and to be exposed to different perspectives. Being aware of students' identities helped faculty implement teaching strategies drawn from differing views. I specifically point to the argumentative storytelling strategy Riley used in sharing differing accounts of a historical conflict between two countries. Riley projected both perspectives, and, per Riley's characterization of students' response to the lesson, students from the countries reported making the most of the lesson. Not only is this teaching responsive to minority students, but it also allows other students to broaden their knowledge beyond their everyday lives.

Faculty in this study shared the possibilities of disciplinary differences in how much a faculty member can implement IET in course materials. The three faculty (Jody, Bran, and Katlyn) who shared the importance of including course materials that students can identify with were in the social sciences and humanities designated disciplines. A faculty member in the science-designated discipline believed that IET is easier to implement in social sciences and humanities. According to Ali et al. (2020), the IET strategy that permeates course materials is not common in scientific disciplines. Livezey (2022) writes, "the chemistry classroom has historically been White, male, fact-based, and focused only on 'scientific' content, and it presents science as politically neutral" (p. 346). Even though it is not common, researchers and educators in scientific disciplines are beginning to explore how students' lived experiences impact scientific knowledge and, more so, projecting scientific knowledge as not culturally, ethnically, racially, or politically neutral (Tanner, 2013). According to Muhammad (2022), educators, regardless of discipline, should pursue four goals: identity, skills, intellect, and criticality. Educators in their teaching practice should reflect on whether their teaching helps students to learn about

themselves and others, whether their teaching helps students to acquire the skills necessary for the specific content area, whether their teaching increases students' knowledge and critical thinking, and, finally, whether it helps students to be critically conscious about issues of power and equity in the society. Muhammad (2020) shared that good teaching builds skills and intellect, but IET builds all four goals. Eurocentrism is not in one discipline more than another, even though scholarly and pedagogic work in social sciences and humanities projects issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion more than others. Eurocentrism, therefore, in the sciences can be confronted using IET practices. Livezey (2022) integrated inclusive and equitable course content in a chemistry class and found that it improved student learning outcomes among science and engineering majors.

Teaching that exposes students to differing authorial voices and perspectives validates the funds of knowledge and ways of knowing of others (Tripp & Collier, 2020; Gay, 2018). To successfully introduce diverse authorial voices in-class readings, participants in this study believe that faculty must be willing to spend extra time revising their syllabus. Syllabus design is one of the teaching activities that can influence classroom dynamics and thus must be leveraged by faculty in promoting equity and inclusion (Fuentes et al., 2020). Faculty life can be overwhelmingly busy with other expectations such as research and service, leaving little room for intentional teaching reflections and continuous improvement of teaching materials. Acknowledging the busy nature of faculty work, Fuentes et al. (2020) discussed the syllabus serving as a conduit for promoting equity and inclusion, also suggesting that faculty can revise their syllabus in bits rather than taking a totally revamped approach. For example, faculty can decolonize their syllabus by including the diverse authorial reading materials students will engage with each week in the

classroom. A recommended practice is to include historically underrepresented and minority authors in the syllabus (Fuentes et al., 2020). As higher education continues to witness an increased rate of diversity among its student body, one could imagine that the rate of diverse researchers, writers, and authors producing knowledge will also increase. Regardless of disciplinary leanings, IET should be able to permeate the curriculum (Muhammad, 2020). An explicit list of diverse authors, as reflected in the reading materials for each week, can set the tone of the class by demonstrating that IET is valued. Students can then begin to make connections with reading materials ahead of class.

5.2.2 Inclusion of diverse student assessment strategies

Individuals have unique ways of viewing and making sense of the world (Freire, 1970). So, also, course assignments are viewed and interpreted through the lens through which students see the world (Carjuzaa & Ruff, 2010). For many faculty, the default approach will be to assess students' work through their worldview, which might be incompatible with some students' sociocultural backgrounds (Villegas & Lucas, 2007). Some faculty may have also been influenced by the kind of classroom experience they encountered as students. Some will hold on to the teaching practices they have experienced and reproduce them in the classroom.

To allow for a fair evaluation of students' work, faculty need to "design new, flexible assessment standards that allow for a more inclusive interpretation of the assignment but yet exhibit an equal level of quality" (Carjuzaa & Ruff, p. 74). Ladson-billings (1995) wrote that “assessment must be multifaceted, incorporating multiple forms of excellence” (p.481). Faculty in this study reported using different assessment strategies that do not follow the Western normative standards. An example of such assessment is the

ungrading option given as a choice to students by a faculty in this study. The ungrading option allows students to self-award their grades, therefore giving them the power that otherwise would have been held by faculty. Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) termed the ability of an instructor to negotiate with students and give up their power to the extent they are comfortable as a form of reciprocity. Reciprocity is one of the four criteria (respect, reciprocity, relevance, and responsibility) established by Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) as a strategy necessary to provide an inclusive and equitable academic experience for Indigenous students. Reciprocity is a concept that challenges the academy given power held by faculty such that they are perceived as the ultimate source of knowledge and determinant of who is knowledgeable. Faculty in this study cited examples of how they were able to the concept of reciprocity in student assessment.

According to Gordon (2007), faculty may be willing to use IET but feel overwhelmed with how they can infuse IET into their existing practices. Instead of trying to overturn current teaching practices completely, Lang (2016) articulated that units of change could have a huge effect. Ashley, one of the faculty interviewed in this study, mentioned that one strategy per semester is one of the keys to providing an inclusive and equitable assessment. An IET assessment strategy per semester allows faculty to evaluate the impact of the new strategy on student learning experience before adopting a new one. Criticizing the Eurocentric nature of grading, one faculty shared that she would continue to negotiate with her students on alternative ways to grading. Mostly, faculty defined diverse assessment strategies in terms of offering more than one assignment type and grading option, as well as eliminating multiple choice question types. For faculty in this study, the ability to provide different assignment and grading options resulted from their

desire to see students succeed and to respect and validate them as co-learners. IET empowers faculty to allow students to be themselves without leaving their sociocultural identities behind in their academic journeys (Paris, 2012).

5.2.3 Inclusion of diverse student voices in classroom discussion

According to the educational philosopher Paolo Freire, student voices are essential in the knowledge construction process. To include students' voices, educators must be willing to know students and their sociocultural backgrounds (Freire, 1970). However, Dewsbury and Brame (2019) argue that students' voices are often not amplified in the co-construction process. Faculty interviewed for this study expressed that humility allows them to neglect the traditional banking technique of teaching (Freire, 1990) and that they see themselves as co-learners in the classroom. Almost all the faculty in this study shared that one of the ways they implement IET is to encourage active participation in the classroom, especially by amplifying the voices of minority students. For learning to be equitable, it is critical for teaching to be democratic and for all students to have a voice (Power & Rightmyer, 2011). Participation and engagement reported by faculty in this study are some of the criteria for a democratic classroom (Power & Rightmyer, 2011). Participation and engagement ensure that students have the opportunities to express their opinions by contributing to classroom discussions (Gay, 2018). Faculty reported walking around in the classroom to engage minority students in conversations such that they, in turn, felt comfortable sharing their opinions in the classroom. Other criteria for a democratic classroom include valuing and respecting students' sociocultural identities, promoting collaborative and shared responsibility, encouraging critical thinking abilities, creating a classroom atmosphere that promotes respectful dialogue, and involving students

in the decision-making processes relating to their learning (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Faculty specifically emphasized inclusion of female and racially minoritized students' voices in class discussions. One faculty shared that it is the white male in the classroom that dominates classroom discussion while female and minority students passively participate in discussions. Clinchy et al. (1985) noted how some women in their study recalled experiences of not having a voice and how their college experience almost diminished their willpower to be expressive. This current study adds to the existing literature by revealing that unequal gendered performance still exists in the higher education classroom today, more than 30 years after Clinchy et al. (1985). Female students' lower participation in class discussions compared to male students was found to negatively impact female students' academic achievement and persistence in STEM disciplines (Eddy et al., 2014; Cech et al., 2011). Faculty in this study expressed intentionality in amplifying female voices.

The intentional amplification of female student voices described above suggests that faculty were conscious of the possibility that a female student may experience class differently than a male student. Messerschmidt (2019) wrote that "all participants constituting an unequal gender relationship are collective orchestrators of hegemonic masculinity" (p. 87). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) revised the concept of hegemonic masculinity by illuminating the context of gender equality at its core. The relational nature of hegemonic masculinity was obscured by others who had discussed the concept in a way that continues to study masculinity by itself and not the hegemonic nature of masculinity in relation to femininity (Messerschmidt, 2019). Perpetrators and orchestrators of

hegemonic masculinity in the classroom thus promote a non-inclusive and inequitable learning experience for female students. IET confronts the dangers of legitimizing the superordination, sometimes unintentional, performance of masculinity in the classroom. An IET strategy that faculty cited in this study is awareness of the gendered forms of student participation in classroom discussions.

Furthermore, the intersection of hegemonic identities is also harmful to inclusive and equitable classroom experiences for students. Eddy et al. (2014) wrote about the intersectionality of gender and race, saying that the gendered difference in student participation in classroom discussions was more evident for female students who are racially minoritized. Faculty in this study generally reported taking extra steps in encouraging active classroom participation among minority students, such as having a one-on-one conversation with them and checking in with them during class. Another faculty shared that it was essential to consistently project female students' voices by providing lingering feedback and following up incessantly on their comments over two to three class periods. This finding implies that faculty recognized the need to affirm the views of students who are minoritized and those who ordinarily are not in congruence with the dominant culture in the classroom. Faculty-affirming attitude acknowledges the diverse and pluralistic views that are present in the classroom and necessary for collective learning (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). An affirming attitude towards minority students empowers them as knowers, strengthens their confidence toward academic success (Gay, 2018), and builds their cultural capital in the classroom (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

5.3 They are not like the rest of the group: Embodying the act of care by making connections and accommodations

According to research, students**,** more so minority students, who experience care at the hands of their educators exhibit greater academic performance than students who do not (McAllister & Irvine, 2002). Faculty shared their reasons for perceiving their teaching as inclusive and equitable through different experiences and pointed to the essence of IET in embodying care, especially for non-traditional students. Gay (2018) invited educators to think of a caring attribute as one which supersedes emotions, compassion, or feelings. A caring attitude "is more action-driven than emotionally centered" (Gay, 2018, p.63). Similarly, Ladson-Billings (1995) shared that caring "refers not merely to affective connections" between educators and their students but more to "the greater sense of what scholarship/pedagogy can mean in the lives of people" (p.474). Faculty in this study demonstrated evidence of caring through their action-driven efforts to connect with students and genuinely accommodate their various needs. Faculty cited action-driven techniques such as perusall, argumentative storytelling, ungrading, free writing, and fake memoirs, as described above in Chapter four, as examples of IET practices they used in demonstrating action-driven caring attitudes.

Some of the action-driven techniques shared by faculty in this study were related to classroom power-sharing in instruction and assessment. In Au's (2022) autoethnographic study on pedagogical care, not sharing power with students means that faculty embrace depersonalizing coursework, assignments, and grading. According to Au (2022), student assessment and coursework, in general, "remains a highly personal affair" (p. 4) and requires faculty to reflect on how they hold power over students. Ladson-Billings (1995) shared an example of power-sharing as giving students "opportunities to act as

teachers" (p. 480). One faculty in this study used ungrading and fake memoir techniques through contract negotiation with students to allow students to make decisions on class assignments and grading. In the ungrading approach, students assume the faculty role by grading themselves. In the fake memoir technique, students can insert themselves into historical moments, thus allowing them to personalize their essays.

Another dimension of a caring attitude found in this study points to the importance of knowing who students are at the individual level. Au (2022) described the concept of care as a practice that goes beyond faculty informing students to reach out should they need something or to say, "my door will always be open to you" (p.2). Au (2022) shared that getting to know students helped her examine the intensity of her caring attitude. Having heard the challenges of two students, one whose parents were struggling through unemployment as immigrants, and another whose family members back home were imprisoned due to war, Au (2022) concluded, "I no longer whimpered helplessly. I sought to act" (p. 5). Faculty in this study also made remarks that suggested that a deep knowledge of the students they teach is an essential dimension of a caring attitude necessary for educators who want to practice IET. One faculty in this study shared how he connected with an African American student and was able to make her feel comfortable in an environment that suggested otherwise. He knew he connected with the student because of the teacher evaluation comment he read. He believed that the student wrote the comment, and he demonstrated his knowledge of the student:

> I know who wrote it because I knew her handwriting. She was an African American woman from Chicago. I knew she had grown up in an area that was neither heavily, like overwhelmingly, white nor overwhelmingly black, but kind of close.

In a different scenario, another faculty thought he did not know his student well enough to help when the student went through a hard time in his class, “I felt like I did not know his entire back story. I knew bits and pieces about his heritage and his personal situation...” Similar to the positions in other studies (Hsiung, 2016; Carjuzaa & Ruff, 2010), this finding suggests that faculty who practice IET cannot take a neutral stance in teaching a diverse classroom because students are not the same. Faculty in this study shared that minority and non-traditional students are different from their non-minority peers in terms of the everyday experiences that spill into their academic lives. A faculty member mentioned that minority students “are not like the rest of the group.” The statement made by the faculty about minority students reiterates minoritization but substantiates the necessity for faculty to be responsive to students’ individual differences. Embodying the act of care is therefore needed and characterized here as faculty being attentive to their unique needs. Au (2022), however, submitted that a caring attitude that is not superficial takes a toll on a faculty’s socioemotional energy. One of the faculty in this study shared the same feeling by suggesting that making deep connections with students predisposed her to spend more time dealing with the socioemotional needs of her students.

5.4 Who they are is how they teach: The influence of sociocultural backgrounds of faculty

In their book, Cochrane et al. (2017) documented the account of a faculty who could reflect on how her background shaped the way she taught. The faculty titled her self-reflection memoir "who I am is how I teach" (p.13). Similarly, the IET implementation experiences of faculty in this study were shaped mainly by who they are, that is, their social, cultural, economic, and academic backgrounds. One enlightening finding of this study was how most faculty connected their drive to teach inclusively and equitably to their

backgrounds in different manners. It did not matter whether faculty identities were like the students they teach, but it mattered that they had prior experiences that became connecting points for empathizing with students. Thus, their sociocultural identities and backgrounds deeply affected their teaching. Some faculty defined their sociocultural backgrounds as a blend of their own childhood, adulthood, and professional experiences. Whether good or bad, their experiences with the faculty who taught them influenced their use of IET. Hallman (2014) explained that educators often reenact the teaching style of those who taught them. However, faculty who had unfavorable experiences reported enacting the opposite behavior.

Several authors have advocated the need for faculty's identity to match those of their students for a great learning experience, especially for minority students (Fairlie et al., 2014; Dee, 2005; McAllister & Irvine, 2002; Au, 1981; Cazden & Leggett, 1981). To be clear, this study does not advocate the contrary. Instead, the findings suggest that in preparing students to be educated critical citizens of their diverse and pluralistic world, higher education institutions need faculty who are reflective of their identities and empathetic towards minority students. One faculty in this study who identified as white taught a class on race heavily taken by ethnically and racially minoritized students. His first-class session regularly features surprised looks on the faces of students who were not expecting a white faculty to teach the class. It is worthy of mention that the faculty reported that students leave his class each semester having forgotten their surprised looks because of the great experience they had in the class. This faculty member also attributed the evidence of how well he practices IET to the number of minority students waiting to talk to him during office hours. The reality today is that racial and ethnic diversity in the student

body has increased in higher education institutions. Still, faculty racial and ethnic composition is not growing at the same rate (Fairlie et al., 2014). In 2017, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that 76% of faculty in postsecondary education institutions were white. In the same year, the NCES reported 55% of undergraduates were white. These data points suggest that the odds of a student having a matching identity, at least in terms of race/ethnicity, are not great.

According to social constructivism theory (Vygotsky, 1978), culture and previous experiences influence human behavior. My study illuminates Vygotsky's sociocultural point of view in that non-native faculty narrated how their experiences as non-alien citizens of America informed their adoption of IET practices. Non-native faculty explained their difficulty crossing cultural borders and navigating higher education. They all shared their experiences as international students who came to the U.S. to study. Notable in one of the non-native faculty's prior academic experiences is the non-empowering attribute of some faculty who taught him. The study participant explained that some of his faculty did not expect him to succeed, but he did against all the odds. For native faculty, their childhood and adulthood experiences informed their IET behaviors. This finding concurs with the influence of social interactions on an individual's behavior, as described by Vygotsky (1978). Faculty shared they were influenced by father and mother figures in their lives, their communities growing up, their friends, and finally, their colleagues.

The faculty in this study were capable of reflecting on who they are, how they have encountered privileges, or how they have been unprivileged in their own academic experiences from K-16 and up to graduate school. Collins (2002) argue the social identities of an individual can either give rise to multiple privileges as a dominant matrix or an

oppression matrix for those with marginalized identities. For those faculty who reported being privileged, their critical consciousness of their privileges sensitized them to the possibility of minority students facing inequitable experiences in the classroom, and thus wanted to teach inclusively and equitably. Faculty who reported they were unprivileged were determined to teach in a way that would not engender their own inequitable experiences.

5.5 IET is not up to me alone: Influence of Institutional Factors and Contemporary Societal Issues

Several studies have situated faculty as change agents who need to promote the success of minority students in higher education (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009; Bensimon, 2005). Authors of these studies have challenged the deficit perspective of implicating minority students as incapable of academic success (Bensimon, 2005). They have often encouraged readers to shift their eyes of scrutiny away from students and to faculty, noting that faculty, through their teaching, have a role to play in ensuring students' academic achievement (Ginsberg & Wlodowski, 2009). Even though the faculty in this study were reputable for teaching inclusively and equitably, they still shared that the onus is not on them alone to embrace IET. Factors beyond faculty capacity need to be considered for IET to be implemented successfully in higher education.

Faculty in this study cited a lack of resources, time, incentive, and professional development as barriers to IET implementation. These barriers were cited as reasons faculty are "like dinosaurs" that do not embrace change, while some thought some faculty specifically do not see a reason to change how they have taught for years. This study's findings on barriers to IET use are consistent with research on the reasons why faculty

resist change. Dana et al. (2021) suggested that institutions should "secure sufficient resources to support faculty as they reform, including academic promotion incentives and faculty development costs" (p. 11) if they want to see faculty embrace change.

The findings of this study explain that faculty who are reputable for teaching inclusively and equitably often go beyond their traditional teaching roles as subject matter experts. Some of them reported dedicating their time and effort in embracing the unspoken faculty roles that come with the level of internationalization and diversity witnessed in higher education. These roles include counseling and subtle parenting, through caring, to ensure students have a positive college experience. At an individual level, for the faculty who participated in this study, IET implementation came at a cost they were willing to pay. These costs were not necessarily financial costs, though presumably in the case of Riley his decision not to seek promotion to full professor came with financial implications. Rather, the costs were excised along other resource dimensions including time and emotional and psychological well-being. Although engaging in IET practices clearly provided sufficient benefits in many forms for the study participants to embrace the practices, it is not as though their engagement was cost-free. These faculty were also of the opinion that their colleagues might not be ready to embrace similar costs. As such, higher education administration needs to step in to alleviate costs, financial and otherwise, of IET implementation.

The costs and benefits of IET can also occur beyond the individual level. The concept of social cost-benefit analysis (Bonner, 2022) helps explain this study's findings as they relate to barriers to IET implementation, why some faculty might resist adopting IET practices, and the institutional support necessary to encourage IET adoption among

faculty. The concept explains change by considering the different actors (individually, organizationally, and societally) responsible for social change and how each actor evaluates the pros and cons of the desired change in connection to their own circumstances.

According to Bonner (2022), the social cost-benefit analysis articulates that for a desirable change to occur, there are four stages of analysis that must be considered. In stage one, organizations, for example, will investigate the benefits of the desired change. Assessment of the benefits relating to the desired change allows organizations to make a precision-based decision rather than depending on their daily activities. Evaluation of benefits is often tied to monetary gain in terms of increasing profit or widening the profit margin. Public universities, such as the site of this current study, are nonprofit; thus, an increase in internally and externally generated revenue margin is essential for fulfilling their mission to provide a quality educational experience for students. State governments have historically funded public institutions, but the financial support has decreased over the years (McLendon et al., 2009). As a result of these decreases, higher education institutions might begin to think of the benefits of embracing IET in the form of tuition generation: By helping students whose well-being and performance might be particularly enhanced by IET (e.g., non-traditional and international students) could reasonably be expected to result in student admission and retention and, by extension, increased tuition revenue. Looking at the organizational implication of the cost and benefit analysis of IET, a particular finding in this current study hinted at the benefit of the increasing enrolment of international students in higher education at a personal cost to faculty. One of the faculty I interviewed expressed that the university is increasingly enrolling international students as "cash cows" without doing the hard work needed to serve them. The cost for this benefit

is absorbed by faculty who expressed concern that the university did nothing to help them to teach these students effectively. The monetary benefit accrued at the institutional level comes at a cost for faculty, such as the one interviewed in this study, to work through teaching the English Language to students who do not know much English. Thus, the constant institutional benefit reaped without an effort to diminish the costs faced by faculty may negatively affect IET implementation in higher education. Higher education will continue to enroll international students to avert the negative effect of the Great Recession in 2008 on college enrollment anticipated in 2026. Grawe (2018) projected that the plummeted childbearing rate in 2008 will cause a 15 percent decrease in college-aged students in the U.S. in 2026.

Stage two suggests that the cost of a change must be analyzed before the adoption of the desired change. The costs for a change may include but are not limited to higher expenditures, efforts, environment, and personnel loss. According to Bonner (2022), evaluating the cost of the desired change also involves assessing the risks involved in terms of the organization's reputation. In increasing student enrollment, higher education institutions may derive the benefit of increased student tuition but will also need to consider potential associated costs such as hiring more faculty, providing educational resources, investing in more infrastructures, and providing academic and non-academic student support services. Increased admission of diverse students to keep enrollment numbers up necessitates faculty to do more work without adequate institutional support. Faculty in this study are aware of the institutional benefits of international student enrollment but expressed their reservations about bearing the associated costs alone. Further, institutions might also consider whether their reputation or mission might be altered by embracing IET.

Given the national political environment when this study was conducted, developing or expanding a reputation as an institution that champions diversity, equity, and inclusion in its curriculum and instruction could, indeed, prove a considerable risk.

In stage three, the cost is weighted against the benefit to determine if the cost outweighs the benefit. Here, there is a thorough evaluation of the magnitude at which the benefit is higher than the cost. Because most organizations are driven by profit, a quantifiable procedure is employed to determine the monetary impact of costs and benefits associated with the desired change. Since public higher education institutions are not driven by profit, the monetary impact of costs and benefits can be assessed in terms of increase or decrease in generated revenues and operational costs.

Finally, in stage four, a conclusion is made on change adoption based on the analysis done in stages one, two, and three. The conclusion on whether the change will be adopted is based on what Bonner (2022) referred to as the decision rule. That is, organizations should accept the change if the benefit of the proposed change is higher than the cost. In the context of higher education, change can be accepted if generated revenue is higher or equals to the projected operating costs.

At the primary level of using the decision rule, organizations will consider the monetary impact of a change in terms of cost and benefits through economic evaluation (Bonner, 2022). At the social level, however, organizations can expand their evaluation to include non-monetary effects of the desired change. If the social benefit is higher than the social costs, it is believed that the desired change will improve the welfare of society. Non-monetary benefits of changes are sometimes not directly observable, making them hard to measure (Bonner, 2022). For example, monetary benefits of schooling can be evaluated by

the difference in the salary earnings of graduates compared to nongraduates. However, an unobservable, non-monetary benefit of schooling can be that the society is filled with individuals who have creative and problem-solving mindsets. Creativity and problem-solving mindsets are constructs that are hard to measure for reasons such as inconsistent definition of meaning (Kim & Shute, 2015). Bonner (2022) suggested that a change should be adopted when the quantifiable social benefit exceeds social cost but that there are existing qualitative non-monetary benefits that are not readily observable. In the context of higher education, employing instructional approaches that reach, engage, educate, and validate minority students certainly represents a form of non-monetary benefit, and the results of this study suggest the benefits may be becoming observable.

Similar to organizations, whether an individual decides to change also requires a thorough assessment of the non-monetary advantages and disadvantages of the change (Bonner, 2022). Openness to change results from the individual identifying and weighing the advantages and disadvantages of the change from their perspective (Price & Regehr, 2022). If the perceived costs outweigh the benefits, change will not occur (Prochaska et al., 1992). Faculty in this study shared their general orientation toward IET. They suggested the perceived costs and benefits of IET that could expand the use of IET in higher education if considered. In line with the cost and benefit concepts (Bonner, 2022; Prochaska et al., 1992), for faculty to change their teaching practices to reflect IET, they will analyze the benefits associated with implementing IET. For instance, Erby et al. (2021) reported that although it takes much effort, faculty who implement IET continues to do so because of the inherent value it brings them and that "it takes one student to make the challenges worth it" (p. 282). Some faculty in this study shared how it might be impossible for other faculty

to engage in IET if their efforts are not incentivized. For those not looking for a direct monetary incentive, it was important for promotion metrics to capture their IET efforts significantly. For such faculty, there is a need to be extrinsically motivated to engage in IET practices.

In contextualizing stage two of the social cost-benefit analysis, faculty may also begin to weigh the costs of adopting IET. The notion of costs is evident in how faculty reported time as a barrier to IET implementation. Time was cited in several studies as a systemic barrier to faculty change processes (Brownell & Tanner, 2012; Henderson et al., 2010; Howland & Wedman, 2004). Hypothetically, faculty may be asked to dedicate more time to implementing IET. In such an instance, time as a cost may be a hindrance, especially for faculty in research-intensive universities such as the site of this study. Faculty in research-intensive universities find it difficult to make time to improve their teaching practices due to the demands of research (Brownell & Tanner, 2012). Another cost suggested by one of the faculty who participated in this study is remaining in an associate professor rank because of his deep interest in teaching. Faculty unwilling to pay such a price will probably maintain their status quo by not reconsidering their current teaching practices.

Another cost to consider is the influence of contemporary societal issues on faculty's ability to implement IET. Several politically informed controversies are around diversity initiatives, so some faculty may want to maintain a neutral stance. In contrast, others may feel uncomfortable with the undue influence of external factors on their ability to implement IET. A specific example from the findings of this study is one faculty, who is white, now feels uncomfortable teaching a race course he had previously taught.

The findings from this study express the costs, benefits, and barriers to IET implementation in higher education. Faculty characterize their IET practices in numerous ways. These include taking tangible actions such as revising the syllabus to include diverse authorial voices, spending time to know students, creating multiple assessment strategies, and making conscious efforts to provide academic support to minority students. Beyond the practices mentioned above, faculty also reflected on their positionality and its influence on teaching. Furthermore, the competing demands of faculty work remain significant in the topic of advancing IET in higher education. Even though faculty demonstrated their commitment to teaching inclusively and equitably, they did not hold back in sharing how institutional commitments to IET would allow them to do more by offsetting the costs they have had to bear.

CHAPTER 6. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

In this phenomenological study, I explored the nature of inclusive and equitable teaching (IET) in higher education and described the general orientation of faculty who are reputable for its use. In discussing the findings of my inquiry in chapter 5, I argue this study adds to a growing area of research that attempts to demystify the complexities of teaching in a diverse classroom. It also illuminates the challenges faced by faculty in meeting the academic needs of minority students. The findings of this study support the implementation of IET in higher education but not without challenges due to institutional and societal barriers that may impede its implementation.

Several authors have contributed to the growing literature on teaching a diverse classroom, primarily in K-12 and a few in higher education (Gay, 2018; Hora & Smolarek, 2018; Baumgartner et al., 2015; Paris, 2012; Hockings, 2010; Morton & Bennett, 2010; Banks & Banks, 2009; Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995). The works of these authors have positively impacted the development and execution of this study. In this chapter, I provide implications of my research for faculty practice, higher education institutions, and the society at large.

6.1 Implications for Faculty Practice

In understanding the general orientation of faculty who are reputable for teaching inclusively and equitably, different IET practices that could serve as examples for current and future faculty emerged. I share these practices not because I am making a generalized or definitive assumption about what IET looks like in practice. Rather, my hope is that readers will leave having tangible IET examples that they might practice in their journey of becoming inclusive and equitable instructors. Given the findings of this qualitative

study, the following implications for practice are offered to faculty who are committed to the academic success of all students and to ensuring minority students stay in college to complete their educations.

Authors who studied inclusive and equitable education conceptualized it differently but arrived at similar conclusions that IET utilizes the cultural experiences and knowledge of the students (Civitillo et al., 2019). IET also encourages students to keep their cultural identity and links to their culture (Paris, 2012), gives them numerous opportunities to apply what they have learned (Gay, 2018), and includes various viewpoints (Civitillo et al., 2019). Similarly, I found that faculty conceptualized IET as including diverse voices in classroom discussions, in course materials, and employing varying assessment strategies to gauge students' knowledge. As a starting point, faculty who are interested in IET can begin to embrace the four areas of conceptions found in this study: including diverse voices in their course materials, using varying assessment strategies, including diverse voices in classroom discussions, and embodying the act of care. Faculty can intentionally draw from different sources of experience and knowledge, such as assigning readings from international authors, women authors, and minority authors. George, one of my study participants, shared that his family member was told in high school that "girls can't do math" and thus it became imperative for him to intentionally include female author voices in his engineering classes, a discipline he said was stereotyped as masculine. George's experience underscores the importance of drawing from different authors to combat covert biases that exist in classrooms. Faculty, in their teaching, can also draw from ideologies emphasizing social justice and connect them to their subject matter. Faculty in this study

mentioned other techniques they have used in teaching inclusively and equitably, including the following:

1. Perusall: A reading software tool that allows students and faculty to annotate readings and respond to each other's comments in real time (Perusall.com, 2023). Kohnke and Har (2022) reported that because of using Perusall, students who are second language learners increased their engagements in participating in course reading discussions.
2. Argumentative storytelling: A form of storytelling that uses real-life human experiences to teach from two or more viewpoints.
3. Ungrading: A form of assessment that allows faculty to transfer authority to students to be the judge of their own assessment (Dosmar & Williams, 2022). Students who experienced ungrading reported less anxiety about grades and focused more on their learning (Dosmar & Williams, 2022).
4. Free writing: According to Filewych (2019), free writing is the act of writing without halting any thoughts or ideas that occur to you at a particular moment. Alharthi (2021) found that free writing improved grammar acquisition among students who are non-native English speakers.
5. Fake memoir: A method that writers employ to assume a different identity so that they can write about topics that their true identities would have prevented them from writing about. Hemley (2011) describes it as writing about something that is true in a deceptive way.

Including and valuing students' diverse perspectives is one of the characteristics of IET mentioned in this study. According to Gay (2018), IET acknowledges that scholarly truth is fluid and recognizes students' agency in constructing knowledge. It encourages students to engage in multicultural perspectives and embrace the freedom to be culturally expressive. Faculty who are reputable for IET shared that it is important to validate minority students as capable of producing knowledge. Faculty can accommodate differing perspectives from students and ensure that minority students contribute to the knowledge-creation process in the classroom by creating an avenue for a shared learning experience. An interviewee mentioned how he is facilitating a shared learning experience among his students through Perusall, a software that creates an avenue for students to discuss class readings and grade each other's comments. Faculty can also pay attention to the pattern of classroom discussions by being a facilitator and encouraging silent students to share their perspectives. When such students participate, faculty can demonstrate the affirming nature of IET by amplifying their voices (Gay, 2018). This was evidenced in this study when one of the interviewees talked about encouraging female student participation instead of the white male voices often heard in classroom discussions. Villegas and Lucas (2002) explained that it is important for educators to promote students' contributions to knowledge constructed in the classroom.

The findings of this study suggested that student assessment should be multimodal. Interviewees mentioned using different assessment strategies, acknowledging that students from different backgrounds may respond differently to assessment approaches. According to Carjuzaa and Ruff (2010), "one's cultural heritage and life experiences frame the cultural lens through which one experiences the world and infiltrates every aspect of one's life" (p.

71). An example lies in the autoethnographic research by Carjuzaa and Ruff (2010) where they found that an indigenous student's communication style was circular or indirect in nature. The directness of other students' writing is "thought to be equated with honesty and respect for others in the Western communication style and in the Eastern communication style, indirectness is equated with politeness and respect for others" (Carjuzaa & Ruff, 2010, p. 70). It is important for faculty to be aware that students may attempt assignments differently based on the way they experience the world. Assessments, therefore, need to be reconceptualized by dismantling normative practices and validating atypical student works. A faculty in this study questioned the importance of grades and the concept of grading. This faculty challenged the Western epistemological grading standard by introducing the ungrading technique in her classroom. As revealed in this study, faculty practicing IET can allow students to "decide how their performance will be evaluated" (Gay, 2018, p. 39).

The heterogeneous nature of the class composition in higher education will not allow students to always interact and take classes with faculty who are similar to them in identities. Just as students will not always encounter faculty who are similar to them in identities, faculty must also engage in critical consciousness of themselves and the students they teach (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In the process of reflecting on their own identities and ways of life, faculty can begin to identify teaching practices that are unconsciously biased toward minority students. Study participants reflected on how their identities placed them in disadvantaged or advantaged positions. Faculty can become more critically conscious of themselves and others by participating in study abroad opportunities or spending their sabbaticals at universities different from where they teach. For instance, a faculty from a predominantly white institution may spend sabbatical time in a historically black university

or universities in other countries for a cross-cultural teaching experience. Faculty can also encourage students to be aware of social and political issues as they affect every member of society. Awareness of social and political issues helps students to develop the knowledge and skills needed to critique social norms (Gay, 2018).

Finally, faculty can increasingly utilize the available resources on their campuses for teaching in an inclusive and equitable manner. Faculty can utilize the services of teaching and learning centers in their universities for ideas on how to develop an equitable and inclusive syllabus and stay updated on relevant scholarly work. Some interviewees mentioned participating in professional development opportunities created by centers for teaching and learning and discovered universities are increasingly developing such centers to provide teaching resources for faculty. Just as some interviewees had positive attitudes toward professional development, some were not convinced about its importance. For skeptical faculty, building a community of practice that provides avenues to listen to other faculty's IET practices will be beneficial. Interviewees reported being able to practice IET ideas they learned from their colleagues and academic mentors.

6.2 Implications for Higher Education Administration

According to Hockings et al. (2010), if IET is to be implemented successfully in higher education, top administrative support and policy directives have a crucial role to play. More importantly, top administrative leaders must collaborate with faculty to implement IET practices successfully. As higher education administrators carry out initiatives to increase student enrollment, they need not forget that faculty play an integral role in meeting students' academic needs when they arrive. As such, a combined effort that

draws faculty members' input ensures that students make the most out of their academic experience.

As stated by faculty in this study, higher education administration needs to assist non-native English students. Faculty shared their displeasure in how students who are non-native English speakers are increasingly enrolled with no guidance or resources provided by top administration to cater to their needs. Higher education continues to increase cash flow into their system through non-native English speakers' tuition. While higher education institutions need to open their doors to globalization, putting resources in place to help faculty deal with the difficulty of teaching linguistically minoritized students is integral. Teaching and every facet of postsecondary education must be modified to meet the diverse learning demands of a student body undergoing rapid demographic shifts (Herrera, 2011). Higher education can invest in preliminary programs to ensure that this set of students receive the help they need and acclimate to their new environment before starting formal classes. I also echo Herrera et al. (2011)'s suggestions on immersing non-native English-speaking students into campus-based work opportunities that will help improve their academic language. More importantly, I argue that such programs should be implemented long before formal classes begin and should continue until students become comfortable. Similarly, students can also be allowed to work on community engagement initiatives that expose them to their host country while pursuing their academic degrees.

The importance of technology in advancing IET in higher education institutions cannot be ignored. Universities can invest in technology solutions such as real-life transcriptions in different languages to foster inclusivity and equity in the classroom. Faculty can choose the particular transcription language they need based on their

knowledge of students in their classrooms. Technology capabilities can also ensure that classes are recorded in real-time and made available to students. One faculty in this study mentioned recording his lessons in real time allowed students to rewatch lectures.

Higher education institutions can continue to provide professional development opportunities, especially for new faculty members. Faculty in this study reported starting their careers without knowing what to expect as they teach in class. Faculty also shared that they did not have the resources or formal training on teaching diverse classrooms. Higher education institutions can create a professional development training structures that would give new faculty the orientation they need in teaching inclusively and equitably.

According to Kezar and Eckel (2008), the issue relating to diversity, curriculum changes, and adapting teaching practices are faced with greater resistance among faculty, but the use of reward was found to be important in promoting change. Most faculty in this study shared the perspective that institutions need to attach a reward to IET use to encourage its adoption among other faculty. Some suggested that faculty will increasingly use IET if it is valued significantly for promotion and tenure. Having some form of a reward system that embodies a university's recognition that IET's benefits outweigh their costs institutionalizes a university's commitment and sends a message to the university community that IET is valued.

6.3 Implications for Society

Education is pivotal to how individuals perceive the world and function in society (Bottrell, 2009; Paris, 2012; Mag et al., 2017). Active participation in society in political, social, and economic forms can be linked to education (Paris, 2012). Educational institutions are in the business of bridging society's political, social, and economic gaps

(Bottrell, 2009). Educational institutions “provide cultural and social capital, but their distribution is not necessarily equitable” (Bottrell, 2009, p. 497). As found in this current study, IET challenges traditional norms by consciously recognizing the voices of minority and underrepresented students and getting them engaged. Through engagement in academic activities, minority students are better positioned to access the social capital that comes with education. As a result, IET prepares students to actively participate in the increasingly pluralistic society by increasing faculty and students' awareness of the complexities of a pluralistic society. Hurtado (2006) found that students who were exposed to diverse peer interactions improved their perspective-taking abilities and had pluralistic orientations. Traditional approaches to teaching frequently fail to promote intercultural learning, address disparities, manage conflict, encourage the willingness to take other people’s perspectives, and address delicate issues (Hockings et al., 2012).

The use of IET can improve college persistence and graduation rates among minority students in preparation for them to enter the job market. As evident in the excerpts of faculty in this study, minority students bring unique cultural perspectives and responsibilities to higher education that can negatively affect their persistence in college compared to traditional students. For some of these minority students, a college education is a key that unlocks their abilities to live above generational economic hardship and actively engage in civic activities in their communities that will set examples for others to follow. However, less equitable experiences of minority students in higher education when compared to their White counterparts (Williams, 2020) might truncate their dreams. Faculty’s use of IET by connecting with each student in the classroom can help “build an academic community of learners” where each member functions as a family and

encourages one another towards success. (Gay, 2018, p. 38). By building an academic community of learners, no one is left behind, and together, students rise by lifting others (Gay, 2018).

Paris (2012) shared that political climates often oppose adopting inclusive and equitable practices in education systems. Opposing the implementation of teaching practices that will ensure that minority students succeed academically without losing their sociocultural heritage creates "a monocultural and monolingual society based on White, middle-class norms of language and cultural being" (Paris, 2012, p. 95). An opposite view means that IET implementation can potentially challenge traditional norms in society by sustaining and extending both minority and dominant students' academic experiences into mainstream society, thus allowing citizens to reap the civic benefits of diversity. The higher education community is a microcosm of mainstream society; as such, the pedagogic benefit of diversity can be transformed into civic benefits as students continue to transition into active civic engagements in their communities.

6.4 Implications for Future Research

In chapter one, I identified the gap this study set out to fill by explaining that much work still needs to be done to understand IET in higher education. This study captures the general orientation of a sample of faculty at a research-intensive university by using a sampling approach that depended on two levels of nomination. The method used for identifying faculty who participated in this study is just one possibility out of many, depending on the research questions posed. In expanding this area of research, future studies can examine different participant identification strategies to recruit study participants such that a different perspective of faculty who are reputable for teaching

inclusively and equitably is possible. An example is using students as nominators instead of using the two-level peer nomination strategy employed in this current study. This study focused on one institution type. Exploring faculty perspectives in other institution types can also contribute to our understanding of IET in higher education. Byrd (2016) cited inattention to students' perspectives as a limitation of IET studies. Future studies can also account for students' perspectives on understanding IET.

Although this study explored IET beyond the K-12 setting, faculty in this study emphasized that K-12 educators need to foundationally prepare students to succeed in a multicultural and diverse classroom. Upon this foundation, faculty in higher education will build a transformative experience that will enable students to become social critics of their world (Banks, 1991). Hence, this is an implication for studying how K-12 educators can effectively prepare students to engage in a multicultural classroom filled with individuals from different religious, social, cultural, and national backgrounds.

The experiences of faculty shared in this study represent preliminary work toward understanding IET development and implementation in higher education. As such, this study illuminates IET as one characterized by faculty's willingness to ensure students are included in classroom discussions, connect to course materials and use multimodal assessment strategies (Ladson-Billings, 1995). However, the connection of the IET practices shared by faculty to student academic outcomes is beyond the scope of this study. Sleeter (2012) raised a concern that studies focusing on connecting inclusive teaching practices to student outcomes are rare. Hence, future research can investigate the connection of IET practices to student outcomes.

To combat the danger of marginalization of traditional pedagogy, Sleeter (2012) prescribed the need to orient educators on what IET means in practice. This current study shares the self-reported practices from the faculty interviewed as a starting point. Future studies can observe IET practices as they appear in the college classroom using the conceptual frameworks of respected authors in the field, such as Gay, Ladson-Billings, Villegas, and Lucas, among others. Observing actual IET practices among educators might present us with narratives needed to educate faculty who intend to adopt IET practices and do not know where to start (Debnam et al., 2015). Such studies could explore how faculty attitudes toward IET and their self-reported practices are reflected in the classroom.

Another area of research worth pursuing is using IET in large classrooms. In the data generation phase of this study, some interviewees talked about large classroom sizes as one of the barriers to implementing IET. A large classroom is, however, a reality of higher education, especially in lower-level courses (Herreid, 2006). Technology-based teaching and learning approaches are increasingly embraced in universities. Introducing technology-based and online teaching and learning experience in an attempt to deal with the negative effects of large classrooms on teaching and learning raises concerns about IET implementation in online settings and technology-based instructions. As higher education institutions embrace online teaching as a cost-effective measure, how to establish an inclusive and equitable learning experience in such environments needs to be studied.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in higher education institutions often fail to target the whole areas of student experience (Golom, 2018). If faculty are perceived as change agents in providing inclusive and equitable learning experiences (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009), they are not solely responsible for instituting a widely accepted

culture of equity and inclusion in the classroom. Kezar (2012) noted the importance of administrators' involvement in successfully implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. In this dissertation, I studied the general orientation of faculty towards IET and found that institutional contextual factors impede its implementation. A step further towards understanding IET can explore how higher education administrators think of the phenomenon and their role in its implementation.

Fairweather (1993) cited that higher education institutions reward faculty who contribute to the research mission more than those who are heavily vested in teaching and service. Fairweather (1993) also noted that faculty basic salary decreases as more time is spent on instruction and teaching. Some of the concerns raised by interviewees in this study are the insignificant measure of faculty's contribution to IET in their performance evaluation. Overall, some felt that teaching is not rewarded like research and that diversity efforts relating to teaching do not constitute a significant portion of performance evaluation metrics. Thus, the time faculty spend on implementing IET is not reflected in rewards. A study assessing faculty motivation towards using IET could further our understanding of its adoption in higher education.

6.5 Concluding Thoughts

In concluding this dissertation, it is essential to reflect on the research questions that guided this study. Similar to Gay (2018), I conclude that IET is student-centered in a number of ways as revealed by the findings of this current study. IET is emancipatory in nature because it allows students to be exposed to diverse course materials, thereby widening their conceptions of sources of knowledge. IET is empowering because it accentuates and amplifies the voices of minority and historically underrepresented students

in classroom discussions. IET is transformative because it involves contextualizing objects of study from different cultural perspectives.

Faculty in this study practiced IET by sharing power and ensuring students have agency in the learning process. They developed a caring attitude that allows them to make classroom connections with their students in ways that enable them to engage in meaningful learning experiences for themselves and others. These faculty did not maintain a neutral stance on teaching; instead, it was imperative for them to validate students' sociocultural backgrounds and experiences through their teaching activities. Many of the faculty in this study could engage in IET because they grew up in a diverse community, had prior experience teaching minority populations, or belong to a minority group. In advancing the use of IET in higher education, faculty expressed the critical need for institutional support through reward and teaching resources. Even though the faculty in this study shared they were mainly intrinsically motivated towards using IET, they believed that educating the increasingly diversified student population is not for faculty alone.

As I noted throughout this dissertation, it is vital to ensure that minority students whose sociocultural backgrounds are incongruent with Eurocentric teaching practices feel a sense of belonging and thrive in higher education. Although this dissertation illuminates IET practices that will help faculty who are willing but do not know how to engage in its use, the opportunity to learn more about its conception and use remains. I conclude by encouraging readers of this dissertation, faculty members, and graduate students who are future faculty, to reflect on the question I was asked by one of the faculty in this study: "what can I do better in teaching a diverse classroom?" I, therefore, do not see the practices

reported in this study as an end but a foundation for continuous reflection and modification of IET in higher education.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. DIRECTOR OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES INTRODUCTION EMAIL

Dear [Director of Undergraduate Studies],

I am Adeola Ogunade, a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation at the University of Kentucky. I am currently conducting research for my dissertation under the guidance of Dr. Jeffery Bieber. My research is designed to explore faculty members' general orientation toward the concept of inclusive and equitable teaching in college classrooms.

My research design requires that I interview faculty members who are known to be inclusive or equitable in their teaching. Your department is one of four departments in my sample frame. I am hoping that you are able to nominate faculty in your department with a reputation for equitable and inclusive teaching to participate in my study. Once I receive your response, I will send the nominees a letter detailing the study and interview process and inviting them to participate in my study. I will randomly choose from the names you recommend and contact the first nominee. If the first individual says no, I will proceed to the second nominee. Please feel free to contact me at adeola.ogunade@uky.edu or my advisor at jpbieb01@uky.edu if you have questions.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Adeola Ogunade

APPENDIX B: FACULTY RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear [Dr. xxxx],

I am Adeola Ogunade, a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation at the University of Kentucky. I am currently conducting research for my dissertation. My research is designed to explore faculty member's general orientation toward inclusive and equitable teaching in college classrooms. The research design requires that I interview faculty members who have a reputation as being inclusive and equitable in their teaching. The Director of Undergraduate Studies in your department included your name amongst a list of instructors with a reputation for equitable/inclusive teaching. I am hoping to spend some time with you over Zoom to interview you and learn about your general orientation toward teaching in an inclusive and equitable manner. If you will be interested in participating in my study, which will take approximately 60 minutes of your time, please respond directly to this email. If you are not interested in participating in my study, please notify me as well to prevent me from sending you multiple reminders. Once I receive your response to participate, I will send you another letter detailing the study and consent process. Kindly reach out to me if you have questions at adeola.ogunade@uky.edu.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Adeola Ogunade

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT

I am Adeola Ogunade, a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation at the University of Kentucky. I am currently conducting research for my dissertation under the guidance of Dr. Jeffery Bieber. You are receiving this letter because you indicated your interest in participating in my research study about inclusive and equitable teaching practices of faculty members. This letter will give you more information on the study procedures.

By doing this study, I hope to explore faculty's perspectives on inclusive and equitable teaching practices in higher education. The research procedure will be conducted in form of an interview on Zoom. You will need to attend a one-on-one virtual interview session that will last between 45 minutes to one hour. The interview will be conducted online to mitigate the health concerns relating to COVID-19. You will be asked questions to explore your views on culturally responsive teaching in higher education. The interview session will be video recorded on Zoom, but video generated will be deleted immediately after interview. Only audio recordings will be retained for transcription. There are no known risks to participating in this study. You will not receive any rewards or payment for participating in this study. Although you may not get personal benefit from taking part in this research study, your responses may help us understand more about inclusive and equitable teaching in a college classroom. Some volunteers experience satisfaction from knowing they have contributed to research that may possibly benefit others in the future.

If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. If you volunteer to take part in this study, you will be one of about eight people to do so at the University of Kentucky. You will not lose any services, benefits, or rights

you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can choose to leave this study at any time. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study. If you choose to leave the study early, data collected until that point will remain in the study database and may not be removed.

The identifiable information that will be collected in this study are your years of teaching in higher education and the number of classes you teach. Your information collected for this study will NOT be used or shared for future research studies, even if we remove the identifiable information. When I write about or share the results from the study, I will write about the combined information. I will keep your name and other identifying information private. I will make every effort to safeguard your data, but as with anything online, I cannot guarantee the security of data obtained via the Internet. Third-party applications used in this study such as Zoom may have Terms of Service and Privacy policies outside of the control of the University of Kentucky.

If you have questions, suggestions, or concerns regarding this study or you want to withdraw from the study contact Adeola Ogunade of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation at adeola.ogunade@uky.edu or my advisor at jpbieb01@uky.edu

If you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact staff in the University of Kentucky (UK) Office of Research Integrity (ORI) between the business hours of 8am and 5pm EST, Monday-Friday at 859-257-9428.

Sincerely,

Adeola Ogunade

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction

You have been invited to be a part of this research study because you are a faculty member at the University of Kentucky who might have a great deal of information to share regarding my research topic. My research focuses on faculty members' teaching, with particular interest in understanding inclusive and culturally responsive teaching in higher education. My aim is to learn about faculty teaching practices in a diverse college classroom. This interview has been planned not to exceed one hour.

Pseudonyms: I will assign interviewees color pseudonyms such as Dr. Blue, Dr. Purple, Dr. Orange etc., to differentiate participants' responses.

Part of this interview process involves recording our conversation simply for the data to be analyzed after the session. Zoom record audio-visually but be rest assured that the video recording will be deleted immediately. I will only retain the audio recording of interview to for transcription. Transcription will be done immediately after our session. Do you give consent to be recorded during this interview session?

If yes, I will proceed to recording the session.

If no, I will use notepad and pen to write note interviewee's responses.

Interview Questions:

1. How long have you been teaching at the University of Kentucky? 12 years
2. Tell me about your academic career to date.
3. How many classes do you currently teach? 2 years

4. How will you describe your understanding of inclusive and equitable teaching?
5. How would you describe your philosophy of teaching a diverse classroom? If at all, how have your background experiences shaped the way you teach?
6. You were nominated for this study because of your reputation for teaching in an inclusive and equitable manner. In what ways do you think your teaching is inclusive and equitable?
7. How do you implement inclusive and equitable teaching in the classroom?
8. What factors do you think informed your use inclusive and equitable teaching?
9. What factors encouraged your use of inclusive and equitable teaching?
10. What personal factors, if any, mitigated against your use of inclusive and equitable teaching?
11. What organizational factors, if any, mitigated against your use of inclusive and equitable teaching?
12. Can you describe a time that you had difficulty teaching a culturally diverse classroom? How did you handle the situation?
13. In what ways do you think inclusive and equitable teaching will be difficult to implement in higher education? What concerns do you have about its implementation in higher education?
14. Who can you nominate to be part of my study?
15. Lastly, is there anything else you would like to add to our discussion today that you wish I had asked?

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technology, engineering, and math courses. *Physical Review. Physics Education Research*, *17*(2), 020140–. https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevPhysEducRes.17.020140

VITA

Education

May 2017	Master of Science, Agricultural Education and Communication *University of Florida, Gainesville, FL*
July 2012	Bachelor of Agricultural Science, Animal Science *Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria*

Professional Positions Held

Evaluation and Communication Specialist, November 2020 – present
West Virginia University, West Virginia University Extension Service

Extension Associate, Program and Staff Development and Reporting, June 2017 – October 2020
Kentucky State University, College of Agriculture, Communities, and the Environment (CACE)

Publications and Conference Presentations

Ogunade A. C., Abeleje, R., & Kruger, M. (2023). Assessing Extension Educators' Motivation for Program Evaluation Using Self Determination Theory. Journal of Extension

Ogunade, A. C., Plein, C., & Kruger, M. (2021). Assessing Extension Educators' Motivation to Engage in Program Evaluation. National Association of Extension Program and Staff Development Professionals [Conference Presentation].

Kruger, M. & Ogunade, A. C. (2022). Making Sense of Your Research and Evaluation Data. West Virginia University Extension Annual Conference [Conference Presentation].

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