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Teaching Through a Screen: How USU English Instructors Approached Online Course Accessibility During COVID-19

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Introduction

Although academia has been transitioning to more virtual instructional methods for some time, the COVID-19 pandemic has made switching to remote classrooms a necessity. This study explores how USU English instructors implemented accessibility strategies in the transition to more remote learning during Fall 2020 in order to ensure equitable access to students with disabilities and situational barriers alike.

Methods

We used the following methods to conduct this study:

- 1. Content Analysis:** We analyzed three informational accessibility resources available to teachers: Canvas, the Center for Innovative Instruction and Design (CIDI) website, and the Disability Resource Center (DRC) website.
- 2. Survey:** We surveyed USU English instructors.
- 3. Interviews:** We interviewed two teachers in the English Department.

Findings

1. COVID-19 has prompted English teachers to reconsider how they approach accessibility in their courses.
2. English instructors are generally aware of and using informational resources about accessibility.
3. The degree of confidence that instructors have in their ability to teach in an accessible manner is likely related to their view of the adequacy of their resources.

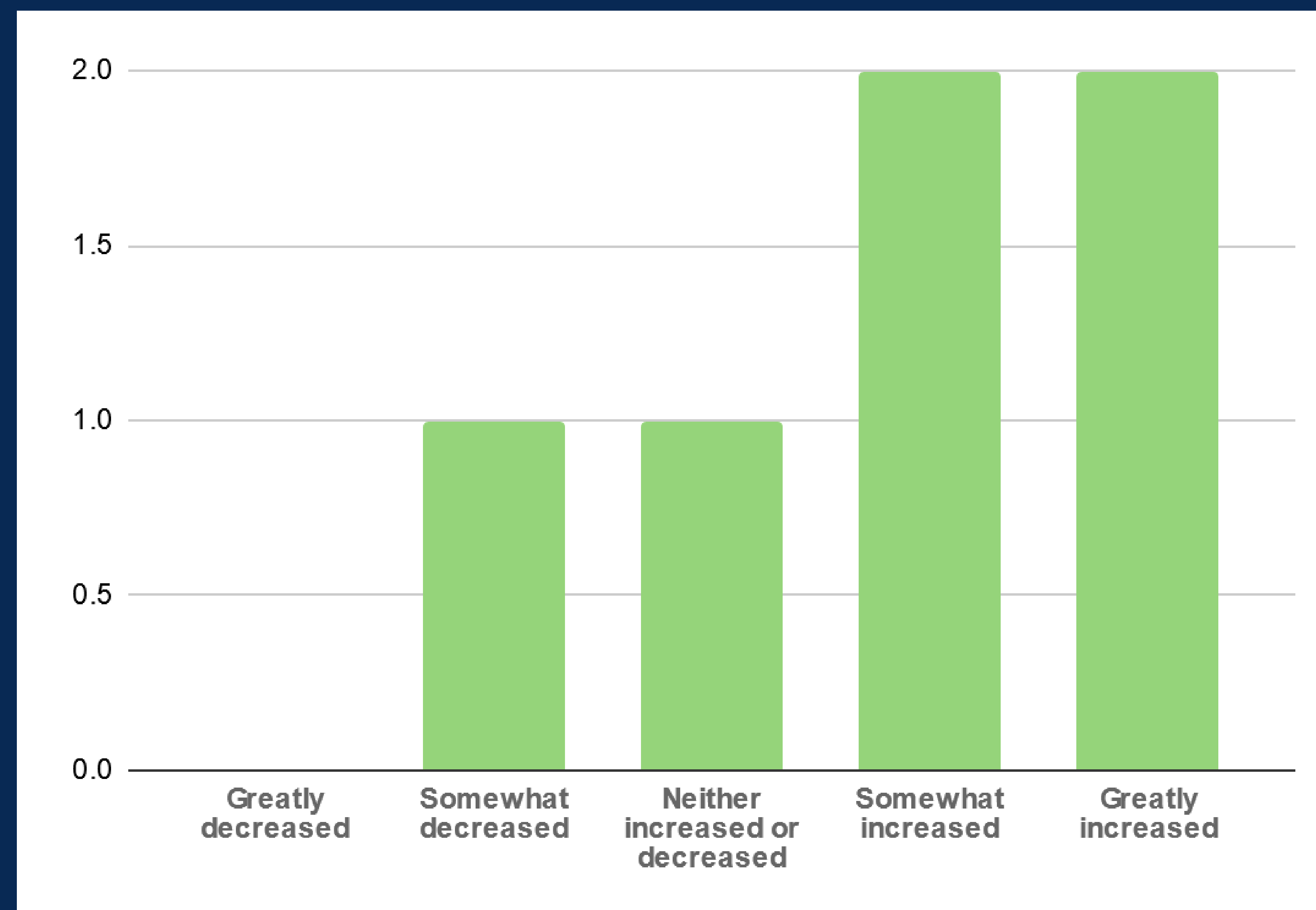


ENGLISH

TEACHING THROUGH A SCREEN

How USU English Instructors Approached Online Course Accessibility During COVID-19

Figure 1 – Responses to “The COVID-19 pandemic has _____ how frequently you consider the accessibility of your courses...”



Two-thirds of surveyed English instructors reported thinking about the accessibility of their courses as a result of the pandemic.

Researcher: Sabrina Satterthwaite / PI: Dr. Joyce Kinkead

Approximately 42% of CIDI website pages are about an accessibility topic or make a reference to accessibility.

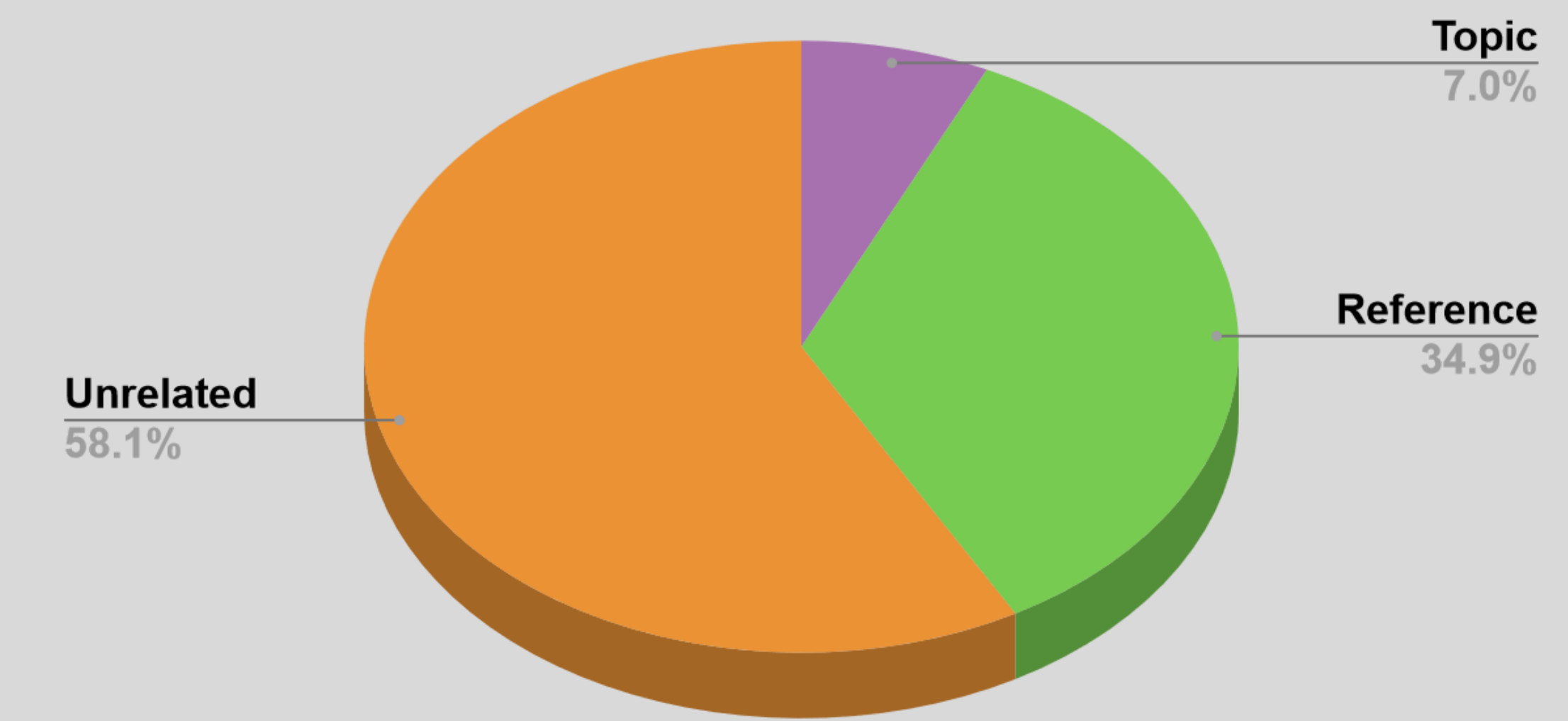
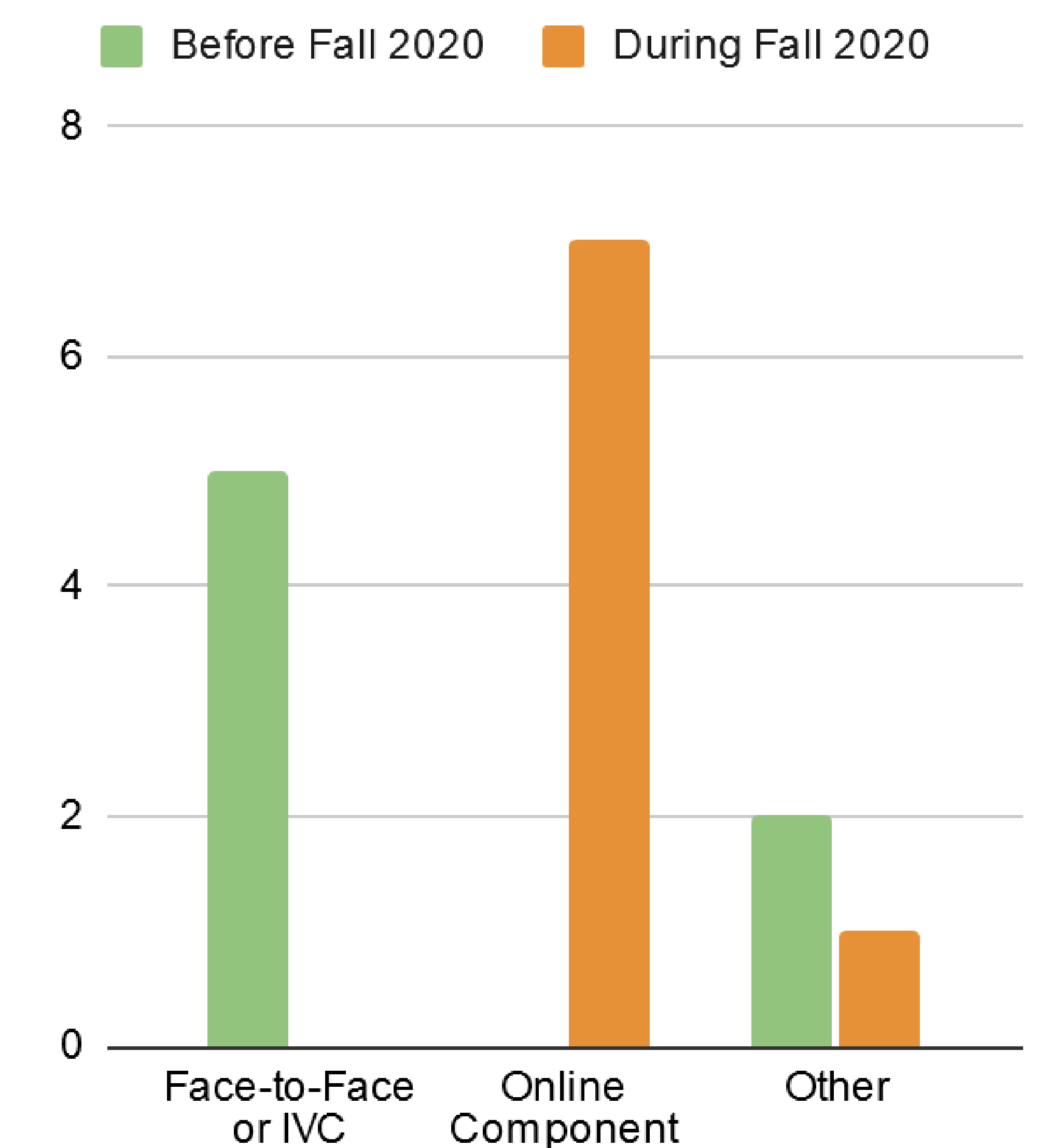


Figure 2 – CIDI Page Topics and References

Many English instructors are teaching classes with an online component for the first-time during Fall 2020.

The Hybrid Face-to-Face, Web Broadcast, Online, and Blended formats each have an online component.

Figure 3 – Surveyed English Class Formats Taught Before and During Fall 2020



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