

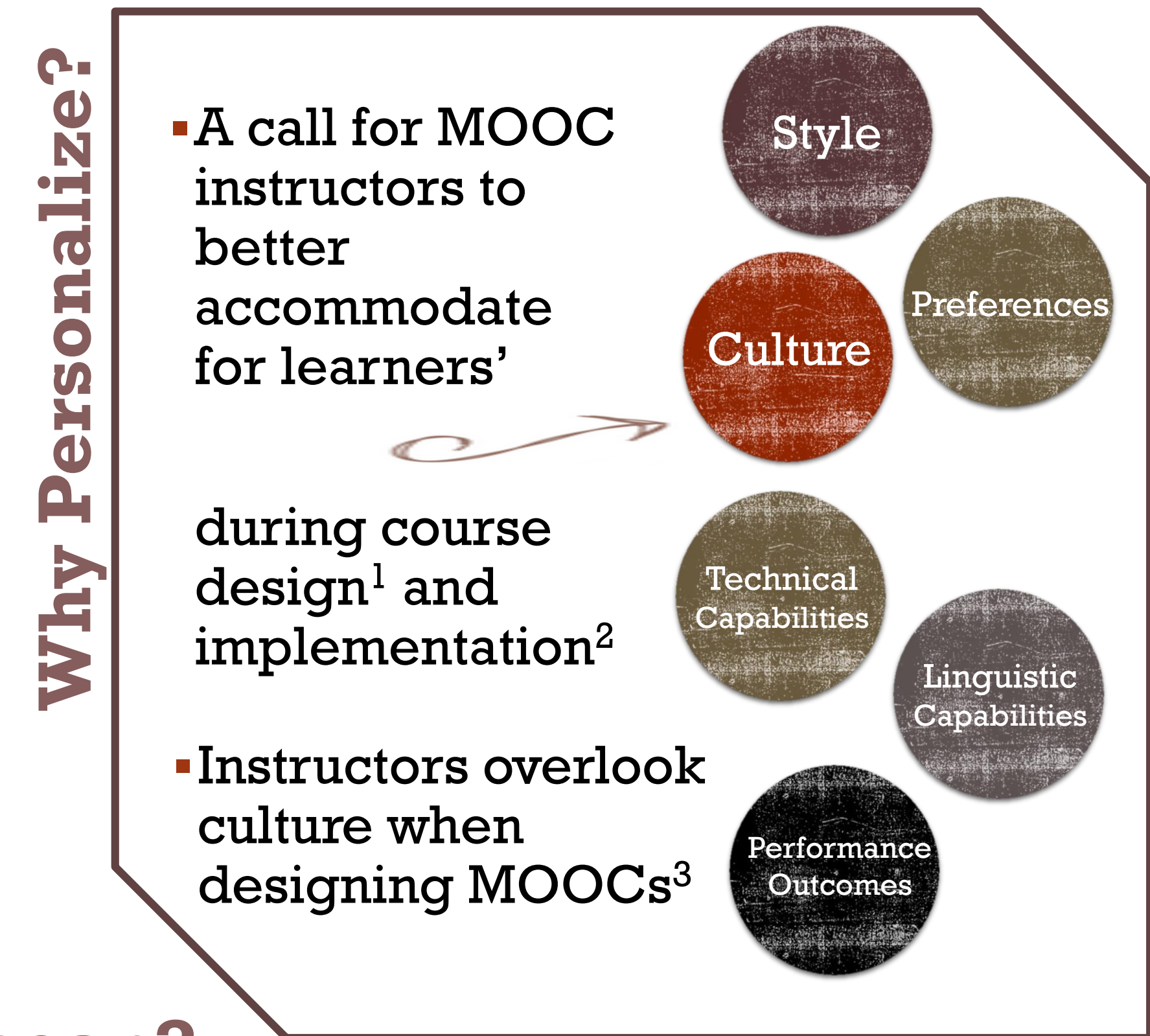
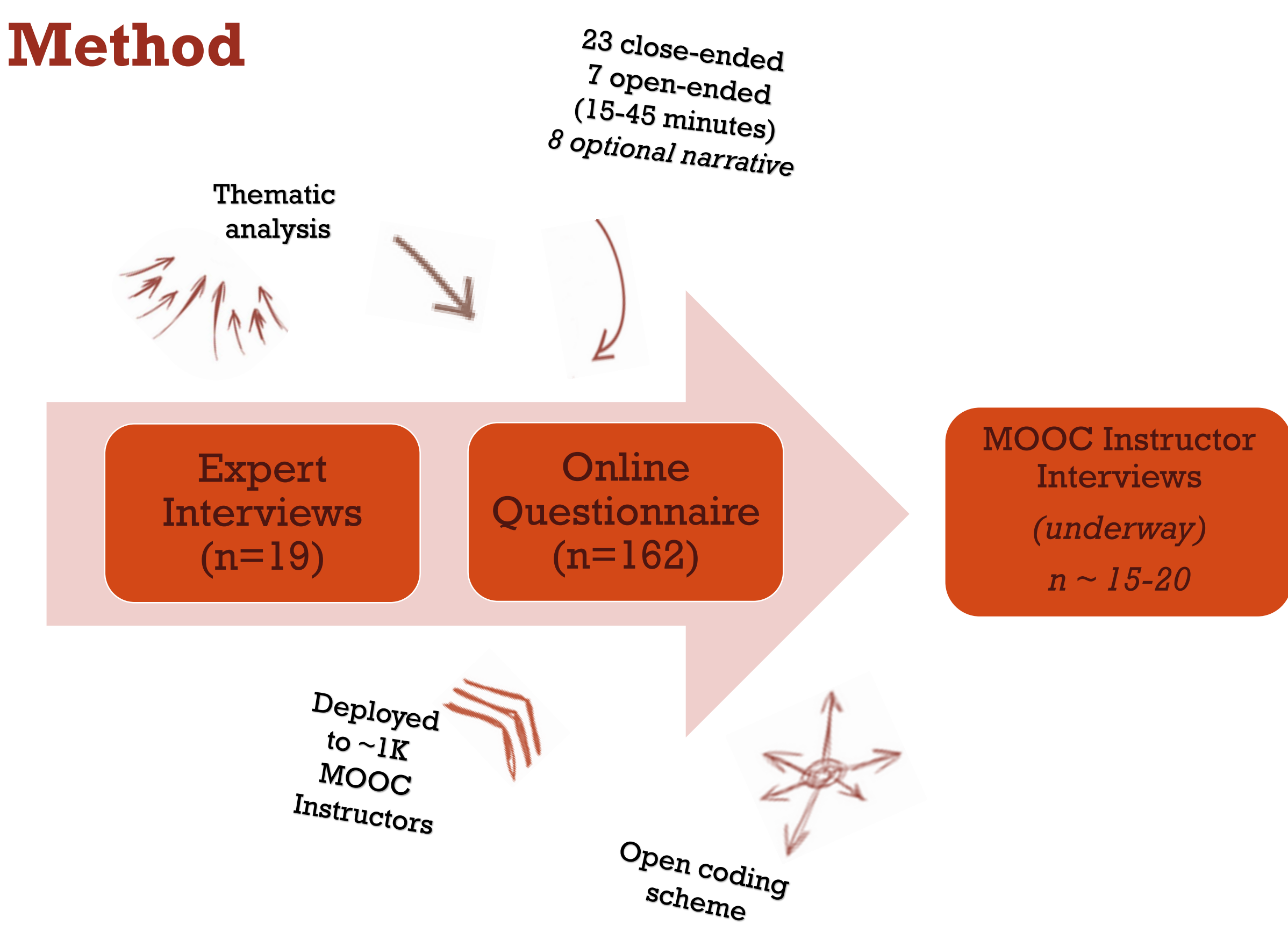
Adapting for Learners' Cultural Diversity in Open Courses: MOOC Instructors' Efforts at Personalized Learning Environments

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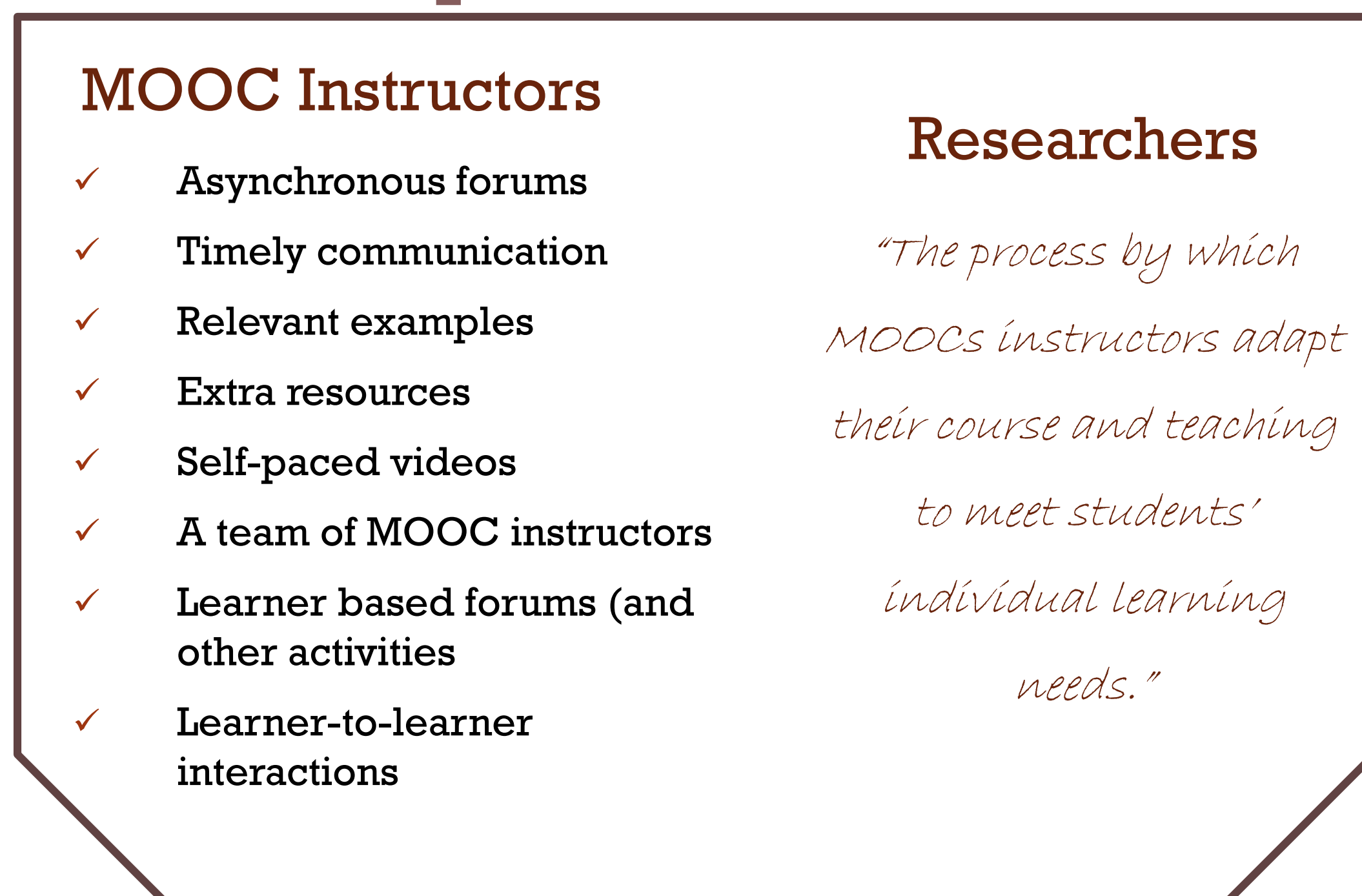
Abstract

This mixed methods study investigates the tools and techniques massive open online courses (MOOCs) instructors used to reshape the learning environment for cultural diversity and learner personalization. Leveraging a grounded theory approach the researchers analyzed 19 email interviews from MOOC and distance education leaders supplemented by 28 archival, participant-written case descriptions. Leading to the analysis and formation of an online questionnaire, which was completed by 134 MOOC instructors. While most of instructors did not understand complex issues of cultural diversity, most made attempts to modify their instructional practices to accommodate cultural variances. A majority of the instructors favored collaborative, small group learning; however the instructors could not agree on best practices to establish these groups.

Method



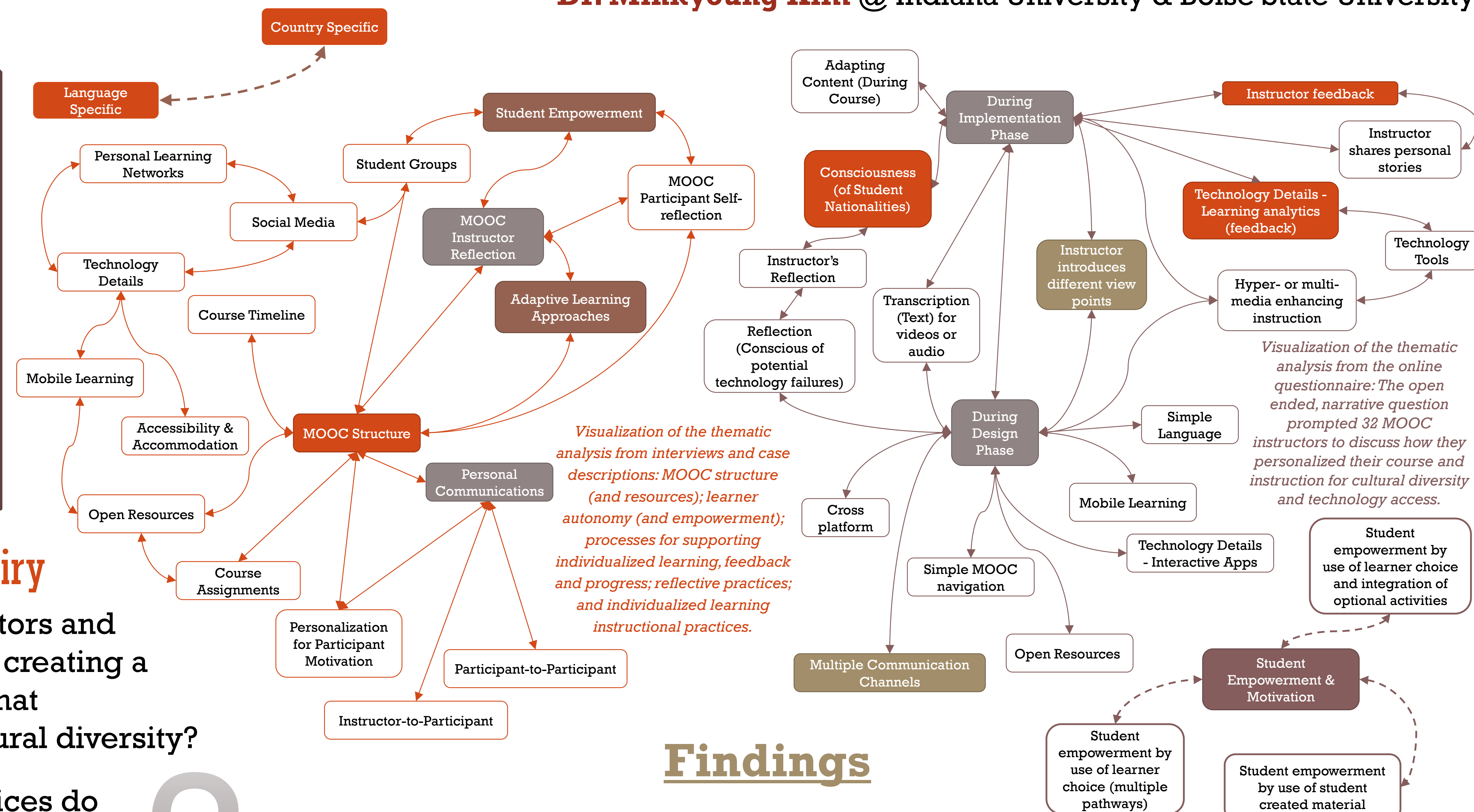
What does personalization mean?



Areas of Inquiry

1 How are MOOC instructors and instructional designers creating a learning environment that accommodates for cultural diversity?

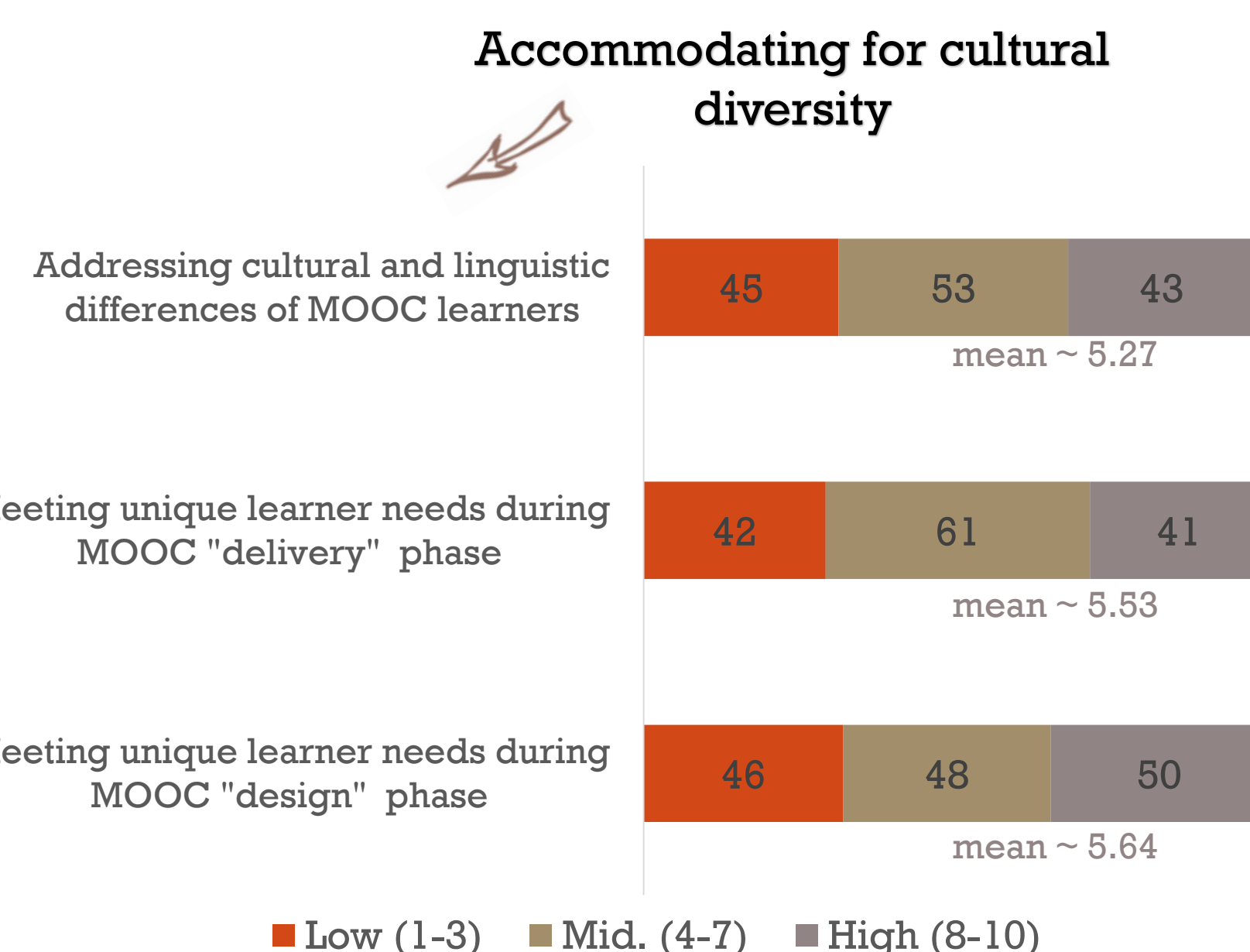
2 What personalization practices do MOOC instructors utilize to enrich the virtual classroom experience of its diverse adult learners?



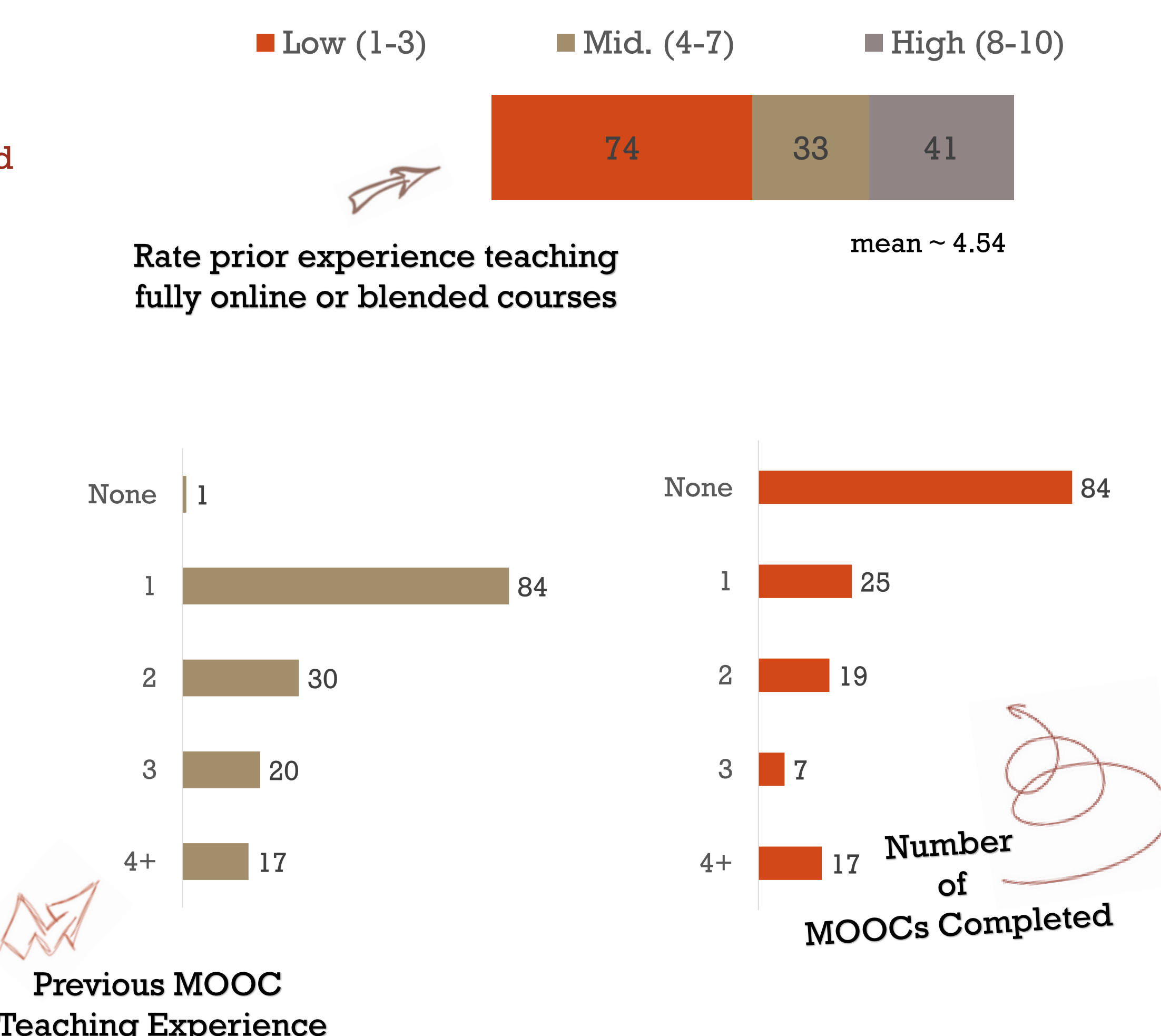
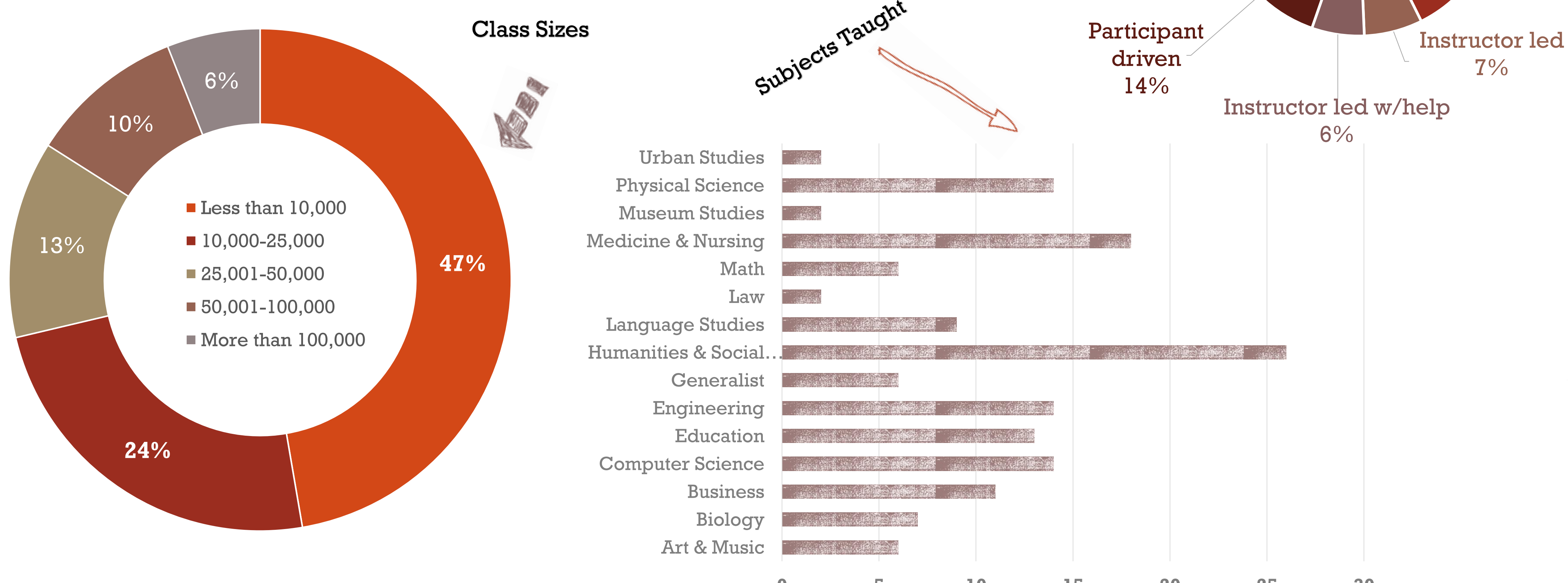
Findings

MOOC Instructors Interpretations of Cultural Diversity

- "We used Google Translate"
- "Discuss cultural differences"
- "Encouraged participants to develop/share content about their own experiences"
- "...It's a primary concern throughout"
- "A Facebook group started to translate materials"
- "[showed] videos"
- "Transcripts and closed captioning provided"
- "Include content from other cultures and places"
- "Consider... design of assignments and encourage sharing of diverse examples from different countries on discussion form"



Survey Demographics



References

- Such as: Ahn, et al., 2015; McAuley et al., 2010; Ostashewski & Reid, 2012
- Such as: Fini, 2009; Schulze, 2014; Siemens, 2012; Speece, 2012
- Subramony, 2004

Common Design & Instruction Practices

- Supplementary transcripts for videos/audio (n=88) or additional material to supplement activities
- Changing language
 - Sensitive about language and gestures used (n=69)
 - Simplify the language used (n=56)
 - Slowing the pace of speech (n=49)
- Altering MOOC navigation and content (n=36)

Cultural Diversity ≠ Linguistic Diversity

Nearly all MOOC Instructors in our sample liked the idea of addressing culture

- Many claimed to do it
- When asked what steps they took - they were not able to describe "how" they addressed culture (often centering on issues of language competencies)

Further research is needed to determine where diversity is reflected upon?

- Before the MOOC is taught
- Just in time teaching strategies
- Post MOOC reflection

A need to investigate the relationship between a participants country of origin and language...and culture?

