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Author

HORA, Matthew T. (ANDERSON, Craig)

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Abstract

Normative expectations for acceptable behaviors related to undergraduate instruction are known to exist within academic settings. Yet few studies have examined disciplinary variation in norms for interactive teaching, and their relationship to teaching practice, particularly from a cognitive perspective. This study examines these problems using survey (n = 436) and interview (n = 56) data collected from faculty at three research universities in the United States in math, physics, chemistry, biology and geology departments. These data are analyzed using quantitative (i.e., ANOVA and ANCOVA) and qualitative (i.e., thematic and causal network analysis) techniques to provide multi-faceted accounts of normative systems. Results indicate that perceived norms for interactive teaching are weak or non-existent, yet other types of norms including those regarding course content, tacit norms for instructional autonomy and norms instantiated in course syllabi are present. Significant differences in perceived norms were found between institutions and disciplines, with

06.7.2025

biology and physics departments at two research sites exhibiting significantly stronger norms than other departments. Analyses of relationships between perceived norms and teaching practice indicated significant relationships between norm strength and the use of two teaching methods. Further, analyses of interview data revealed complex chains of decision-making involving considerations of course syllabi, student characteristics, and feedback mechanisms. Implications for pedagogical reform include the need to understand local cultural conditions and decision-making patterns to inform program design and implementation. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Hora. Matthew T., E-Mail: hora@wisc.edu