

Transcript - OLC Innovate Student Panel: Co-Constructing Diverse Pathways to Digital Learning With Our Students

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ANGELA GUNDER: Hello, everyone. I am so excited to welcome you to this session that focuses on the most important thing that we do in our work, which is the equitable support of our students. And as Mary mentioned, I'm Angela Gunder. I'm the Chief Academic Officer for the OLC. And this will be our third time featuring a student panel on the closing day of our virtual conference.

And I have to say, for me and for so many who have participated before, this is always one of the greatest highlights of the conference. And today will be no exception.

Although, we're going to make it great with your help and support by offering us your questions in the chat for our students who have graciously and generously agreed to be here and are giving their time amidst a lot of responsibilities, amidst classes.

I know that Eddie had to change some plans around to be here and may even have to leave early in order to get to class, which I told him that we always support. And I'm so excited to have us all engage with them and learn from them about how we can better support our students collectively.

So our moderator for today is Sam Agee-Roark. She is actually one of the student panelists from last year. And she's going to be leading a dialogue with our three student fellows here who are joining us from Every Learner Everywhere, which is a solutions network of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that focuses on improving student outcomes, particularly for Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students, poverty-affected students, and first-generation students through the affordances of digital learning. And OLC is one of 12 proud network partners of Every Learner Everywhere. And we continue to be humbled by the work that the students here and the students like Sam are doing to advance the centering of quality, of equity, and care in our teaching and learning environments.

So one thing I will mention, as is typical about online gatherings is that the weather can throw everything off. Sam is in a region that is receiving quite a bit of weather and is having some technical difficulties. So what I'm going to do is I will pretend to be Sam, I

will do my best, [CHUCKLES] And I will kick us off. And then once we see her in the room, we will welcome her to the stage.

I also would be remiss in not recognizing our colleagues who are here from Every Learner Everywhere. So if you have questions about the work that we do and the work that these students are doing, both Patty O'Sullivan and Emilie Cooke are here and you can ask questions in the chat about Every Learner Everywhere and they'd be happy to provide links, and resources, and to help out there.

So yeah, you've got some waves and some highs. They're wonderful folks, and are doing amazing work, and are the ones that are helping to guide these students in doing the work that they're doing. So without any further ado, I would like to shift over to each of our panelists. And I'm going to start with Chidinnma. Just want to welcome you to the stage. And I would love for you to share a little bit about yourself and how you've been able to support educators like us in better understanding the needs of today's students through your work.

CHIDINNMA EGEMONU: Nice. Hi, nice to meet you guys. My name is Chidinnma Egemonu. I'm a senior at Vanderbilt University studying Cognitive Studies and Human and Organizational Development. I've been interested in education since high school. I was an ambassador for my city's public education fund, and I also worked as the president of our local Toastmasters for Teenagers.

And I was really passionate about education because as a Nigerian immigrant, my parents always stressed that, but they often didn't have the resources to help. So I had to figure a lot of things out on my own. So just making things easier for other students like myself was something I was really passionate about.

And it's a passion that I've brought into college as well. I've worked at a childhood education lab. And I worked at an edtech company for higher education strategy. And right here at ELL, we're working on so many different things. One thing I really like that we're working on right now is understanding how HBCUs support their students so that other universities can take some notes as well. So yeah, that's really how I've been able to contribute to education. I'm really excited to answer all of your questions.

ANGELA GUNDER: Thank you so much. And next I'd like to welcome Eddie. Same question, I'd love for you to share a little bit about yourself and how you've been able to support educators in better understanding the needs of today's students through your advocacy work.

EDDIE FRAUSTRO: Good morning, everyone. Excited to be here on today's panel. My name is Eddie. I'm currently a junior at Georgia State University and I'm majoring in Marketing. So how I've helped educators, currently throughout my work through ELE, I'm doing a similar project with Chidinnma. And my focus for my personal project is with Hispanic-serving institutions.

Seeing as right now there's a lot of different emerging Hispanic-serving institutions, so how do you be a lot more equitable when it comes to policy and also incorporating what type of different student support services that those universities are going to need? Growing up, similar to Chidinnma, I started getting involved in terms of advocacy work and helping underrepresented communities in high school. There were a lot of different nonprofits and making sure that as I was going through and I'm going to go to college, how do I help give back.

So now kind of having that same mind frame of like, OK, how do we include more inclusive language like Spanish, how do we make sure that going forward it's an inclusive framework that's going to be inclusive for Latinos going forward. Yeah.

ANGELA GUNDER: It wouldn't be a Zoom call if I didn't start talking and was still on mute. So [CHUCKLES] thank you, Eddie. I'm going to have Emma introduce herself. And I'm so happy to welcome Sam into the room. Seems like restarting your modem worked and you were able to get around the storms. And then, Sam, I'll have you introduce yourself and then we can jump into the questions and your moderation. So Emma, over to you with the same question, a little bit about yourself and how you've been able to support educators and better understanding the needs of today's students through your advocacy work.

EMMA SULLIVAN: Yes, good morning, everyone. My name is Emma. I'm a junior at Georgia State University majoring in Middle Level Education. I've always been interested in creating accessible resources for students through intersections of technology and policy. Something that I've done since I was a child, growing up in an area that didn't have a ton of resources for students, and it's just something that has kind of followed me into my college and my career.

So in the past, I've worked with organizations such as Future Leaders of Action and the Latino Leadership Initiative to provide services for low-income, at-risk, and marginalized students. This summer, I will be attending service learning trips to Dominican Republic and Munich, Germany to further my knowledge of understanding various educational

systems around the world and what we can apply right here in the United States, especially understanding what students need to thrive and learn in different settings. And I'm so happy to be here with you this morning to answer all your questions.

ANGELA GUNDER: All right. And then last but not least, Sam, if you would go ahead and answer that question that I had for the other students, give us a little bit about yourself and tell us a little bit about your advocacy work for making education more equitable.

SAMANTHA AGEE-ROARK: Absolutely. So my name is Samantha Agee-Roark. I'm a pre-law student at Motlow State. I'm about to graduate in May. My experience with Motlow State through digital learning and access has been amazing and it's been quite life-changing for me.

When I started at Motlow State two years ago, I was very much focused on my school path, but I was also a musician and I had some mentors that stepped in, and through digital learning, they were able to work with me and my own business which I have through music and helped me get my education while working with digital materials to grow my business.

I recently was taken to the Grand Ole Opry back in October and I was inducted as Independent Female Single of the Year. My mentors worked with me to make that possible. Digital access and learning helped make that possible for me. But the biggest thing that made that possible for me was diversity, equity, and inclusion. And that's something that I feel is the biggest impact that can be made on students, employees, and in society as well.

ANGELA GUNDER: Thank you, Sam. And, Sam, through the technical difficulties or I don't know if you have everything pulled up to be able to moderate or would it be helpful for me to ask the first question of the group?

SAMANTHA AGEE-ROARK: I'm getting caught up. I'm so sorry. We're having tremendous storms in Kentucky right now. So if you could start the first question, I'll hop in right after you.

ANGELA GUNDER: Happy to do so. So diversity, equity, and inclusion, and belonging are key to all learning experiences and university activities. So my first question for the group is, what does this mean to you and how can institutions get better at embedding DEI into their work ubiquitously? And let's start with Chidinnma for that question.

CHIDINNMA EGEMONU: Of course. Thank you. So I think when it comes to diversity and inclusion and embedding that more within the college environment, I think it should not be superficial or very surface level. And I think that students should definitely not be infantilized when it comes to the level of advice or support that they can provide. I think making sure that all the stakeholders within the college environment are taken seriously, I think that's something that's very important.

And I think that when it comes to diversity and inclusion, things constantly change, our communities constantly change. So I think it's something where we need to have constant meetings and also understand that having one specific program is not an end all, be all answer to something and it's something that also has to continue.

And I also think that when it comes to diversity and inclusion, there's so many other different types of diversity that I think that a lot of schools focus on. I think neurodiversity is definitely one of those big things, especially if we're talking about technology, and education, and understanding how different students learn. So, yeah, I think making sure that there isn't just one solution because if you have one solution for a super diverse environment, then there are other groups that are suffering as well.

ANGELA GUNDER: That's fantastic. And I think that a lot of folks that are entering into DEI work for the first time, particularly in digital learning environments, are looking for a singular path. And the challenge is that you'll treat students as if they're all the same and that's the exact opposite of what we need to do and what we know is best for everyone's success. So thank you for that. Let's go to Emma next. Same question.

EMMA SULLIVAN: Yes. To me, DEI initiatives are more than clear cut subsections in the student handbook. Like Chidinnma said, it's learning how to be adaptable and changing. And more often than reading it on a piece of paper, it's how we interact with each other and our students inside and outside the classroom. And I believe institutions can get better at embedding these both in coursework and what happens in our communities as well.

So for pushing faculty and staff to pull in organizations like ELE and OLC to give trainings and demonstrations. So show how we can support our students even when they're not in the same room as us, knowing how we can advocate for them, and policies in our community, and different injustices and impressions we see.

So just being activists in our own community, demonstrating what we see written down on DEI coursework and things like that, just keeping our students at the forefront of what we do and ensuring that we hold their own identities and their own lives at the core. So making sure that everything we do is for their best interest. And overall, that would just provide strong, culturally responsive learning and teaching both for students and professors.

ANGELA GUNDER: That's fantastic, Emma. And we certainly need to do more in terms of professional development and making sure that all of our educators are prepared and there is a place for students to help in preparing that professional development such that it's aligned to all of your needs. Eddie, same question.

EDDIE FRAUSTRO: Thanks for putting it in the chat. That helped a lot.

ANGELA GUNDER: Yeah. [CHUCKLES]

EDDIE FRAUSTRO: But I also agree. I don't think DEI should now be just looked at as kind of like a buzzword, just to have the campus. I think to be truly inclusive, at the forefront, I think I'm going to tackle the question a little bit differently in terms of I've seen a lot of studies, and just from my own personal experience, being an out of state student where if I'm not involved on campus, I feel like my academic success also reflects that.

And I feel like from a lot of my peers and people I've met through clubs, once they start getting more involved on campus, then I started, oh, now I can see myself fitting here, and I can start making friends, I can start building a network. I can see a community of people that are going to support me.

But if you don't have that space on campus, if you don't feel like you have anyone to go to or any faculty, peers, then they're going to be a lot more hesitant and OK, like, can I really succeed here? So my challenge to universities would be like, OK, how do you make an overarching institutional structure?

So not just having a multicultural center, but making sure that Multicultural Center is connected to every office beneath that. So for Georgia State, for example, we have the Lasso Office for the Latino community, the Black Student Achievement Office, and all these offices underneath that, and having a monthly newsletter, making sure all social media is upgraded.

Being a business student, I'm trying to think about as many ways to get to the consumer as possible. So in this case, colleges are businesses. So how do you get as many

students? So if you have all these channels and you're updating, like, here's these spaces, here's these opportunities that we have going on, then it's like, now if you can find other people that look like you, making sure that you can connect with faculty that are like, hey, once upon a time, I was in your shoes, now how do I help give back and make sure I can elevate you, that's how I would make DEI more-- sorry, ubiquitously better on campus.

ANGELA GUNDER: Yeah. The challenge, too, is so many learners are balancing way, way, way more challenges than prior and folks are learning in different modalities. They might do some classes online, some classes face-to-face. And even feeling like they have the ability to connect is such a challenge. And we have to be able to meet students where they are and make sure that just because you're a fully online student that you have opportunities to connect with your other with your other students.

So I also want to give a shout out to Jennifer Panton, who put in a resource in the chat and talked about how a lot of people are handling equity at a surface level. She talks about doing equity, spray and pray equity. Within ELE, we talk a lot about equity gloss where we just use the word but we're not actually aligning actions to that and that we have to go a lot deeper in order to support diversity, equity, and inclusion, and belongingness for our students. So, Sam, are you ready to go with the next question?

SAMANTHA AGEE-ROARK: Absolutely, Dr. Gunder. And I think just to touch on what you said, equity is very important. And I would like to call to action for everybody to step in and invest in that equity, invest in the equity of their students, invest in the equity of your fellow employees. That's the biggest thing that you could do. So to begin with, the next question, let's think back to when you first started college, what do you wish that digital learning had been like then and why? So to begin, let's start with Chidinnma.

CHIDINNMA EGEMONU: Thank you. So when I first started college in the fall of 2019, I would say that a lot of my professors used technology the same way they had sort of been used in high school, so like online portals for assignments, and then presentations for class sessions, and maybe like uploading things to a website for working in groups and stuff, but the more standard ways that technology is used in classroom.

And once the pandemic hit and we had to go into virtual classes, I will say that a lot of it was an adjustment period, especially for a lot of my instructors. So I think that's when we had to think outside of the box and think about different ways to teach students, whether it's online science labs and whatnot.

So I think because of that, it's definitely led to more diversity in the way I've been kind of been taught in the classroom, even though we've gone back to in-person classes. And I think that in the beginning, I had to come up with my own ways of learning. I'm a very visual learner. I'm a very creative learner. I use song lyrics to help me memorize things sometimes and stuff like that. But that's not something you can actively do in the classroom. So having something that could help with that afterwards was something that was very important.

And I also think that now one thing that I really appreciate is that we can personalize our own learning and that it can basically allow teachers to ensure that there are different types of learners having access to the tools that they need without the teachers always having to create those tools themselves.

And I think it takes some space off the instructor as well, often giving more flexibility. And I think that just having more agency and choice when it comes to the kind of things that I would like to learn digitally has also been helpful as well. So I say overall, as we've looked into other options, I've been able to personalize my learning a bit more and that's something I wasn't able to do as much when I first started college.

SAMANTHA AGEE-ROARK: Wonderful. I think with COVID, we learned a lot about human resiliency, didn't we? But with digital learning, you're exactly right, change is key, and having access is key, but adapting and growing with digital learning to the needs of students is absolutely the most important. Emma, let's go to you. So think back to when you first started college. What do you wish that digital learning had been like then and why?

EMMA SULLIVAN: So when I started college in fall of 2020, it was my first time ever experiencing an entire selection of courses in semester online. I graduated early, so I wasn't really a part of the initial lockdown switch to digital learning back in March of 2020. And in addition to that, I didn't really come from a school that had a lot of technology embedded in their courseware or anything like that.

I had my first laptop given to me by my university when I started. I had never had my own piece of personal technology. So I think a lot of professors and faculty as well didn't even understand how to make that switch and replicate in-person learning to mirror or even exceed what was classroom learning.

And it's not a question of the professor's knowledge itself, but it's knowing how to deliver that same information in a digital format is an entirely different subject

altogether. And I think that ensuring that humanity and human interaction is at the core of digital learning, and it's so important, and I wish faculty had more training and understanding on how to, like I said, mimic or replicate and even exceed classroom learning.

But of course, with the pandemic, it was so hard to make that switch and give everyone the time they needed to adjust. Reflecting back, so many of my lectures were pre-recorded and I rarely ever saw my professors' face or even interacted with them. It felt a lot of times like I was just talking to a digital bot online. It didn't feel like it was an actual human interaction.

So I wish that we could, moving forward, and aftermath of the pandemic, and also just the tech-centered world we live in, sharing with our professors who have such a wealth of knowledge to share how they can deliver that content in different interactive digital activities. So not just speaking at students in a recorded lecture or having a Zoom. Doing different activities online that you would do in the classroom or sharing different resources online to mimic those small group discussions, different things like that. And it doesn't have to be challenging. So that's why I think that we can have different trainings and offer different supports and also make sure everyone knows that not everyone has the same access to technology or the same understanding of technology. So just making sure that we're all on the same page so that we can all work together because it truly happens as a collective.

SAMANTHA AGEE-ROARK: Thank you. Thank you so much, Emma. So I think that what you said was very powerful about variation, especially variation in the digital space for engagement. I think we learned a lot about Zoom as well, and the different tools, and how we could incorporate virtual reality, for example. VR is something that was utilized a lot at my college post-COVID and something that's still utilized now. So, Eddie, think back to when you first started college, what do you wish digital learning had been like and why?

EDDIE FRAUSTRO: Yeah, so I also started during fall 2020 when COVID first hit, like fully transitioned for college students. And it was really hard for me, too, especially not having feedback and also being in intro level classes where the average class size is at least 150 to 300 people. So when you have that many humans just in one call and/or like just pre-recorded lectures, I felt like it was a very big disconnect for me as well.

And then one thing that ELE that we have been researching a lot is specific educational tools. And for me, I think I realize it connects to the big ones, I know a lot of students are familiar with, but having courseware that has feedback loops built into it so you can have real-time feedback on, like, OK, you're going in the right direction, or hey, maybe you need to go back and read this part of the chapter, or like, hey, maybe you should try this activity.

For me, I need different ways to learn and having a courseware that I can learn from my mistakes, and keep building on, and say, OK, this is how the subject is built on instead of just me reading like 20 pages of a chapter digitally and then when I try to reach out to the professor, he's like, oh, you could do this and this. But if I don't have someone kind of guiding me throughout the way because then you can't always reach out to a professor when you have one small question. But I feel like with courseware, they were always giving me tips. That's where I feel like I could have been best supported when the pandemic first started.

SAMANTHA AGEE-ROARK: Thank you so much, Eddie. And again, it wouldn't be Zoom if I didn't try to talk on mute, right? So we're going to go and move on to our next question. One of our previous students, our ELE students, Kiara Williams, gave a lightning talk at our conference last fall where she talked about the importance of including students in the design of education. What are some of the ways you think these educators should be including students in the process of building the future of learning? We'll begin with Chidinnma.

CHIDINNMA EGEMONU: Yeah. So I think that's a really great question. I think that like I mentioned earlier, it's very important to include students and to not assume that they don't have something to provide. I think one way that would be really interesting would be when it comes to syllabus design or curriculum design, I think having some student input on certain types of topics that could be covered or certain ways to teach students or more engaging ways to teach students I think would be really interesting.

Because I feel like sometimes, maybe there are issues that our professors might not know about because maybe there are issues that are specifically impacting Gen Z that could be made as a connection to what we're learning in class or maybe there's a different way or a different method of sharing information.

I know for one of the classes that I had one of my professors sharing a TikTok video that was related to one of the education sociology lessons we were learning. And I feel

like a lot of the time, people think that maybe like social media cannot be included in education in some way but it's pretty similar to sharing a YouTube video or a Ted Talk or something.

My professor is a bit younger so I think that's why that TikTok was something that she kind of thought about, but it was an engaging way to just take this thing that we're learning in class and then package it in a way that students were familiar with. And I think if professors talked to students a bit more about the kind of way that they would like to see their own materials presented or the specific things that might be impacting young people that they're not familiar with, I think that's definitely one way that students could be involved in the learning process.

SAMANTHA AGEE-ROARK: Thank you so much. I think that was wonderful. And social media being integrated into school is a revolutionary idea. I feel in modern times with digital learning, we have to be open to new ideas exactly as you just said. So let's move along to Emma.

EMMA SULLIVAN: As someone going into the field of education, currently in a teacher prep program for middle grades, grade 6 to 8, people always ask if I feel blind to a lot of the issues going on regarding policy and legislation directly affecting educators, whether that's K through 12 or higher Ed, and I always say that I don't because I'm in such a great program right now at Georgia State that really focuses on social justice and just making sure our educators are aware of these issues.

And my professor always takes time out of class to discuss different Bills that are introduced, harmful Bills, and what we can do. And we just talk about them and we create these safe spaces for open dialogue and how we can continue to deliver our Social Justice Center teaching and supporting students throughout these policies, making different strategies.

And everyone here who's in education knows that it's a community. And if you try and take on everything by yourself, you're going to get burnt out really fast. And you need to know to ask for help and have others who have the same goals and mission as you to lean on. So for me, that's really helpful in going through my prep program, especially as I gear up to start student teaching.

And like we've said, that's kind of been the common theme, education is constantly changing and we have to adapt with it. And just knowing that we have different supports, and people in our corner, and continuing to learn. Even as educators, it's just

so beneficial to us and future students. So making sure we're aware of the policies, and different things that go on, and keeping ourselves informed, especially when we deal with students who these Bills directly impact is just so important to our work.

SAMANTHA AGEE-ROARK: Thank you so much. That was wonderful, Emma. So, Eddie, what do you have on this one for us?

EDDIE FRAUSTRO: Yeah so I think in terms of how to have students in that process going forward, I guess an example, it's like semi-unrelated, but it kind of is. So at Georgia State, they've recently built a Student Free Activity Committee. So they've been trying to get students at the forefront of like, OK, if your tuition is already going to go to fees, how can we get you guys' to say in terms of all the student organizations on campus? How are we going to--

Because a lot of the faculty came and were like, hey, we know we're trying to build internal GSU tools. How can we make sure that your voices are being heard? Because right now, we realize there's a lot of forms, it's very hard to get access to funding, getting access to spaces on campus to host events. And we shouldn't have this disconnect.

So let's make an exact likeness committee of different student leaders from all different types of student organizations, like political, business, or just fun organizations. That's like, OK, so we have this focus group that can be representative of the whole student body, then we always have feedback and we have representation of how we should change our policy going forward.

And I would imagine just for students, they can also have that same philosophy when applying to the classroom and not just to the organizations. So they can have focus groups for different schools, so at the School of Business, the School of Education. And if you have different majors within that school and also different years, if you have a big sample size, what does and doesn't work for you guys, get the average of those results and then start applying it to your educational practices. I feel like that would be the best way to include students.

SAMANTHA AGEE-ROARK: Awesome, Eddie. Thank you. I think student voices are something that we can't go without looking towards. And that was wonderful, Eddie. Thank you. Dr. Gunder, I see you are taking audience questions right now. Are we moving along to those?

ANGELA GUNDER: Yeah, let's do that. There's a bunch that are fantastic. But while I queue up these questions for you, why don't you take that one that came in the chat first, which was from Sarah, who asked, how did your institution manage the expense of VR equipment?

SAMANTHA AGEE-ROARK: Wonderful. Thank you. So with our institution, we actually went to our President's Council and we went and we have a forum within our university. And when we need to do spending, we send out a form. It goes out to everybody on the President's Council, but there are student members on that. For example, I am president of SGA at my college.

So when we have anything that involves student activity fees or use of funds, we go in, and we meet on it, and we all decide on it. Post-COVID, at our university, we felt that VR was one of the biggest things that we could do to engage our students, give our students something to reduce stress. So we have an open VR lab. We can walk into it anytime. If I'm stressed out during midterms or studying for a block, I can go in, I can play some games, I can relieve my mind. But then again, in the next block of time going on, our nursing students may be in there doing virtual hands-on science.

So it was something that they felt that they needed to spend the money on. And it has been very useful. And then T-Mobile actually partnered with my college, in closing on this question, T-Mobile partnered with my college, and they provided all students with a free hotspot and a free cell phone.

And then our school was able to start letting us lease out VR equipment from the library. So they started with a very small VR program and they've grown it to something massive and even partnered with T-Mobile. And we all have had two, this is going on two years now of free hotspot provided by T-Mobile. I'm just catching up with the chat here. Sorry, guys. So I think that is everything in touch with that question. I don't have any other comments coming in. So Dr. Gunder, do we want to move on to Nicole Weber's question?

ANGELA GUNDER: Yeah, let's do it.

SAMANTHA AGEE-ROARK: All right. So this question is from Nicole Weber. I love hearing all y'all's wonderful perspectives. What's one thing that you would recommend instructors do in teaching fully online courses to build community and support inclusion at the beginning of the semester? And now that one didn't have any direct person that

they wanted to hear from. So, Eddie, Chidinnma, Emma, if either of you guys want to chime in and give your perspective on that, go ahead.

CHIDINNMA EGEMONU: Yeah, sure. So I can't see the specific question here again actually. Do you mind repeating it?

SAMANTHA AGEE-ROARK: Absolutely. What's one thing that you would recommend instructors do when teaching fully online courses to build their community support and inclusion at the beginning of the semester?

CHIDINNMA EGEMONU: Yeah, I think emphasizing flexibility is something that's important. And I think it's also something that's important for in-person classes as well, especially because if you're working with mainly digital platforms, there are going to be times when certain students might not have internet access.

There are certain things that students will not have access due to their socioeconomic status or maybe they're like-- I know for a lot of students, when we went back home, maybe we were helping out our siblings or something like that. So even though we were home, it wasn't as if we didn't have other responsibilities and stuff like that.

So taking that into account, trying to make it as interactive as possible, maybe hosting some group social studies sessions or something, something that really engages students and lets them know that even if they're struggling in a specific part, they can still receive support in this other way with different learning tools and different learning styles. So just using the psychology and making it as diverse as possible of show that there's some sort of flexibility when it comes to different types of learning as well.

And yeah, I think I would say those are the main themes because I think if you're not in front of the person physically, sometimes you'll have to follow-up more or dig a bit deeper when it comes to ensuring that the class is not just a session where they're just coming in and looking at a Zoom screen and then leaving. They're actually feeling like, OK, I'm going to touch base with this professor on a certain thing because that's something that they told me to do. I think once there's that sort of accountability thing that the students have moved into, they also are made to engage in it as well. So I think that is one way that could happen.

SAMANTHA AGEE-ROARK: Thank you so much. I think engagement is one of the biggest things to touch on, what you said, as far as involving to build community. For example, my university utilizes discussion boards, open discussion forums in all of our

classes where we're not on campus or on ground. And that really allows us to communicate. But our professors also communicate in those discussion boards with us and they listen to our opinions and our ideals based on all the different modules that we work on. So thank you for that.

So the next one that we have is from Viera And, Chidinnma, this is actually for you. Can you please say more about using TikTok in a specific assignment that you found meaningful? Viera is currently working with Intercultural Communication Students.

CHIDINNMA EGEMONU: Yeah, so the TikTok video was actually used in class and we were going over our lesson about different ways that teachers, and underserved students, and parents can be involved in the development course materials and stuff. We were discussing the counter-narratives in education, how to loop those in. And so the TikTok video was from an educator about their own experiences dealing with diverse groups.

And I think that's the interesting thing about TikTok. I know a lot of people have different opinions on it. But like any social media platform, it hosts a bunch of people who have different types of knowledge. And if go and find the credible sources, it's a really good way to do that.

So in the class, we ended up showing that video. And I think that it just made it more engaging because there were certain video effects and stuff that they used that just made it more interesting. I think students were more encouraged to ask questions based off like watching that video than if they were told to watch like a Ted Talk or some other super long video explaining the exact same thing.

And I think that a lot of the time, too, I really appreciate when professors understand that we also have other classes and other difficult course loads. So whenever they try to make information as compact as possible but in a way where we can easily digest it without having to spend too much time on something, especially if it's a topic that can be easily discussed in class, trying to make it packaged in that way is super helpful. Another way, actually, I just remembered last year, I was in an education finance class. So just going over different methods of financing education and the different studies that go over that. So I know for one of my professors, he's a bit younger as well, but one of the readings that he assigned for us was actually a really long Twitter thread. And this Twitter thread was by an economist. So he had us read through it and search up

specific comments, search on specific words and take notes on it, what specific things here in this example were related to what we discussed in class.

And I just remember thinking that was so interesting because you're taking something that a lot of students are familiar with and would more likely to be engaged in and having them-- it's basically allowing students to have a say in their own learning as well instead of just-- research articles and everything, those are very super important and we definitely still need those in education, but also involving different methods as well to have as a break from that was also something that was super interesting.

So yeah, I hope that during the semester, a lot of my other professors include that as well. And that's something that can definitely be used because I think social media is super controversial. But if there are positive ways that we can use it, since it's never going away, I think it can be helpful.

SAMANTHA AGEE-ROARK: Awesome! Thank you so much. So we do just have one last question in closing. If you could have everyone here today leave with one call to action for how they might improve the educational experience to make it more equitable and inclusive, what would it be?

EDDIE FRAUSTRO: For me, I would say to start becoming familiar with the resources available to you, whether it's on social media, on campus. I think first, it's definitely information overload. I feel like my school, I follow right now about 50 Instagram pages alone just from different offices, different clubs, Georgia State itself because there's always so much going on.

But then at the same time, I could feel like FOMO. Then it's just like, I feel so overwhelmed so I'm like, OK, I just can't. So then at first, I'm like, OK. what's an actionable thing? Currently, I'm president of ALPFA, so it's a Latino business club here on campus. And one thing I do with my board every week is I meet up with them and I'm like, OK, let's go through these Instagram pages, let's go through our emails, and let's see what are the current career fairs going on. what are the activities going on.

Then where can we get a headshot? If someone doesn't have access to get a suit, where can we put that? Let's put that on a one-pager for our members. And so we build these tools and we become knowledgeable of these resources so that we can share it to other people.

Because I firmly believe the statement that knowledge is power. So once you empower yourself, once you start getting familiar with what's out there, and then sharing it as much as you can. And I know that's not always the case in terms of getting access to resources, but if there's external resources in your city or just that you find digitally, I would encourage you to always share that with anyone else that you can.

SAMANTHA AGEE-ROARK: Wonderful. Thank you so much, Eddie. For me, it's mentorship. If I can have one call to action, it would be mentorship. Get in there and get invested in the lives of your students. There are going to be some very, very above and beyond special ones that are going to match you and that you're going to see perhaps even a bit of yourself in. But get in there and be a mentor because you are going to change someone's one's life.

ANGELA GUNDER: All right. I think we are at time. I just want all of you to flood the chat with your appreciation right now, all of your kudos and thanks to these amazing students who have taken time out of their schedules to join us today.

To Chidinnma, to Eddie, to Emma, and to Sam, who was our incredible moderator, fighting [CHUCKLES] nutso challenges with the weather and all sorts of things, you all brought it home for us and created an incredibly impactful moment in time that we will be sure to watch back and to keep on reflecting on for quite some time. Everybody in our community is made better because of each and every one of you. So thank you so much for your time.

And with just one minute left, I'm going to turn the mic back over to my colleague and friend Mary Mack to close us out with some final announcements.

MARY MCILQUHAM: Thanks, Angela. Thank you to all our panelists, as Angela said, for sharing all your expertise with us today. And thanks for the great engagement questions in the chat. Just a reminder to fill out the evaluation link. It definitely helps OLC as we plan additional conferences.

As a reminder, we ask that you don't edit the auto-populated session ID or conference ID fields. We need this information in the form in order to watch the feedback or match the feedback to your correct presentation. I have posted that evaluation link in the chat for you.

We'd also like to invite you to join us in our first Blended Learning Symposium that's this June at the Gaylord Texan. And I've posted a link in the chat on that, too, for more our

information. If you register now, you can use the code below for \$75 off. And we hope to see you all at Innovate 2024, which is in April, 10 through the 13, 2024 at the Gaylord Rockies in beautiful Denver, Colorado. At this time, we do end our presentation. Thanks to you all for attending. And I hope you all have a great day.

ANGELA GUNDER: Thanks all. Take good care.

MARY MCILQUHAM: Have a great day and stay safe.

ANGELA GUNDER: And thanks, students. Y'all rock. [CHUCKLES] You're so amazing.

AUDIENCE: I don't see the evaluation.

ANGELA GUNDER: We'll drop the link in the chat again, Suneetra. Thank you for calling that out. [CHUCKLES]

MARY MCILQUHAM: Thank you. I will put it in there again.

ANGELA GUNDER: Mary, there were so many kudos that it flooded the chat.

MARY MCILQUHAM: Oh, sure. I just pasted it again. So it's there now.

ANGELA GUNDER: Yeah. All right. Take care. Have a great day, everybody.

MARY MCILQUHAM: Thanks, everyone.