Transcript - An Equity-First Approach to Postsecondary Digital Learning

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NORMA HOLLEBEKE: Welcome to the Every Learner Everywhere, Strategies for Success Through Equitable Digital Learning, the webinar series for this year. It is a pleasure to have you with us today. My name is Norma Hollenbeck, and I'm the manager of Network Programs and Services with Every Learner Everywhere.

Before I introduce our speaker, I'd like to take just a couple of 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 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 quick housekeeping note. Throughout this presentation, we welcome your questions in the Q&A or in the chat sections. If a participant raises their hands, however, during the presentation, we will not be able to unmute you. However, we will be monitoring the Q&A and chat and will be giving those questions to our guest.

As a biology professor and a recovering dean, I'm excited about today's discussion. An Equity-First Approach to Postsecondary Digital Learning. Our speaker today is Dr. Aireale Rodgers, founding director of the Transgressive Teaching Collaborative LLC, and a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Rodgers is a learning scientist of higher education whose research agenda explores how people and organizations learn and how educators can better facilitate learning that advances critical race consciousness for faculty and students in post-secondary institutions.

She is currently iterating the equity first framework work for digital courseware, a set of six considerations for designers and instructors seeking to leverage courseware as a tool to support equitable and just student learning. Dr. Rodgers holds a BS in social policy and an MA in learning sciences from Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy, and a PhD in urban education policy from the University of Southern California's Rossier School of Education.

I will now hand it over to Dr. Rodgers.

AIREALE J. RODGERS: Awesome. Thank you so much. It's such a pleasure to be here with everyone today. I am going to go ahead and share my screen. So everyone should be seeing my slides right now. Norma, is that right? Can you see them?

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: We can see them.

AIREALE J. RODGERS: Perfect! Awesome. So again, I'm so grateful to be here with each of you today. We are going to do kind of a quick, fast, and dirty overview of framework that we are developing that's near and dear to my heart, and we want to start by doing some introductions.

And one of the things that I was really intentional about, given that this is a webinar, given that it feels like I'm talking a little bit into a void, I recognize that for those of us who are teaching online, using digital platforms, this is kind of a lot of what sometimes teaching feels like. So having some ways to model some of the things that I've been thinking about and talking about in my work feels really salient.

So if you have access, I am hoping that you will be able to go to the Jamboard, which was linked the chat for everyone. You can click on that link and you should be able to access that Jamboard. On the first two slides-- the same question is on the first two slides. I wasn't sure how many people would be here, so I made an extra slide just in case we needed some overflow room. But I'm hoping that you'll take a minute to share your name, your gender pronouns as you're comfortable, your current role, and answer one of the following questions.

What is something that you're hopeful or excited about regarding the use of digital courseware for racial equity? And what's something that you are skeptical or concerned about? So I'm going to give folks just a minute to navigate over to the Jamboard and jot some questions-- just some responses to those questions down. Again, something that

you're hopeful or excited about as well as-- or something that you're skeptical or concerned about. I'll give folks a minute to do that.

I see some good activity. As a reminder, you can use the text feature. You can draw something, you can use sticky notes, whatever feels good to you. We're just taking one more minute to introduce ourselves and answer or share a little bit about what makes us hopeful, or excited or skeptical and concerned about the use of digital courseware.

All right. As folks continue to add to the Jamboard-- because I trust that we can do some typing and some listening at the same time. Feel free to foreground whichever one feels good to you. But for the interest of time, we're going to do a little bit of multitasking. But just to give an overview of what it is that we're going to be doing today, we did our introductions and icebreaker. I'm going to introduce myself to you all.

I'm going to share some framing for our shared work and what brought us together, tell you a little bit about the framework, and give some ideas and prompts for how to leverage the framework in your own pedagogical practice, as well as share some resources and hopefully answer some questions. So I hope that feels like a good use of time, but it's always important for me to situate myself relative to the work that we're doing. So I start all of my presentations by naming that I am a very proud Black woman who is raised and was raised by very proud Black women on the South side of Chicago. And I named that because the approach and the epistemologies that guide my program of research and my commitment to racial equity in educational practice is really something that I've seen modeled from my grandmother and my great aunt and my mother. Recognizing my grandmother was born to sharecroppers in the Mississippi Delta, only received up to a fourth-grade education. I always say she was my first and best example of an ethnographer. My grandmother could tell you everything that was happening on the block.

And so really being able to recognize the different ways that we learn from the people around us, and that teachers are a lot more than just the people inside of our formal learning environments is always really important. I'm also a first-generation college graduate and the first in my family to receive a PhD, although I always joke that my degrees are as much my mother's as they are mine, especially since she's hoarding all of my diplomas at her house. But for all the sacrifices that she made, she can hold on to them.

I am also a current postdoc, an incoming assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. I'll be working in the educational leadership and policy analysis program, and my program of research is really around thinking about, how can we tangibly transform post-secondary teaching and learning experiences into places where paradise can be created? And I take the lead from bell hooks in thinking about learning as a site of paradise. And how do we take seriously the possibilities that come along with creating, learning for students and particularly historically marginalized students?

And in my work that's funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, I've really been able to hone in on using digital courseware as a particular tool to support the learning experiences and outcomes of Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students, as well as students experiencing poverty. And I've done that alongside a group of phenomenal graduate students, all of whom are pictured here, my team, my ride or dies. And we're doing work together around building the framework that I'm going to tell you a little bit about today.

So I wanted to start just by sharing a little bit of framing. So why racial equity? Why digital courseware? And why now? And I think that a lot of us are kind of on board. I imagine you probably wouldn't be in this space with me, sharing space with me right now, if it was something that you were a little bit skeptical about, but just to kind of provide some transparency in how I think about it.

So why racial equity? From my perspective, racial equity issues are life-or-death issues. So thinking about the ways that Ruth Wilson Gilmore, a wonderful scholar, defines racism as group differentiated vulnerability to premature death. That is what is at stake, from my perspective, when we think about how do we design for racial equity and why does racial equity matter. So thinking about the ways that our society makes sense of racial difference, it's still disproportionately puts Black, Indigenous, and other people of color at risk for premature death.

And so thinking about the ways in which racial bias quite literally kills people provides a very powerful imperative for why we must really interrogate and transform the ways that we are centering racial equity in our work. And so to me, thinking about issues of racial equity, demand interrogating or emphasizing kind of the shifting processes of racialization or what Patrick Wolfe describes as race in action. So it's not just race as this static thing, as this static concept, but what meanings do we associate with race

and various people's racial identities that inform the ways that we either confer privilege and legitimacy, or it legitimizes their oppression?

And so thinking about race in connection with what the Combahee River Collective talks about is interlocking systems of oppression. So thinking about race alongside socioeconomic status, disability, gender, sexuality, and sexual orientation, citizenship status, to name a few. What are the ways in which social categorizations function to confirm or deny privilege or oppression is what we need to be paying attention to, from my perspective.

And so why digital courseware? Well, in the literature as well as discursively, in a lot of our post-secondary settings, digital courseware is often positioned as an equity imperative, right? And so people talk about different possibilities for post-secondary education in terms of more access for historically underserved students relative to digital courseware. So the ability to streamline the aggregation of data analytics on student engagement and performance. Courseware can support hybridity, individualization, and adaptability, which is all known to be good for student learning. That courseware is generally more affordable than traditional text course books, especially within the context of STEM, right? Also thinking about the opportunities for flexibility of time and location for learning that gets opened up for a digital courseware. And so when we're thinking about racial equity and how to design opportunities for learning that are attuned to and adaptive for, the target populations that we are investing in, digital courseware a lot of times becomes the center of the conversation.

And why now? Because we know that digital courseware and digital learning more broadly, a lot of people are saying it's here to stay, right? And so the shock to the educational system that was COVID 19 and the implications from the still ongoing pandemic are providing inroads. There was an article that talked about the pandemic as a portal, and thinking about the ways in which COVID 19 created opportunities for us to rethink what our lives and what our societies can be.

And I think that digital learning is now part of conversations that it was not before. And so now is an opportunity to really take the time to build the infrastructure for a system that can actually do what we needed to do in really intentional ways. And so when I'm thinking about, what do we do now, given the why of racial equity, the why of digital

courseware and the why now? I come back to a quote from a paper that one of my-- that a few of my mentors used or-- I'm sorry-- that they wrote that reads, equity lies in the how of teaching and learning. And so really focusing on-- not only what is it that we're doing? Why? All of that stuff matters, but also the how, the particularities of our pedagogies. The approach to our teaching, what we do in the classroom settings, and how we are creating environments in which all students, but particularly our target populations, can thrive within our classrooms, that is the work.

And so when it comes to-- sorry, when it comes to digital courseware, we at the Transgressive Teaching Collaborative, are thinking about a key opportunity. So this idea of learning in post-secondary education broadly, but particularly within the context of digital learning platforms, the theoretical and epistemological foundations, so the theories of learning, the values, the purpose about how to construct and produce knowledge, are often left implicit in digital courseware, design and implementation.

And so two of the questions that we are really trying to interrogate is, which theories of learning guide our technological design and guide our pedagogies? And alongside that are, what implicit beliefs about students our disciplines and our world undergird our tech design and our pedagogies? So if we are designing platforms with deficit-based orientations, right? Deficit-based beliefs about students, about their racialized identities, about their histories, about their cultures, that is going to show up in the ways that the technology is implemented within the classroom, that's going to show up in the learning experiences and outcomes that students have.

So we must be very explicit in naming and interrogating these theoretical and epistemological foundations. And so our charge from our perspective, we called for a reinvigorated focus on the, quote, the for what, the for whom, and the with whom of learning and digital courseware. And so we're asking questions like, what shifts in sense making and practice must educational tech designers and instructors make to better serve Black, Latinx and Indigenous students as well as students experiencing poverty? And how can we use digital courseware to cultivate rigorous and affirming learning experiences for our target populations? And so in thinking through some of that, we are developing a framework that is informed by the literature, as well as by a series of conversations that we've been having with people and we are continuing to have with

people, digital learning experts, faculty and students, about their experiences leveraging digital courseware in their day-to-day pedagogical practice.

And those conversations and the literature pointed us to six main dimensions. And now I am not making the argument that these are the six, you know, all encompassing things. These are six things that are very important. And if there's something that's missing, I hope to be in dialogue with you about that, but this is very much a living framework.

But we're going to go through the six dimensions of the framework as it exists now, and then talk about some of the ways that you might be able to integrate this into your pedagogy. And I'm hoping, as we are engaging in this learning session together, on the third slide of the Jamboard, if there are questions, thoughts, feedback that you have, you can drop those in that Jamboard, and I'll be happy to respond either during the question and answer or even after. If there's something that you hope to dialogue about, I would definitely be open to that.

OK. So the thing that we want to start with today is the importance of critical consciousness raising and really thinking about the idea of critical consciousness as a key learning outcome for not only one course within higher education, but as the purpose of learning in higher education. And we take the definition of critical consciousness from Paulo Freire, who describes it as learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality.

And so thinking in privileging critical consciousness raising as a tangible and not a tangential but central, learning outcome of the coursework that students engage in post-secondary education really leads us to really transform what is the goal of learning. The goal of learning is directly then related to the liberatory role of pedagogy and its ability to address real-world consequential problems.

So in a statistics course, sure, there are certain types of equations that students need to master, but engaging from a perspective of critical consciousness raising, it begs us to ask the question of, towards what end? So if students can perfectly complete this problem set, that is wonderful. But also, towards what end? What are students to do with this information?

So some questions that we might be able to interrogate or ask ourselves as we're thinking about embedding critical consciousness raising in the ways that we're not only designing our courses, but also are-- designing our courses, but also implementing and assessing mastery in our courses are kind of, what is the origin story of the field that your students are exposed to through your course? Where does the story start? Where does power lay within that story?

Who is or who is not considered part of the canon? And what does that mean for the ways in which students are understanding and coming to know what the discipline is? How to use the tools of the discipline towards transformative ends or towards continuing a status quo? And who are your students becoming by interacting with you as an instructor and by interacting with your course?

If we're thinking about learning, Chris Gutierrez, learning scientist, often talks about learning as the organization of possible futures. And I love that so much. It's not only this rote kind of memorization or mastery of particular subject matter. It's those things that then are contributing to also the becoming, students becoming.

So the next thing we're going to talk about is interactivity and relationality. And that's something that is deeply important. Drawing from years of sociocultural and constructivist theories of learning, we have tremendous evidence that the social interactions are powerful mediators of learning, being able to be in community. And that doesn't mean that we're sitting next to each other. The digital learning platforms have raised that for us, that being in community in expansive ways can afford learning.

And so particularly interactions between faculty and students have important potential to support learning, especially for students of color. And so being able to be attentive to the importance of faculty student interactions that the empirical literature and higher education point to, really emphasizes the need for interactivity and relationality.

However, this can have deleterious effects when courseware limits or forecloses direct instructional interaction, whether that's between the faculty and the students, or I'm even thinking about interaction and relationality between students themselves.

How do we create bonds and intellectual kinship within the students that are in our class? So when we're thinking about ideas for application relative to that dimension, some things come to mind for me. So set some community commitments with your students for how you all will learn together in the course. Thinking about the types of

relations that you all are going to privilege together throughout the academic term. Invite students to create e-introductions. Before the start of the course, using a platform like Vimeo.

I did that in a course that I taught online with master's students, many of whom were living in different states, had never met each other, but it was a fun way to be able to have a personalized introduction and really humanize not only each other, but humanize myself as the instructor in that space. Facilitate study-buddies or group sensemaking. Create opportunities for students to be in intellectual kinship with each other, and if you have a synchronous class, create opportunities for students to be in community with each other and in community with you during the class session.

We know for a lot of times, we might have office hours, but folks's availability don't always align with when our office hours are, depending on commitments outside of school or even the ways in which we might open ourselves up to be welcoming to students. Sometimes it's just an intimidating experience. So designing the time that you have together, with that in mind, is also really important.

So I'm going to move on in the sake of time. One thing about academics, you know we like to talk, so I'm trying to keep myself on pace here. But we're going to move on to individualization and differentiation. And so really thinking about this dimension, differentiation is a process of tailoring one's pedagogy or course content, instructional approach and assignments to meet learner's individual needs.

And oftentimes, when I talk about differentiation and individualization with people, it's like, well, Aireale, I ain't got time. I got 30 students in my class. I ain't got time to think about 30 different assignments. And I appreciate and I honor the labor that true differentiation takes, and I think that there are ways to meet in the middle.

I don't think it's actually a good use of anybody's time to have 30 different assignments. But there are ways to partner with students and be in community with students to create opportunities that allow them to express their unique brilliance in the course. And so key to individualization and differentiation is having the tools and the knowledge of how to be adaptable. And sometimes, given the time constraints, given the labor that faculty have in a variety of different contexts, adaptability sometimes is not at the top of our priority-- of our list of priorities.

But I think that it should be, and I'm arguing that it should be, because adaptability is an equity imperative. And so really thinking about ideas for application around

differentiation, I take inspiration from Professor Dr. Tomlinson, who talks about individualization and differentiation as having four key categories. So first, course content. So thinking about varying the ways that you present your materials.

So if all you do is lecture, OK. Well, what does that mean for folks who don't learn best from lecture? Being able to have some adaptability there and some flexibility is important. Making sure that everything that you use in your courses are accessible to all of your students is really important. Brainstorming ways to integrate what students want to learn in your curriculum.

So one of the things that I do with my students every academic term is I ask them, what excites you about what we're going to be learning together? What questions do you have? What curiosities or wonderings do you have? And I try to plant seeds throughout the semester being responsive to that.

So process. Rethink how you gather information about student accommodations. And actually, we're going to come back to that in the accessibility section. But also think about examining course policies around attendance or late works in terms of privilege and marginalization. So if you have a super strict attendance policy, who does that privilege? Or who does that marginalize?

If you have folks who are caretakers of little ones or beloved elders, how might we be able to be responsive to that, if you have folks who work in addition to going to school? How do certain strict policies differentially privilege or marginalized folks?

In terms of products, the products that students are creating in our courses. Interrogate what counts as knowledge and mastery in your course. Is it mastery only completing this problem set? Or is it being able to apply the idea to a real-world scenario? Is it only an essay-- 5-10 page essay, or is there an opportunity for someone to script a podcast episode? So thinking about the products and how we might be adaptable in that way can be really powerful for students as well.

And lastly, learning environments. I think that's so important. Thinking about how we might invite students to learn in, with and alongside local community spaces and local community members is deeply important for individuality and differentiation, and it connects to this next dimension, culturally responsive and student-centered pedagogy. And so I use a definition from Gloria Ladson-Billings, which talks about the ability to link principles of learning with deep understanding of and appreciation for students

cultures. And so taking up a culturally responsive and student-centered pedagogy really demands that instructors position students as valuable knowers, right? So it's not that I am the-- I know everything and then my students are there for me to just pour into them, but students are subjects of learning rather than objects of learning.

They're active subjects and they are knowers themselves. And so I will move to the next slide for the purposes of time, but thinking about applying culturally responsive and student-centered pedagogy in your own teaching practices, first of all, demands that you know your students. So really continuously throughout the semester, working to earn your students trust and working to know your students, their passions, curiosities, and histories. And you can do that in a variety of different ways, whether that be through the types of conversations that you have with students one on one, or whether that be through asking, questions at the beginning of the class session if it's synchronous. One professor I saw, she had a list of questions kind of cut up in a bowl at the start of every session. Students were able to pick and choose, and you can recreate that virtually. But there was an icebreaker where students were talking about issues that were not necessarily centered around course content, but tied to the course. And students really seem to enjoy being able to know more about each other, as well as being able to bring parts of themselves into how they were making sense, of course, content.

You can create exit tickets to get continuous feedback on your students experience in the course. One of the things that I think are the most-- there's a lot of things that are tragic about course evaluations, as we know, especially for those of us who hold marginalized identities, the instructors.

And one of the things that's really challenging is, by the time we get the course evals, the course is over. So if a student was like, I really did not appreciate how the professor did x, y, and z, sure, we can definitely take that into consideration as we're planning our next course, but we don't have the opportunity to be responsive in the moment to students-- to our students in that time period. And so one of the things that exit tickets does is that it allows for students to continuously offer up feedback and offer up questions and wonderings that you can then be responsive to throughout the academic term.

Also thinking about diversifying your content. So how can a local issue become a case study for your students? If you're thinking-- if you're teaching an environmental studies class, what is there-- you is there a chemical plant within a community that students live in that you can have a case study around? Is there a local issue? Are there ways that students can bring in snippets from their local newspaper that are applying some of the concepts that you're wrestling with in the course?

And lastly, remember that who you are matters. So, interrogating who am as a pedagogue? How do I come to the work of teaching and learning? How, if at all, do I relate to my students? And what social identities do I hold and how do they inform my approach to the courses that I teach?

So really thinking through and interrogating the ways in which you are positioned to support students and be-- yeah, to model the types of responsiveness with students, is deeply important.

The next question is data-driven decision-making. And so thinking about data-driven decision-making, a core part of equity-minded practice, as one of my beloved mentors, Estela Bensimon talks about, is developing practitioners capacity to engage in inquiry. And again, a part of this is a capacity issue. So recognizing the day-to-day labor of teaching and learning, managing teaching and learning within a classroom context is daunting. And being able to take a moment, to take a step back, to be curious about what is and what is not working about our pedagogical practice is deeply important and impactful for student learning.

And good inquiry is made possible by having access to robust and meaningful data. And so one of the affordances of digital courseware is that there are data gathering and data analytics embedded within courseware. So there's ways for us to leverage some of that more easily than if we were ini in-person, synchronous course. But data shows that practitioners often need support in gathering and interpreting data sets, and, you know, something that I am still working through as a qualitative research, these large of quantitative data sets.

Really trying to figure out how do we make those digestible and interpretable for instructors is really important, as well as disaggregating data by race and ethnicity. So being able to take a large data set and say, OK, here is the overall picture, but if I am thinking about a particular population or folks with particular lived experiences within

that data set, how am I being attentive to some of the distinctions, variances, patterns, themes, disparities, all of those things within the data set?

So some ideas about application. One of the things that came up in our interviews with folks is that it's deeply important to be explicit and transparent about how you're using data with students. Because sometimes our use of data, although it may come from good and honorable places, can feel like surveillance. And recognizing the ways in which we have to be responsive-- to responsive and accountable to our students as we gather data is really important.

Telling students in your responsiveness to data trends. So thinking about not only, OK, I am noticing this trend in the data, but being able to share transparently with students. Hey, this is something that I'm noticing that we may need to revisit as a course. And so I want to take a minute to pause and go back to this concept. What questions do we have around this? So being really explicit and pedagogical about how you are being responsive to trends that you're noticing?

Also in those exit tickets that you were collecting, if there's something that you're noticing that students are struggling with, saying to them explicitly, I am honoring that you're sharing with me, this is something that we need to revisit. So let's take a minute to pause and revisit that right.

Knowing which data are not or are accessible to you and making a plan to supplement that data as you see fit, and collecting qualitative and quantitative data is important.

Making sense of data in asset-based ways. So if you are collecting data and you see a trend where there's a certain population that may be struggling with the particular concept that we're not leaning on deficit-oriented notions of why that is.

When we're making sense of what the why is, that we're not placing blame or shame on students, but rather we are taking accountability for what we need to do differently to create space for that shift to change. And last but not least, accessibility and full participation. And so I take Garces and Gordon de Cruz's definition of full participation, which asks questions about where change is needed to support institutional conditions, cultural practices and policies that contribute to historically marginalized people being respected, valued, and meaningfully engaged in important areas of society.

And so it's incumbent upon us to proactively find ways to mitigate access challenges for our students, and create learning environments where everyone can engage,

especially those who have historically not been afforded the opportunity to fully participate in the ways that they deserve to. So first, some things to think about relative to that is familiarizing yourself with campus and community-based resources for students, supporting disciplinary identity development.

So if you are teaching a statistics course, really supporting students. Students aren't only doing statistics. Students are becoming statisticians. If you are teaching students, biologists or biology, how do we support students in coming to think of themselves as becoming biologists? Being expansive in accommodations. One of the things that I think is so important and completely unnecessary, quite frankly, from my perspective, is the ways in which students have been socialized to feel like they need to overshare with us.

I had one student send a list of all of the people-- the COVID tests-- a screenshot of all of the COVID tests of people in his home who had tested positive. He tested positive. He sent doctor's notes. All of these things. And it's like, I trust you, honey, like, you do not have-- I don't need all of that from you.

What I need to know is, what do you need from me to support you? Shifting the propensity for surveillance technology is really important.

So I want to open up for questions. But also at the bottom of this PowerPoint, there's a different link. I'll also share a link to the actual slides in the chat if it hasn't already been shared. I apologize, I should have done that at the start of the conversation, but there are some resources on the last slide of the Jamboard. We're creating a toolkit around this framework.

And so if you're like, this is really interesting. She talked about a few things I'm interested in knowing more, we're going to have a whole toolkit for you, baby. So you can sign up to receive a virtual copy of that, if you're interested. Also, we're seeking more feedback on the framework. So if that's something that you're interested in and you are a STEM professor and you teach STEM undergrads online, you can sign up for that.

And then also, if you're interested in reading the full kind of Change Magazine article-- and it's not an empirical article. It's really quick and easy-- you can download that, too. But I just want to really thank you all for engaging with me and, yeah, thinking through some of this stuff. And I'm excited to engage in question and answers with you all.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: Thank you Aireale. That was really wonderful. We do have some questions that are surrounding the idea of an exit ticket, and some ideas of how you would suggest that they use them, and how to then turn around and integrate that into your learning of how to be a better person in the classroom and working with your students. So could you elaborate on the whole idea of an exit ticket?

AIREALE J. RODGERS: Yes, yes. So I actually witnessed this in dissertation data collection, and I adopted it in my own classroom practice. But exit tickets are pretty common in K-12. So students generally, you have the SWBAT written on the board. "Students will be able to." You have the three learning objectives that are guiding the classroom learning that are happening.

And then at the end of the course, you have a check for comprehension through an exit ticket. So if students will be able to do double digit addition, there may be three double digit addition questions at the end of the class session that students then hand to the teacher before they exit the classroom for the next class. So the idea comes from that. And so what I've noticed, or what I've done in classroom practice is that I've asked about particular concepts. And so I've asked students about takeaways.

So what's one takeaway-- what important takeaway that you've gotten from the lecture, or from the conversation that we've had together about this concept? I've asked students about what is feeling unclear, right? What's still feeling unclear? And being able to kind of-- that tells me then what I need to spend a little bit more time on in that next class.

I've also asked students or given students the opportunity to tell me what's something you would like me to know, and that could be literally anything. I've had students tell me that they're going to have to miss class the next week. I've had one student tell me, I need you to know that I'm pregnant. And so when I have my camera off, I'm likely experiencing morning sickness. It's not that I am not engaged.

So just having opportunities. I've also had students tell me, I want you to know that you're doing a good job or I want you to know that-- whatever. So just creating space for students to provide continuous feedback, but also for you to gain some data and some insight on what is exciting students and what is confusing students so you know where to spend energy in the following classes. I hope that's helpful.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: I think it was. Another question that has popped up. Earlier in your presentation, you talked about differentiated instruction and how that doesn't necessarily mean, if you have a class of 30, you're doing 30 different assignments. What about these gateway courses where you've got 150-200 students, but you still really need to differentiate somehow because you've got such a large class, but the diversity in that class in terms of learners diversity--

How would you go about trying to integrate some type of differentiated instruction in a large gateway course?

AIREALE J. RODGERS: That's a great question. So I guess I would think about the design of the actual time that we have together, as well as the assessment. So what I mean by that is creating opportunities for-- you may have a large lecture, but within that time you may create opportunities for small group discussions even with turn-- this may sound like church for some people, but turn to your neighbor and talk about this particular concept.

Or perhaps there's a way-- I've seen people use Mentimeter and have some interaction that way, or being really intentional about how you're using the lecture course and if you have, or the lecture time-- if you have breakout sessions for small group time with a TA. Being really intentional about how those times are differentiated and the learning goals within those spaces are differentiated. Also, I think in those large lecture classes, it's really important to think about how you are designing and implementing assessment. So you can have a large lecture course, do all of the things that we've been talking about. But if it comes down to whether or not you can pass this one or these two big exams, some students are going to be screwed, quite frankly. And so really thinking about, how am I designing the assessments in ways that capture a variety of different ways of mastering the content? And then how am I waiting those assessments appropriately such that students who write really good essays are not privileged over students who are able to verbalize or talk through really complex issues?

So those are some of the things that I'm thinking about. I see Patty has a question, too. So she says, I see in last week's webinar Brian Dewsbury-- I love him-- provided research demonstrating that cutting content and focusing the class on skills versus content coverage, better prepare students in STEM for subsequent classes in the discipline. Is this a strategy that you've encountered in your own research?

AIREALE J. RODGERS: You know, I really appreciate that. So I haven't necessarily analyzed the data in a way that-- in my data in a way that would reveal that, but intuitively, that completely makes sense, focusing on, again, that SWBAT at the top of the board that we use in K-12 classrooms-- being able to properly identify what students will be able to do. And quite frankly, from a critical perspective, who students are able to become in very expansive ways, through engaging with the course, feels definitely really compelling.

So I would be compelled to agree, although I don't have-- my own empirical data doesn't speak to that.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: So you also mentioned courseware and bringing courseware more into the use of digital learning, whether it's in a hybrid format or solely online. Where are we today with courseware, with adaptive learning, and with those adaptive courseware products, in terms of bringing them in and making sure that we are not looking at them through a myopic perspective where we actually-- have we started to address the equality and equity and challenges that they provide, whether it's a financial issue, whether it's-- some of the examples in them are very privileged in their approach-- Where are we today as opposed to maybe five years ago with the changes in courseware?

AIREALE J. RODGERS: That's a great question. And something that I'll add before I answer it fully is that I'm also-- I am wrestling with not only where are but also where are we going. Especially I think about the sociopolitical context and the fact that state governments are trying to criminalize race talk, trying to criminalize some of the things that we are trying to create opportunities to lean into, that we think to be very generative and foundational to students' understanding and engagement in our social world, are quite literally being criminalized.

And if we think about that means for the ways that we design market, what can get sold where? I worry about the ways in which neoliberalism and capitalism might influence some of the progress that we've made relative to thinking critically about how to redesign courseware products to be more intentionally inclusive of a diverse body of knowing, diverse systems of knowing and ways of knowing in terms of content, to think about the ways that we have privileged Black, Brown, Indigenous students, as well as students experiencing poverty and some of the work that Every Learner Everywhere.

And the transgressive teaching collaborative has pushed the Gates Foundation to think about really taking into account, yes, that there has been substantive progress, I would argue, in the ways in which the courseware itself, as a tool, can be leveraged to support racial equity and economic justice within classrooms. But also, I worry about the ways that neoliberal capitalism can then undermine by virtue of what can be sold where, and how things can scale and can roll back that progress.

So I think that that's part of the why now. That's definitely part of the why now, is that you're on to something really important when folks are really kind of poking and prodding, that's when I feel like, oh, you're mad. I'm on to something.

[LAUGHTER]

So that's something that I've been contending with as well.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: OK, with that capitalism thought, we do have a question. It's an observation but a question at the same time. A lot of the courseware seems to be driven by that profit motive, and not necessarily by learning theory. What should we as educators and those in the post-secondary realm-- what do we do about that? And are there any thoughts that you have as to what we can do to shift that from that capitalism profit motivation to a true learning motivation?

AIREALE J. RODGERS: That's a great question. And if I had the answer to that, honey, I would I'd be really rich from a capitalist perspective. But one of the things that I think about relative to that question is also we need to recognize and lean into the fact that decisions about courseware are happening in very complex and political ecologies. And so thinking about-- it's often-- rarely ever, is it the individual instructor that says, I want this courseware, right?

The decisions about what courseware we use and how to evaluate courseware and which courseware to invest in happens at different levels, depending on the institution. And so one of the things that I think will be important moving forward is figuring out how to leverage the experience and expertise of instructors and instructional designers in informing the types of policy decisions and purchasing decisions around which companies we are investing in and why.

So if there is a product that you're currently using, one of the suggestions that I had was around developing a community of practice around this stuff. And again, I know that that can be hard to do. But really trying to find other folks who are asking similar

questions and being in community with them and figuring out, OK, what is our leverage point? Because there's always a leverage point. Where there's constraint, there's necessarily agency.
So what opportunities for agency do we have? And what is our leverage point to be able to influence the decision that has to be made in ways that our making a decision that's in our favor or in our students favor? Because everything that we're doing is for our students and for their well-being and their wholeness.
NORMA HOLLEBEKE: Yeah, I think sometimes we lose sight of what we're doing this, what we're doing and why we are doing it and who we are doing it for. And you had mentioned something similar at the beginning of your presentation, that we lose sight of that who and the who is the students, not the institution, not the faculty member, not the administrators, the who is actually the individual students.
So that's very well said on your part in terms of we got to keep that who in mind. So we are getting close to time. We have one more question. I want to see if we can squeeze it in. Peter says, thank you. The RFP process for a public institution doesn't seem centered in equity. So it's a challenge. Do you want to make a couple of comments in terms of that challenge with the RFP process and the lack of centering equity on it?
AIREALE J. RODGERS: Yeah, that's a great point. I know that there are different folks within the Gates ecology that are thinking through, particularly courseware developers that are thinking through various audits. And so I'm wondering, again, this is labor that-- this is extra labor recognizing that. But I'm wondering if there is a way to audit the RFP and be able to make tangible recommendations around which pieces need to be transformed and what the actual-- if the bar is here, how do we raise the bar here? Like, what are the criterion that we need to be able to center and pay attention to relative to that? But I completely I completely agree. And that sounds like a policy issue. Yeah.
NORMA HOLLEBEKE: We still need to tackle policy, I get that.
AIREALE J. RODGERS: I know. I know. I wish I could just wave a wand.
[LAUGHTER]
NORMA HOLLEBEKE: So I want to thank Dr. Rodgers for such a wonderful presentation and for really getting at some of those challenging questions. I wish we had more time to really get into the nitty-gritty of this. But I want to be cognizant of everybody's time on

a Friday afternoon especially. So thank you again, Dr. Rodgers, for such a wonderful presentation.

I also would like to thank our audience and ask that if you would take just a few minutes out to complete our survey for today's presentation, using the link that Patty's going to drop in the chat for you. If you've got something else going on immediately after the webinar, don't worry, we'll send you the link to the survey in an email that will follow up with Monday or Tuesday. So you'll see that there.

Also, a brief look at our strategies for success schedule for this series. Quick reminder, we do encourage you to visit the Every Learner Everywhere website and our resources page, including the workshop page. We've got two more webinars this month for this series, and there's also a few other things on there that might be relevant and exciting for you all to see. So we really encourage you to do that.

But most of all, I would really like to thank, once again Aireale for her time and her energy and her excitement and her-- just all out devotion to the students and how we can get there. I want to thank our audience for attending today's webinar. We look forward to seeing you next week for our webinar on learning from our students, student perspectives on good teaching, as well as any of the other Every Learner, Everywhere events that we have in the future.

So thank you very much and have a great day.