Transcript - Learning from Our Students: Student Perspectives on Good Teaching

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NORMA HOLLEBEKE: Welcome to the Every Learner Everywhere strategies for success through equitable digital learning webinar series. It is a pleasure to have you with us today. My name is Norma Hollebeke. And I'm the manager for network programs and services with Every Learner Everywhere.

Before I introduce our guest speaker, I'd like to take out just a few minutes to tell you about Every Learner Everywhere and the mission of our network.

Every Learner Everywhere is a collaboration of 12 higher education organizations with expertise in evaluating, implementing, scaling, and measuring the efficacy of digital learning and its integration into pedagogical practice.

Every Learner Everywhere is one of three solution networks sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Here at Every Learner, we work with colleges and universities to build capacity among faculty and instructional support staff to improve student outcomes with digital learning.

Our mission is to help institutions use new technology to innovate teaching and learning with the ultimate goal of increasing student success, especially for first generation college students, poverty impacted students, and students of color.

A few quick housekeeping notes-- throughout the presentation, we welcome your questions in the Q&A or in the chat sections of Zoom.

If participants raise their hand during the presentation, however, we will not be able to unmute you. However, we will be monitoring the Q&A and the chat and providing those questions to our guest speaker.

As a biology professor and recovering dean, I'm excited about today's webinar-- Learning From our Students-- Student Perspectives on Good Teaching. Our speaker today is Dr. Christine Latulippe.

With teaching experience at a public Hispanic serving institution, and a private liberal arts college, as well as k-12 classroom experience, Christine brings a unique perspective to her work in higher education.

As an advocate for STEM teacher education, Dr. Latulippe promotes student success and strives to open doors to populations who may not have yet recognized themselves as part of higher education communities.

In addition to mathematics education courses, she has taught gateway mathematics courses for many years, utilizing courseware and other digital tools. She actively modified her courses during the COVID-19 pandemic to emergency remote, HyFlex, and fully online, depending upon the semester and the institutional needs.

Throughout her faculty and administrative roles in higher education, Christine has promoted equity and worked to advance inclusive excellence, focusing on mentorship, clear communication and community building.

Dr. Latulippe earned her BS in mathematics from Sonoma State University, M.Ed From Lewis and Clark College, and a PhD in mathematics education from Montana State University. I will now hand it over to Dr. Latulippe.

CHRISTINE LATULIPPE: Thank you so much, Norma. And thank you, everyone, for being here today. I'm excited to talk with you about learning from our students and student perspectives on good teaching.

As Norma mentioned, the chat is going, so there will be a couple of times throughout this presentation where we'll either have a poll question, or I'll ask you to reflect on something, or ask you to brainstorm some ideas in the chat so that we can have a little bit more engagement together today.

I tend to think in questions. Just as a human being, it's how my processing of ideas goes. I also have two young children and so there's a lot of curiosity at my house and a lot of question asking that happens.

I've always been interested in assessment as an educator and finding ways to ask questions of my students. That helps me learn more about what they know than I can learn about what they don't know.

So I have to think about reframing some of the content questions that I ask. And I've been working on that for a number of years now in my teaching.

As I've grown as an educator, I've taken that more expansive view of questioning and started applying it, not just to learning about student's content knowledge but also to learning about students as people. What are their experience and what's working for them in the classroom as well?

So let's go to the next slide, please. And this is going to be our first poll question, just to get a feel for why you're here today. And there might be more than one reason, but our three options are-- maybe you're here because you want to learn or learn more about what students think about good teaching.

Maybe you want to learn or learn more about why student perspectives matter to you as an instructor or maybe you want to learn or learn more ways to collect perspectives. So if you can prioritize one of these and just pick one primary reason, we'll see where everyone's coming from today.

All right, so it looks like we have a pretty good response here. A little bit higher in the wanting to learn more about what students think about good teaching, but also some people interested in learning about why student perspectives matter, as well as learning about their own students specifically.

So thank you for your participation in that. We have a little bit of information today about each of these areas. And I will actually start with that first category of learning or learning more about what students think about good teaching. So next slide, please.

I lied. We're going to actually start with why they would matter. And then we'll come back to that first one. I apologize. So why might we want to solicit student perspectives?

Student perspectives can help inform our instruction. Collecting or gathering student perspectives and actually using them can help empower students as active participants in our learning communities in higher education. And having conversations with students about their perspectives and their experiences can help build strong student teacher relationships.

By soliciting student perspectives, we can also influence how our students view their roles as members of the learning community, instead of non-participants who are receiving something from us. By soliciting their perspective, students become participants. They are members in our learning community.

We can also encourage students and instructors to be metacognitive about learning and teaching if we are having open dialogues about how learning and teaching is going and thinking about ways to use that feedback to enhance our learning and teaching.

Another reason to solicit student perspectives and to learn about students in general is to increase equity in the classroom. The more that we can learn about our students and the experiences that they're having and that they're bringing into our institutions of

higher education, the fewer assumptions we will be making about what their readiness levels are and what their needs are as students.

So I can assume that a student needs this thing or that I'm teaching really well. But if instead I ask my students, what do you need or how's my teaching working for you personally, I can reduce some of the barriers that they might be experiencing. I can learn about what would work better for that particular student or that particular group of students. Next slide, please.

So especially with student feedback that's gathered during the middle of a term that can be used to improve teaching with real time data, a dialogue gets opened between students and the instructor. And changes can actually be made based on that feedback.

When a professor or instructor goes through the process of soliciting feedback and then using that feedback for some kind of growth, they're actually modeling a really healthy mindset and process for students to practice themselves-- getting feedback, and adapting, and then reassessing how things are going.

Wilbert McKeachie, who has written a lot about teaching and teaching in higher education has said that students are in class almost every day and they know what's going on.

And I think that's one of the most important reasons to solicit student perspectives. If we want to know how things are working for them, we should ask them. And that leads into our next slide.

This is exactly what Ken Bain said in his 2004 book, What the Best College Teachers Do. If we want to know if students think that something has helped and encouraged them to learn, what better way to find out than to ask them?

And Ken Bain really encouraged university instructors to take a lot of the responsibility away from students in terms of, they have to learn how to play the game of college. They have to step up to the plate of learning.

And instead, Bain challenged instructors to make learning easier for students. Find the ways that can help the students better learn based on where they are right at that moment.

So we did ask students about what is working well for them. And most of this presentation is based on the Every Learner Everywhere publication called, What are Best College Instructors Do.

It includes real student stories. And it serves as a springboard for instructors to consider stories in general, but also to start thinking about ways to gather information from their own students.

For that publication, we asked students affiliated with the Every Learner Everywhere network to summarize a story about good teaching. And there were a variety of stories. Some were very specific to one instructor and one method. And some were general descriptions of what these students thought of as good teaching. Next slide, please.

So the 22 students who trusted us with their stories were affiliated in some way with the Every Learner Everywhere network. As of summer 2022, when we were gathering this input, they were enrolled in an undergraduate degree program or they had fairly recently graduated since May of 2020.

Their stories and the students themselves represent a large cross-section of students at US institutions of higher education. We had about 60% under the age of 25. About three quarters attended four-year institutions. And the remaining attended two-year institutions. Approximately 41% were first generation college attendees. Approximately 77% attended college full time. And the vast majority attended public institutions.

Our students identified as male, female, non-binary, immigrants, parents, caregivers. Some were affected by poverty. And you can see, from our racial and ethnic identities breakdown, that we had students in a variety of categories, including some with intersecting racial identities. Next slide, please.

So we have to be careful to keep in mind both that these students have their own stories. They're individuals experiencing the classroom in their own way. And also that they're each telling their own story. They're not representing anyone besides themselves.

But there were still some themes that rose to the top as we read through these stories and looked at them. So we have some key takeaways from students about life changing teaching.

The first one was that students want to be recognized as individuals and appreciated in the classroom. The second is that students want real life in the classroom. And the third is that students want to be treated with respect and trust.

So the document itself includes all these student stories. It's really written in student voice, with very limited paraphrasing or summarizing.

In the interest of time, today, I'm going to delve in a little bit into each of these takeaways, but encourage you to seek out the resource in order to actually read those student words. And I note that Patty has put the link for this resource in the chat right now already. Next slide, please.

So one of the key takeaways. The first one listed is that students want to be recognized as individuals and appreciated in the classroom. This came through with students discussing examples of instructors and classes where they really felt part of a class community. They could engage with their whole identity. And there was a strong sense of belonging.

And again, for the actual student examples and words, you can access the document. But the general idea of some of the examples were instructors who checked in with students personally.

And sometimes this meant a quick email or a phone call that said, I know you've missed a couple classes. How are things going? So using information and actually finding out what's happening with that student.

There were also examples of instructors who celebrated student successes, as well as those who supported students when they were struggling. Another set of examples were instructors who conveyed to minoritized students that the class is a safe space for them.

So again, that sense of belonging and really bringing a student's whole self to the classroom based on the environment that the instructor was able to create for the students. Something to keep in mind with-- oops, sorry.

Something to keep in mind with checking in with students is that in this day and age, a lot of us are using online, either course management systems or software for homework assignments and that sort of a thing.

And there's dashboards available that have a lot of information at our fingertips about student progress and student engagement. And the extra step that students were asking us to take in this category as instructors was to follow up on that information and actually see if the gap was something that could be addressed and worked on between the instructor and the student. Now, next slide, please.

Our second key takeaway was that students want real life in the classroom. So about two thirds of the students actually use the word real at least once in their descriptions.

And they described active learning's not as supports of real

learning, but as the real learning itself. So when the learning was active, that's when it felt real in the classroom.

And some of the examples that students included were instructors who made connections between course content and real life, working on and discussing real life examples, problems, and scenarios.

So bringing the outside world into the classroom. And also engaging with real industry leaders and practitioners-- so perhaps guest speakers or visiting different sites depending on the nature of the course.

This, as I said, was beyond just hands-on activities, but actually making connections between what was happening in the classroom and where students might take that next, between what's happening in the classroom and what students are bringing to the classroom. Next slide, please.

Our third key takeaway was that students want to be treated with respect and trust. Students who feel instructors are on their side and who want them to succeed in their class are more engaged in class. And this was something not just from our 22 students, but that you'll find repeated in the literature about student engagement in higher education.

Some specific student examples included, just day one, the tone of the syllabus can convey, respect, and trust of students. Instructor timeliness with communication is a continuation of that respect and trust of students, as can be grace and flexibility around policies.

Examples of respect and trust included giving students time to learn and the resources to succeed, as well as when instructors ask for student feedback on how to make the class better. And we'll talk a little bit more about that today.

In general, this one was related to students being seen as real people, feeling like their instructors really recognize them as adults and people engaged in this learning process. Next slide, please.

So we're going to do just a minute here of independent thinking. Let some of that information sink in. So with these three takeaways in mind-- and I've repeated them here on this slide.

I'd like for you to reflect on your own teaching and maybe jot down something that you're currently doing that supports one of these three takeaways for your students. So

it's a chance to reflect and acknowledge yourself and the good

work that you're probably already doing and maybe congratulate yourself.

So if you'd like to jot it down for yourself, that's great. If you want to put it in the chat, that would be OK as well. But we'll spend about 30 seconds here just thinking, how are you doing for these three takeaways for your students?

So again, congratulations and thank you for those of you who can think of at least one example of a way that you are helping to recognize students as individuals, ways that you are providing real life to your students, and ways that you are respecting and trusting your students. Let's go to the next slide, please.

This time I want us to look ahead and think about maybe something you want to continue doing from that last reflection or something new you'd like to try that could increase your ability to support these life changing experiences for students.

So I do see some chat showing up on things that you've already been doing. Congratulations. What is one thing that you can commit to doing this term, right now, that will support one of these three takeaways for your students? Make it small. Make it big, but commit to it. Write it down. Let's take another 30 seconds or so here. What can you do this term?

Great. Thank you so much for those of you who are jumping in there. It's really nice to see. I think some of these feel like they take a lot of time. But a quick congratulations via email or in class if you're lucky enough to be face to face just as you pass back something, perhaps.

I still put rubber stamps or stickers on the tops of quizzes and tests as that quick congratulation. And it's small, but it's one way that I can actually recognize my students. And so I think if we can see things like that-- bringing in students work experience I've seen, but also instructors bringing in their work experience. These are great. There's little steps we can all be taking. Thank you so much. All right, let's go to the next slide, please.

So the Every Learner Everywhere document that I've mentioned is definitely one way to learn more about what today's students are experiencing and feeling as students, What Our Best College Instructors Do.

And there are also other sources of data if you're interested in learning about student perspectives generally, broadly. So I have three links or images down here below. And

Patty just put them as links in the chat. These are Every Learner Everywhere publications or videos.

The Student Leaders Speak is going to be a little bit more about just student experience. The ASU remote's about 30 minutes long. It's a panel discussion. And students are talking specifically about inclusive teaching strategies that have meant something to them.

And the APLU Adapt is about 50 minutes long. Again, it's student voice. And this one specific to the adaptive digital learning experience.

What you might also find is that your own university or institution has data or surveys about students that they're collecting pretty continuously that might be a good source to tap into for your specific institution's population.

And this could be something like alumni surveys. It could also be exit surveys of students who are leaving. I'm not thinking just of demographic data about your students, but anything that gets student voice or student perspectives there for you to read about.

You'll also find research in general that includes student perspectives and a quick ERIC search of the educational research databases. In the past 20 years, the phrases student voice and student perspectives are appearing a lot more in studies.

And you might find that, even within your content area, you can find articles and research studies that include things like student perspectives about writing in mathematics or other pedagogical strategies that are of interest to you. Next slide, please.

So at this point, I'm going to go a little bit from general student data-- maybe students you've never met yet, but getting an idea for what students in general feel, to finding ways to learn a little bit more about your students specifically.

So What Our Best College Instructors Do document starts with this quote by Kiara Williams. A professor may not always get it right the first time around, but those who remain open minded actively seek student feedback and use this knowledge to grow will garner much respect from the students that they serve.

And I really think that phrasing of actively seek student feedback is important. I love to think that I'm super friendly and approachable. And that I'm always reminding my students to come by office hours or that I consistently ask for questions in the classroom.

But every single semester there is always at least one comment on the end of semester evaluations that makes me cringe just a little bit and think, oh, I wish you had said something sooner. We could have fixed that.

And I'm talking 20 years of student comments, more classes and students than I can even count up to. But every time, there's one comment at least that I feel like, I wish I had known about it sooner.

And I need to be actively, more actively, even, seeking student feedback along the way. I have to be intentional about it. I have to find different ways to open doors to my students and create opportunities for them to give me that feedback, ask for that clarification, make that request along the way before it feels too late for both of us.

So one of the ways that we're going to talk about doing this is with mid semester feedback. So let's go to the next slide. And this is going to lead us to our second poll question. Have you ever conducted a mid semester check in or solicited mid semester feedback from your students? There it goes, perfect.

Oh, good. We have a lot of experience in the group. Great. Thank you for sharing that and replying to that one. Perfect. So about half of you regularly do it. That's great to see. So we'll move on to the next slide.

And I'd just like to share an example of the mid-semester check-in that I most commonly use. And I figure examples are great. Whether you've never done this before or you have something that you like to use, we can always refine and tweak just a little bit here and there.

So this is my standby mid-semester check-in that I use. I have three categories. The first is progress-- list three things that are going well with respect to the class. The next is problems-- list two things that need improvement with respect to the class. And a question. I ask students to list one question that they have for me.

I typically conduct these in class, on paper. And I find that if I am willing to give the time to this in class, it signals that it's important. And students are more likely to just fill it out because we're all doing it together.

So sometimes I type the prompts up on just a single sided sheet of paper, leaving lots of room for student voice, showing them that my questions are less important than the space I want to give them for their answers.

Sometimes I have them pull out a scratch paper or I raid the copy room for one sided paper to pass out and have students just write these things on a blank piece of paper.

I really try to sell this to students as it being a check-in opportunity for all of us. It's going to be helpful for them because it might help them get what they want out of the course, depending on what they reflect on.

It also might help me improve the course, not just for the next class, but for them because we are taking care of this real time. I tend to give the overview that I'm interested in anything they can think of.

So if they are proud that they have come to class on time most days because there's someone who usually runs late, I want them to write that down. Even though sometimes as an instructor we feel like coming to class is just a given, it's not always true for our students. And it's not always feasible for our students. So we want to let them be proud of what they're proud of.

So it can be things about them, the classroom environment, the textbook, the pacing, the way I've organized things, anything that they can think of related to the class. Same thing with problems. Here's a great time to tell me that the room is too cold or that orange pen I've been using on the document camera just is not visible from the back of the room. It's also a time to say, I need to try to come to class on time. So any category that they want to use, what's going well, what's not going well.

And then as far as the question, these can be-- I don't have any questions at this time, which is definitely fair for some students to put. And it can often be about something related to the class or not related to the class. And we'll get to that in a couple of slides here.

Someone mentioned, in the chat, I believe, that it was hard to connect with students in an online class. Although I like to do this in a face to face class with paper and pencil, if I'm able to, I have done it before as part of a regular assignment for the class, either a final question on a quiz.

Or in one class that I was teaching during the pandemic, we had twice a week reading quizzes. And so for one of those, I replaced the reading quiz with a mid-semester check-in, just three questions-- what's going well? What's not going well? And what's a question that you have for me?

And I made it really clear in the directions that they were going to get their 5 point reading score, no matter what they wrote down. They just had to answer the questions. And that, I hope, took off some of the pressure of needing to say good things versus honest things.

When I look at a mid-semester check-in like this-- and for those of you who have your own that you like, there's a lot of different versions out there with more specific questions in mind or more structured questions. But this is one that I like to use.

One of the big advantages of it being very open is that everyone has an answer. Everyone can tell me something that's going well related to this class. Everyone can tell me something that needs improvement related to the class. So it's very open. Everyone can have an opinion about it.

Another advantage is there's not a lot of reading. There's just these three prompts. And so I'm giving space for the responses instead of space for processing the questions that I'm asking.

One disadvantage is that because it is so open, there might not be consensus on any one issue. So students are going to list totally different things for progress, and for problems, and for their questions.

And so, for example, if one student thinks that the room is too cold but no one else mentions it, I'm not going to be able to know how everyone feels about the room temperature.

So it's something to think about with open ended versus closed questions, just as in any survey design. You want to think carefully about what you really want to know and what you can actually do with that information.

Another thing to think about is if you are really interested in a certain aspect of your pedagogy and you're really working on it, you might want to just ask a quick question of your students about, are you satisfied with the level of in-class practice that we're doing this semester? Just one quick question that gets at the concept that you are interested in working on and improving.

There are lots of great resources available for mid-semester check-ins, questions, and strategies. And Patty put a couple of them in the chat. Brown University as well as UC Berkeley, they have a variety of examples there depending on the type of class that you're teaching. Next slide, please.

So just for some comparison here to get a feel for, if I really want to learn from my students, I probably have to seek out that knowledge. I was teaching four classes in the fall, this most recent fall of 2022.

And this chart just shows a comparison mid-semester check-in responses that I was hosting in class live. The response rate there compared to the number of end of semester university evaluations that my students completed in December at the end of the term.

So not only can I respond to the feedback in real time and actually make some changes and connect with my students, if I conduct a mid-semester check-in, I also tend to get a higher response rate and a higher quality response rate.

We're all busy in December. And I think that it's easy for students to not recognize the importance of their feedback at that time of the year, when they're on their way out of a class and their minds are busy with lots of other things.

So I wanted to be sure, just as a quick comparison there, if you really want to hear from your students, you might need to consider using your own resources to do that. And it sounds like at least half of you are already working on something like this. Next slide.

So this is just a different version to look at. This one has some prompts built into it. It's a little bit more wordy, but the basic format tends to be something working well, something that needs improvement, as well as, specifically, what can the instructor do to improve? What can the student do to improve?

So this particular prompt 2 and 3 tend to put a little bit of reflection just built into the questions and prompt students to think about their own actions in the classroom before they dive into what needs to be fixed. So that's built into this question, a little bit of responsibility there.

We can take this same idea-- if we go to the next slide. Oops, I'm sorry. Go back one, please. I'm sorry. We can take this same idea and just shorten it, if you like, four questions instead of three.

The second question could even be, what could you do to improve your own learning? What can the instructor do for question number three? So we can modify them just a little bit there. Let's go to this next question, This next slide. There we go.

So whether you use mid-semester feedback already or you're just thinking about adding it in, would anyone like to toss into the chat a question that you would like to ask students in a class you're teaching this term? So it can be broad. It can be really specific to something that you're working on. Try on for size a mid-semester feedback question.

So do you like icebreakers for each Zoom class? If that's something you're trying to be really conscientious about, maybe you don't think you're doing enough, but you find out from students that you're doing too many. It's a great way to adjust or modify.

Name one concept you did not understand. Sometimes a question like that takes the format of an exit ticket, just a really quick daily, how are we doing on this information, rather than waiting for a test.

Is the information provided to this point helping you understand the topics we have covered thus far? Great. Am I doing what I think I'm doing? What questions are arising for you? Yes, thank you. That's wonderful. All right, let's go to the next slide.

If we're going to ask our students these questions and if we're going to gather this information, we must close the loop. We must honor their insight and the time that it takes them to reflect the bravery that it takes to share with us their thoughts and find a way to follow up on the information that they're providing us with.

We need to signal that feedback that they're giving us is valued. It is appreciated. And this is something to keep in mind when you're designing your questions. If you're asking short directed questions, can you change that thing within the next week, for example? If you're asking big open questions, can you pick something out of there to address pretty immediately with your students? When you consider what style and when you're going to give your mid-semester feedback, you want to think of how you are going to close that loop.

Depending on timing, I tend to do a quick read that same day and try to address at least one or two items directly in the next class meeting and let students know that I'm still working on the rest of that information that they've provided me with.

I often provide a PowerPoint or some sort of frequently asked questions follow up with the whole class. I'm someone who believes that if one person asked it, probably there were a handful of other students who had that same question in the class. Next slide, please.

When I think about closing the loop and finding that easy win, those one or two quick questions to be really quick about addressing and following up on, I've been fortunate. There is almost always a question about the final exam, what's going to be on it? When's it going to be? That type of thing. This is a really nice way to follow up quickly and in an informative way for the whole class.

There tends to also be a personal question or two. So am I a cat person or a dog person? What's my favorite color? Some of those kinds of questions that let me know, maybe a student couldn't think of an academic question, but maybe they really are starting to be curious about me as a person by this point in the semester. And so this is a good reminder to me that if I want my students to bring their whole selves into the classroom, I need to bring a little bit more of myself into the classroom. And I tend to be a private person, but these are questions that feel fairly safe to answer. Where did I go to school? Do I like teaching? Am I a cat person or dog person?

Like I said, those are-- they're safe for me. I'm comfortable with them. And as I give of myself, it encourages my students to bring more of themselves into our community. Some people recommend sorting the responses that you get. And I think, yeah, Patty put a link in there to Syracuse University. They have some suggestions, like, how to respond and how to process all this information.

And one of the strategies is to sort things you can control, things that you can't control. If there's things you can't control, like the temperature of the room or the time of the class, tell students about it.

Respect them as adults to understand the explanation that you have as a faculty member to help them understand why you're including something in the curriculum, even though it exhausts them, for example, or the person actually put in something about icebreakers. Why do you believe in them?

Why are you including them? Help students understand why it makes sense to maybe trim them back, but not stop them entirely. You have pedagogical strategies you're working on. Next slide, please.

I often like to have students celebrate each other and what they're learning. Their successes show through in those what's working well, what's not working well. So this is student answers to those questions. And I can have students learn from each other by sharing this with the whole class.

They can see, oh, somebody else thought it was a good idea to put more time into assignments. Maybe I should try that. And so a slide like this is also a good opportunity for me to reiterate some of the class expectations and some of the requirements for the class.

So I can take that student input and share it out in a way that helps all of us continue the semester in a positive way and even strengthen some of our habits for the rest of the semester. Next slide, please.

Another thing that sometimes comes up in these-- and we've all seen this at the end of the semester, that totally contradictory information. And that can be frustrating, but it can also be really informative to our students.

So sometimes I use a follow up and my closing the loop idea to actually help students raise their awareness about who's in the room with them, who they are as a student compared to who else is in the classroom.

So for example, each of these kind of bubbles here shows a pair of comments that feel contradictory. So for example, everything you teach is what will be on the test.

I sometimes feel like the exam questions are not completely covered in the handouts we do in the class. And so that gives me a chance to address, not only are we all different but here's where things might appear if they weren't in the handouts. You might have seen them on a quiz. You might have seen them in a reading, for example.

It's a good reminder to students, but it's a good reminder to me that maybe I can't please everyone. And I should give myself a little bit of grace when it comes to trying to please everyone. But I wouldn't know that these perspectives are out there if I don't ask for them.

So let's go to the next slide, which is also a poll question. I'm curious to know-- because they're a wonderful resource for this type of activity.

I'm curious to know whether you have a center for teaching and learning or a different title for something similar on your campus. And if so, do you know if they can help with gathering and/or interpreting mid-semester feedback? So let's do poll question 3 here.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: Christine, we may have to have them answer the questions in the chat. The poll is not launching, for some reason.

CHRISTINE LATULIPPE: Thanks, Norma. That's OK. So go ahead and chime in the chat. If you have a center for teaching and learning, do you know whether they offer services that can help with mid-semester feedback?

Sometimes they can actually even come into your classroom and survey students for you, which can make students feel safer. OK, getting some answers in there. Good. Yeah, it's worth asking.

Great. Yeah, different name-- office of instructional resources.

Sometimes they're teaching and learning excellence. It's a different names there. And I think someone said they were a graduate TA.

Usually, you are eligible to use these centers as well. There's no restriction on full time faculty. It's TAs, and adjuncts, and lecturers. Everybody's allowed to use them.

There's some schools as well that have modules built into their Blackboard or Canvas, just three or four standard questions that you can import to your course and use as your mid semester feedback. So that's a question worth asking as well.

Ava, that's interesting. Your school is sharing first year student survey on what motivates them. That's great to know about your student body. Wonderful. Wonderful. OK, so let's go to-- oh, wait. Here's my results. It's OK. We got enough in the chat. We're great on that. Thank you very much.

I'd like to just continue on this idea of how to learn about our students. We'll go to the next slide with a couple of other examples that I use in my classes, just to give you a little couple tricks. If you want them, use them. If not, that's fine too.

One of the ways that I try to open doors to my students is just from day one with that syllabus, because I really want them to read the syllabus, I sneak a little extra credit opportunity in there.

And sometimes I make it light and silly. Send me a picture of a cute animal. But often, I ask them to send me an email with an expectation that they have for themselves and an expectation that they have for me.

And this is a really nice way to learn about students from the very start. What are they hoping to get out of this class? What are they really hoping and thinking that they need from me for the semester because it is secret and hidden. It's imperfect. I tend to get about a 50% response rate on this one.

But for the students who notice it and follow through with that email, I start the semester knowing just a little bit about how they're walking into the room with me.

At the end of every in-class quiz or test. I do ask the question that somebody-- a couple people put it in the chat. What questions are arising for you? Is there anything else you'd like to ask or tell me? And that's a question that I've started putting at the end of assessments.

Just sometimes it's about assessments that they want to say something. Other times they just draw me a picture or there's a lot of blank spaces. Many students actually just

write thank you, which to me feels like a connection in a different

way than I might get as they're walking out of the classroom. Next slide, please.

Thinking about questions and how to ask them in order to invite information from the people around us. A colleague taught me this many years ago. And it's an in-class language change from, do you have any questions to what questions do you have.

I find that when I even say these two questions out loud, when I say the second one, I'm more excited. I'm more welcoming. I'm finishing a little bit of lecture explanation. I'm like, oh, this is good stuff. What are you excited about? What questions do you have? What are you curious about?

When I ask that, what questions do you have, I'm really opening a door for students to participate and be brave in that classroom space in a different way than when I quickly glance around the room, any questions? And I move on to the next thing.

So I found that this language choice, this shift helps me really acknowledge that questions are good. Questions are how we learn. And you should have questions. You should be curious about this exciting stuff that we're working on together. Next slide, please.

So this is the short, quick 10-minute version of that wonderful Every Learner document that I've mentioned. I teach teachers frequently. And so frequently, I have them brainstorm attributes or dispositions of their favorite teachers.

And so they get to reflect on someone they loved being in the classroom with and think about what made them love being in the classroom with that instructor.

And so we can go quickly around the room, just everybody adds something to the list. This is one of my classes of freshman brainstormed in the fall.

And I think that you'll notice, when you look at this list, that it's evidence based teaching practices and strategies. It's inclusive and equity principles in higher education.

Maybe not with those academic words, but these are the things, the attributes of instructors and teachers that our students are continually recognizing and appreciating. These are the practices that are making a difference in their everyday life. They want to be treated with respect and trust. They want to be seen as individuals in the classroom and cared about in the classroom.

I'm going to have Norma go to the next slide just so that my email gets added up there, if anyone's interested in continuing this conversation with me. But I know that we do have a little bit of time here.

So I open it to you, what questions do you have? You can go back one while we're hanging out together, Norma, please. There you go. Thank you.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: We did have some comments that came in. One was tone of the syllabus. There was some curiosity behind how to do that. Is there some examples that you can give or explain how you would go in and adjust a syllabus so that it has a more inviting tone?

CHRISTINE LATULIPPE: Yeah, I'm not going to think of a title off the top of my head, but there are actually some Every Learner resources about this with comparison columns of language that's more-- and somebody put it in the chat actually.

Instead of saying to a student, you're going to fail the class if you don't start coming to class, you can say, hi, I see you haven't come to class. How are you doing?

So that tone difference that you might use to check in with students, you can also start the semester with that kind of tone difference.

So instead of no devices in class-- underlined, all caps, bold writing, maybe a sentence that is more along the lines of, please respect our classroom environment and only use devices when they're related to the work that we're doing together.

So there's different wording and phrasing around many of the rules and regulations of our classroom that can be put into a more positive slant and expect students to rise to the challenge and be adults in the classroom.

And I know that we're working with young adults, not small children, but even in, say, a preschool classroom, instead of telling children no running, we can change the tone of that and say, let's walk when we're inside.

And it's that messaging difference. It's all the same idea. We don't want you running down the hall. We don't want you on your cell phone all class period.

But how can we communicate that to our students with the fonts that we use with the more reprimand language versus positive language that we're using? Oh, we have scary syllabi that people are seeing, less foreboding, more welcoming. Yes.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: I do have to say that there was a time where when I was teaching, we had a required section of the syllabus. And we were not allowed to change the wording. And it was very harsh.

And it was really hard to convince the people who put together that part of the syllabus to change that term, the terminology, because they did. They liked the big bold print, the do not this underlined.

And it did not do well for the students, but it did take some time for us to get the committee-- because it was a committee, to change that terminology and stuff. So just a good point that Christine has made.

We do have another question. Have you considered pivoting on the student responses you get from the survey questions and sharing those more broadly back to them like in a pie chart or other data visualizations?

I have done this to normalize their feelings of not knowing, et cetera. Really great, great class discussion. So have you had that opportunity to visualize that data with your students?

CHRISTINE LATULIPPE: I try to share whatever questions as best I can. In terms of visual summaries, because I'm not asking pointed questions, it's difficult for me to summarize in a pie chart, for example, because I don't know what percentage of my class really thinks that the lecture is going too fast because I don't ask that question of all the students.

I can make a point to say, there were a couple of you who thought the lectures went too fast. And a couple of you who thought the lectures went too slow.

And then I can bring in why I'm pacing things the way that I'm pacing them and also bring in some of the suggestions that students have offered about what's making them successful or what they want to do to become more successful.

So where possible, I do try to bring the information back about their experiences. But because of the format that I use with these big open questions, I don't tend to have easily summarizable data with pie charts and that sort of a thing.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: We also have just some comments regarding the different variations of syllabi, visual syllabus, game based syllabus, even collaborative syllabus where the students are able to contribute, one of those living-- I've heard it called a living syllabus. So those are also great ideas.

And from my experience-- just to put my two cents in. I've learned that since the syllabus is one of the first things that those students see and read, that tone is going to be very impactful.

Are they coming into a classroom that's being taught by the Wicked Witch of the West or is it a learning opportunity for all of us as a community? And that can be a big difference.

CHRISTINE LATULIPPE: I'm noticing Hassan is saying something about schools being resistant to collaborative syllabi. Something that you can do without taking some of the boilerplate things and making them collaborative is create a living frequently asked questions portion for your syllabi in the course setup.

And so that-- you can still have some of the things that you want to stay standard, but you can also have that collaborative element on other portions of rules and regulations about the course, perhaps, things that you want to have students continuing to grow with.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: Yeah, that's a great idea. We do know that there are those administrators that like legal ease in a syllabus. That doesn't mean we have to completely isolate the students from it.

CHRISTINE LATULIPPE: And there also might be ways to reorganize the syllabus. Have the last page be the legalese, but the front page be your more welcoming statement and a visual of some sort.

So you need to know the culture of your department and your institution and what the regulations are for sure. But I think, wherever, you do have the power to have these conversations. Students notice it. It's the first thing they're seeing about your class.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: Yeah, and for those of you interested, there is a resource that's not an ELE resource, but it's from the University of Southern California Center for Urban Education.

They've got a whole playbook or workbook on equitizing your syllabus. And a lot of that has to do with the tone and the verbiage that you use. Yeah, this is great. This is great conversations. We are running down on time however. So we're going to wrap things up. I would like to thank Christine for such a wonderful presentation. Some great ideas out there, a chance for all of us to go back and really reflect on our own teaching and learn from those things that we've done and that we need to adjust and reflect upon.

So thank you very much for awakening our minds on that effort, Christine, and letting us know what students really need to hear from us. And that we need to listen to them. That student voice is very important. So thank you very much.

For those of you interested in the strategies for success series, we have a survey coming up for you. Patty's going to throw the link in the chat for you. We'd really appreciate it if you take a few minutes out to give us your feedback through that survey.

If you've got something to do immediately after, don't worry, we'll send it out-- we'll send the link out in a follow up email. And in that follow up email, we will also include a link to the slide deck, which will also have some of those links that we posted in the chat for you to the Syracuse, the Brown, Berkeley University, and a few of the other things that we included. So we'll have that in there as well.

Here's a real quick look at what's left. We have one more webinar in this series. Xeturah Woodley and Mary Rice presenting next week on designing online learning as intersectional entangled commitments.

So we hope that everybody will have the opportunity to attend that. So thank you for attending today's webinar. We look forward to seeing you next week for Xeturah and Mary's webinar as well.

We'll also have future events, so keep an eye out for those as they come forward. And we would like to thank, not only Christine but thank the audience, again, for your participation. And hope you all have a great day. Thank you very much. Thank you everyone.