Transcript - ASU Remote 2022:
Ask the Experts Q&A Inclusive Teaching

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PATTI O'SULLIVAN: Hello, and welcome to REMOTE, The Connected Faculty Summit. I'm Patti O'Sullivan, Content Manager with Every Learner Everywhere. And I'll be moderating today's sessions. These sessions in this 90-minute block are sponsored by Every Learner Everywhere, a nonprofit network that advocates for and supports institutions in achieving equitable outcomes in US higher education through advances in digital learning. This block of the Every Learner Ask the Expert Sessions focuses on equitable and inclusive teaching.

We are going to welcome back Ray Keith and Sarah Kinnison to join Dr. Garth-McCullough and Tynan Gable for our Q&A panel. Welcome, everyone. So the first, most pressing question-- and it came up many times-- Tynan and Ruanda, is, where can people get your slides? Or would you say that everything in your slides is actually in the tool? So if they download the tool, they have everything that's on the slides?

RUANDA GARTH-MCCULLOUGH: Correct. But we're happy to share the slides as well if anyone would like them, if we can add them as a handout.

PATTI O'SULLIVAN: I think our headshots might be--

TYNAN GABLE: Yeah, and I've told people they can email me.

PATTI O'SULLIVAN: Go ahead. Sorry.

TYNAN GABLE: Yeah, I think our headshots might be the only thing that's unique to the slides that you wouldn't find in the tool itself. So if people want those.

PATTI O'SULLIVAN: So you can send me those slides. And anyone who wants the headshots of Tynan Gable and Dr. Garth-McCullough, you can email me. I put my email in the chat, and I will send those to you. All right.

So let's begin with some of the questions from the chat and the Q&A. The first two seem to have to do with the Equity Review Tool. So the first question is, who do you imagine using the Equity Review Tool? And how do you imagine those people use-- actually using it?

RUANDA GARTH-MCCULLOUGH: Great question. We designed and created it thinking about educators-- so faculty, faculty developers, instructional designers-- using the tool to do two things. And it might be-- it's a little ambitious, but to create documents and instructional materials but also to review existing instructional materials.

And by instructional materials, we're defining that as everything from your open education resources content to your PowerPoint slides to your assessment directions and discussion boards and lecture and anything that you use to lecture. So it's really all-encompassing. We think many of the tools and resources there in the tool are helpful for both of those, to create and review materials.

PATTI O'SULLIVAN: Great. And a follow-up to that, how would the Equity Evaluation Tool be used in a way-- how can you present it in a way that it's not reduced to a checklist? If I do this, this, and this, then I'm inclusive. I'm done.

TYNAN GABLE: I can chime in. And then, Ruanda, please build on my answer. But I think there's a couple of things that make it more of a continuous process. The first is that we tee up a bunch of personal learning and reflection at the beginning. And I can't say enough how important it is to not skip over that step and just go straight to the tool development. I think a lot of the concepts that we've outlined in that first chapter are things that should be constantly done, because there's always opportunities to continue to learn and reflect on your own positionality and your own lens that you're bringing to the work. So that would be the first thing.

I think, developing the resource itself, there is a start-to-end checklist, and that's what's included in chapter 2. But then the follow-on work to that is continuous improvement of that resource through feedback and through-- that comes from both students and peers and potentially management or department leads, et cetera. So there's lots of opportunities to continue to iterate on it after that initial checklist-- development of the resource is done and that we would definitely encourage you to also do.

I don't think that there's ever a perfect resource or tool or piece of writing that exists. There's always room to continue to iterate and improve. And honestly, something that we're super aware of with the development of this tool is that language is constantly evolving. And that's one of the reasons why we also want to emphasize this is a living document. It's something that we're going to continue to update, because the way that

language is used is always evolving. And so just that alone is a reason to never feel like you're completely done. Ruanda, please build on that if you have more to add.

RUANDA GARTH-MCCULLOUGH: Thank you. No, I think that was a really comprehensive response. I would only add that when you think about the students in front of you, that changes every semester. And that changes every term. And so that continuous improvement, that aspect of gathering student feedback midcourse and early on to midcourse is really critical and-- because this is not something that we want to think anyone would approach this as a one and done, like I equitized my course.

As Tynan said, this work is ever evolving as marginalized groups have-- are constantly gaining more-- people are paying more attention to voices that have been marginalized and silenced for so long. And so we're all in this process of learning and also to make sure that we don't want folks to take this on-- take too much on.

I feel like if you-- we always encourage educators to, one, don't do this alone. This is something that you should be doing with your colleagues and fellow staff members. And then two, not to do-- think-- expect you're going to do everything at once. So it might be this term, you focus on a specifically problematic module or that you've felt-- you're feeling uncomfortable when you're presenting it, knowing it has some work to be done there.

And then build that in while you're constantly getting feedback from students. So that's something that's really important that we emphasize that continuous improvement model and that continuous improvement loop. And also, just frequent check-ins with students.

PATTI O'SULLIVAN: Good. All right. So this next question from the Q&A, this could be for any of you. But I'm specifically thinking of Ray and Sarah, your presentation. The question is, can you give me an example of a student-centered assessment?

H. RAY KEITH: That's a great question. I think when we think about assessment, think about our assessment practices. Think about traditional assessments. Think about how those assessments, when we think about comprehensive exams, writing assignments, multiple-choice quizzes. Think about who those assessments serve. And also think about the traditional ways that those assessments might have impacted students. Those assessments can create stereotype threat. They can create anxiety. Many times, we're not aware of our students' previous experiences with assessments. And so when

we think about student-centered assessments, one, we should be asking our students, how do they demonstrate their learning best?
And so that could be in project-based learning projects. That could be service learning projects.
That could be taking a new approach to assessment. Students could be using digital tools to demonstrate their learning as it relates to content matter, subject matters, thinking about ways that we are-- and I like to use Bloom's taxonomy as an example. And how do we move to higher order thinking, where students are actually analyzing, creating, and really sharing this-- their learning in ways that are not just rote memorization or repeating back what they've learned.
And so when we think about student-centered assessment, it's really about assessments that engage students in ways that are meaningful to them, thinking about their identities and their cultures. We might think about specific communities operate as collectivism-- as collectivists in collectivist ways. And so thinking about, how do we create those opportunities for folks to share their learning collectively and versus this kind of competitive, individual way of demonstrating their learning? Ruanda and Sarah and Tynan, you can certainly build on that.
SARAH KINNISON: Sure. I love what you said, and I can add a little bit. So I think it's important when students have options for how they share their knowledge. It can lead to confidence. And they feel confident because they're sharing in ways that they are most strong in that sharing and that learning style for sharing.
And also, they could share in ways that align with their cultural perspectives, with their way of using language. And it could be a very asset-based and strength-based experience rather than a punitive one, which sometimes assessment can be punitive. And also for assessment to be about part of the learning process, speaking of it being punitive, rather than it being faculty versus student, really it being a positive part of the learning experience. The assessment can be-- can lead to further learning and further exploration.
In addition, there are many examples with open education resources where students create their own questions for exams and then give them to other students. It could either be like within that same semester or the following semester. So it's written in student language. It's written with students' cultural backgrounds. They're the ones who are writing it. So they can be using examples, names, language representation,

experiences that are specific to them. And then it translates into sharing it with everybody else. So it's like a very multifaceted set of questions for the exams. So those are some other examples.

PATTI O'SULLIVAN: So we have a-- it's a statement. I'm going to try to turn this into a question, but I'll read the statement. "I am concerned that the discourse of equity does not engage with the issue of faculty inequities, and specifically the unfair treatment of adjunct faculty." To the person who asked that question or made that statement, I will say that we do have a session later on today. It's one of the Ask the Expert sessions. And it's specifically on support for adjunct faculty. But I'm just going to throw it to our panelists. What about adjuncts in all of this, regarding the way that they're included in trainings, the way-- the workload that they have? How can we be supportive of adjuncts in doing this work?

RUANDA GARTH-MCCULLOUGH: I can take that one. I know at Achieving the Dream, we have done extensive work and have a really strong report on engaging adjunct faculty, with the realization and the recognition that without including adjunct faculty into professional learning, opportunities at colleges, you're not going to be able to move the needle. When you look at which courses are being taught by adjunct faculty, which-- how many students engage with adjunct faculty, and then-- and these key critical gateway courses that can really make or break a student's experience, it's really important to include adjunct faculty into the professional learning initiatives.

What we found was-- in the study that the CCRC did-- that alongside-- is that students who have-- or who are taught by adjunct faculty do just as well. That's a myth that, oh, our numbers are low. Our DFW rates are high because of adjunct faculty. They busted that myth in this report. And I'll try to find it and put it in the chat for you here in a minute.

But saw that because adjunct faculty aren't included in the institutional initiatives, they-- students who had key courses with adjunct-- being taught by adjunct faculty didn't always-- didn't go on to the next course and at the same rate. And so that just really flags the importance of ensuring that adjunct faculty are equipped and supported to participate in professional learning, to understand the-- what resources the institution offers, the advising model, the pathways model, the degree paths.

And we showcased, I think, eight institutions at different approaches to engaging adjunct faculty that included-- sorry-- that included-- some things was just having a

center for adjunct faculty, a room, a dedicated space. Some created-- made sure that the professional learning-- this was prepandemic. So it was mind blowing. Now it would be obvious. But was available on a Blackboard shell that folks could engage in when they were available.

There was a newsletter one institution did just for adjunct faculty to make sure they had the click-- the links to the resources and what was happening as well as-- I think our Harper College created a track for adjunct faculty that-- a tenure track. But it was if you completed this level of professional learning and conduct professional development sessions, that you would be first in line.

It was a whole process. You had to do a portfolio and everything. But then you would be first in line when a position came open in your discipline, in your department. And you got first choice of class time, things that really make a difference when you're teaching, especially if you're teaching with multiple institutions. And so really finding ways to recognize, honor, and validate adjunct faculty is key.

And so for any of the tools that we develop, we always have in mind how this can-- how adjunct faculty can be included. And I know there's different issues with union. And most colleges don't have the budgets to include-- to pay adjunct faculty to come to all of the sessions. But just being mindful of what you can do and how you can design professional learning opportunities so that they are accessible for folks that aren't full time at your institution is really important. And, Ray, I don't know if you want to speak to some of your experience with engaging adjunct faculty.

H. RAY KEITH: Yes. Thanks, Ruanda. We've had some really-- I should say, in my previous institution, we were very intentional about making sure that we secured funding to support our adjunct instructors, making sure that they had the same opportunities to engage in professional development and professional learning as our full-time faculty. And what we found is our adjunct instructors truly wanted that support. Many of the folks that came on to the institution were surprised that we were providing that type of support and compensation at the level that we did. And so I think, as institutions, it's really important that we recognize the importance and value of adjunct instructors and the heavy lift that they really carry at the institution as it relates to teaching and learning and providing them with these opportunities to-- for professional development in ways that are meaningful to them.

And so being able to provide that compensation but also providing that support, we had workshop series. We had communities of practice. We had some individual coaching. And so providing those opportunities and scheduling also those opportunities where they could actually participate in those activities.

PATTI O'SULLIVAN: All right. Well, on to our next question. And this has to do with class size and what you can accomplish in different class sizes. The question is, "Some of the inclusive teaching strategies seemed more aligned with smaller class sizes. For those of us who teach 100-plus students per section, how can we personalize learning and get to know our students so that we are respecting their experiences and creating really meaningful, inclusive learning experiences?" And I'll toss that to any of the panel who wants to take a go.

SARAH KINNISON: I can start. Oh, go ahead.

RUANDA GARTH-MCCULLOUGH: Go ahead. Go ahead, Sarah. You go, you go.

SARAH KINNISON: I just wanted to mention one approach that-- when I heard that question-- that came to me, definitely is having small groups. So then the small groups become-- the small group of 10 students or five students or however-- for your discipline-- however you need to break it down. I'm thinking of one student who had a really strong experience in her small-group instruction. She felt really empowered. She felt like the professor came and spoke to them. And they became like one body. They supported one another, and they really worked together in a small group, which is also a very-- a strong learning component, in certain cultures, to work as a group anyway. And it could be really positive for everyone. And they worked together as a group to do problem-solving. And then the professor came over and worked with them. So turning fraction-- doing that fraction 1 to 10 and turning each 10 people into a person can be one approach. And then the professor can come and interact very personally, very closely with those small groups. Go ahead, Ruanda.

RUANDA GARTH-MCCULLOUGH: Yeah, no, I think that grouping is an option. And I also think that as I was saying before, when you're talking about embedding equity in your course and you're teaching a large gateway course, I think it's more feasible to focus on course-wide design, so like equitizing your syllabi, doing-- looking at reviewing your course shell for-- using the Equity Review Tool that Bensimon developed for the syllabi, I think, is also useful for course shells as well as creating your assignments in ways that

embed equity, invite students' culturally bound prior knowledge and their lived experience.

And so these are things that you're already doing. But to do that with a-- through a lens that centers student equity-- and it could be racial equity, economic equity, religious, gender, what-- in response to your population, it's-- what you're doing for the-- course wide for all your students, you-- starting there, I think what you're going to get-- more-- you're going to have-- you're going to see great results.

It's not feasible that you're going to personalize everything to-- for every student. But I also think using peer assessment and, again, that student feedback-- I saw in a question earlier about students aren't very responsive to surveys. And I think that we're all pretty overinundated with surveys. It's not just students. I could say the same thing for emails. And that's why I think those quick entry exit ticket questions, doing a mini focus group, and then also using your office hours or some Zoom sessions to just get feedback from students will also help you figure out where you need to place your attention, where the attention is most needed, as Sarah's example earlier about the discussion board.

So try to figure out what levers you can adjust. And be sure to ask students how the changes you made landed, because if not, we burn out quickly. And there's a lot to do. We're not going to solve anything in one term or one semester. But I think if you're just always asking, interrogating your own practice, through that student-centered and equity lens, you're going to make strides every time you try.

SARAH KINNISON: And, Ruanda, if I can just add, as far as looking at it on your whole course level, whether you have 5 students or 200, culturally responsive materials, instructional materials, that's another something that you can make sure to include multiple perspectives in every area of your course. And that will help bring more inclusivity no matter the number. So yeah, I really like that idea of, how can you design the course in every aspect to bring more inclusivity without having to think of each student individually? Then with 200, it just becomes very overwhelming.

PATTI O'SULLIVAN: Well, let's-- I had a question that kind of speaks to that, Sarah. But quickly, there was a question about whether or not the resources that we're putting in the chat and that we're linking to are openly licensed or not. Everything on the Achieving the Dream resources page and the Every Learner resources page, these are free, open to the public. Everything that is on the Every Learner resource page is Creative Commons license with no derivatives. So you're free to use it, just not changing it. I

don't know if-- Ruanda, do you know about the licensing for the Achieving the Dream resources?

RUANDA GARTH-MCCULLOUGH: So everything that we do with Every Learner Everywhere is openly licensed. And Achieving the Dream has many resources on the website. And those are all free to use. And we encourage you to take them and adapt them for your context. Reuse, remix, revise so that-- they're offered as templates and guides and tool kits. But in no way do we assume that it captures the specific context of every campus. So I definitely want to make sure that folks-- even this Equity Review Tool, it's written in such a way that you can make it what you need for your-- to address your context.

PATTI O'SULLIVAN: Thank you.

TYNAN GABLE: Patti, before we move on to any more questions, I'd love to just acknowledge and address some pretty rich discussion and healthy debate, I think, that's going on in the chat. I wish we could bring folks off mute to join us on the panel. I think it would be great to have a discussion as a larger group, but absent of having that opportunity, I just wanted to call out and elevate some of this discussion for maybe some other folks on the panel and myself to address.

So it seems like there's some discussion around the heavy extent to which most faculty today are still white. That's definitely something that we talk about and discuss a lot. I think it's really important and valid to acknowledge that, yes, most faculty today are still white, identifying two of the four of us on this panel are white. I think it's totally valid to call that out and say that is a structural barrier to achieving true equity, the fact that faculty don't reflect necessarily the student population in every institution.

At the same time, I think the recommendations that we're making here, while limited by that larger barrier, are still an effort to say, from where we are now and from the context in which we all sit, here are some things that you can start doing immediately, that you can start implementing regardless of your racial identity or any other identity that you may hold. So hopefully, that's helpful. I think it is really valid just to call out. I think it is valid to address that, yes, there are larger structural inequities. One of them is that a large percentage of faculty today are white. There are lots of political things going on in the world that prevent us from doing all the things that we would love to do and address.

And I think even going back to Patti, your question about this resource doesn't address adjunct faculty, yeah, totally. We didn't address that in this specific resource. There is another resource, as you said, in a panel later today that's going to talk more about that.

I think one of the hard things about doing work in the equity space is that it's this vast, ever-changing, ever-growing, and there's always room for more learning space. And so one of the things that's important when you're creating a resource, or when you're talking about it, is to be really specific about the scope that you're addressing. And so for our specific tool, we focus on racial equity. We focus on socioeconomic equity. And we touch a little bit on ability and different learning styles and preferences. But we don't talk about gender equity. There's lots of other things that we don't address.

And I think it's important to just call out the scope of what we're talking about and that it is-- it doesn't include everything. And it doesn't-- absolutely does not address all of the institutional and systemic undercurrent that has created a lot of the problems that we see today. So I wanted to call that out and just address what's going on in the chat. I think other panelists, if you guys want to weigh in on that discussion, I think it's a super great topic to dig into a little bit.

PATTI O'SULLIVAN: Does anyone else on the panel want to weigh in on the chat.

RUANDA GARTH-MCCULLOUGH: I would just like to add-- oh, sorry. I was just to say, I would just like to add, given all-- definitely the systemic and structural and historical context that we operate in, in the postsecondary space, it's all of our work to do-- to disrupt and identify barriers and disrupt inequities.

As Patti mentioned, I was faculty for 12 years. I was one of two faculty of color in my department, definitely experienced a lot of additional tax of advising students of color because-- mentoring students of color that weren't even in my department or in my area and also getting published and getting your research supported. I have experienced all of those barriers as that faculty of color do.

I think it's just really important that the burden of changing the system isn't placed at the feet of the victims of the system. And so that's what really draws me to-- the passion-- that is a passion that I-- to this passion-- the passion I have for this work is creating tools and strategies and processes that help faculty who are interested in looking at the role that we all play in perpetuating the inequalities and finding ways through it, because

most of us were not taught to teach, let alone teach in ways that center cultural difference in a positive, asset-based way.

And so I'm just really thankful and that we get to do this work and we get to share it with folks who are in the classroom working with students every day and interested in seeing what they could do differently to be more responsive to their students.

SARAH KINNISON: Thank you, Ruanda. I want to add-- I want to bring in Bettina Love for a moment. She's a pioneer in the area of abolitionist pedagogy. And I really think at Achieving the Dream and our cowork-- our fellows who work with us, I think we tend to talk about transformation.

So sometimes, of course, you have to be aware of the system. But sometimes rather than re-creating, reimagining, readjusting the system, you need to think more about transformation. You need to think of stepping outside of the system and working from a space of bringing real truth and justice to the situation, which sometimes, within the system, there's too much racism and too much historical racism, historical silencing of important voices that bring truth to history, to math, to physics, to whatever the discipline.

Sometimes you just have to step outside of the system and work for real transformation. And I feel like at Achieving the Dream, we do-- we are open to that. And from a personal perspective, as a child growing up, as a daughter growing up in with immigrant parents from Argentina, as a Jewish woman, as a white presenting woman, I can only give so much for my own perspective, for my own intersectional identity.

But I always think all of us can bring in so many speakers, so many understandings, learnings, research, be open to the truth, and really bring that in everywhere as much as possible. So it's really important to look at our own positionality, question our own identities, and our own biases. And that's where Tynan and Ruanda were saying that's where the equity toolkit starts with, looking at ourselves.

RUANDA GARTH-MCCULLOUGH: You're getting some Argentinian call-outs in the chat, Sarah. [CHUCKLES]

PATTI O'SULLIVAN: Let's lean into this, the idea of course content. We have a question in the Q&A. "I teach accounting topics, including taxation. These are very specific course concepts and language usage. How would you incorporate letting students develop their own culturally based questions, language usage in a class such as this?"

SARAH KINNISON: Are there different contexts that come up in your discipline? Oh, sorry, I forgot-- we're not-- I can't hear your response. But students can write questions that reflect different concepts within the discipline that you're working in. So yes, if you work in a field that seems very-- like there's one solid answer but there's still many ways-- many contexts to put it within many cultures that experience the same discipline, many words that can be used to ask a question.

I think that if we're open to multiple perspectives, then there are many different ways you can put together the assessments. Or students can also-- rather than disposable assignments, which are assignments that the professor gives, and then it has an end, you could do-- I'm forgetting the word right now. But assignments like that have a continuous life. And students can do projects that are based on their own experiences and their own cultures.

And they can be utilizing the course content and the information and reaching the objectives through their own perspectives. And then these projects can be shared with others and contribute to the field. I don't think there's ever just one way something has to go. There's always--

RUANDA GARTH-MCCULLOUGH: Yeah. And I would agree, Sarah. I would agree, Sarah. And I think a lot of times-- and there was another question about culturally responsive and relevant when you're teaching STEM fields-- in the STEM fields. And I want to push us a little bit here to not assume that-- just I think there's a fallacy of objectivity. All the facts.

I mean, when you said taxation, you're thinking about the different ways that communities are affected by tax, by taxes, taxation, different tax laws. And so I think creating assessments and assignments that invite that experience in and that perspective in and that critique of our financial institutions and the harm that they have-- that they have created, it-- you'll be surprised of how that lets folks who are poverty affected feel seen, because if you start talking about everything as if everyone has what they need and our world is fair and just, it's automatic messaging to folks who don't have that experience that, OK, this isn't about me.

This topic doesn't include-- because I can't even relate to that experience, because where I live, we're heavily taxed. Our schools are based on property-- income tax or

school funding. And so just getting into some of those issues and ideas, I think, will invite students' lived experiences with the content and the discipline in, in many ways.

And then when you think about sciences, there's not a-- every arena of science has injustice in its history. And I think that that is often not included in the curriculum. And when you think about poison gas for chemistry and atom bomb for physics and genetics, the eugenics movement, I don't think there's any area that we teach that doesn't-- that could not be-- use the exploration through a historical lens with injustice. And so I think we do our students a disservice when we teach these things as objective, as truth, as in one way and don't invite different perspectives. And not that you have to push any agenda. I really support creating assignments and assessments and discussion prompts that invite that discussion in. And I will wrap up with that.

H. RAY KEITH: Can I add one more thing real quick? I want us to think about also-- thinking about folks from diverse backgrounds and perspectives that have contributed to those fields, many times, we take a very dominant approach to who we're sharing information about. And so there's cultures outside of the United States that have contributed to STEM and science. And so I think we need to be very mindful of bringing those folks in so that students can see that representation of themselves in the curriculum.

PATTI O'SULLIVAN: Well, thank you to our panelists. Thank you to everyone who attended this session. We're going to take a break now so you can explore the event. Be sure to check out the partner hall to access valuable resources and engage with sponsors, as well as the networking lounge to mix and mingle with attendees. We encourage your participation in the themed networking chats that align with today's topics. Thank you everyone. And enjoy the rest of the conference.