

Finding Culturally Inclusive Instructional Strategies: “Because of Who I Am, Not in Spite Of”

Colleen M. Smith
K. Bret Staudt Willet





Colleen M. Smith, Ed.D.
North Carolina Central University



K. Bret Staudt Willet, Ph.D.
Florida State University

Inclusive Online Learning Solutions, LLC

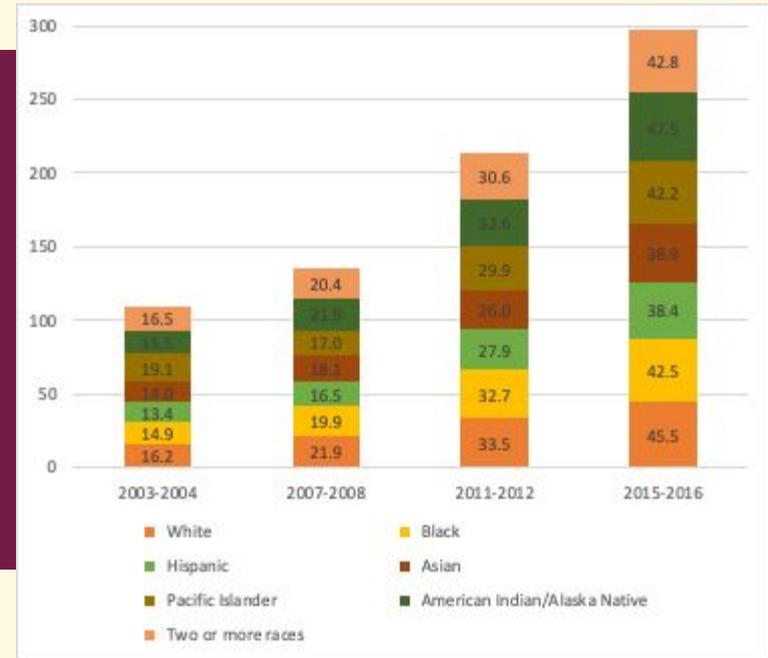


Background

Historically underserved students do not share the same level of success as their white and higher-income counterparts, identified as the “Success Gap”.

(Green, 2006; Green et al., 2017; Buchan et al., 2020)

Percent of Undergraduate Students Enrolling in Any Online Classes



National Center for Education Statistics, 2019



Background

The Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program is a federally-funded program to increase the number of underrepresented students, who are either first-generation with financial need, or members of a group that is traditionally underrepresented in graduate education

(Jett et al., 2016; Gittens, 2014; McNair Scholars Program, n.d.)

Funded Programs

Funds were awarded to 187 institutions of higher education in 2022-2021 & 2021-2022, and 189 in 2022-2023 academic years

189



Problem of Practice

A gap exists between the **needs of historically underserved students seeking online support services** in higher education and the **practical knowledge** of student services administrators to design effective online learning environments (Ali, 2020; Renbarger et al., 2021a)



Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore **culturally sustaining online instructional strategies** that Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program students services administrators who are “**Designers-by-Assignment,**” (DBA) implement to aid in the **success of diverse students.**

Conceptual Framework

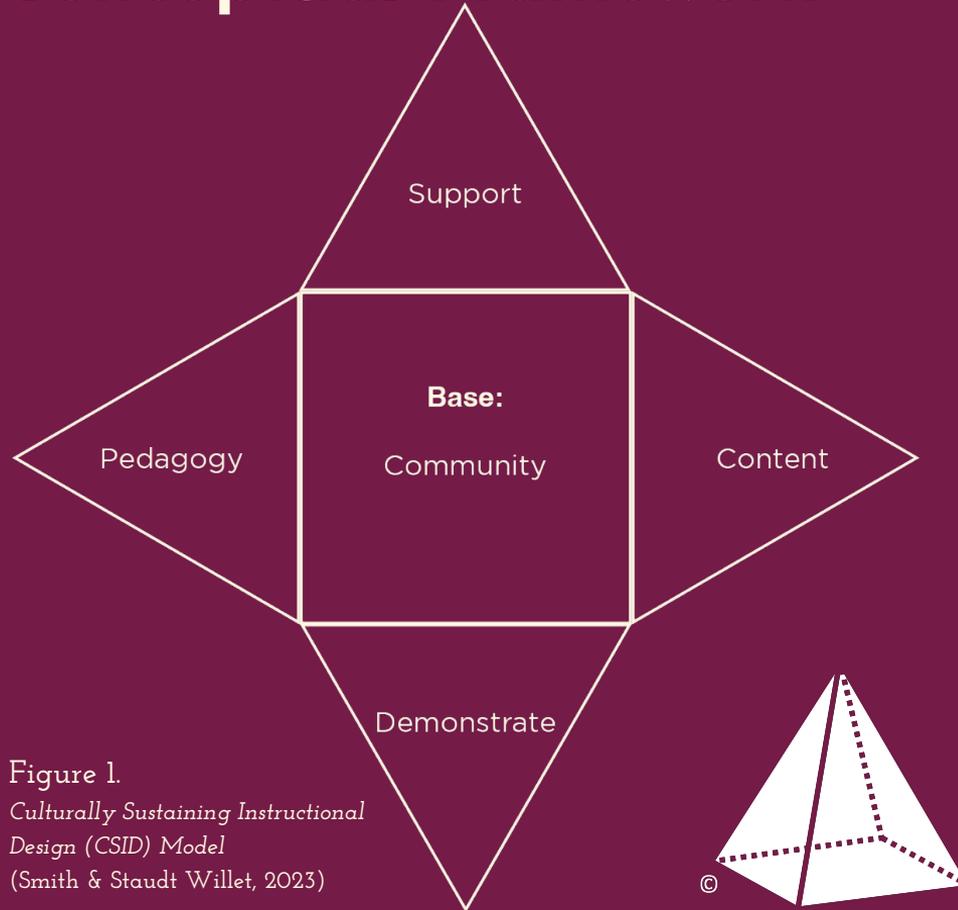


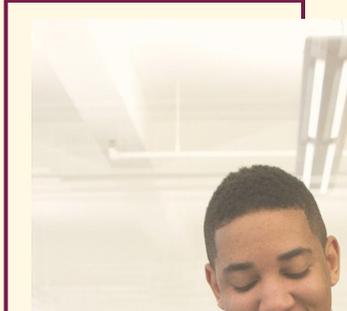
Figure 1.
Culturally Sustaining Instructional Design (CSID) Model
(Smith & Staudt Willet, 2023)



Culturally Sustaining Instructional Design Model

(Smith & Staudt Willet, 2023)

- **Integrated Multicultural Instructional Design model**
(Higbee et al., 2012)
- **Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy**
(Paris, 2012)



RQ1

Which culturally inclusive instructional strategies do McNair designers-by-assignment (DBAs) use, if any?



RQ2

Why do McNair DBAs use the identified inclusive instructional strategies?



RQ3

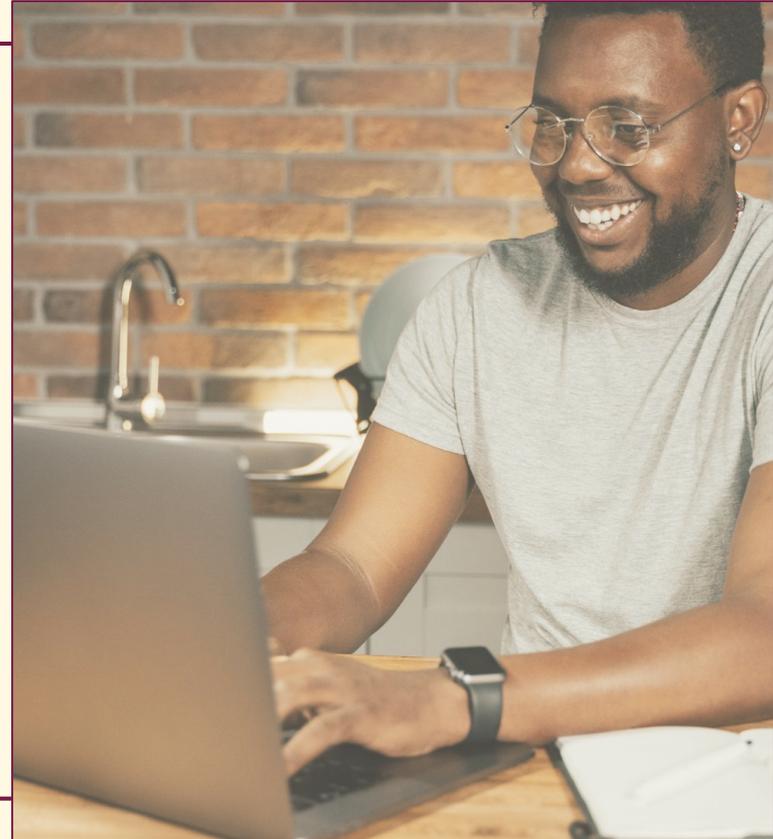
How do McNair DBAs assess the effectiveness of these strategies?



Method

Research Design

- ◀ **Qualitative research design:**
multiple case study (Creswell, 2013)
- ◀ **Cases bound by:**
 - ◀ Institutions
 - ◀ Recipients of the federal grant program
 - ◀ DBAs who work with the McNair Scholars Program





Method

Participants

- ◀ Purposeful, snowball sample
- ◀ Inclusion Criteria:
 - ◀ Ronald E. McNair Scholars Staff
 - ◀ Designed an online learning environment in the past 3 years
 - ◀ Not formally trained in ISD (DBA)

McNair Staff
completed the
Recruitment Survey | 16

Fit the
Inclusion
Criteria | 12

Scheduled
Interviews | 11



Recruitment
Survey



Website
Review



Interview



Method

Trustworthiness

- ◀ **Validity:** Member-checking
- ◀ **Reliability:** Audit Trail of Analysis
- ◀ **Credibility:** Multiple Cycles of Thematic Coding

(Creswell, 2013)



Data Analysis



Stage 1



Identify recurring ideas

Stage 2



Organize into broader themes

Identify connections between themes

Stage 3



Select defining quotes

Member checking



RQ1 Which culturally inclusive instructional strategies do McNair designers-by-assignment (DBAs) use, if any?

Inclusive Strategies

Theme 1

Create a Space for Authentic Learning

Sub-Themes

Build a System

Define the Purpose

Define the Characteristics

Participant	LMS	Teleconferencing Platform	Communication Platform	Organization Platform
Abby	●	●		
Andy	●	●		
Ann			●	●
Beth			●	●
Bob	●	●		
Ethel	●	●		
Inspired		●	●	●
Maria	●	●		
Pechez	●	●		
Rene	●	●		
Sophia	●	●	●	●



RQ1 Which culturally inclusive instructional strategies do McNair designers-by-assignment (DBAs) use, if any?

Inclusive Strategies

Theme 1

Create a Space for Authentic Learning

Theme 2

Create Access to Learning Materials

Sub-Themes

Build a System

Define the Purpose

Define the Characteristics

“

All of my appointments can be either in person or on Zoom. If students have to miss because they can't come to our in-person session, I'll always send them a Zoom link and record it that day.

”



RQ1 Which culturally inclusive instructional strategies do McNair designers-by-assignment (DBAs) use, if any?

Inclusive Strategies

Theme 1

Create a Space for Authentic Learning

Theme 2

Create Access to Learning Materials

Theme 3

Select an Inclusive Instructional Approach

Use Inclusive Pedagogy

Design & Deliver Content Inclusively

Sub-Themes

Build a System

Define the Purpose

Define the Characteristics

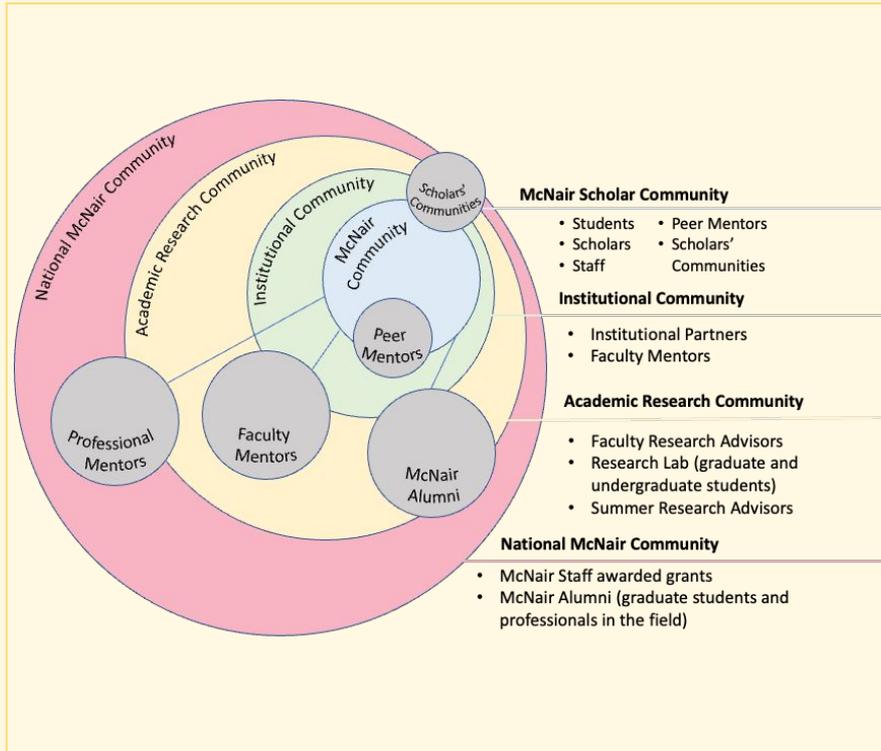
“ I exist and succeed in this environment because of who I am, not in spite of who I am. ”



RQ1 Which culturally inclusive instructional strategies do McNair designers-by-assignment (DBAs) use, if any?

Inclusive Strategies

Sub-Themes



Theme 4

Create a Network of Support

Build Community

Theme 5

Clarify Expectations

Clarify Engagement Expectations

Theme 6

Be Flexible

Adapt Content

Offer Multiple Opportunities



RQ1 Which culturally inclusive instructional strategies do McNair designers-by-assignment (DBAs) use, if any?

Inclusive Strategies

Sub-Themes

“
So initially we required everyone’s cameras to be on in Zoom, you know. Then we realized that it wasn't culturally and realistically sensitive to the needs of the students... ”

Theme 5

Clarify
Expectations

Clarify
Engagement
Expectations

Theme 6

Be Flexible

Adapt Content

Offer Multiple
Opportunities



RQ1 Which culturally inclusive instructional strategies do McNair designers-by-assignment (DBAs) use, if any?

Inclusive Strategies

Sub-Themes

“ We've recognized how important it was for students to be able to talk about the things that mattered to them outside of an academic context. And how important it was to be able to exchange ideas and understand different perspectives.

”

Theme 6

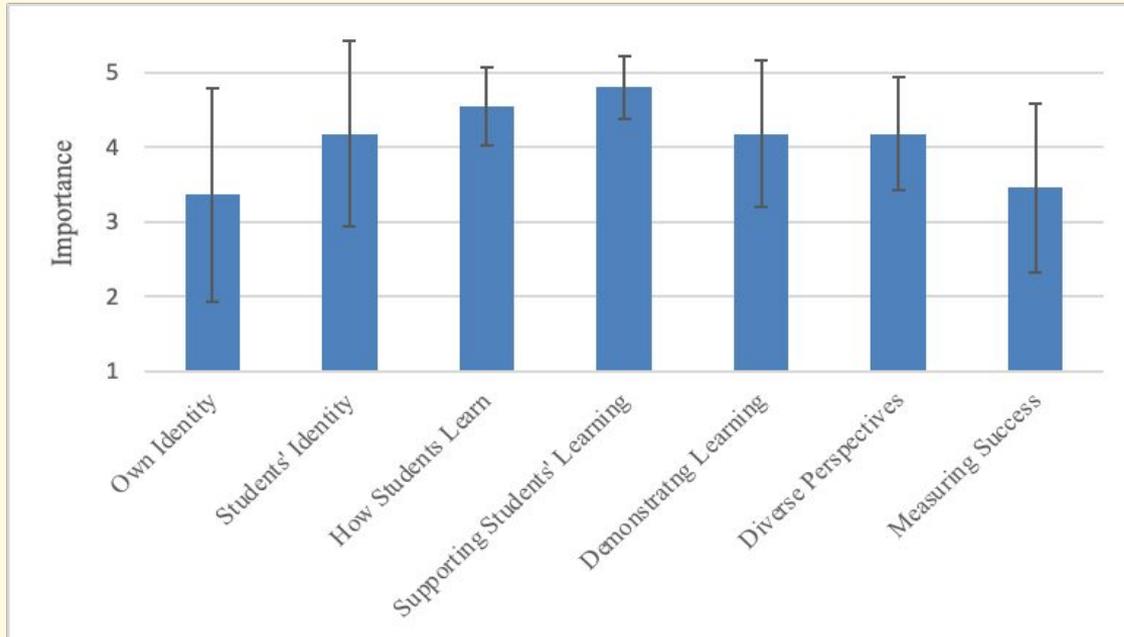
Be Flexible

Adapt Content

Offer Multiple Opportunities

RQ2 Why do McNair DBAs use the identified inclusive instructional strategies?

Figure 3. Importance of DBAs' Considerations when Designing Online Learning Environments ($n=11$)



Themes

Sub-Themes

Theme 1

Contextual Factors

Importance to DBA

COVID Transition

DBA & Student Experiences

Theme 2

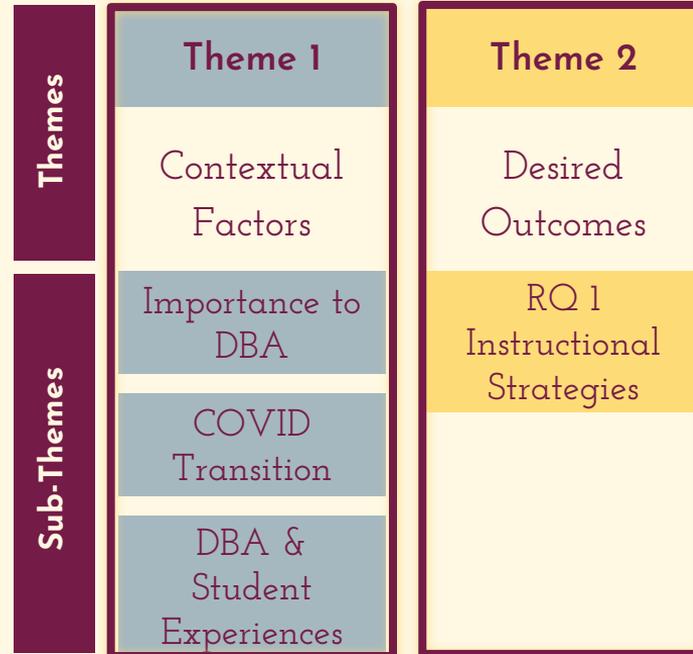
Desired Outcomes

RQ 1 Instructional Strategies



RQ2 Why do McNair DBAs use the identified inclusive instructional strategies?

“
When I think about my own identities, a lot of the times I've seen myself in the scholars so much that I am basically helping them to unlearn things that I wish I had unlearned at that time.”





RO2 Why do McNair DBAs use the identified inclusive instructional strategies?

Table 3. Culturally Sustaining Instructional Strategies, their challenges and opportunities address, and the desired outcome of the strategies implemented

Theme 4	Inclusive Strategy	Challenges/Opportunities	Desired Outcome
Create a Network of Support	Capture an alumni sharing her mental health journey in a video texting app	"...With her permission, I shared a video with a current scholar who is having a similar mental health journey."	... "I think a lot of like what I try to do is craft those connection points."
Build Community			



RO2 Why do McNair DBAs use the identified inclusive instructional strategies?

Table 3. Culturally Sustaining Instructional Strategies, their challenges and opportunities address, and the desired outcome of the strategies implemented

Theme 2	Inclusive Strategy	Challenges/Opportunities	Desired Outcome
Create Access to Learning Materials	Build more robust PowerPoints & Use intentional language	"So, I'm not First Gen, but I grew up low-income and you know I am white. So I did have a level of privilege that came with my race. But I think I grew up like in a poor family...I was very aware of the haves and have-nots."	"I was just making sure the students felt like they weren't being excluded because of their own financial or cultural or living experiences that they could access the materials when they needed."



RO2 Why do McNair DBAs use the identified inclusive instructional strategies?

Table 3. Culturally Sustaining Instructional Strategies, their challenges and opportunities address, and the desired outcome of the strategies implemented

Theme 6	Inclusive Strategy	Challenges/Opportunities	Desired Outcome
Be Flexible	Create community guidelines, but be flexible within those guidelines	"...With the identities we have, we have been socialized to not center ourselves. We have been socialized to help everyone else or to do things ourselves and on our own...The value of the community wasn't expressed to me when I was in a similar program and... my voice wasn't centered"	"The student feels like their voice matters"
Adapt Content			
Offer Multiple Opportunities			



RQ3 How do McNair DBAs assess the effectiveness of these strategies?

Table 4. Assessing the Effectiveness of Inclusive Instructional Strategies

Participant	Feedback Loop	Observing	Measuring	Issues
Abby	●	●	●	●
Andy	●	●		
Ann		●	●	
Beth	●		●	
Bob	●	●	●	
Ethel		●		●
Inspired		●		
Maria	●	●	●	
Pechez		●	●	
Rene	●		●	●
Sophia	●	●		●

Discussion

6 Culturally Sustaining Instructional Strategies:

1. Create a Space for Authentic Learning
2. Create Access to Learning Materials
3. Select an Inclusive Instructional Approach
4. Create a Network of Support
5. Clarify Expectations
6. Be Flexible

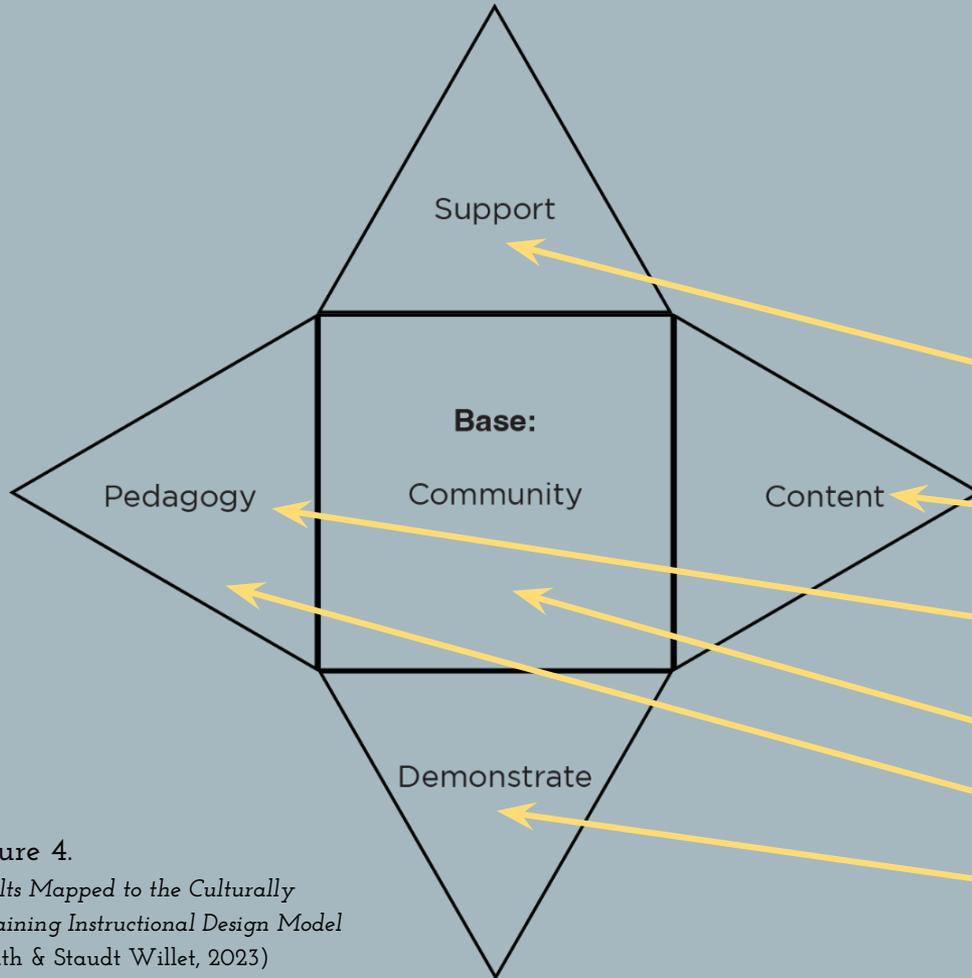


Figure 4.
Results Mapped to the Culturally Sustaining Instructional Design Model
(Smith & Staudt Willet, 2023)



Implications

- This study...
 - Informs the McNair community of effective inclusive instructional strategies.
 - Informs gaps in higher education student services preparation programs
-



Limitations

Generalizability

Influence of Researcher



Future Research

- Trends of inclusive instructional strategies in online student support services
- Students' perspective of the CSID model
- Effects using the CSID model:
 - Instructional Designers
 - Online Academic Support Programs





Thank you all for your time and valuable feedback.

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Committee Members:
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Tamara Bertrand Jones, Ph.D.

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Where do I go from here?



[JAID Publication](#)



[Dissertation](#)



[CSID Card Deck](#)



[Research Poster](#)

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