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EXPANDING ACCESS AND IMPACT: CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES FOR HISPANIC GRADUATE STUDENTS IN VIRTUAL ACADEMIC SPACES

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ABSTRACT

Aim/Purpose	This paper investigates the challenges Hispanic graduate students face in online education, focusing on disparities in satisfaction and academic outcomes. It aims to identify and implement culturally responsive teaching strategies and community-building practices that promote equity and success.
Background	The study addresses the problem by exploring how tailored, culturally grounded instructional strategies and virtual community practices can mitigate feelings of isolation, improve engagement, and foster academic achievement among Hispanic students.
Methodology	Using a qualitative, autoethnographic approach, the researcher analyzed data from 122 Hispanic graduate students enrolled in online courses. Data sources included Student Ratings of Instruction (SRIs), reflective journals, and informal feedback, complemented by descriptive statistics.
Contribution	The study contributes to the literature by identifying effective, scalable, culturally responsive teaching practices that support Hispanic students in online learning environments. It offers practical insights grounded in student voices and integrated theoretical frameworks.
Findings	The findings of this paper are the following. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personalized feedback increases emotional connection and motivation• Culturally relevant curricula enhance student satisfaction and engagement

The full paper has been published as the following and is being presented at this conference:

Chernosky, J. (2025). Expanding access and impact: culturally responsive practices for Hispanic graduate students in virtual academic spaces. *Issues in Informing Science and Information Technology*, 22, Article 15. <https://doi.org/10.28945/5557>

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Culturally Responsive Practices

- Peer support networks reduce isolation and build community
- Students reported growth in confidence, academic goals, and creativity

Recommendations for Practitioners	Implement culturally affirming feedback, include cultural content in the curriculum, create virtual community spaces, address language barriers through multimodal tools, and establish intentional peer mentorship programs.
Recommendation for Researchers	Expand research to other cultural and linguistic groups using mixed-methods and comparative designs. Examine how strategies perform across different modalities and educational levels.
Impact on Society	These practices help close equity gaps in higher education, enhancing institutional inclusivity and promoting diverse student success. They also support international and underserved populations facing similar challenges.
Future Research	Investigate the adaptability of these strategies across varied cultural groups, educational settings, and course formats. Further studies should explore undergraduate, doctoral, and international student populations.
Keywords	culturally responsive teaching, online education, Hispanic, graduate students, community, equity

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Dr. Jeffery Chernosky is an Assistant Professor (Doctoral Faculty) and Coordinator of the Educational Administration and Instructional Technology graduate programs at Texas A&M University–Kingsville. He has over 30 years of professional experience, including roles in education, instructional design, and leadership development. Dr. Chernosky earned his Doctorate in Educational Leadership and advanced degrees in Curriculum and Technology. His academic and professional endeavors center on culturally responsive teaching, online and blended learning environments, leadership development, and student engagement, with particular attention to Hispanic and multicultural educational contexts. He has published extensively and presented internationally, offering significant contributions to the fields of cultural capital, innovative instructional technologies, and strategies for promoting student success and satisfaction in virtual academic spaces.