Graziella Pagliarulo McCarron, Ph.D.
George Mason University

Aoi Yamanaka, Ph.D.
George Mason University

REFLECTING BACK AND GOING FORWARD:
Promising Pedagogical Practices for Culturally Relevant/Sustaining and Equitable Online Leadership Education

Abstract

According to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, in the fall of 2020, 72.8% of U.S. postsecondary students were enrolled in distance education courses—up from 36.3% in the fall of 2019. While this surge may be explained by a number of factors, one of the most significant factors is the COVID-19-induced pivot to online learning. The rapid and intense expansion in distance education due to COVID-19 offered learners some sense of continuity in their studies, but it also revealed stark inequities in learner resources and access—especially for students of Color and students from lower-income households. Further, as COVID-19 spread, the U.S. roiled in a "twin pandemic" of racial injustice that continued to metastasize—spawning more pain-points such as online environments where racism became unmasked when face-to-face norms were abandoned. These revelations about the shadow side of online learning are particularly concerning in the context of leadership education and its commitment to inclusion, collaboration, and holism. Given this new context for online leadership education, the purpose of this piece is to reflect on how the Journal of Leadership Education has shepherded the journey of online leadership education and what the future of this journey might look like for online leadership educators committed to change. Scaffolded by the Community of Inquiry model, we offer promising practices that address cognitive, social, teaching, and learner presence in the pursuit of culturally relevant/sustaining and equitable online leadership education.

Introduction

According to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (USDOE-NCES) (2020), in the fall of 2020, 72.8% of U.S. postsecondary students were enrolled in distance education courses—up from 36.3% in the fall of 2019. While this surge may be explained by a number of significant factors is the COVID-19-induced pivot to online learning (USDOE-NCES, 2022). The rapid and intense expansion in distance education due to COVID-19 offered learners some sense of continuity in their

studies, but it also revealed stark inequities in learner resources and access—especially for students of color and students from lower-income households (Means & Neisler, 2021; Mize & Glover, 2021; Shin & Hickey, 2021). Further, as COVID-19 spread, the U.S. roiled in a "twin pandemic" (Hershberg & Sandmeyer, 2021, p. 439) of racial injustice that continued to metastasize—spawning more pain-points such as online environments where racism became unmasked when face-to-face norms were abandoned (Eschmann, 2020). These revelations about the shadow side of online learning are particularly concerning in the context of leadership education and its commitment to inclusion. Rost and Barker (2000) offered that "leadership education is aimed at producing citizens for a democratic society" (p. 1) by emphasizing "collaboration, wholeness, consensus, client-orientation, civic virtues..." (p. 5) and laboring toward "global connections, diversity, pluralism, critical dialogue, and multidisciplinary perspectives" (p. 5). How can we foster this inclusion and wholeness when the online learning environment may be inaccessible or marginalizing? As we modernize our leadership education offerings and expand further into online modalities, how do we evolve the ways in which we center equity in pedagogy and how do we ensure that all students feel as though they matter in these specific learning contexts?

The aforementioned questions are not new—they have been asked by hosts of scholars and practitioners (including us) in pursuit of re-imagining leadership education. Yet, in this mid-COVID-19 era, how we respond to these questions in light of the inequities revealed requires more—more intentionality, more deconstruction of standing pedagogy, more self-awareness of our own positionalities as educators, more centering of marginalized learner voices and stories, and more obliteration of barriers to access. Given this new context for online leadership education, the purpose of this piece is to reflect on how the Journal of Leadership Education has shepherded the journey of leadership education and what the future of this journey might look like for online leadership educators committed to change. We offer this reflection humbly as curricular and co-curricular leadership educators, developers of online leadership curriculum, student-centered scholar-practitioners, and, more importantly, as learners ourselves. Much of this work has been inspired by the needs of our own students as they reflected on the rapid COVID-19 transition from face-to-face to online leadership learning in the Spring of 2020.

In this piece, our understanding of "culturally relevant/sustaining" pedagogy will be guided by the work of both Ladson-Billings (1994; 1995; 2021) and Paris (2012; 2021). Ladson-Billings's (1995) conceptualization of culturally relevant teaching affirms that it is a "pedagogy of opposition…committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment" (p. 160). Emerging from their three-year study of successful school teachers working with Black/African-American students, Ladson-Billings (1995) posited that

> Culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three criteria or propositions: (a) students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order. (p. 160).

Culturally relevant pedagogy not only centers academic skills (e.g., literacy, numeracy), but it also honors students' culture(s) of origin (e.g., language, traditions) and prioritizes students' capacity to think critically and interrogate cultural norms (Ladson-Billings, 1994; 1995). Paris (2012; 2021) expanded culturally relevant teaching to "culturally sustaining" teaching, noting that culturally sustaining teaching "requires that our pedagogies be more than responsive of or relevant to the cultural experiences and practices of young people—it requires that they support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities" (Paris, 2012, p. 95). Culturally sustaining pedagogy reframes learning environments into spaces where marginalized students are vital and co-creators of knowledge.

In this piece, our focus on culturally relevant/sustaining online leadership education will go hand-in-hand with reflecting on and providing

promising practices for equitable online leadership education. We will situate some of our discussion in the Universal Design for Learning framework (UDL; Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), 2018). The UDL guidelines address equity and accessibility in learning via inclusive teaching practices that stimulate motivation across various forms of learner engagement, multiple means of content representation, and multiple means of learning action and expression (CAST, 2018). Both the culturally relevant/sustaining framework and the UDL model will help us look back and forge ahead—considering the intersection of teaching advancements, learning technology, shifts in pedagogy and andragogy, and leadership's relationship to justice and equity. We do so with the aim of furthering discussion on how digital pedagogy can both be re-imagined and transformed and how it can be more deeply transformative. In their commentary on higher education's current critical juncture with regard to digital transformation, Joseph (2022) noted that "digital enablement isn't limited to technology – it's challenging us to think differently about processes, people, and how to engage our students" (p. 1, para. 1). We wrestle with this challenge here and, via the Community of Inquiry (COI) model (Garrison et al., 2000; Shea & Bidjerano, 2010), offer promising practices that address cognitive, social, teaching, and learner presence in the pursuit of culturally relevant/sustaining and equitable online leadership education.

Reflecting Back: JOLE and Online Leadership Education

For this work, we engaged in a review of articles published in the Journal of Leadership Education since its founding that intersected with online leadership education—12 articles emerged, and the pieces highlighted below are aligned with our positionalities as educators. In two of these articles, Manning-Ouellette and Black (2017) and Ann and Aziz (2022) compared online leadership education with in-person (i.e., face-to-face (F2F)) leadership education. Specifically, Manning-Ouellette and Black conducted a directed content analysis of 53 students' assignments to explore differences in student learning in the online and F2F class environments. They found that students in the online course engaged in a deeper level of application of leadership theory to personal experiences, whereas students in F2F classes exhibited diminished learning and critical thinking. Manning-Ouellette and Black suggested that the insular nature of the F2F class format prevented students from fuller analysis of course content because of immediate verbal reflection that occurs between students and instructors—i.e., students had less time to think before contributing to the class discussion. In the online class, however, students navigated a range of information before articulating application—the online class provided more opportunity and time for reflection. Akin to Manning-Ouellette and Black, Ann and Aziz—in their examination of perceptions and experiences of postgraduate students at a Kenyan university— also confirmed that students had opportunities for deeper leadership learning in the online course format. However, the researchers also found that the online leadership courses were overall less effective and less accountability-oriented than the F2F environments.

In tandem with Manning-Ouellette and Black (2017) and Ann and Aziz (2022), Moore (2008) offered deep guidance for creating quality online environments. They focused on fostering students' sense of community in online classes by providing learners with the opportunity to integrate personal experiences into the course via a small group project. Relatedly, McRay et al. (2016) highlighted student-moderated discussion boards as a means to enhance student engagement in online leadership classes and underscored the importance of student facilitation and co-creation. Odom and McKee (2018) also focused on engagement and found that students enriched their leadership competency and efficacy through interaction with exercises that spoke to "understanding of self, value of understanding self, ability to understand self, and the behavior of enhancing their understanding of self" (p. 118). Similarly, Nguyen (2014) centered this notion of understanding and offered that deep reflection through experiential learning and collaborative work with other students who were culturally and ideologically different allowed students to develop a better sense of self as culturally relevant leaders.

Shifting to an equity and access lens, a number of Journal of Leadership Education pieces have argued that online classes have enhanced access and learning opportunities for various student populations (e.g., students with disabilities, first-generation students, adult learners, professionals, students who work multiple jobs) (e.g., Guthrie et al., 2022; Noopila & Pichon, 2022). However—as COVID-19 so clearly illustrated—students still face significant challenges in online learning given the very real digital divide that creates inequity and potential dehumanization (Richards et al., 2021). In their Kenya-based study, Ann and Aziz (2022) found that students faced accessibility issues in their online classes due to a lack of reliable internet connection and affordable devices. Students in the United States have encountered similar accessibility issues (Means & Neisler, 2021; Mize & Glover, 2021). In addition to stable connections and bandwidth, students also struggle with accessibility with respect to course materials. In their work, Gin et al. (2022) examined the degree to which students with disabilities were being properly accommodated in online classes, and they found that more than half of their student sample faced challenges with video-proctoring software, limited access to a distraction-free environment, and a lack of accommodation from instructors despite official documentation. Given all of the Journal of Leadership Education work shared above and what we know about the continued full-body-brain impacts of COVID-19 on online learning, identifying strategic, inclusive, and equitable pedagogy is critical for sustaining student engagement and for continuing to care for students as whole people (Cash et al., 2021; Goertzen & Squire, 2019). Via this applications-based piece, we hope to offer online leadership educators (and leadership educators, in general) support on the path forward toward deeper teaching and do so in the context of culturally relevant/sustaining and equitable pedagogical practices.

Going Forward: Promising Pedagogical Practices

From the brief review above of the Journal of Leadership Education's last 20 years of discussion regarding online/distance leadership education, we are heartened at the growing focus on inclusive and equitable online leadership education. Scholars have interrogated the depth of critical thinking and expression of lived experience in online formats (see, Manning-Ouellette & Black, 2017), examined the role of co-creation in students' sense of community (see, McRay et al., 2016; Moore, 2008), and explored the power of reflection in facilitating learning across culture and ideology (see, Nguyen, 2014). Yet, though engagement with creating equitable, inclusive online leadership learning environments has been robust, we also recognize that the path ahead requires an expansion of this focus. As such, in the promising practices below, we offer fodder for evolving online leadership education that is scaffolded by the Community of Inquiry (COI) model (Garrison et al., 2000). Grounded in the work of John Dewey, the COI framework articulates the interactional nature of social, teaching, and cognitive presence in online learning and "is consistent with constructivist approaches to learning in higher education" (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007, p. 158). Adding to the COI, Shea and Bidjerano (2010) offered learner presence, positing that effective online learning must engage learner experiences, self-efficacy, and agency. In this current work, we call on all four elements of presence, and we have emphasized learner presence/student-centeredness as an all-encompassing context. Figure 1 details the holistic COI framework scaffolding the practices we share.

Figure 1

Holistic Community of Inquiry Model for Online Learning
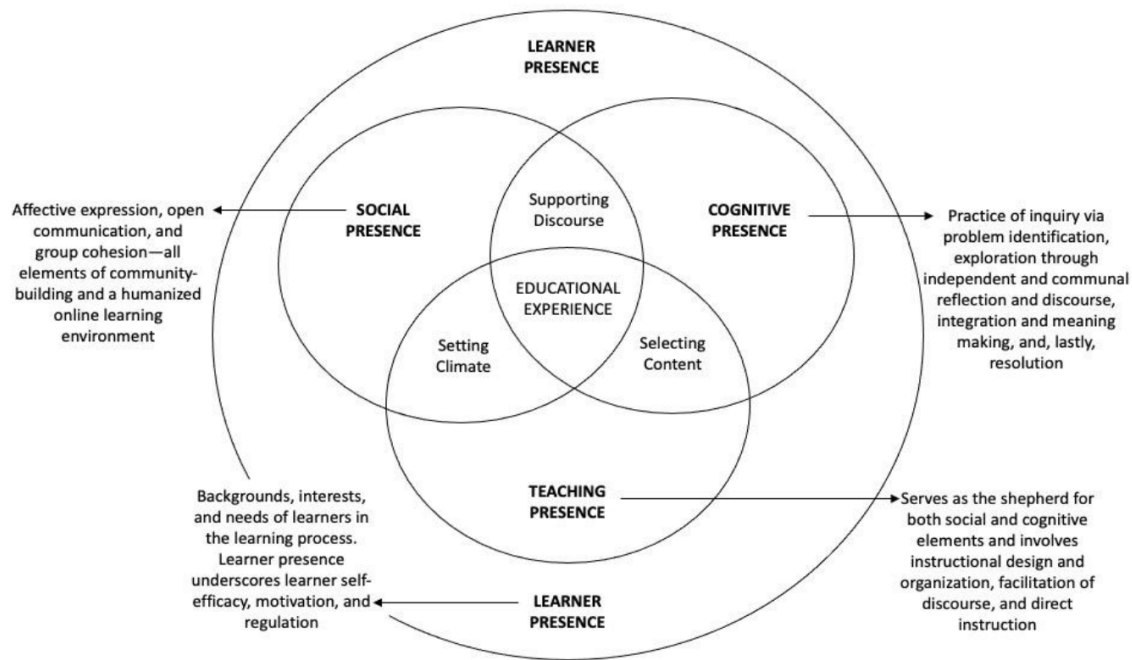
Note: Adapted from Garrison et al. (2000) and Shea and Bidjerano (2010)

Given the holistic COI framework for online learning above, we have mapped each of the four COI elements (i.e., learner, social, teaching, and cognitive presence) to pedagogical practices that reflect culturally relevant/sustaining and UDL/equity-grounded online leadership education. For example, teaching presence encompasses instructional design and, as such, below we offer course design practices that center culturally relevant/sustaining approaches and UDL/equity tenets. As noted by Hanesworth et al. (2019), we recognize the fluidity between the concepts of cultural relevance and equity; while we address them separately for each COI presence, many of the practices intersect and offer educators a fuller perspective on creating inclusive climates. The ideas we share below are grounded in Journal of Leadership Education work as well as practices situated in broader scholarship of teaching and learning, student perspectives, and our own experiences as online leadership course developers and educators.

Learner Presence. Per Shea and Bidjerano (2010), learner presence speaks to student "self-efficacy as well as other cognitive, behavioral, and motivational constructs supportive of online learner self-regulation" (p. 1) and their active roles in the online learning community. The concept of self-efficacy is especially salient given that it is an individual's judgment of their own competence and can be shaped by students' identities (e.g., race, age, gender) and experiences (Amnie, 2018). Thus, going forward, as online leadership educators, we must continue to challenge ourselves to identify online pathways for supporting the self-efficacy of our learners by paying attention to our students as whole people. We emphasize this point because the digital divide in learning is real and is especially salient for students with marginalized and minoritized identities (Francis & Weller, 2021). Tables 1-2 below offer promising pedagogical practices that speak to this wholeness and the honoring and uplifting of individual learners' lived experiences.

Table 1
Culturally Relevant/Sustaining Teaching Practices to Foster Learning Presence

Commitment	Practices
Culturally relevant/ sustaining online leadership education	*Preposition 1: Learner must experience academic success* **Draw on issues/topics that students find meaningful** in their own lives (e.g., activism, work, family, social identities) and amplify learner voices via assignments (e.g., journals, collaborative projects, reflections) that sit at the intersection of class content and students' lived experience (see also Honig & Salmon, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 1995; 2021). **Foster learner self-regulation and motivation** by conducting reality checks with students as a way to understand challenges and assess their confidence in managing the course or program content. Engage students in authentic relationships and actively build student agency and capacity (e.g., comment on good work or potential of work, relate comments to the students' story), and do so using an array of technological tools to include audio/video (see also Gay, 2018). *Preposition 2: Learner must develop/maintain cultural competence* **Encourage constructive, trust-based co-regulation among learners**—i.e., foster opportunities for all learners to serve as support and scaffold for each other via engagement across difference and lived experiences (see also Hayes et al., 2015). This approach might include online peer reviews and peer teaching. *Preposition 3: Learner must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order* **Interrogate "common ground rules" for online class discussion** or [n]etiquette that sustain dominant ideologies. Rules such as "assume good intentions" could be silencing and problematic for students with marginalized or minoritized identities because they leave no room for agency. Instead, consider rules that allow for marginalized learner voices to be amplified (e.g., "engaging constructively with alternative perspectives," "consider power relations and your positionality," "tolerate ambiguity") (see also Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014).

Table 2
Equitable Teaching Practices to Foster Learning Presence

Commitment	Practices
Equitable online leadership education	**Focus on the affective networks of Universal Design for Learning** (UDL; CAST, 2018) by providing *multiple means for learner engagement* that center students' full selves and purposes for learning. Consider how we motivate students and how we support them in accessing, building, and internalizing their specific "why" of learning. ● **Remove as many threats to engagement** and learning agency as possible by setting clear expectations and

creating routines across online learning modules so that students can prepare cognitively and affectively (see also Moore 2019; Tucker, 2021). For example, begin every online learning week with clear learning outcomes and a full explanation (e.g., via video) of purpose for the week's activities.
- **Foster motivation and interest by enabling choice and autonomy** in readings and projects and by relating coursework to students' authentic selves (see also Evmenova, 2021; Kieran & Anderson, 2019).
- **Sustain student effort and efficacy by offering mastery-oriented feedback** that moves away from short-term performance measures but supports students for long-term success (see also Fong et al., 2021).

Social Presence. While learner presence focuses on learner self-efficacy and agency, social presence emphasizes *relationships* in the learning community. Boston et al. (2010) asserted that social presence is "the basis of collaborative learning and the foundation for meaningful, constructivist learning online….and can be described as the ability of learners to project themselves socially and emotionally as well as their ability to perceive other learners as 'real people'" (p. 68). Social presence speaks to humanization in an effort to establish connection, care, and mutual understanding (Bangert, 2008; Garrison et al., 2000), which can be challenging given the digital divide. To this point, social presence is characterized by three components: (a) affective expression, (b) open communication, and (c) group cohesion (Garrison et al., 2000). Tables 3-4 below offer practices that make space for each of these social presence components.

Table 3

Culturally Relevant/Sustaining Teaching Practices to Foster Social Presence

Commitment	Practices
Culturally relevant/ sustaining online leadership education	*Preposition 1: Learner must experience academic success* **Position students for academic success by fostering community**. Reflect on the online community and learners' unique backgrounds. Seek out a photo roster of online students and welcome learners to share preferred names and pronouns. Encourage learners to offer a narrative or video noting how they feel coming into the class, their hopes for learning, their areas of expertise or uncertainty, their concerns about motivation, purpose, or efficacy, their experiences with leadership education, and/or their feelings about online learning (see also Gay, 2018; Pacansky-Brock et al., 2020). **Show empathy and care for learners via intentional outreach**—especially with regard to students who are struggling or feel marginalized or "other." Focus on relationships before teaching (see also Pacansky-Brock et al., 2020; Palacios & Wood, 2016). ● **Post video/audio** or use innovative, accessible teaching tools (e.g., Flipgrid) that **reveal the real instructor**, and encourage students to do the same—foster constructive vulnerability in an effort to normalize Imposter Syndrome (see also Hammond, 2014). ● **Consider offering an in-person gathering** to bolster a sense of community and trust-building (see also Child et al., 2021). *Preposition 2: Learner must develop/maintain cultural competence* **Create opportunities for collaboration and empathy-building** via group projects and/or fluid discussion during asynchronous or synchronous modules in an effort to foster conversations across difference. Invite in, via discussion or video, guests who are important to students and/or help students make meaning of their culture and lived experiences (see also Kumi-Yeboah, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995). *Preposition 3: Learner must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order* **Consider learners' identities and the role of power** in how they engage with each other and the instructor. Assess virtual spaces and unmask elements that perpetuate othering and diminish empathy (e.g., Ask "Is affective expression, communication, and group cohesion involving all students?") (see also Gay, 2018; Phirangee & Malec, 2017).

Table 4
Equitable Teaching Practices to Foster Social Presence

Commitment	Practice
Equitable online leadership education	**Enact UDL-based affective network elements** (CAST, 2018) by *presenting multiple means* of engagement and fostering deep collaboration and community. The aim is to get students connected not only to the "why" of learning but also the "with whom" and to illustrate that instructors care about them as learners. ● **Create and encourage peer support and mutual care** via opportunities such as peer reviews, peer tutoring, virtual encouragement boards, peer question and answer boards (e.g., class discussion board, digital tools such as note.ly, Miro, Idea Flip) (see also Armellini & De Stefani, 2016). ● **Audit the usability of the online leadership learning content** to ensure text is readable and accessible to all students—both in function and in types of words used. Is media helpful (not just decorative)? Are instructions clear? Visualize being a student who has never encountered leadership concepts or language—how does this change instructor communication? Have we set a climate for authentic community learning? Are we validating students' scholar identities? (see also Hammond, 2014; Parker & Herrington, 2015). ● **Assess the tone of communication** (audio, video, text)—is it clear, paced, empathetic? (see also Johnson, 2022; Murphy et al., 2012).

Teaching Presence. Social presence focuses on setting a climate for rapport. Teaching presence also addresses climate in that it speaks to the strategies and instructional design approaches that create a high-quality online learning environment (Bangert, 2008). Garrison et al. (2000), in their conceptualization of the COI, offered that teaching presence includes the following elements: (a) instructional design and organization, (b) facilitation of discourse, and (c) direct instruction. Expanding on the element of discourse, MacKnight (2000) focused on the potential of well-facilitated discourse to spark critical inquiry and complex conversations across difference. Tables 5-6 below note practices that engage the three elements of teaching presence.

Table 5

Culturally Relevant/Sustaining Teaching Practices to Foster Teaching Presence

Commitment	Practices
Culturally relevant/ sustaining online leadership education	*Preposition 1: Learner must experience academic success* **Activate or scaffold learners' background knowledge and existing expertise** in an effort to dismantle the inequities in learner familiarity with leadership and to interrogate historical leadership norms that may marginalize students with minoritized identities. Offer online "Module 0" at start of the semester as a way to pre-teach important concepts, connect course content to learner experiences, and reduce intellectual alienation (see also Hammond, 2014; McCoy & Bocala, 2022). **Interrogate our educator biases and mindsets** about student success and reframe toward a growth mindset honoring the range of learning. Consider reflexive practice as educators and creation of our own self-improvement plans aimed at equitable teaching (see also Ricci, 2013). *Preposition 2: Learner must develop/maintain cultural competence* **Revise online curriculum to include a wide range of diverse perspectives** so that students—especially students of color, first-generation college students, and students from other underserved communities—see themselves in the class materials, text, videos, and assignments. Be mindful of stereotypes and old stories inherent in materials and call out spaces where new voices are needed (see also Mize & Glover, 2021). *Preposition 3: Learner must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order* **Design individual assignments, collaborative experiences, and discussions (synchronous or asynchronous) with opportunities for critique of existing leadership literature and other course content.** Via course design, class discourse, and instruction, offer opportunities for systems analysis and discussions about the role of power and privilege in peer groups (see also Ladson-Billings, 1995; Taylor, 2021).

Table 6
Equitable Teaching Practices to Foster Teaching Presence

Commitment	Practice
Equitable online leadership education	**Focus on the UDL-based recognition and strategic network elements** (CAST, 2018) by paying attention to how students perceive information and illustrate learning. *Provide information to learners via multiple approaches* and *offer learners a variety of pathways for action and expression of learning.* The aim is to center each student as an individual and support their intellectual gifts while providing a range of avenues for engaging course material and showcasing learning. ● **Design instructional modules that enable alternatives for auditory and visual information**—e.g., transcripts, charts, captions. Provide learners with options to customize how content is displayed (e.g., downloadable files, screen-reader friendly, zoom-in capacity) (see also Black & Moore, 2019; Rogers-Shaw et al., 2018). ● **Utilize Open Education Resources** in an effort to support students in accessing no cost materials (see also Clinton-Lisell et al., 2021). **Encourage students to submit assignments in alternative, creative formats** as a means toward manifesting holism in their expression and communication (e.g., online artwork, video, spoken word, poetry, song, digital portfolios, performance, graphic novels, memes, websites—pixilart.com, Krita, Sketchpad, wix.com, storyboardthat.com) (see also Rosch & Jenkins, 2020; Sanders, 2022).

Cognitive Presence. Interestingly, research has shown that teaching presence and social presence are strong predictors of cognitive presence (Ozogul et al., 2022) suggesting that students can engage deep academic tasks once they feel supported, connected, and comfortable online. Garrison et al. (2000) describe cognitive presence as meaning-making of course content that includes four phases observable through online engagement: (a) problem awareness, (b) problem exploration and discussion, (c) integration and meaning construction, and (d) resolution and/or application of solutions. In Tables 7-8 below, we explore practices for engaging cognitive presence.

Table 7

Culturally Relevant/Sustaining Teaching Practices to Foster Cognitive Presence

Commitment	Practices
Culturally relevant/ sustaining online leadership education	*Preposition 1: Learner must experience academic success* **Engage elements of learner, teaching, and social presence to "get students to choose academic excellence" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 160)** and build confidence in their capacity for meaning-making. Engage with students as whole people to explore how they come to know what they know (i.e., ways of knowing) and assess the compatibility of teaching and the online environment in supporting students as scholars in their own right (see also Baxter Magolda, 2004; Immordino-Yang et al., 2018). *Preposition 2: Learner must develop/maintain cultural competence* **Expand the number of partners and mentors to whom learners can turn in an effort to make meaning across culture and story.** Use digital tools (e.g., Zoom, MS Teams) to welcome guests into the online space as a means to create authentic exchanges and relationships across difference. Pay special attention to the individuals' whose stories are not told because of systemic oppression and legacies of dominant ideologies. Encourage learners to invite guests from their cultural heart space and communities (see also Ozogul et al., 2022; Puckett & Lind, 2020). *Preposition 3: Learner must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order* **Build and sustain learners' awareness of systemic social issues as well as their capacity to assess root cause, think critically, and challenge dominant lenses.** Explore the use of collaborative case studies, video-based role playing, advocacy projects, virtual or in-person experiential learning, or community-based learning. Examine pathways for facilitating critical conversations via synchronous means or online discussion boards utilizing tools such as affinity mapping or backchannel discussions (e.g., YoTeach!) and model good discussion practice (see also Gonzalez, 2015; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Kumi-Yeboah, 2018). **Challenge ourselves as instructors and facilitators to support students' critical consciousness** via empowering, socially engaged pedagogy that lives beyond the bounds of the online program. Ask: "How can we make real change from our meaning-making?" (see also Sosa-Provencio et al., 2020).

Table 8
Equitable Teaching Practices to Foster Cognitive Presence

Commitment	Practice
Equitable online leadership education	**Focus on all three UDL-based network elements: affective, recognition, and strategic** (CAST, 2018) and implement practices that address the "why," "what," and "how" of learning. Continue to offer *multiple pathways for how students engage the online course, perceive information, and demonstrate learning.* Take a holistic approach to supporting students in developing critical thinking. ● **Provide spaces for learners to customize their learning** by offering adaptive assignments that engage critical thinking and problem-solving in learners' areas of interest and that honor their lives and community cultural capital (see also Evmenova, 2021; Yosso, 2005). ● **Empower students as agents of their own learning** and ask how *they* wish to engage as collaborators. Re-frame online leadership education environments as a community of practice in which each learner is an expert contributor and storyteller (see also Jenkins & Endersby, 2019). ● **Engage appropriate goal-setting and scaffolding** with learners, be mindful of deep learning, critical thinking, and cognitive complexity in assessing student work—not just performance (see also Lantis, 2022).

In closing this section on practical pedagogical approaches, as educators, we reflect on the joy and challenge of our leadership education work. We also reflect on the deep learning we must continue to do in service to our online (and all) students. We hope that, by contributing to a conversation about the COI framework's (Garrison et al., 2000) place in relationship with culturally relevant/sustaining and equitable online leadership education, we have come a bit closer to supporting new directions for the future of online leadership education.

A Note about Equity and Access to Online Leadership Education

In writing this piece, we acknowledge that the practices we present do little to address systemic gaps in resources such as internet access and sufficient learner technology made plainer by the COVID-19 shift to online learning. Mize and Glover (2021) and Richards et al. (2021) highlight this need and further elaborate on how the loss is felt most keenly by students of color and students from lower-income and/or rural households. As such, we offer a challenge to ourselves and to our larger community of leadership educators to embrace the social change priority inherent to leadership work and be a united voice that calls our higher education administrators and policy-makers to action. We ask that stakeholders and decision-makers consider wild and creative measures for supplying students with the technological and tactical resources necessary for learning. How can we possibly engage learners with culturally relevant/sustaining and equitable pedagogy if students cannot even log onto our online class or program, maintain bandwidth, and/or find a quiet space to learn?

We recognize the reality of budgetary constraints, but we ask that our colleagues take note of the innovative K-16 school districts across the U.S. that have implemented resource and online access plans for students. Communities equipped school buses for broadband and parked them at city hubs so students could complete assignments while other school districts offered computers and devices on loan (Mize & Glover, 2021). We celebrate colleges and universities that provided no-cost hotspots in collaboration with media companies and remind us all that, while COVID-19 catalyzed these accommodations, the need is not a pandemic-only anomaly. Now that disparities with regard to access are more fully revealed, there is no going back and, as leadership educators, we must keep pushing change forward.

Conclusion

McCarron et al. (2021) underscored that—as leadership educators—we must "catalyzes [sic] action toward accessible, culturally-responsive, learner-centered, and impeccably-designed leadership curricula that leverage digital environments and complement traditional brick-and-mortar-based pedagogies" (p. 73). As such, our aim for this piece was to offer food for thought with regard to how online leadership pedagogy can be bolstered and re-imagined in an effort to provide learners with deeper, more transformative learning. We shared a brief review of the online leadership education journey the Journal of Leadership Education has guided as well as a range of pedagogical practices that rest at the intersections of the Community of Inquiry model and culturally relevant/sustaining, equitable online leadership education. Our hope is that this work sparks dialogue and, more importantly, supports learners' holistic development.

As they closed out the Spring 2020 semester—after a challenging COVID-19 pivot to online learning—one of our undergraduate leadership students, "Anya," shared the following:

I realized that I'm not invincible and neither are the incredible leaders that raised me- there will be times where you feel like you are defeated and won't ever get back to your place on top. But this semester has given me the opportunity to be completely vulnerable with myself and others….I had to step out of my comfort zone and open up…

Anya's words reverberated within us as we wrote this piece. Reflecting back and forging ahead in our online teaching practice, interrogating how/if we have centered culturally relevant/sustaining and equitable pedagogy, and committing to doing better as we grow as educators brought up our own vulnerabilities. Now, though, we move forward, and we do so with a community of committed leadership educators in service of incredible learners.

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