

Transcript - ASU Remote 2022: Students share the most impactful inclusive teaching strategies

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[AUDIO LOGO]

JENNI ATWOOD: Hello, and welcome to Remote, the connected faculty summit. I'm Jenni Atwood with Every Learner Everywhere. And I'll be moderating today's session. The three half-hour sessions in this 90-minute Ask the Experts 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 first block of four Every Learner Asks the Experts session blocks focuses on students. In our first presentation, a student panel will discuss teaching strategies they have found to be the most impactful in their learning.

In session 2, we'll look at how institutions can care for the whole student, particularly in light of the mental health crisis facing students today.

Finally, our third session will focus on how communities of practice provide faculty with spaces in which to learn about inclusive teaching and how to share their experiences implementing inclusive teaching strategies in their classroom.

Our first session is called Students Discuss Impactful, Inclusive Teaching Strategies. I'd like to introduce our speakers, starting with the moderator and moving on to our student panelists. Today's student panel moderator, Camille Lew, is a senior education strategist at Intentional Futures, where she works to pursue innovative and socially conscious projects.

In her two years at iF, she has worked on strategy, storytelling, and research projects spanning the k-12 and post-secondary landscapes, including co-leading this year's cohort of Every Learner Everywhere Network Student Fellows.

Daniel Crisostomo is a student at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Daniel is pursuing a BS in finance and accounting and a BA in music. His dreams for the future

reflect his different majors. He hopes to pursue an MBA, become a CPA, pursue an MA in music, and teach music at the collegiate level.

He was accepted into the UNC Charlotte College of Music despite having no formal musical training, and was recognized for his talent and hard work when he received the most improved award a year after his acceptance. In his free time, you can find him playing soccer and writing songs, especially in his favorite genre, pop.

Zaire McMican is a student at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, where he is studying business administration and minoring in psychology. Attending UNC Greensboro has been one of Zaire's longstanding goals, so he feels great pride that he is now a student there. He has goals of becoming a local business leader in his community, and bringing equity and a deep human connection to his work. Zaire is inspired by the triumph of the human spirit, and hopes to always be a person that helps others.

Renee Restivo is a mother of three, currently attending Northwestern Connecticut Community College for her associates in both health information management and social sciences. She plans to pursue a bachelor's in these same areas. She is a small business owner and founding member and standing president of the Student of Color Alliance. She was also a runner up for student of the year and made honor roll.

Renee is a low-income, first-generation student, formerly incarcerated single parent. She knows the real issues at stake and wants to be the change needed in order to bring true equity into the future.

Aajahne Seeney is a first year student at Delaware State University, where she is majoring in elementary education and minoring in Spanish. Originally from New Castle, Delaware, Aajahne has a passion for equity and inclusivity. This passion informs her career of opening an inclusive, accessible, and affordable child development center for low income and racially minoritized families in her hometown. She's a first-generation college student, a dean's list award winner, a passionate teacher to her siblings, and a lover of all things mystery and true crime.

And now for the panelists' presentation.

[SOFT MUSIC]

AAJAHNE SEENEY: Hello. My name is Aajahne Seeney. I am a rising sophomore at Delaware State University located in Dover, Delaware. I major in elementary education and I minor in Spanish.

DANIEL CRISOSTOMO: Hello. My name is Juan Daniel Crisostomo. I go by Daniel. I am a senior at UNC Charlotte, and my major is music and finance.

RENEE RESTIVO: Hi, my name is Renee. I am a second year student at Northwestern Connecticut Community College, and I'm majoring in health information management. And I will also be pursuing my associate's in social science, where I feel that I can make a difference.

I am one of the founding members of the Student of Color Alliance, which is the first of its kind in my school. And I'm also a small business owner who hopes to incorporate community talents into my store. And I want to be the change that I want to see. I'm motivated and positive about what I could do with my life and my energy.

ZAIRE MCMICAN: Hi. My name is Zaire McMican, and I'm a recent associates of arts degree graduate from Central Carolina Community College in Sanford, North Carolina. I currently attend UNC Greensboro, where I am an ambitious business major with a minor in psychology. I hope to go on and pursue a profession either in management or human resources, and am currently a junior at UNC Greensboro. I am set to graduate in May of 2024.

CAMILLE LEW: What does inclusive teaching mean to you?

AAJAHNE SEENEY: To me, inclusive teaching means developing practices and initiatives that allow for students of different backgrounds to feel as though they are in a learning environment that provides equity. One inclusive teaching practice that I've noticed in the classrooms that I have been in is having a class discussion developing norms.

These norms can be put in place to ensure that everybody in the classroom gets the opportunity to voice their opinion on how they feel the classroom should be ran as far as what they expect from their fellow students and their teacher, in order to ensure that everybody is getting the respect that they feel as though they deserve. And to make sure that the classroom environment feels safe enough for them to voice their opinions and be able to thrive.

DANIEL CRISOSTOMO: To me, inclusive teaching is developing a course that gives opportunity for all types of students. One way my teacher has used inclusive teaching

has been giving opportunities to composers who have been excluded from classical music. This means that composers, such as Black composers or Latino composers or LGBT composers, women composers, since classical music has been gatekept for centuries, since the beginning of music, he's pushed for inclusivity within the course.

RENEE RESTIVO: Through interviews and classroom observations and research. These experiences enabled me to ask questions about inclusive teaching and see the opportunities for change through my perspective of a nontraditional student. I think that an important aspect of this is decolonizing the curriculum and being more inclusive of different experiences that different cultures bring.

Dismantling the curriculum and making it more individualistic, instead of trying to fit everyone inside of a box. And also widening perspective and revamping traditional ways of teaching whitewashed material, and include the students' lives and futures into their education. In the classroom, students come in all ages, from all socioeconomic statuses and points in their life and education. And understanding each population's historical oppression, or oppressions, help to improve learning.

Incorporating ethical dilemmas of our country's past beliefs and practices and their effect on different populations, and using different resources as educational materials, such as Khan Academy, YouTube, and the available recorded lectures in specific areas of learning that are inclusive of other perspectives. This leads me to inclusive teaching and course content.

Taking the background of the student and what makes them who they are and building off of that, results in more student engagement by allowing the student to incorporate the lessons into their life. Focusing on the student's ability to absorb and apply the information as opposed to a pass/fail approach.

And making two years of another language is so central to learning about human behavior and is central to communication and empathy between cultures. Language is so much more than words. Its tone and its context. And we can recognize the melody of other languages. When we do that, we broaden our own understandings of not only what language is, but how to communicate more effectively.

Feedback is another big aspect that has huge influence on the student's performance. Timely grading is also another important aspect for the student to stay current with their efforts.

ZAIRE MCMICAN: Inclusive teaching to me means being aware and open to the constant changes in our social landscapes. I believe it requires teachers being open to a certain level of understanding, while also being empathetic enough to treat students how they want to be treated. I believe this can be seen in the form of referring to students by their preferred pronouns, as well as correctly pronouncing their names.

Another example of this today can also be seen in the syllabus when the instructor is putting their own pronouns to just make the students feel more welcome and be more inclusive. Another example would be to reach out to students and make it known that if they do need assistance or more assistance than others, that it's there and available for them. And I think this is truly-- as well as making it known if they require any further accommodations, that that's possible. And I think that's really what inclusive teaching should be and what it's all about.

CAMILLE LEW: What effect do you believe being more equitable and inclusive has on students? What effect has it had on you?

AAJAHNE SEENEY: Being more equitable contributes to the overall success that the student has in the course. It is important for the instructor to understand that every student has their own set of requirements and needs that must be met in order for them to be successful in the course. It is important that instructors are able to develop interpersonal skills that will allow them to have effective communication between the student and themselves.

DANIEL CRISOSTOMO: By having inclusivity, it has given me-- this made me feel welcomed. When I first started to realize and study music, I realized that music has-- the music I sing in the music I study, it was never meant for anybody who looks like me to sing. And it really makes you not-- it really leaves a bitter taste in your mouth. It makes you not want to sing it.

And after my professor would show us all types of different composers, a Latino composer or a Black composer, it made my heart feel welcomed. And other teachers too, who are really supportive of that, pushing for different-- pushing for inclusivity, it makes you feel welcomed. That says that maybe things are changing and maybe I have the possibility to be as great as anybody else.

RENEE RESTIVO: I believe that when something is a subject of learning, that all of the experiences and perspectives in the involved populations and how they were directly or

indirectly affected helps to give acknowledgment to each of the students personal and historical struggles and oppressions of their families and their lineage.

All people have been historically oppressed throughout human history, and many populations have shaped the way that we think and believe today. Whether those beliefs are flawed or biased or just ignorant and uneducated, it stops in the classroom and real-life learning can take place.

It also stops producing factory workers and minimum wage workers, and puts a person potential and talents to use. A workforce that is dedicated to our true evolution and is not built off of the backs of any population that is oppressed, regardless of their race, will be what brings our country to the front lines in education and in our talents.

When people feel isolated or at the outskirts of their own education, they start to think education has no place in their life. It really speaks to the values and origins of thinking of how we got into this current situation in the first place and how we can get ourselves out.

ZAIRE MCMICAN: The effect that I believe being more inclusive and equitable has on students, in general, is that I believe it makes students more engaged. And especially since inclusive and equitable practices are aimed at minoritized students, I think this is very important considering the amount of setbacks that these students already face, especially in their pursuit of opportunities. So finding a way to help them and make their journey easier as they best utilize the opportunities given to them is very important.

And I know for me personally, seeing teachers that do practice equitable and inclusive practices has always been something that's helped keep me engaged between teachers that are willing to understand how to pronounce names properly, as well as teachers who are extremely welcoming and comfortable with reaching out and asking students how they can best be assisted. I know for me personally that it's made a difference, and I think for other students it has too.

CAMILLE LEW: When do you feel most engaged in your digital learning experiences?

AAJAHNE SEENEY: I feel the most engaged when using new and innovative digital platforms to learn. When I am learning virtually, I find that using new platforms can be tricky and a lot to learn at one time, but it can also provide unique and new experiences that can make learning easier.

The platform that I am specifically referring to is Edpuzzle. I was introduced to Edpuzzle years ago in a normal classroom setting before the pandemic, but it was not used regularly. However, when I got to my math class, that was a virtual setting in college, my professor used Edpuzzle regularly.

She made the videos herself and would post them onto Edpuzzle, which allowed us to re-watch and re-answer questions as many times as necessary. Which I found extremely effective and it was much more comfortable than her pulling a video from the internet because we got to hear her voice, and it was very similar to class. This also allowed us to have more time in class to have discussions, as we would watch the Edpuzzles on our own time separately.

DANIEL CRISOSTOMO: Digital Courseware, I feel, more engaged with Digital Courseware when I feel like I matter, not when it's just I feel like I'm just another person or the questions are recycled. I feel I'm more engaged when I get a second of self-reflect, or I give it a second to-- there different questions I get wrong and it's tailored towards me, not just for anybody else.

AAJAHNE SEENEY: I feel most engaged in my learning experience when I am taking a part of class discussion or a reflection of what we just learned. I'd like to hear everybody's point of view and to see how people react to information before and after they learn something. They might have formulated an opinion with very little or inaccurate information, and after learning the different aspects of a problem or issue, change in the thinking process happens.

When I can connect to the material that I am learning or identify with it and experience it in my life is when I am most engaged and actively learning. I also think it is important to note that a lot of my education and participation in programs and opportunities has been possible because of digital tools and hardware. So many opportunities open up when a person possesses a laptop and constant access to the internet.

A digital library is also a super helpful tool that helps me take charge of my own research and I feel helps engage me the most in my learning experience. I feel most engaged in a digital learning environment when my teacher goes out of their way to emphasize that they truly want me to succeed in a course, as well as making it clear that they care about me as an individual.

For instance, when I was having technical issues with the Courseware of one of my classes and informed my instructor, they immediately responded, tried to help me find

solutions to the issue, connected me with the IT team for the school, as well as for the Courseware. And the next day after we did figure out the problem, put out an email to the rest of the students noting other issues that– noting not only the issue I had, but also other issues that may come up and potential solutions. So I think just going that extra effort and doing that really helps engage students and helps them best succeed in the course.

CAMILLE LEW: Hi, everyone. Welcome to the Q&A section of this presentation. We're really excited to have all four of our students here today. If you have any questions, please submit them in the Q&A tab, not the chat. But it seems like we already got a few coming in already. First, I want to address a question about when handouts will be made available. There are no specific handouts for this particular presentation, but we will drop some resources around inclusive teaching in the chat momentarily. But we're really excited to hear from our students. It's not every day we get to hear about their perspectives and experiences. So we'll get started. So one of the first questions from the audience is that sometimes faculty try to reach out to students in ways that are caring or create a sense of belonging, but it can come across as prying into their personal lives.

For you as students, do you have recommendations for how instructors and faculty can make those connections without feeling like it's crossing, I guess, boundaries into your personal life?

DANIEL CRISOSTOMO: I can go first.

ZAIRE MCMICAN: Yeah.

DANIEL CRISOSTOMO: Oh, you can go. It's all good.

ZAIRE MCMICAN: No, you go ahead. OK. Well, yeah, I was just going to say-- oh, sorry. Sorry. Go ahead. All right. Well, I was just going to say that I think that when it comes to teachers reaching out and stuff, I think that as long as they're making it known that they're just there to help, I think, when they do reach out instead of– like, for me, I never felt this as prying with my instructors when they just made it known that they were here to help, or when they may have just checked in on me maybe if I missed a class or two. Like, to me, that never felt like it was prying. It just seemed like they were there actively trying to ensure that I was doing the best that I could to succeed, and they were just there to help me out. So I just say, making sure that they proactively make it known that they care and that they're there to be a resource to the student.

DANIEL CRISOSTOMO: One thing that I found helpful was that we would have an assignment called self-reflection, would give us opportunity to voice our opinions and to reach out if we needed help. And also, had professors email us like if we missed a class or something like that.

But I also understand the idea of it being like an invasion of privacy because some professors would write-- make it too handed, almost, I guess, you were dissing them. Like they'd be like, oh, you didn't study. You need to do this. And that's why it feels like that. So I would say be aware of the way you're writing it and the way you're saying it.

AAJAHNE SEENEY: I can go next. I think it's really important to come across genuine. I think that instructors should really think about the tone that they're using for me, when my professors always come across as very genuine, it doesn't seem like they're prying. It seems like they just are actually there for me. So if I do have something to say, I will feel comfortable enough to share. And if I don't, I wouldn't feel like I'm not giving them enough information.

RENEE RESTIVO: I think that it's important for faculty to reach out to students before there's a problem. So maybe like include it in the syllabus and let every student that they have know that they are important and that their education matters to that professor. Maybe a Google Form that they could fill out to get to know the student a little better, this way they can find out more information and feel comfortable enough to engage with their professor.

Or if a professor notices that a good student's grades are slipping or something isn't quite right, reaching out to them actually makes them feel-- it's support. And I think that that support is really important.

CAMILLE LEW: Great. Thank you. And something that you guys touched on a little bit, which there's also a question about from the audience, is giving feedback to faculty members about inclusive teaching strategies. So I guess my question would be beyond what you've already said, have there been times where you have been asked for feedback or given it without being asked? And did you feel empowered to do so? Or were the dynamics in the classroom, did they feel uncomfortable?

So if anyone wants to start us off.

AAJAHNE SEENEY: I can start. I have something to say about that. At my university, we are forced to do a survey at the end of the semester where we analyze how each class went. So the fact it's a grade and we have to do it, but there you are anonymous. So it

doesn't feel awkward or doesn't feel like the teacher would hold any kind of grudge. And I do feel like I'm able to get anything off my chest at the end of the semester. And I feel like although I might not have that professor again, I feel like I'm able to help that professor be better for the next semester.

ZAIRE MCMICAN: Yeah. I was just going to say that one of my psychology classes this past semester, one thing that they did that I think was really cool was they also had an end-of-the-semester survey. But throughout the semester, I think, in the middle, before spring break or right after spring break, what they did was they made sure they checked in with every student.

They had an individual meeting with every student, whether it be for 10 to 15 minutes. And it was just them asking, what they could do better and how the student is doing with the Courseware so far. And it's stuff like that I think really makes a big difference.

DANIEL CRISOSTOMO: We had-- at my school, we had the surveys. And what some professors do, they give out extra credit to push for students to do it. And actually the dean of the college of arts, actually read through all the surveys to make sure we're having a good experience. And he actually goes out of his way to try to fix the curriculum if students are complaining about certain things or complaining about certain professors.

CAMILLE LEW: Great. Thank you. And so we have a question about what if there's a place where faculty can read more about impactful teaching. I'll note that we'll drop some resources, but I also know that the four of you are participating in an every learner publication around the best college teacher you've had, which is going to be published in September. Can you each tell me a little more about what you wrote there and what those experiences were like?

DANIEL CRISOSTOMO: I could go first. So I wrote about my music history teacher who I had for two semesters for the music history I or music history II. I wrote about inclusivity and how he pushes for that. In the video, I talked about how you hear about Latino classical composer. It's very-- he even admitted that history has endowed privileged-- endowed white men with privilege.

And that's really disheartening if the songs you constantly learn-- it's like a whole little bubble and everybody feels normal because everybody's white. But when you look at yourself, you go in the mirror and then you realize you don't look like everybody else, and then the music you learn wasn't meant for anybody like you, that's really disheartening.

And so one thing the professor did, he pushed a lot for Black composers, LGBT composers, Latino composers. He went out of his way and we would discuss it. And he'd always discuss about the problems that they had-- or like the way their feelings have bled into the music, the struggles of being a Black composer and writing classical music, things like that. And that's what I wrote about and how that made me feel that I mattered and that I could one day be as great as them. And it really helped me push forward that semester. That's what I wrote about.

ZAIRE MCMICAN: I wrote about when I first came to college in the midst of the pandemic, my first math instructor. And just how impactful he was for me, especially considering how many things were just changing during the time, like, between the pandemic.

I moved from New Jersey to North Carolina, so it was just a lot of big changes in my life. And I was just really grateful for how accommodating he was throughout my journey in the beginning of my college career. So that's what I wrote about. And it was something that really helped me become the student I am today.

CAMILLE LEW: Aajahne and Renee, do you have thoughts here?

RENEE RESTIVO: Yeah. I wrote about my medical ethics teacher, who I had for two semesters too, because my last semester a lot of things happened, so I wasn't able to pass her class. So I ended up taking her again this semester. And the bond that I formed with her was amazing. And I know it wasn't-- it's not just me. She has this amazing effect on everyone in that class. Not one person who started that class dropped out of that class. And I really think that it made everybody be better.

And so I kind of wrote about that. She really read the work. So if you put a lot of work into the assignment, she put a lot of work into grading your work. And she let you know that your work is either good or you need improvement. But if you need improvement, she did it tactfully. She was kind of mothering in a way. And I just think that her compassion and empathy for her students, because she does have two sons, just really, really was impactful in the classroom.

AAJAHNE SEENEY: I wrote about my child development professor. Specifically, I wrote about the way that she introduced lessons. What she did was specifically one time I remember that she introduced the lesson with a TikTok video. I felt as though this was very impactful and a good way to start off the lesson, because it was something that we're used to this generation. We like to watch TikTok videos a lot.

And it was something that was, like, we're really comfortable with.

It was very familiar compared to a TED Talk video, which might be a little longer and intimidating. We're watching like a one-minute TikTok video that was on the topic that we're learning about. And then we would have discussions about it. And our class was very small, so it was very intimate and we could have a great discussion about it.

CAMILLE LEW: Great. Thank you, students. So we are out of time for this session. Sorry if we weren't able to answer any questions you left in the Q&A. But we're so happy to have been able to hear from the four of you. So thank you for joining. And I will pass it back to Jenni, who will kick off our next session in this block. So thank you, everyone.

JENNI ATWOOD: Thank you all so much. And thank you to those who joined the session. We hope you can join us for session 2.