

Transcript - Reflections on 2021 and Aspirations for 2022 from Digital Learning Leaders and Learners

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MEGAN RAYMOND: Welcome to today's webinar, Reflections on 2021 and Aspirations for 2022 from Digital Learning Leaders and Learners. I'm Megan Raymond. I hope that many of you are joining us for the first time or for the 100th time. We really like these beginning of the year webinars, because it's a great time to reset our intentions for the year and really pat ourselves on the back for 2020 plus plus.

So here we are in 2022. And hopefully, it's going to be a little different and better year for all. As we go through the conversation today, please enter your questions into the question box, and we'll make sure to get those. And we hope to have a very active discussion in chat. But we don't want to lose your questions. So do put it into the Q&A, please.

Kim will share the slides. And this is being recorded. So we'll share the link out with you later next week. If you want to follow along on Twitter, the hashtag is #WCETWebcast. Just another reminder-- put your Q&A in the Q&A so that we can keep track of that. We have a wonderful moderator today. A long time friend of WCET and a familiar face to many of you in education. She's been doing this for a little more than 25 years. We won't say exactly how many years. Carrie O'Donnell. She's the founder and CEO of O'Donnell Learn. Welcome, Carrie.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Oops, had to unmute myself. Thank you, Megan. Happy to be facilitating the conversation today. And I want to encourage everybody, as we speak, to feel free to make comments. I mean, the great thing about this is that we have a lot of people that are as expert as anyone here at what we're talking about and what's happening in education. So please feel free to play along in chat, and we'll try to bring your comments to the forefront. And then put your questions in Q&A so that we can make sure that we catch them.

So let's introduce the panel. I'd like to have everybody introduce themselves. We'll start with John Holdcroft.

JOHN HOLDCROFT: there. Thank you, Carrie. John Holdcroft

here. I am the associate vice president of BibliU. The company is

based in London. Although, about half of us live here in the United States.

I live in Seattle, Washington. I've been a part of educational technology companies for a decade or two. And I feel very flattered to be able to join and learn from the community today. So thank you for inviting me.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Great. Jennifer.

JENNIFER SEYMOR: Hello, Jennifer Seymour. I serve as vice president of general education and applied technologies at WSU Tech in Wichita, Kansas. I saw someone mentioned in the chat, it's cold in Texas. I'm sorry that some of our air is leaking farther South. It's 14 degrees here today.

So I have the pleasure of serving alongside our academics in general education, applied technologies culinary which is a fun area, as well as our applied learning and career services teams. I'm happy to be here and have a conversation with everyone.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Awesome. Kelvin.

KELVIN THOMPSON: Hey, everybody. Kelvin Thompson from the University of Central Florida, UCF, where I serve as executive director for the Center for Distributed Learning and from where I co-host Topcast, the teaching online podcast. I've been in education for 29 years. I just did the math. And I'm like, oh, my gosh, how'd that happen. And it is not 14 degrees here. I'm looking outside and it's 75 degrees Fahrenheit. Sorry.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Nice. I hope you're drinking a little cup of good coffee.

KELVIN THOMPSON: I did earlier, I did earlier. Try to limit myself. Try to limit myself.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: And we have Jessica.

JESSICA ROWLAND WILLIAMS: Hey, everyone. I'm Jessica Rowland Williams, director of Every Learner Everywhere. And Every Learner is a network of organizations. We have 12 partners, including WCET. And our work is focused at the intersection of digital learning, evidence-based teaching, and equity and racial justice. So good to be here with you all.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Awesome. And last, but certainly not least, Kiara.

KIARA WILLIAMS: Hello, everyone. I'm so happy to be here. My name is Kiara Williams. I am a recent graduate of Georgia State University in Atlanta. I've worn many hats in my years on this Earth. But right now, I do serve as the education outreach coordinator for 3D Girls Incorporated. We do a lot of education and empowerment. And I will be here

giving a lot of good insight on the perspective of a student, being a recent graduate. So I'm very excited and very happy to speak with you all.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Great. Thank you, all. Well, I'll open this up. Many of us thought that we would be emerging in early 2022 out of the pandemic crisis and into the new normal, right?

Well, that isn't happening with Omicron. We're getting another set of crisis and disruption this year. And we're just going to have to deal with this. But faculty students and academic support teams are already burnt out. They're anxious and, frankly, in a constant state of anxiety. So they've had to change the way that learning is delivered and haven't had time to sit back and think about how to make this experience more successful for all of the players.

So I think that's what we're going to explore today. We're going to look at the future world. We know it's going to be blended, some amalgamation, some disruption. Sometimes we'll be face to face, and then we'll find ourselves in a virtual environment. And what we want to do is talk about what we can do to deliver a more humanized and equitable experience for all in this world. And particularly focusing on minoritized populations on affordability and access to all the resources that you need as a learner to be successful.

So I'm going to start. We're going to ask a bunch of questions and have everybody talk. And again, as I mentioned earlier, and I'll say it again, please feel free to contribute in chat. We want this to be an interactive webinar. We want to hear from you.

So I'm thinking about the blended world of 2022. What does the ideal learning experience look like? And how does it differ from experiences in the past? Kelvin I'd love to have you kick us off.

KELVIN THOMPSON: Sure, thanks. I think that the ideal learning experience, in a word, or a hyphenated two words, is student-centered. And student-centered takes intentionality and design. And in my experience, many faculty attempt to replicate courses that they've experienced in the past as learners because they've not had the opportunity for more explicit preparation and course design and teaching and nuanced thoughts-- consider all the various aspects, everything from whether it's diversity, equity and inclusivity, or accessibility, universal design for learning, whatever.

And so faculty professional development is key to a more student centered learning experience and to overcoming one's own limitations. We all have our limitations in our thinking. So if possible, collaborative design support from other professionals is a great benefit. If not, just building, brokering relationships with trusted faculty colleagues is a good start. But faculty preparation and team-based, if possible, intentional design are key, regardless of modality. We just kind of tend to deploy those things more in online settings, but we don't need to be limited to that.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Kelvin, that's really great. And one of the things-- we did a survey of 500 faculty last year. And we asked them about how they deliver their courses when they're in a virtual environment. And 50% of them said they mirror what they do in the face to face classroom. So that's not an intentional design.

And Kiara, I see you shaking your head. That's not really great for the students. So anyway, we'll bring it-- so Kiara, from the viewpoint of the student, tell us about what the ideal experience looks like for you.

KIARA WILLIAMS: Well, honestly, one thing that is probably universal sentiment is that humans tend to be creatures of habit. We do things, and then we keep doing them because they work. Until a couple of years ago when all that went to the air and things that have worked are suddenly not working and they will continue to just not be ideal. So honestly, when I think of the ideal learning experience, of course I'm going to talk about things like it being flexible and accessible, because those are two major themes. In the past, it's been in person. We had that standard, traditional way of learning. You show up to class, you sit down with your books.

And in today's world, it's really changed. As far as flexibility goes, ideally, we want the different modalities that we'll probably speak of in this conversation. We have to pay to take quizzes and do homeworks for some classes, and we have to pay for books and for access codes. And in ideal learning experience, students don't want to jump through those hoops or have to dish out that money to be able to do something like do homework or take a quiz.

So it's like that conversation-- it's just an endless cycle. And with COVID, a lot of people losing jobs and not being able to work, conversations were, how are we going to continue doing that, how am I, as a student, why should I have to pay to do my

homework and also pay to be in this class. And I don't know, flexibility and accessibility is always going to be those main themes that we cannot stop talking about.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: That leads really beautifully into Jennifer, who I know you've been focusing on access and affordability. So talk to us about it.

JENNIFER SEYMOR: Absolutely. And before I jump into that, I want to add that Kiara was talking about we're creatures of habit and we do something because it works. I would argue that sometimes we're creatures of habit and we keep doing things, even if it isn't working. [LAUGHS]

So we've been, at WSU Tech, looking for ways to make it easier for our faculty to try something different, but not have it be something that is so different for them that it's too hard to make that change. So we've partnered with our friends at BibliU who are helping us with their platform to provide our students with their textbooks electronically. And this is important to us for a lot of different reasons, most of them centering around equity and access. So by having this platform and the books automatically being available to the students within their LMS-- we're a Blackboard school-- it's there for them on the very first day of class. So you don't have that struggle as a faculty member of two, three weeks into the classroom, your students still don't have the course materials that they need to be successful in your course.

It's also not all of these different access codes that Kiara was referring to there. You don't have to worry about that. It's all right there, ready for you. Currently, we're using some of our HEERF Funds to provide this to our students at no additional charge. But as we continue with this program, it will be wrapped into tuition and fees. So it's not an additional fee for our students. It's not I paid my tuition, now I'm going to the bookstore, and I've got to come up with another \$750 for these textbooks.

And we also love that BibliU provides these resources in a format that's searchable. It will read to them. It will change the text size or font color so that if you have some sort of a disability that you learn differently, this is going to work with you to make that as easy for you as possible.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Great, great. So John, you're sitting at BibliU right now, but you've had a lot of different roles in education technology and education content. And I think that we've heard great things about what you're doing at BibliU now. From your

perspective, what do you think the ideal looks like, and what are you seeing that's really most successful?

JOHN HOLDCROFT: Yeah, thanks for the question, Carrie. I would say all of what Jennifer said. Thank you for that. And I think she has the credibility to talk about what it's like in implementing some of these solutions.

But I also think some of the other partners that we've worked with, they're taking this period of uncertainty and unprecedented challenges. I mean, who on this call thought two years ago that some of us would be responsible, you and your institutional leadership roles, to figure out on-site COVID issues and how you deal with that? But one of the things that's done is also create opportunities.

One of the schools that we work with, Jackson College in Michigan, actually decided that their relationship with their bookstore, they should look at it differently, and ask, if we don't have students on campus, where is the value of having books shipped to a bookstore and made available that way. So they've worked with us. And the bookstore still exists for retail and other things. And I think that will always exist.

But they're saying, how do we maybe go all digital more quickly as an opportunity, not as a burden. And like Kiara said, to create flexibility and accessibility for students to have access all the time. And those that can't get to campus for some of these reasons. And then what Jackson is doing is some of those funds with the bookstore that were associated with the bookstore, they're now pouring back into student services, hiring more student success coaches, more support for faculty. And hopefully, BibliU have been one of the people that's helping them with that.

So I think, as I've observed, when I knock on doors and get to meet with campuses, there are challenges, but there are some opportunities like there as well that I think people are appreciating and navigating through.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Great. So Heather McCulloh from UNC Charlotte says, this is very timely. This whole concept of moving some of the cost transparency, moving things away back into the registration, for example. And so that's something I see a lot of schools looking at.

Shelly, you commented-- I think you're at Cal State, Fullerton. We've met before. But you commented about-- this is an advocating for open education resources. And we worked a lot with OER in our company and in springing new content solutions to schools. I'm just going to circle right back around to where Kelvin started and say that what really is

required for these types of solutions is really strong faculty development because a lot of times, faculty get these new opportunities, and they don't quite know what to do with them. So just a comment. Next question. So if we assume that the workplace of the future is more fluid and blended and requires workers to have an ever evolving set of skills and knowledge-- and we know that most of our students are entering in higher education right now either to reskill, upskill, or to prepare themselves for the workforce. That is the reality of today-- what can we do to ensure that your institutions or that institutions are preparing their students for this new world of work?

So to kick that off, I'd like to start with Kiara. What do you think? You just got out of college recently.

KIARA WILLIAMS: Well, as far as preparing students to be successful in this new world, whatever new normal we are approaching, I think the one thing that will come to mind immediately will be relevant work experience, work-based learning, because when we apply for jobs, they want people with experience. I mean, that's just a fact. We want people that have done the job, have experience doing the job.

So as a University, as a college, an institution, are we giving those type of opportunities to our students, do they know about these opportunities, how can we help them go about getting these opportunities. So relevant work experience, a lot of work-based learning. Even then moving into an increasingly digitalized world, maybe classes and courses or just ways to teach students how to be successful on digital platforms. That is a huge one.

I know a lot of professors that we had to sit and be patient because grace and patience also was a major theme, emerging out of COVID. We had to learn how to navigate certain systems that we've never really had to navigate before being in person, primarily. So it's just a lot of skills, a lot of digital skills, I think, that we could benefit from. A lot of relevant work experience in fields that people want to go for. That will be probably what comes to mind for me as a student.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Great, great. Well, Jessica, from the perspective of leading a network of institutions that are really focused on helping minoritized populations be successful, what are your thoughts?

JESSICA ROWLAND WILLIAMS: Yeah, I think this is an awesome opportunity for organizations to also provide opportunities for students. One thing that we've done

within our own organization is launch a student fellows program, where we actually invite students into our work. And Kiara is actually was one of our-- she's one of our student fellow alumni. And we have many others.

And this is important for us for a number of reasons. I think a lot of times, we solve for students, but we don't solve with students. And that's an important shift that we've had to make within our network. We also realized that fellows program that there are a lot of soft skills, that we have opportunities to teach fellows, things how to set up your LinkedIn page, or how to translate the classroom work that you've done into what would be considered work experience. And I think there are a lot of things that we just take for granted that students should know, that they don't know.

And I think that organizations like my network and organizations within my network have the opportunities to really support students in tangible ways. But it just really means taking that extra step of bringing students in our work and providing that mentorship and guidance.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Excellent, excellent. And this kind of circles back-- I was just looking at the chat because I think Megan asked, what do you think panelist is the ideal learning experience. And a lot of people circled back to the whole idea of being able to be successful in any modality. And I think that kind of lends itself really well to the-- if you can do that in our learning experience, and you can help to prepare students to be successful in any modality. So, awesome.

So, Jennifer, from your perspective, leading a lot of applied and technical education, do you have any comments on that?

JENNIFER SEYMOR: We really pride ourselves on being a microcosm of our economy here in Wichita. And we work very closely with all of our local employers to find out not only what are their current needs, but what are they forecasting their needs are going to be in the future so that we can walk along that journey with them and help them prepare their workforce. We're very focused on integrating applied learning into as many of our programs as possible and getting our students actually in industry as soon as they can in their academic journey so that while they're in our classrooms, they're also on a manufacturing floor or on a flight line.

They're working hand in hand with mentors in the industry to learn not just book knowledge, but that practical knowledge that they're going to need to be able to apply to

be successful in their career. It gives them someone they can talk to-- what have you done to be successful in your career, what are the next steps that I should be considering in order to move up in this career, or what are things I didn't think were possible. When I thought I wanted to be in aviation, I had a very narrow view of what that is. But once I had experience in actually in a manufacturing plant, I realized there were so many other things that were out there. I should clarify, I'm not in aviation. But students have said these things to me. They didn't know what other jobs were available to them because they just had this very narrow view. So educating our students on all of these different opportunities by getting them in plugged in as soon as possible.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: So I'm going to ask this just kind of a general question. And I'd like to ask this to the universe here. I know Luke Downs said, opportunities for durable skills, practice, and attainment is equity work. Couldn't agree more. But I would love you to talk about what you've seen, what are some really good types of initiatives, programs, or activities that are out there that can actually give students the opportunity to practice and prepare.

So, anyone. I'm going to leave this open to the universe here. Nobody's answering.

[LAUGHS] So I'm going to go back to you, Jennifer. What are some of the programs you have at your school?

JENNIFER SEYMOR: Yeah, so we have lots of different applied learning opportunities, whether it's what you might think of as a traditional internship or what we like to develop, earn and learns. So you are going to school and lockstep with an employer. They are paying you a living wage so that while you are learning alongside their mentors and while you're in class, you're making money too, because so many of our students can't afford to work for free.

And honestly, as an employer, you shouldn't expect them to. The work they're doing for you is valuable to you, and you should be compensating them fairly for that. But it allows them to learn and not worry about how am I going to feed my family, how am I going to pay for daycare for my kiddos while I'm at school or at work. They're being compensated fairly for the work that they're doing while they are learning.

And then they see that career path. They see that progression. And they can see themselves earning and learning throughout their lifetime. And for so many students, they don't see that opportunity. No one has taken them by the hand and said, you can do

this. And let me show you what you're capable of if you take these steps. And I'm going to be here with you to help guide you along the way until you can start taking these steps on your own.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Great. Great, great. I want to come to some of the things in chat in a moment. But I did want to ask, Jessica, you talked a little bit about your student fellowship program. Are there other programs that you've seen at some of the schools in your network that you think are most— one of the things I think about is scale. There's always these programs, but it's like a onesie. And are there things that you've seen, or institutions you've seen, that have done a really good job at scaling this?

JESSICA ROWLAND WILLIAMS: Yeah, that's a good question. Unfortunately, there's been a challenge recently with COVID. And so one thing that we're hearing from students is that they're having a hard time finding internships because there aren't a lot of organizations and companies that are willing to do virtual internships for students or remote internships for students. And so that's been a huge hindrance for people. And I think oftentimes, people are being privileged who are able to travel even during COVID. And we know that a lot of marginalized students just maybe aren't willing to take the risk or have to work or have to do other things. And so they're not able to take advantage of the opportunities.

And there are a lot fewer opportunities. And I think that's an important thing to note because that's going to play out over time into the workforce, what opportunities are available. If there are groups of students who aren't able to get that experience that you talked about, Jennifer, then is that going to ultimately put them at a disadvantage when they're ready to graduate, and they haven't had those internships, they haven't had those opportunities.

That being said, things come across my newsfeed and LinkedIn and email all the time. So one that I'm excited about, that I just learned about recently, is a partnership between HBCUs and the NBA. So that's one for folks to look out for. If you know of any juniors and seniors who are attending HBCUs right now, the NBA is looking for interns and looking to hire a number of interns this summer. So if I find the link, I'll stick it in the chat. But that's a really cool one that's kind of on circuit right now.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: That's really great. I was in a conversation earlier this morning with associate provost at Cal State, Dominguez Hills, Ken O'Donnell, about high impact practices. And one of his ideas for scaling high impact practices— and by the way, high

impact practices, internships, student research, the things that give students the skills, students fellowship programs. One thing he said is that a really important thing to keep in mind is piggybacking on initiatives that are already at the institution. And people that already have excitement about whatever their initiative is, and tagging on these kinds of programs onto them. I thought that was a really good idea for scaling, because I think one of the things people really struggle with is scale.

So I want to come back to the chat here. And the question we all want to know, Kiara is what's pounced as effective as promoted. And I just want you to know that I may be dumb, but I have no idea what pounce is. So could you tell us what it is first?

[LAUGHTER]

KIARA WILLIAMS: Pounce is a gem to the Georgia State University community, very much known for bringing luck and blessings to the student body. And every time you rub his nose, I think a bit more luck is transferred into the system. I rubbed his nose a couple times just to see what would happen. And I think life turned out pretty promising. So--

CARRIE O'DONNELL: So you're in the positive data point.

KIARA WILLIAMS: Yes, yes, yes. On the graph, I am the success story that comes from the data analyzation.

JESSICA ROWLAND WILLIAMS: I think they might be referring to the chatbot. Kiara, do you remember the chatbot.

KIARA WILLIAMS: Oh, the chatbot? Oh, that was hilarious when that was released. Oh, my. And any chatbot-- the world is crazy. Technology is crazy. But oh, my gosh. I think the mascot is not nearly as-- the chatbot is not nearly as popular as the mascot. I will say that. A crowd favorite, if you must.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: So Heather McCullough said that-- she told us a little bit about her learning design and technology program, which has a Capstone program where the students design training solution, and then the Center of Teaching and learning has used them to great effect. That's a perfect example, Heather, of taking an initiative that's already in place and designing high impact student practices to prepare students and get them practicing.

Simple as shadowing in different fields, John Wiltshire says. And yeah, John Holdcroft talked to us a little bit-- I think some of the people here probably have done some

stackable credentials and badging programs. But tell us what you've seen that you found to be effective at Grand Canyon Phoenix or WSU Tech.

JOHN HOLDCROFT: Yeah. And Jennifer might have even more intimate knowledge of the aviation program. But I had a conversation with the dean there who talked about how they're very, very well tuned to the aviation industry, obviously. And they really want to create the content curriculum and training that the industry requires and having these stackable degrees and confirming that students are accessing the content, doing the simulations, and showing the badging as well.

I was speaking to the senior provost at University of Phoenix, who we work with as well. And they are extremely focused with their industry partners, whether it's healthcare, automotive, other areas as well, the computer information technology. And they are working with us around some of the content, but also other partners out there that are wanting to see, can a student graduate at Phoenix. And if it has three badges in CIT and two in another area, how do we establish the value of that. And I think that there's some interesting things going on that probably a lot of the audience is working on beyond my knowledge as well. So just some observations of some of the partners that I work with.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Yeah. Jen, please.

JENNIFER SEYMOR: I was going to say, we like to think of stackable credentials as a highway with multiple on and off ramps. So if you need to jump off for a little while, you have this credential. And you can go do these things with it and be successful. And when you're ready to jump back on the highway, we're here waiting for you, and we've got that next level of credential that you can start working toward.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: That's excellent. Excellent. So Judith said, we're working to help our member colleges explore 3D Sim trainings for career and technical education program. It's interesting. O'Donnell does a lot of building content. I mean, we have a whole design team, hundreds of designers. And they work with institutions and organizations.

And one of the things that I think is really cool that we're working on these days is, basically, it's an interactive graphic novel approach where we're doing branching exercises off of graphic novel to help the learners in training-- these are real world type of training-- get into the place of the characters. And it also allows you to get away from some of not just implicit bias, but also some of the-- yeah, some of the implicit bias that

happens when you do video training. Video branching exercises.

So a graphic novel can be a little bit more androgynous and generic and take it away from who's the person and more into what's the experience. So just a thought.

So Luke had a question. What are you hearing about micro internships? Companies like Forge or Parker Dewey-- are these companies helping with the supply issue of these important learning experiences? But actually, I would just like to ask the broader question before you talk about companies. Is anyone here have any experience with micro internships?

JENNIFER SEYMOR: The state of Kansas launched an initiative to promote micro internships. I can't remember if it was before the pandemic or in the middle of it. Do you all feel like you're in a time warp too? So I don't remember exactly when, but sometime in the last couple of years, they've really been pushing micro internships.

So we have a platform that employers and students can join and be linked with different opportunities. We find it's almost like a gig economy for internships because they're very short term things.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: What is a micro-- I mean, can you describe a micro internship and what is it compared to other type of internship?

JENNIFER SEYMOR: Yeah, I'd say they're more project-based. So it's typically a company who has this one project that they're needing some help with. But it's something that a student could very easily do with little oversight. So they put it out on a job board, and then students with those applicable skills can apply.

So where I've seen it be very successful is in a marketing field. So if someone is needing help with designing a website or maybe a chatbot, they can send that out there. And there's students who have those skills can sign up, do that one thing, and then they can put that on their resume, that they've done this thing. They have something tangible they can show employers. And that employer partner was able to get that thing done without hiring out a consultant or a professional service.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Awesome. And one last-- actually, there's a question in Q&A. I'll get to in a moment-- but Shelly asks, what about students who graduated and didn't have the opportunity for things like internships. Are there any programs out there for them? Does anyone know of anything?

JENNIFER SEYMOR: In those instances, I think-- and Jessica alluded to this too-- I think it's important for students to know how to sell themselves. So how do you set up your LinkedIn profile, how do you create your resume and your cover letter so that you can best sell what you have to offer the company? An internship or an earn and learn is great. It's an amazing experience. But students shouldn't think that just because they didn't get to do that, that they don't have the skills necessary to be successful in their career. So what projects did you do in your classes, and how can you explain that to an employer in a way that showcases what you're are capable of?

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Excellent, yeah.

KIARA WILLIAMS: May I say something, add something to that?

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Yes.

KIARA WILLIAMS: So for students that didn't get the chance to experience those cool opportunities or things in their classes or any cool projects, I know as far as I'm concerned, last I heard when I graduated, Georgia State all supports their graduated students definitely, I want to say, a year after they graduate as far as utilizing career services, using handshake, different platforms to help excel them in their career, resume review, LinkedIn workshops, any workshops available to currently enrolled students, Georgia State does support our graduated alumni students as well until they feel comfortable enough to be on their feet to go for this opportunity.

So as far as the ones that didn't get to experience x, y, and z because of COVID, because of the pandemic, not a lot of open in-person, whatever the case may be, opportunities. I think schools should also reflect on whether or not they do resources still accessible to their freshly graduated and not just leaving them feeling like, OK, here's your degree, goodbye, I hope you had fun.

So it's like as universities and institutions, what can we do also to make sure that even though you are not taking a class right now, we gave you a degree, but we want to make sure you are set up for success because college is more than just your piece of paper that you get mailed to you. What also did we do-- because we are here to set you up for success. How can we ensure that we actually did what we want to do, or what we intended to do.

So honestly, different programs like that, utilizing those resources, having them available to students, even though they graduated, I think that will be a game changer for a lot of students that often feel lost once they walk that stage.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: That's great. Just before we move on to our next question, I just want to respond. Ryan Faulkner referenced an article in Inside Higher Ed from yesterday that said that HyFlex is not the future. And Kelvin, I would like you to speak to what are your thoughts about HyFlex and its role in the future of digital learning as a long time leader in distributed learning and virtual learning. What's your thought?

KELVIN THOMPSON: Yeah, I've skimmed the article. I think my initial question and response to the question is, well, what's HyFlex. I think a lot of folks say HyFlex to mean a lot of different kind of things. As designed, as intended by Brian Beattie years ago, it's an extremely intentionally designed approach that requires a lot of work. We talked before about intentional design, student centeredness. And it's both of those things when it's really carried out that way.

Do I think it's been carried out that way over the last couple of years? Probably not. I think in practice-- forgive me, but I think in practice, what it often means is there's an instructor in a classroom. There might not have been students inside the four walls and a door. And there was a camera and a synchronous video platform. Figure it out. And that's overwhelming and frankly, potentially dehumanizing. It's the antithesis of pretty much everything we've been talking about. So if we just think that we can just put a webcam in a classroom and call it the future, well, yeah, I don't think that's a very good future. It's dystopian at best. So we can do better than that.

Intentional design, intentionality, student centeredness. Real HyFlex, maybe. But it's a lot of work to do that well.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Yeah. That's good. I couldn't agree more. I mean, you really have to design that. You have to design your interactions as an instructor. You can't just put on the camera, lecture, and it's like throwing a bunch of buckshot out there just hoping it hits the wall or something.

But anyway, so what do institutions need to do in order to ensure that students and faculty and support team are successful in this new environment? And Jessica, we'll start from you. I haven't heard from you in a little bit.

JESSICA ROWLAND WILLIAMS: I think we have to start by defining successful. I think that's one thing that even Kiara pointed out in her last comment is, I think, universities would define success maybe as graduation rates. She's defining success as do I have a job after I graduate. I think a lot of students feel that same way.

And so I think that when it comes to what faculty want, what students want, what institutional leaders want, everyone has different metrics of success. And so I think we have to think about what that looks like. I think another thing that, of course, is going to be critical is training, professional development. I think that we're asking a lot from faculty right now. A whole lot. And I think that they need a lot more support than we're giving them.

And I think that support needs to come in a lot of different ways. But one, of course, is professional development. I think there needs to be some mental health support. That's something that we're not having enough conversations around mental health support for both students, but faculty too. I think technology support— I think we're making a lot of assumptions around what faculty do and don't know or can and can't do and assuming that everyone's kind of coming in with some type of a knowledge base, and we may be wrong.

Same is true for students. And I think just general, student services support. A lot of times, faculty are at the front line. They're the ones that the students go to, not just for grades, not just for the content, but that's who they go to a lot of times when their grandma passed away or when all of these other things that we know faculty are having to try to juggle and figure out. And so, yeah, I just think that professional development, but also just that support is something that is going to be necessary going forward.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Yeah, good. Jennifer, anything to add there?

JENNIFER SEYMOR: Yeah, I would add and pick up some of the comments that are happening here in the chat about faculty development and intentional design are more important than an outfitted classroom. You can put all the technology that you want in a classroom, but if your faculty don't know how to use it and they're not comfortable with it, then it's just technology that, in three to five years, is obsolete and you have to replace.

So we've spent the last year and a half intentionally curating professional development for our faculty to help them be more successful in this new normal that we're

experiencing. We asked them, what do you need, how can we help you be more successful. And so we created professional development around that.

We have invested in some technology as well to help them do that. We also have an amazing team of instructional technologists that that is their job is to support our faculty as they are using the new technology or implementing new learning design into their classrooms. So supporting them through that. And of course, to Jessica's point, recognizing that this is taxing and draining on them as well. And when we need to, providing some mental health resources for them too, encouraging them to take time off, all of those things that they need to do so that they can be there for their students 100%.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: That's great. That is so great. We found in-- again, we support 55-60 institutions. And we found that most of them spent most of their cares money on hardware and on technology. And they didn't spend it on their faculty.

And now they're coming and saying, oh my gosh. And the other problem is that a lot of the faculty development are like, OK, come to this workshop. And the problem is that that doesn't really-- well, first off, there's a lot of research that shows that attending a workshop is maybe not the most successful way to inculcate learning, for long term learning and deep understanding and learning.

So the idea of supporting faculty in the journey and thinking about delivering learning as a journey and thinking about the way faculty behave-- I cited a study earlier of about 500 faculty, we asked them how they spend their time in preparing for designing and developing their course. And the answer was that for the first time they teach a course, they spend about 50 hours pre semester on the course. And thereafter, they spend about 23 hours per semester.

But here's the most interesting thing-- they spend eight hours a week in term, working on adjusting, tweaking, iterating the course. So what we've done is we've rethought our whole thing, and we really think about what we do as supporting faculty and not-- for those eight hours and trying to make them more effective and have them use less time on that and more time on engaging with students. If you think about it that way, it's an interesting way of thinking.

So, Kelvin, before we get off this question, is there anything you have to add to what was been brought up here?

KELVIN THOMPSON: I'll pile on. Sure. So I think to be successful was the question, to be successful. I think institutions, we need to foster being human, being human, treating other people as human.

It occurs to me that back in March, April, May of 2020, we heard words a lot like compassion and empathy. Those were the watchwords. And we just can't tire-- we're tired of a lot of things, but we can't tire of compassion and empathy now. So individually, personally, and in our networks, our collective work, got to cultivate kind of, I guess, a growth mindset.

And we've got to stay in dialogue with each other. We can't just see ourselves as just little individuals doing our thing and othering the other person or the other group. All those various rolee-- the faculty, the students, support personnel, administrative leaders, instructional designers-- we got to be in dialogue with each other so that we don't just see things from our little narrow view. And again, to just pile on that faculty preparation within that kind of a vibe-- that's the kind of vibe we need, that kind of faculty preparation and team-based design. Be human.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Yeah, that's great. Yeah. Shelley, says more community practices for faculty professional development. Really more thinking through.

Heather brought up a comment here. And I think this applies to a lot of what we're talking about here. One of the things I see in education is there's oftentimes no common definition of the words we throw around. And so defining the words that seem to have varied meanings and less reliance on assumptions is what Heather is bringing up in her comment. And I think that is a very, very good comment for everything we're talking about today.

So, Kelvin, you're getting a bunch of agreements on stamina for empathy. We use an exercise we call the empathy map. And we use it frequently. We speak about it in all of our webinars many times

I'm actually going to be speaking about it after this in a live conference session. And it's just really thinking about what do students here, do, say, see, and think when they're in your class, and what do you want them to hear, do, say, think, and see when they're in your class, because oftentimes it's different. And then what are their emotional needs, what are their physical needs, and what are their intellectual needs. And really grounding yourself in the student is a really great way to start your day, your week, your semester.

The next question is going to be kind of a wrap up question. And by the way, keep Q&A coming. We got 10 more minutes here. So what are your aspirations for institutions, learners, and leaders in the future? And Kiara, we'll start with you because let's start from the student. Let's start with some empathy here.

[LAUGHTER]

KIARA WILLIAMS: Honestly, I think the main thing that I personally would want to see in the future is more human relational skills. I want to see people step out of the business and the productivity mindset and realize that we can't be productive if we are not right within our own person. So words like empathy and compassion-- we hear about it a lot. But what are we actually doing to foster that?

Because not even just a student, if a person doesn't feel supported and encouraged and just appreciated or anything of that nature, that productivity, that burnt out is going to just go crazy. So focusing on more of the human aspects of life and not the productivity, not the business, not that. I think we will be better all around, as leaders, as learners, as students if we do just focus more on the human part of life.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: That's great. Awesome. Who else has something to add to that? Jennifer, you got something? Kind of a parting aspiration for learners and leaders and institutions and faculty.

JENNIFER SEYMOR: Yeah, I think we just all need to work together for whatever the common goal is for your local area. We can't be successful at WSU Tech if our area employers and students don't find what we are doing to be beneficial. So I think it's just being willing to listen and hear what other people are wanting and needing from your service, rather than thinking you know the answer already.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: That's great.

JOHN HOLDCROFT: Carrie, I just wanted to dovetail on a point that Kiara made earlier and Jennifer just made. And Kiara talked about students seem to be trained on how to use some of these tools that are out there. And we at BibliU, we make a tool, we have a product team, we have engineers. And at the University of Phoenix, they told us, we have adult learners that need to hear the book read to them or want the book read to them from the beginning of a chapter.

We'd never thought of this. We'd never conceived of this because we probably didn't ask the question, do you guys think your students are consuming the content the way that

it's intended. So we now have people that, go to chapter 3, hit Play. And they're multitasking, making dinner, doing their dishes, laundry, talking to their students, their kids. And it goes to the point of listening to who you work with, whether you as educators within the WCET community or us as creators of these tools as well. So it's a great thing that Kiara mentioned that I thought, boy, it's a lesson learned for us to make no assumptions about how our products and platforms are consumed and used.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: I think that's very true. And I think also, not to ring the bell over and over and over again, but it's true of faculty as well. They need help in understanding how they can best use the technology and how it can benefit their students.

So, Kelvin, do you have anything to add to this question about your aspirations?

KELVIN THOMPSON: Yeah, everything that's been said is so good. I guess the only slightly different tack I might offer is a different kind of open-- openness is my word. A different kind of openness. Maybe if we can look backwards to what got us here in terms of our successful past and look for core principles that are more timeless, like student-centeredness, like faculty preparation, like empathy, be human, and then still be open to the opportunities that have emerged during this crisis time.

So we don't just try to look back and go, oh, we need to get back to that. And we don't just say, oh, we just materialized here with no past. Let's do more remote learning for forever. But instead, we look back or influenced by what's going on. And then we seize an opportunity. That's a kind of openness. But that means being open not just to ourselves and our own thinking, but open to each other and our perspectives as well.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: Wow, that's it, man. [LAUGHS] Jessica, do you have something to add here?

JESSICA ROWLAND WILLIAMS: Yeah, my highest aspiration, I guess, for higher Ed would be that we, one, stop blaming students for the inequities that we see. I think that we identify what structural inequities are built into our systems and policies and practices and that we disrupt them and repeat over and over and over again.

CARRIE O'DONNELL: I think that blaming students is so critical. So many times, students come in feeling like they're blamed for any failure that they have when the whole system is set up to promote failure really is to weed people out and not to bring them to mastery of outcomes. And it's such an important way to reframe. And it's a much bigger question than we can talk about in the last three minutes.

But I wanted to come back to one of the quick conversations that was on in chat here. And just as we're leaving, I just want to come back. Lynn Thompson asked about how do you motivate faculty to come into faculty development. And there were some really good comments. And I think one of the things that Luke said is we're offering less and more focused trainings and options of explaining the why and how it benefits faculty.

So one of the things that came up in the meeting I was at an earlier meeting today was an academic leader was saying, even just offering a personalized note to invite a faculty, I think you'd be interested in attending this because, and/or I think you could contribute as well as learn in this because it's a great way to get faculty to participate. The other thing we found is that looking at it more as support and making our virtual team available to-- and that's what we do in some of our services-- making them available so that it's anytime, anywhere. And faculty can use you in context when they need you is a really important thing.

So are there any parting comments or questions? I think we're getting to the end here. No? Nope. Well, Megan, should I turn it back to you?

MEGAN RAYMOND: Sure, thank you. What a great conversation. So you can see contact information there for our friends. And we will be sharing this deck out. So you'll be able to click on those links to follow everyone listed there.

And just a few housekeeping notes and announcements of upcoming events and programs here at WCET. If you're new to us, check out our website. In fact, we launched a brand new website in the fall. So we hope you have a chance to get in there and check out everything that we have to offer for members, as well as tons and tons of content that's free and open to everybody.

Again, the webcast was recorded. And we'll share that link out with you. And also, there was such good conversation in the chat. We'll clean that up and share that back out. And I wanted to make a quick plug for our Elements of Quality Summit coming up April 6. And this is for WCET members. And I will say that the program will be announced shortly, but it's going to be fantastic. You won't want to miss it.

And finally, I want to thank our WCET annual sponsors and our supporting members. They help underwrite much of our programming and event here at WCET. And we are grateful for them. And we're grateful for all of you for being part of this conversation.

And thank you so much to our speakers today and Carrie for leading the conversation. Hope everyone has a great rest of the week. And take care and be well. Bye now.

