

Transcript - Teaching For Digital Equity and Cultural Relevance

7/19/2024

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: Welcome to the Every Learner Everywhere and Teaching For Digital Equity and Culture Relevance webinar, presented in collaboration with our partners at CORA Learning. It's a pleasure to have you with us today. My name is Norma Hollenbeck, and I'm the senior manager for network programs and services with Every Learner Everywhere.

Before I introduce our guests, I'd like to take just a few minutes out to tell you a little bit about Every Learner Everywhere and the mission of our network. Every Learner Everywhere is a collaboration of higher education organizations with the expertise in evaluating, implementing, scaling, and measuring the efficacy of digital learning and its integration into pedagogical practice.

Every Learner Everywhere is sponsored by the Gates Foundation. And 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 racially minoritized students.

Some quick housekeeping notes throughout the presentation. We welcome your questions in the Q&A section. If participants raise their hand, however, we will not be able to unmute you. We will be monitoring the Q&A section at the bottom of your screen as well as the chat.

And at this time, I'm going to hand over everything to Mary Mitchell with CORA Learning. Mary.

MARY MITCHELL: Thank you, Norma. Go ahead to the next slide. Oh, I'm sorry. We'll go back to that one so that we can introduce our speakers for today. But for the next slide, I'll start with our agenda.

We are CORAL Learning. We provide equity centered and accredited professional learning for college faculty, staff, and administrators and leadership. And today, our two speakers will be Dr. Frank Harris and Dr. Sim Barhoum. Let's go to our agenda.

So today, we will talk about our relationship with ELE joining as our new technical assistance partner. And then Dr. Frank will take over and talk about our research and the research brief that we have recently published with Every Learner. And then Dr. Barhoum, after that, will talk about our new course--teaching for digital equity and learning. Next slide, please.

So at CORA Learning this year we have partnered with Every Learner to join their network as a technical assistance partner, providing professional learning courses for the network. And so we'll move on to the next slide so that we can see and move on and talk about the research.

FRANK HARRIS: All right. Thank you, Mary. I'll pick it up from here. And so good morning colleagues. Good afternoon to colleagues joining us East of the Mississippi.

I'm Frank Harris III. I have the pleasure of being the vice president for research with CORA Learning and also serve as a professor in the Community College Leadership Program at San Diego State University. And so, as Mary shared, we had the opportunity to partner with Every Learner Everywhere as a part of the work that we're doing, supported by the Gates Foundation.

And one of the projects that we want to share with you today is a study that we did to examine how faculty who taught gateway courses in post-secondary education were intentionally infusing cultural relevant content into their courses, all with the goal of benefiting diverse learners. This study was inspired. We can go to the next slide.

This study was inspired in many ways by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's target product profile. So any of you who's part of the Gates ecosystem and has been involved with Gates work, particularly as it relates to digital learning and courseware, you're probably at least somewhat familiar with the TPP.

And in the TPP, it was reported that while we have a pretty good understanding of how culturally relevant content impacts diverse learners in the K-12 context, we don't have the same level of understanding, empirical and inquiry-driven understanding of the impact on diverse learners in post-secondary education. And by post-secondary education, we're talking specifically about students who are enrolled in community colleges and four-year institutions. Next slide.

And so in conducting this study, we thought it was important to focus again on what was happening in gateway courses. And the reason for those who may be unfamiliar with gateway courses, these are those that students typically enroll in at the beginning

of their post-secondary journey. So maybe, say, within the first four semesters of their enrollment, depending if they're attending part-time or full-time. And the goal of gateway courses is to provide students with foundational knowledge and skills that they'll need as they transition and matriculate to upper division coursework.

At the same time, we also know and recognize and understand that more often than not, gateway courses usually become barriers to persistence and success, particularly for diverse learners, diverse learners. And these courses have traditionally yielded high rates of grades of D, F, and W.

And so presented here in this slide are the top 20 gateway courses with the highest student enrollments and post-secondary education. And I should also note that within the context of this study, we really did utilize the Gates Foundation's definition of diverse learners, which are Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and poverty-impacted students. Of course, we know that these students are also the students that tend to be the most underserved and are often disproportionately impacted within post-secondary education. Next slide.

Some of you may also recall that our colleagues at Every Learner Everywhere also identified six evidence-based teaching practices for student success. And those practices are a transparency, formative practice, active learning, data analytics, metacognition, and sense of belonging. And this latter one sense of belonging was also an area of focus for our study as well.

So part of what we wanted to know is not only how we're faculty who teach gateway courses, how are they intentionally infusing culturally relevant content, not only for the benefit and success of diverse learners, but also to create safe, welcoming, and belonging environments for diverse learners. Next slide.

And so we decided to take a survey research approach to conduct this study. And the survey that we developed was grounded. First, we began by looking at the published literature and research on culturally relevant teaching and learning and equity-centered pedagogy. And as I stated earlier in describing the purpose of this study, there was a lot of published insights and research on the impact of culturally relevant content for diverse learners in the K-12 context. Not so much when it came to post-secondary education. So in some ways, we had to fill in some gaps there.

We also did a lot of work and relied on some previously identified surveys that was developed by our colleagues at CCEAL, the Community College Equity Assessment Lab at San Diego State, which was also a partner in this study. And you see three of the tools presented there. And then once we felt like we had a survey tool that we felt good about, we validated it with six faculty subject matter experts. So these were faculty who are teaching in post-secondary education, had some experience teaching gateway courses, had some demonstrated success in being able to work with and support diverse learners. And we asked them, can you review it? Are the constructs that we're measuring, do they make sense? Are we measuring them in the right way? Are there things that we're missing? And we got really good, insightful feedback from those colleagues. And that really helped us to fine-tune the study, pardon me, fine-tune the survey. And ultimately, we landed on the 22-item survey instrument. And part of what we're going to do for you today is share the results of that. Next slide. We also had to come up with a good sound strategy for identifying survey respondents. And so in doing so, to identify the participants, we sent an invitation right once we went through the IRB approval process at San Diego State, where our partners at CCEAL was affiliated there. Once we got approval there, we sent the invitation to a Listserv as approximately just over 3,000 educators, again, those who had some recognized expertise in equity-centered teaching and learning in post-secondary education. Now, these weren't all faculty. So these were colleagues who were working in post-secondary education and a range of contexts and roles. And then from there, we received just over 500 responses, which was about a 17% response rate, which is not that bad for an online survey. It's actually probably about average for an online survey. And then again, our focus in this study was really understanding what was happening in gateway courses, because we recognize and understand that if we can get a sense of what was happening in gateway courses, then that's going to give us some momentum and give us some insight. And if we can identify tools and resources and strategies to get diverse learners through gateway courses, then their likelihood of success beyond those courses was much greater.

And so ultimately, we landed on a final sample of 261 respondents again. And these were all colleagues who were working part-time and full-time faculty who taught gateway courses. Next slide. The next slide gives you a little bit of a snapshot of the demographics of the colleagues that ultimately participated. This is, again, the final 261 colleagues that comprised the final sample of the study. You'll see with regard to racial identity, the slightly less than half of the participants identified as white. We had almost 2/3 were women. And it turns out, of course, modality, which we thought was very important, it's actually going to come up in one of the significant findings that we'll present shortly. Just over half of the colleagues were reporting on courses that they taught in person. Just under a third were teaching online in either synchronous courses or asynchronous courses. And about 16 and 1/2% were teaching hybrid courses, which, of course, is some variation of in-person and online engagement. Next slide. And on the survey, we asked the participants to tell us how often did they intentionally use these seven culturally relevant teaching and learning practices, which we identified again from the published literature and research on the topic. You see the survey there. So we asked them, when designing and teaching my course, how often do I purposefully use instructional practices that positively reflect the identity of diverse learners, that help to expose students to the historical contributions of diverse learners to the field that they were studying, as well as the contemporary contributions of diverse learners? We also want to know to what degree were they using instructional practices that help to make the content that they were teaching relevant to the lives and experiences or the lived experiences, we should say of diverse learners. Did they give diverse learners the opportunity to engage a range of cultural viewpoints and perspectives, but perspectives that help to center the voices of diverse learners on particular topics and issues. Collaborative learning opportunities. We want to get a sense of how often they were engaging in that strategy. And then to what degree were they engaging and using experiential learning as ways to particularly engage issues that again were impacting diverse communities? The response options to each of these items where we ask them, how often did you do it? Either weekly, once a month, once per semester, or never? So those are the four response options for each one.

And our first research question we wanted to essentially know what were the top instructional practices. Which of these seven instructional practices were most widely used and again with the goal of infusing culturally relevant content in gateway courses? And then the next slide, you'll see with four of the top seven were right.

And as we can see here, the most widely used instructional practices that were intentionally used by faculty in these courses were those that helped to connect the content of the course to issues that were relevant to the lived experiences of diverse learners. And we can see that the mean score there was 3.81.

The second one was instructional practices that exposed students to content that positively reflected their identities. One thing we know and one thing that we've learned from the published research on culturally relevant content is that it's really important that students not only engage content, but they engage content, and they encounter images and ideas and perspectives that help to really provide a more positive perspective of them as diverse people, recognizing that historically that typically wasn't the case in most fields of study.

And then we saw that collaborative learning opportunities, again, and exposure to content that expressed different cultural viewpoints that centered the voices of diverse learners, rounded out the top four in terms of the most widely used instructional practices that were reported by the respondents.

The next slide, we had our second research question. Again, it was important for us to not only know what instructional practices were being used in these gateway courses, but also to what degree did the faculty who were using them believe that those practices would have a positive impact on student success.

Now to keep things simple, we define success as earning a passing grade in the course. And I can tell you we had a lot of conversation about this within our research team about to what degree do we want to include other elements and other dimensions and aspects of success which we know are important to do.

But with regard to recognizing that we're conducting and collecting data by way of a survey and wanting to make sure that we had good, consistent, valid data, reliable data across the participants, we just really said it. Success in this course was defined as being able to earn a passing grade in the course.

That said, we see from the table presented on this slide that the top four most widely used instructional practices were also the same practices that the respondents felt were most contributed to student success. So the top four from the previous slide, in terms of what were the most widely used, were also the top four in terms of the ones that faculty believe would have the most positive impact on student success, again, for diverse learners.

Makes a lot of sense. The idea there that faculty are using instructional practices that they believe will have a positive impact on student success, no big surprise there. Next slide.

In our third research question, we wanted to know what cultural relevant practices were least used by faculty in those courses who were teaching gateway courses? And then we also want to know why is that? Which we'll address in the next slide.

But as we can see, instructional practices that provided students opportunities to engage in experiential learning, and for those who may not be familiar with what experiential learning is, it's essentially learning that takes oftentimes takes place outside of the context of the actual course. And it requires students to participate in the learning process by way of direct experience and reflection. So it's getting students out and being able to experience the things that they were learning about.

We also know from our work at CORA and our colleagues at CCEAL that experiential learning is actually identified by learning experts as one of the most impactful learning strategies, and it is especially impactful for diverse learners. And so keep that context in mind.

That said, we also see that experiential learning was reported as the least used instructional practices by faculty teaching gateway courses. And then we also see that instructional practice that honor both the contemporary and the historical contributions of diverse learners to the field that they're studying was also those were round out our top, three in terms of those that were least used.

Now, in the next slide, we're going to find out why, because it's not enough to know which ones are not being used. We also thought it would be important to know why aren't they being used.

Now admittedly, when we were designing the study, we thought that the political climate would be at the top of this list in terms of why faculty were not intentionally using

culturally relevant instructional practices. But as you can see, we were wrong to think that.

Instead, the top two reasons for why an instructional practice was not being used is because the faculty don't have the time to incorporate it, or they don't have the resources or expertise to do so. Again, that makes a lot of sense when we think about the finding of the previous slide with experiential learning. Even though it tends to be a high impact-learning strategy, it also requires a lot of time and resources to incorporate it in a course. So this made a lot of sense from our perspective.

The next one we got into course materials. So we wanted to get a sense of how were faculty choosing course materials? And by course materials, we're talking about readings and videos and texts, anything that they were bringing into the environment that they wanted students to use and engage and consume in order to facilitate instruction. To what degree were they intentionally choosing course materials that also, again, were culturally relevant?

And then, as you can see here, materials that help to connect the content that they were teaching to the lived experiences of diverse learners were most reportedly most widely used by faculty in our gateway courses. So they were choosing books and readings and videos and other visuals that they felt would help facilitate making the students making connections to what they were learning to their own lived experiences.

In the next slide, we saw that-- actually the next couple of slides, we start to highlight some other key findings. So there's a lot. I will say there's a lot in this reporting. And so we're giving you a snapshot all with the hope and expectation that folks would go and read it.

But we also thought it'd be important to highlight a few other things. We were able to disaggregate this data by discipline, which allowed us to do a deeper dive into the instructional practices that were used by faculty in fields like math and English. And of course, math and English, it all goes without saying. Regardless of where you're at in terms of post-secondary education, regardless of your major, more often than not, you're going to have to complete some math and some English as a college student. And so what was interesting here is that collaborative learning was actually the most widely used practice by math, the faculty who are teaching math and statistics. So the idea that they were getting students to do things like jigsaw, think, pair, share, that they

were creating opportunities for students to work collaboratively, all with the goal of facilitating learning and success for diverse learners.

Now, recall when we looked at the data in the aggregate, this is actually one of the least used widely instructional practices. But when we disaggregate and just hone in on math, actually it rises to the top as one of the most widely used.

For English, the top two strategies actually mirrored what we saw for the overall sample. That being practices that expose students to content that is relevant to their lived experiences and practices that expose students to content that positively reflected their identity. So a lot of alignment there. Next slide.

We also did some comparison of part-time and full-time faculty and found that the only statistically significant finding of those seven practices was this one, that being that part-time faculty use collaborative learning less often than their full-time faculty colleagues. Again, makes a lot of sense when we think about how labor intensive it can be to incorporate collaborative learning in a way that actually facilitates learning.

And we know that our part-time colleagues are often some of the best faculty, but they tend to be the least supported in terms of what their institutions provide them in terms of resources and support. So this made a lot of sense to us there.

Now the next slide is where things get really interesting. We did a comparison of again those seven instructional strategies to infuse culturally relevant content. And they're used by faculty teaching in in-person, online synchronous courses, online asynchronous courses, and hybrid courses.

Of the seven, there were four statistically significant differences between faculty who taught online and in-person. With our online colleagues, whether there be teaching online synchronously or online asynchronously, they actually use these four practices on a weekly basis more often than their colleagues who taught in-person in gateway courses.

One thing about survey research, it tells us a lot of what, doesn't really tell us why. And again, it was almost without exception that the in-person instruction was actually faculty teaching in person were actually among the least likely of the four different modalities to actually intentionally use these practices. So again, not sure why, but we thought that was a very curious finding worth sharing.

Last slide here before we turn it over to Dr. Barhoum. There's some good insights here. We know again, faculty tend to prioritize strategies that they believe will have the most positive impact on student success. And then again, we know that the lack of capacity and the lack of expertise tends to be one of the biggest barriers when faculty say that they don't use a particular practice. So that makes a lot of sense in terms of why faculty might not utilize practices.

We also know that there's some questions. We like to say that all good research in many ways raises as many questions as it answers. And so, we need some additional insight on why do we see this difference, these statistically significant differences between those who are teaching online and those who are teaching in-person, on those for instructional practices?

We also know that we need to engage in some qualitative work. It would be good to do some interviews with faculty, some interviews that also included, hey, turning your syllabus. Let's look at your syllabus, and let's have a conversation about the things that you're intentionally doing.

Classroom observations, being able to observe faculty who are utilizing practices, and be able to glean some learning from that would be good. ELE, all our colleagues at ELE, our experts when it comes to digital learning and things like courseware, so we need to understand how can digital learning and things like digital tools like courseware actually be used to facilitate the infusion of culturally relevant content? That would be interesting.

And then, of course, we need to hear from students. Everything that we shared today was from the perspective of faculty. But we also know that sometimes there's not always alignment between what faculty think are impactful and helps to facilitate success and that what students actually experience. And so it would be good to get some student perspectives.

At the same time, I think it would be irresponsible of us to not have on this future research list the understanding of how as the political climate tends to grow more toxic, how does that have an impact on what faculty choose to do and choose not to do in terms of creating a culturally relevant and culturally affirming experiences for students.

And so with that, I'm going to turn it over to--

MARY MITCHELL: Mary. I'll take it from here.

FRANK HARRIS: Mary, I'm sorry about that. Thank you.

MARY MITCHELL: Yeah, so naturally, as a professional learning organization, we found the insights from the study to be so impactful that we designed a course around this. Dr. Frank Harris and Dr. Sim Barhoum co-organized this course for CORA Learning. And so Dr. Sim Barhoum will come up next and give us a first look into what we will learn into this new course and how we give educators a foundational understanding of the culturally relevant practices that we discussed in the research. So, Sim, go ahead and take it away.

SIM BARHOU: Thank you, Mary. Thank you, Dr. Harris, for nicely detailing the survey. It's always amazing to watch you present.

I'm Sim Barhoum I'm the content director at CORA, researcher of higher Ed teaching practices and professor at San Diego Mesa College. So based on the survey and the previous knowledge that Dr. Harris highlighted, we developed a course that highlights the outcomes. I'm just going to quickly go over the contents of the course and give you some specifics. And I think we think you're going to love them.

So next slide it's called teaching for digital equity and learning. There's four modules. Module 1 focuses on participants being able to identify and describe who diverse learners are, their lived experiences in Ed, and how they are disproportionately impacted in both traditional and online modalities in post-secondary education.

Module 2 focuses on learners being able to articulate the principles and assumptions of digital learning, equity, and equity-mindedness, and digital equity. Module 3 then focuses on being able to apply the practices that are aligned with digital equity in their andragogy course design and relationship building for diverse learners. And then module 4 learners learn about tools and techniques for equity in digital learning environments such as blended, hybrid, synchronous, asynchronous, and modalities.

So that's the overview. Let's start with module 1. Next slide, please.

So we have four questions in this module. Who diverse learners are. What are diverse learners lived experiences and education? How are they disproportionately impacted in traditional post-secondary Ed? And how are they impacted in online post-secondary Ed? Basically, we're going to highlight and personalize the challenges and disparities faced by diverse students, which will warrant careful consideration and concerted efforts towards addressing and mitigating them. And that was our overarching theme of this. So next slide.

We went and defined who diverse learners are. And to further what Dr. Harris just said about 20 minutes ago, we defined diverse learners as Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and poverty-impacted students. And as he was talking, I was thinking may ask why? Well, we did it for a number of reasons. First of all, it was to narrow the focus and create a framework for our research. It's also the definition that was used in our course from the Gates Foundation. But also, I think inherently we just wanted to single out these specific groups, so educational institutions, policymakers, organizations like us, ELE, the Gates Foundation. We want to draw attention to historically marginalized populations that have experienced systemic challenges in accessing quality education. And that's the biggest thing. How do we help them? Next slide, please.

One of the aspects we discuss in module 1 is how diverse students do overwhelmingly worse than their counterparts on college campuses. This is shown by a significant amount of data, which we went back to. That's why we defined what these diverse learners were. Next slide.

So these are some of the specific challenges that we found and how they're impacted in traditional post-secondary Ed-- sense of belonging, financial challenges, underfunding, cultural differences, discrimination and bias, lack of representation, accessibility barriers, and familial responsibilities. So it's important to recognize that diverse learners are not a monolithic group, and their individual experiences can vary based on their intersection of these identities and personal circumstances.

So addressing these challenges and providing inclusive and supportive environments is crucial for promoting equity and success in higher Ed. So we're going to talk about how we can do that. All right, next slide.

So there are four main areas where students challenges are in online Ed-- the digital divide, lack of support services, isolation and disconnection, and technology proficiency. Again, I'd like to add that diverse learners are not alone in the struggles in the context of online Ed. Many students struggle similarly, and addressing these concerns don't just benefit diverse learners. Quite frankly, all learners will benefit from this research. And next slide.

The concluding part of module 1 ends with this interesting note that I thought was really cool from our survey. The data showed a divergence in one specific area. Faculty who taught fully online asynchronous and hybrid courses more frequently infused culturally

relevant content than faculty who taught in-person and online synchronous courses. We can talk about some ideas as about why that is but not right now.

All right. Next slide, please. All right. So that was module 1. Let's look at module 2.

There's four parts to this. What is digital learning? What are equity and equity-mindedness? What is adult learning theory? And what is digital equity?

Module 2 shows how participants will be able to articulate the principles and assumptions of digital learning, equity, equity-mindedness, and digital equity. So next slide. So that's the goal. Next slide, please.

So digital equity, we define it as the technology and teaching practices that use technology to enhance learning. Next slide. This includes a broad range of content and communication tools, curricular models, design strategies, and services that personalize instruction for students in blended and online learning environments. Evidence demonstrates active and adaptive learning has the potential to improve course outcomes. And digital solutions lower the cost of course materials particularly for diverse learners. Next slide.

So through digital learning, faculty can adapt instruction to students' needs and capabilities. I think that's one of the bigger things. You also promote active and collaborative learning. And you more easily support learners with timely feedback. And you improve academic outcomes. So all of those things happen with digital learning.

Next slide.

Digital learning expands opportunities for blended and online learning based on the people, processes, and technologies supporting students. So module 2 will also discuss, like next slide, equity and digital equity. And you'll have to take the course to find out what those mean. And we can't give everything away.

So module 3 then goes into the specifics of what we just talked about with module 2. It's structured into four key sections to enhance your understanding and application of digital equity in your teaching practice.

Section 1 is about andragogy. In this section, we focus on the principles of adult learning and how they intersect with digital tools and platforms. Participants learn how to adapt their teaching methods to meet the needs of adult learners in a technologically equity challenging and evolving educational environment.

Section 2 is about the diverse learner framework. We explore a framework that encompasses the variety of backgrounds and experiences that students bring to the classroom. This section aims to deepen the participants understanding of how these differences can influence digital learning experiences and outcomes.

Section 3 is about course design practices. We jump into the inclusive course design that supports digital equity. Participants gain practical tools and strategies to create courses that not only use technology thoughtfully but also ensure that all students feel valued and empowered.

And then section 4 is about building and maintaining relationships with diverse learners. That section addresses the importance of relationship building and fostering an inclusive learning environment. And techniques for effective communication and engagement with students from diverse backgrounds are covered, enhancing our ability as educators to support every learner effectively. So next slide, please.

So this diagram illustrates our diverse learner framework which was constructed based on comprehensive research I just discussed. So we conducted our own comprehensive study targeting diverse colleges nationwide. And we specifically focused on the most effective professors. And this started in 2014 and '15 with Dr. Harris and Dr. Wood, and it's morphed till now.

Basically go through these domains really quickly and not get too in depth into the research. The structural domain focuses on the organizational aspects of courses, like, that includes factors like enrollment processes, assessments, course duration, the number of units, and whether the course is for credit or non-credit.

The curricular domain focuses on the course itself and the content, what is being taught. This can include specific content, learning objectives, and other similar elements. The andragogical domain pertains to the methods of teaching employed by the professor. Andragogy, as defined by Knowles, is the art and science of teaching adult learners. This encompasses the educators philosophy and beliefs, how they design assignments, their approach to guiding discussions or delivering lectures, and their overall teaching proficiency.

And lastly, the relational domain focuses on the interactions between educators and students. This domain emphasizes the importance of fostering trust, encouragement,

sense of belonging, genuine care, and building meaningful relationships. Next slide, please.

So just really quickly, we present this framework here. So you can see that each domain has a list of techniques that are validated to work. And like I said, this is about eight years in the running. And it came from independent research that we went out and found across the nation. And then we started using our own research to validate this. And these are the specific techniques that educators can use. But to keep it simple, the module curates the most promising techniques for digital equity. So next slide.

So these are the eight curated techniques that we can work on for digital equity. I also bring up a bonus technique, which is reason I bring it up is because my personal favorite and it helps educators save a great deal of time.

So just quickly through these eight. In discussing effective strategies to enhance our teaching approaches, we begin with the overall course design, which serves as a foundation for creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment. Moving on, we incorporate the concept of a liquid syllabus to humanize the course, making it more adaptable and welcoming for students.

Next, we focus on resources, ensuring their open access to provide all students with the tools they need without barriers. And this seamlessly connects to equity grading, where we reevaluate our grading systems to support fairness and inclusivity. Following that, the practice of feedforward, which offers constructive guidance for assignments, preparing students for success rather than merely critiquing their past work, which we always call feedback.

This closely ties with the sixth part of this, which is class content and workload, which must be balanced and thoughtfully designed to maintain student engagement without overwhelming them. A particularly noteworthy part of that is faculty are always jamming stuff into their course without actually detailing how much time it's going to take students to go through it. We actually follow Ed code. So that's a particularly interesting section.

And then our curation extends that to assessment and assignment design, where innovation and inclusive methods measure learning effectively. Alongside that is the option to redo work or revisions, which empower students to learn from feedforward and improve their understanding of skills through the iterative process.

And then, as the bonus practice, we introduce efficiency, also known as text replacement, to streamline communication and enhance productivity, rounding out the curated strategies. So all of these are meant to foster a more equitable and effective learning environment. So next slide, please. We're going to give an example of one of them. And it's the first one I mentioned, the digital design principle to rethink this overall design of our courses. So the goal here is straightforward. It's to make our online course as easy to navigate as possible. This simplicity significantly improves the learning experience for students, particularly those that are less savvy or face digital accessibility issues. So the first principle we talk about is make the course easy to navigate. And just when we're at the Gates Foundation, gathering a few like a month or so ago, this is the one I just was like, OK, I need to make this more easy to navigate. I need to make this more easy to navigate. So courseware designers need to think about these principles, especially this first one. You want to start by ensuring that your course is easy to get through. This means having a well-organized structure where students can find what they need without confusion. Clear labels, logical module organization, and a consistent layout across pages will help students focus more on learning and less on figuring out where things are.

Second is having a clean landing page. The home page of our course sets the tone for the entire learning experience. Uncluttered landing pages with only essential information front and center, welcoming students reduces anxiety, include only the most critical links and information to prevent overwhelm.

Third is to minimize clicks. Adhere to the principle that the fewer the clicks, the better. Every additional click needs to find information or complete the tasks that can be a barrier to learning. Streamline your design so that students can access materials, assignments, and discussions with minimal effort.

And then my personal favorite is KISS, Keep It Simple Silly. This age-old design principle is vital in educational settings. Avoid overcomplicating your courses with unnecessary graphics, texts, multimedia, simple designs are not only aesthetically pleasing but also easier to follow and interact with. Next slide, please.

So that was an overview of that. That was section 1. Here's section 4. We look at building and maintaining relationships with diverse learners. And I'll just highlight one of these principles that we discussed in the course next slide.

It's called the EAN protocol. It's Escalate As Needed. And it's structured on an approach on how and when to contact students.

So when an assignment is due and if a student does it, you're good. But if a student doesn't turn it in by the due date, look at the graphic at the bottom.

We use the EAN protocol. So you escalate as needed. So from the first day an assignment is due from the first day of classes, you can do this in Canvas or anywhere else. You check when it's due, and if students haven't done it, you contact them either that night after it was due or that day after it was due or the next morning by 8:00 AM. If they turn it in, if they comment back to you, like, you send them a Canvas message and-- go to the next slide-- this is what you can say. Hey, class or hey there, the class started, and I haven't seen any participation yet from you. The first assignment was due last night by 10:00 PM. Our grading policy is flexible. Go read it for more info, and I want to make sure you succeed and don't get too far behind.

Maybe you have had difficulty logging in or figuring out Canvas or work or life is a bit hectic. Whatever it is, I can help. I'm here for you. We can Zoom. You can respond here or text call me on my cell at da, da, da.

Some people aren't comfortable with that. Give them a different number. I'm available for you. What can I do to help? Sim.

So that's the message you send them if they do not even log into the class or do that assignment. So then you-- go to the next slide-- you go about your day.

Hopefully the student responds. And they usually do. If the student does not respond, then by Wednesday morning, the next day you escalate and you send a similar message to their email, not just through the LMS. And the same process continues.

If they respond, great. Respond back to them and see how it goes. And then if they do not respond, then you escalate. You escalate to a text message, and then you call them by Friday.

And you do this from the beginning of the semester with each assignment. It only takes five to 10 minutes a day, but it's less about checking up on them and more about checking to make sure that you're building a relationship with them.

And the amazing thing about this is in the future, very soon, hopefully AI should be able to assist in much of this for us. So without giving too much away, let's quickly go to module 4. Next slide.

The overview is, what is courseware? Key research insights on courseware, courseware and equity, and choosing courseware.

Next slide.

There's many different kind of courseware out there. I don't need to go through all of these. Everyone, you can do research on your own, but these are the ones that are the most prominent especially in the Gates ecosystem. Next slide.

I know real Kim isn't on there, but we'll get it. With regard to the research insights on courseware, it is important for us to acknowledge some of the challenges that faculty have reported. One of the most significant challenges with using courseware is that are still significant gaps in students access to the tech that's required to use it. We have that in the study.

We're also relying on faculty to teach these courses, especially gateway courses. These colleagues receive the least amount of support from their institutions, and they're the least likely to have access to professional development. Another challenge is that equity and accessibility are often lacking or completely absent in courseware, and that's what we're working on personally.

And then here is what this is talking about. Faculty report that the challenge with customizing it is a big barrier to making it work well for specific courses. Because courseware is designed to be used in many institutions and course sections, standardization rather than customization tends to be a priority for developers.

So obviously there's more to it, and there's more to the course that we designed in reporting our survey and the results. We just wanted to give you some highlights and a few tidbits about what the most recent research is telling us. So with that, I turn you back over to Mary.

MARY MITCHELL: Thank you so much, Sim. We are so excited to launch this along with a bunch of other courses related to equity in higher education. You can scan the QR code on the screen, or click the link in the chat to visit our website to learn more about how you can partner with CORA and ELE to bring equity focused and accredited professional learning to your campus.

We are accredited through ISA and provide CEUs for our courses that meet their standard. So while I give you a moment to learn more about us and fill out our information on that screen, there's a form you can fill out to contact us and learn more.

So just so you remember, CORA provides professional learning courses and equity coaching to education institutions and colleges, universities, looking to improve learning outcomes for diverse learners in higher education. As Sim and Frank mentioned, we especially focus on Black, Latinx, and poverty-impacted college students. And we do that through giving educators the tools that they need to facilitate equitable learning in the classroom.

We have three main target groups that we serve, colleges and institutions, which are our institutional partners. There's a form to fill out if you are representative of a college institution. We would love to work with you to talk about how we can bring those courses to your campus.

And our partners at every learner will be able to help facilitate that and provide you with a host of other services in the Gates network to make sure that you are meeting all of your equity goals and your strategic planning. Thank you so much. And now we will open up the floor for a Q&A session.

And we do have one question already. The first question is, faculty state that lack of time and access to expertise are barriers to them adding culturally relevant content to their courses. So how can we mitigate those barriers for faculty? Those barriers of expertise and capacity. And Frank or Sim can answer that.

FRANK HARRIS: Yeah, so maybe I'll give it a start. And then you can add whatever I'm sure I'm going to miss.

So we've thought about this, and we've talked about this. So we know particularly for our colleagues who are teaching part time, which tends to become the majority of faculty who are teaching gateway courses. And then we also recognize that the students who are in gateway courses, they probably need the most in terms of innovative pedagogy and support and so on.

And so we really do think it's institutions have a responsibility to provide and help to close the gap in expertise, and even the gap in capacity within these courses. So we talked about, for example, so Sim is an English professor at his institution. And so it would make sense, for example, for his institution to provide some buyout and allow him to be able to work with faculty almost in a coaching type of relationship, to where they can say, hey, you don't have the time and expertise to do this.

I've been doing this a long time. I have some proven strategies and insights. Let me work with you. Let me help you incorporate them into your course.

Not in a cut and paste kind of just copy what I do kind of way. But tell me, what are the priorities for you and how you engage your students? What are the things you want them to walk away with? What do you want them to learn? How do you want them to experience the course?

OK, in light of those things, here's some things that I think might be useful and helpful. Here's some course materials. Here's some books. Here's some instructional strategies. That might be a way that I think where institutions can in some ways close the gap.

And again, my focus is really thinking about our part time colleagues because of what we've learned from this work, but also from what we experienced as well. Sim, anything to add there?

SIM BARHOU: I would say you covered it perfectly. I would also just reemphasize pay. Pay them for this professional learning. And pay them well because they're the backbone of our educational systems and the ones teaching most of the classes.

FRANK HARRIS: That's helpful. And one other thing to add, most universities, I think this is maybe less so a community college than at least in California. But most universities have Centers for Teaching and Learning, who's really their mission is to help faculty build their expertise and capacity. And so I think this provides some promising opportunities for Centers for Teaching and Learning to help be able to support faculty in these ways as well.

MARY MITCHELL: Thank you. We have a wonderful comment from Michelle who says, this is wonderful. Thank you for this work. I have a hypothesis about why online courses have higher frequency.

It's because they're scrutinized far more than face to face classes. And many faculty are required to complete course design like pedagogy preparation programs before teaching online. I think she's referring to the frequency of culturally relevant content in the course.

FRANK HARRIS: Yeah. Right.

MARY MITCHELL: Some of these programs have incorporated more culturally responsive practices in recent years. And so why do we think that is? Any comments?

SIM BARHOU: Yeah, I'll definitely comment on that. Michelle, thank you. And I responded back. We actually used her research in the humanizing and the liquid

syllabus sections of the techniques and practices. So thank you for that, Michelle. Also, thank you for your work that you're doing out there.

My assumption is you're absolutely right. I think online courses are easy. I mean, some of the things are being recorded. They're all date stamped. I mean, you're much more responsible for the work that you're doing.

A teacher can get in class and just talk, but most of the time, the only time they're seen is by another faculty member just when they're viewed once or twice every three years. But your online course is your online course in Canvas.

And to reiterate what Michelle is saying here, the training for them, they're completing these design andragogy prep programs before they have to teach online. And in those courses, you're getting people like Michelle, on my campus, me or someone else that have designed these things. So they're experts that are designing these courses, and at least you're getting some type of minimal proficiency in it.

So totally agree with you, Michelle. And I know you want to add something to that, Frank.

FRANK HARRIS: Yeah, I mean I think you and Michelle are spot on. But not something to add, but also a question. In some ways I wonder if being in an online environment perhaps makes materials, things like videos, other materials more accessible.

It may be easier for faculty to not only access those materials, but also to weave them into their courses. Whereas in person, not to say that it can't be done, but maybe there's some additional steps that have to happen to bring them in person.

And then I also think to Michelle's point, around this essentially greater scrutiny in many ways for online courses. I also wonder if-- I lost my train of thought. Never mind. If it comes back to me, I'll--

SIM BARHOU: I'll add to that. And anyone feel free to jump in. People who are drawn to teaching online, I don't want to get-- I think there are people who are more technologically proficient, so maybe they can find these resources and do the research. And like Frank said, I think once you find it, you're like, OK, I can search for something that I can use for 10 minutes or 20 minutes on YouTube. Or I can find a video that encapsulates what I'm trying to teach, and it's easier to implement. You just switch out your content, as opposed to teaching it with a class.

In class, you're doing different things as far as your content and being able to switch it out where if you're not as technologically proficient, it just takes more capacity to do it.

FRANK HARRIS: Yeah.

MARY MITCHELL: That's a really good point. We have another follow-up to Michelle's comment. They say there's pushback in recent articles Inside Higher Ed and the Chronicle about student-centered teaching. These articles are saying that faculty are burned out from it and want to return to teacher-centered teaching. What are your thoughts on this?

FRANK HARRIS: Well, this is me speaking personally. I think being an educator is one of the greatest opportunities we have. But it also comes with tremendous responsibility. And so I think when you have the responsibility of being able to educate and teach someone, I think it's important to approach that in a very service oriented and selfless way. And so, while I recognize that some of our colleagues that it requires more work, you can get burnt out easily. I recognize that.

But I also think that enter this profession all with the goal of educating and supporting students. Most educators have a love and appreciation for students. And so my pushback would be in some ways, it's our opportunity to pay forward, hopefully, a good instructional and educational journey and experience that we've had that we give that to someone else.

MARY MITCHELL: And I would add to that that's exactly why CORA does what we do. We've sent her teachers by giving them the tools that they need to succeed, because we understand that every teacher may be a subject matter expert at what they teach, but they may not be a subject matter expert in equity or those principles and practices. And so that's why we provide professional learning courses that equip you to do that, because we understand that in order for students to thrive, teachers also have to thrive. So it's not that teachers are not important, but it definitely is a balance between making sure that the students are the priority and that teachers are also a priority in that support.

SIM BARHOU: And to add to that, I think most of us are content experts. And like Frank said earlier, I was taught how to be a reading and writing expert. I wasn't taught on how to teach, and I had to go get a doctoral degree on how to become andragogy.

And the number one principle for how adults learn is to be engaged in the material to actually do it, not just learn from someone talking about it. The best way to learn is by doing something, right? So when we're talking about this, if it's just teacher saying, if it's teacher centered me talking there the whole time, students aren't doing the work. Students need to do the work. And that's what student centered means.

And I think it goes hand in hand with being student centered is teacher centered. But if you're going to separate the two like, oh, I need to talk for two hours, that works for a very small population of students. You need to affect as many students as possible. And I think being student centered is just that, get students involved in the work to make them become proficient at it.

MARY MITCHELL: Thank you so much, Sim. And that concludes our Q&A session. Thank you all for joining us. And I'm going to hand it back off to our partners at Every Learner.

FRANK HARRIS: Thank you.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: Thank you, Mary. Thank you, Frank. Thank you, Sim, for all of your wonderful thoughts and encouragement on this topic. For our audience, we ask that you just take a few minutes out to complete our survey for today's presentation using the link that we are posting in the chat for you. And if you've got something else going on immediately after, don't worry, we'll send you the link to the survey in a follow through email in the next couple of days.

With that said, please, as Mary has mentioned, please connect with us. You can use this QR code to get to the Every Learner website. Use some of our resources.

All of our resources are free to read online, or you may download them. We've got videos, we've got PDFs. There's all sorts of things out there for you, including the link that we had given earlier to the resource that Frank was referring to on their survey. So we would like to thank you for attending today's webinar. We look forward to seeing you at future Every Learner Everywhere Events. Have a wonderful day and thank you very much.