

Transcript - Designing Online Learning as Intersectional, Entangled Commitments

2/17/2023

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: So welcome to the Every Learner Everywhere Strategies for Success Through Equitable Digital Learning webinar series. It is a pleasure to have you with us today. My name is Norma Hollebeke. And I'm the senior manager for network programs and services with every learner everywhere.

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

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

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

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

A quick housekeeping note-- throughout the presentation, we welcome your questions in the Q&A and/or the chat sections. If participants raise their hand during the presentation, we will not be able to unmute you. However, we will be monitoring the Q&A in the chat sections.

As a faculty and a recovering dean, I'm excited about today's discussion-- Designing Online Learning as Intersectional Entangled Commitments. Our guest speakers today are Dr. Xeturah Woodley and Dr. Mary Rice.

Dr. Woodley is the vice president for Academic Affairs at New Mexico State University, Dona Ana Community College. At NMSU, DACC, she is also a tenured education professor in the arts, humanities, and social sciences Division.

Her research, teaching, and service weave together Black womanist thought, critical race theory, and social justice praxis as she interrogates the inherent biases that plague American higher education.

Dr. Woodley's research interests includes womanism, social justice issues in higher education, and critical pedagogies in online education.

Dr. Mary Rice is an assistant professor for literacy of the College of Education and Human Sciences at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. She is a former classroom teacher of English language arts, ESL, and reading support.

She's been involved in K-12 distance, online, and blended learning since 2013 as a researcher, evaluator, teacher, and teacher educator. Mary's research focuses on the relational aspects of designing, delivering, and doing of inclusive and accessible online learning among educators, parents, and students.

Mary has worked with individuals in online learning in most US states and several countries. She was named an emerging scholar by the Online Learning Consortium in 2018 and has been honored with awards from organizations such as the American Educational Research Association and the Initiative for Literacy in the 21st Century. Most recently, Mary was awarded the National Technology Leadership Initiative Award in 2023, which is given for innovative interdisciplinary research shared across multiple professional organizations.

Dr. Rice is the managing editor of Online Learning, the editor in chief of the Journal of Online Research, and an editorial board member for academic journals including Distance Education and Studying Teacher Education. I will now hand it over to Dr. Woodley.

XETURAH WOODLEY: All right, thank you so much, Norma. Thank you for having us here today. I appreciate the invitation for us to come out and talk with people and to share with people. We'll start off before I do my introduction and Dr. Rice does a brief introduction to herself.

I'll start off by telling you guys about our book. It came out in February of 2022. It's called Designing Online Learning as intersectional-- I'm sorry. Designing Intersectional Online Education-- Critical Teaching and Learning Practices.

And so a lot of what we'll be doing in our presentation today about entangled commitments, you can find out more about what we talk about in that book. There are

great chapters from Dr. Rice and me, but also from a lot of our colleagues around the world, where we talk about criticality online.

So I wanted to make sure that you knew, outside of this lecture, that you can find out more about the stuff we're talking about today in our book, *Designing Intersectional Online Education*. All right, next slide, Norma.

All right, so let's start off with adding just a little bit to those great introductions that Norma gave us. I wanted to make sure that Mary got a chance to share about her research and anything else about who she is in the section. And I'd like to do the same. So Mary, I'm going to let you start and then I'll chime in afterward.

MARY RICE: Excellent. Well, let me make sure my mute is not on. Sometimes I do that. It's wonderful to be here today. I thank you all for coming. I'm very excited about having been able to do this work with Xeturah and also the other authors in the chapters of the book.

I do teach online courses as part of my work at the University of New Mexico. And we have also been thinking about how to do online education, online teacher education that is feasible and practical, and also intersectional for both students and teachers.

And so there's a lot of fun there. When I got my PhD, it came from the University of Kansas. And I was able to work on the federally funded program contract for the Center on Online Learning and Students with Disabilities.

And so we do-- I got to-- that's how I got to travel and do all of these things and visit all these states initially. And then I've been able to grow more and do more things there. But I also do a lot of work directly with states, helping them think through policies for accessibility in online learning.

XETURAH WOODLEY: All right, good. Thank you so much. I'm Xeturah, Xeturah Woodley. I have worked in higher education for almost 30 years. I can't believe it's been that long. I've worked for colleges, universities, community colleges. As Norma said, now I'm a full professor at Dona Ana community College, which is part of New Mexico State University system. So I'm also a vice president for academic affairs there at the college.

And as I look out toward retirement because, yes, at some point in the near future, I am a sister will be retiring. I have started my own company, Harutex Advisors, as one of the places that I'll continue my work beyond the university and beyond the college.

Now in life, I am a sister, I'm a daughter, I am an auntie. I don't have children. I have over 50 nieces and nephews. So my brothers and sisters have taken care of that for me, so that I don't have to be a parent. But I do a lot of educating of parents.

So in my job, as a faculty member, both at the university and at the community college, especially the work I do with my graduate students, my doctoral students, and master's students at the university, it really is about teaching them about what it means to be an online teacher, what it means to engage with students of color, and with students with different ethnic, and a differing abilities, different gender identities online at the institutions I teach for in the southwest United States, in New Mexico.

I'm in the borderlands. I'm in Las Cruces, New Mexico, which is on the border with Texas and Mexico. And a lot of the students that we have-- 75% of my students at the community college are Latinx students.

And so when we start conversations about what it means to be an online instructor, it really is centered in making a difference in the lives and educating that population of students, that population of students that may not be traditional in places like Idaho or in places like the Montanas up north.

But in the borderlands, this makes absolute sense that they would-- Latinx students would be the center and the focus of students that we educate here in New Mexico. So anyway, that's a little bit about me. That's a little bit about my background.

And we'll start there as we begin the conversation today about intersectional online education. So we'll start off then with how this presentation is going to go.

This is not a presentation that's inundated with a lot of data slides. It is not a presentation that will be all about a checklist that you can take away with you.

Instead, we wanted to have a conversation with you about who we are as educators, about the research and the work that we've done, the publications we've made, as we've learned over the years as students, as we've engaged, as instructors.

We really did want this to be an opportunity for presentation and conversation. So the format you'll see in today's presentation will follow that format.

Now to aid us in today's presentation, what we have is what we're calling guiding prompts. There are three prompts that Norma will read to us and we'll talk about between-- Dr. Rice and I will share and talk about, because that is more consistent.

And this format is more consistent with who we are in life, who we are as educators, as women, as people that are part of community. So we'll use guided prompts to guide us in the conversation today.

The responses will come from each of us. Dr. Rice will have responses. I'll have responses. And then we'll communicate back and forth if needed before we move on to the next prompt.

Know, though, that at the end of the presentation today, we have set aside some time for questions and to get your questions answered as participants in this webinar. And those questions that you may have or discussion points you may have, you're welcome to post those in the chat area or you can post them in the question and answer area for this webinar. And at the end, we will come to as many of those as possible as part of the Q&A part of the discussion. All right, be ready for the next slide.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: OK, here we go. In what ways do you see equitable teaching and learning practices challenging pre-existing notions of online learning? And I'm going to pass it to Dr. Rice first.

MARY RICE: Thanks. Well, one of the things that Xeturah and I talk about, and authors talk about in the book, and we've seen these in other places as well is that there is a notion out in the universe, a model of an online learner.

The learner who is fit. The learner who deserves online learning. The learner is qualified. The learner who is ready. And it's usually a learner who is not the kind of learner that we have in our context in New Mexico.

So usually, this learner is a white male with a certain amount of privilege. And then we have to come through all of these things and think about, well, if you're not that, then, historically, the response has been to try and make you fit in some way.

And instead what you're talking about in equitable teaching and learning is trying to understand who the students actually are, and who is coming to you, and the strengths that they bring.

And also to really try and figure out what it is that students are trying to tell you in terms of what their participation process is and why they even come and take an online class. So I had an experience recently, for instance, where a student was unable to come to class because they were sick. So they wrote a note to me and said, oh, could I do this class-- this was an in-person class. Can I do this over Zoom, over video conference?

And the university doesn't really want me to do that, actually, because of university practices and not because of any understandings that we have about intersectional online learning.

But I also, in thinking about the student, do they-- even through Zoom, do they really want to come to class and try and sit there and participate when they're sick? Or are they trying to please me? Are they trying to make me think that they're not a unfit learner because their body just isn't in tip top shape that week?

And so there's all kinds of things to think about when we're making these decisions. And for the most part, our university contexts have left us in the lurch in saying things like, students have to come to class. And there are all these penalties, but also students shouldn't come to class if they're sick.

But we're living at a time, in a particular time of the year and a particular pandemic circumstances, where people are going to be sick. And even when people are sick and even if we have access to online learning, sometimes that's not always the best thing for them. But it's this notion in terms of equity of trying to understand all of these edges simultaneously.

And the way that-- one of the ways I derive that from is actually my understanding as a mother, and what I would want for my child, and what I understand about that just from working with kids, as well as a former junior high teacher, and what people can really do and what they can't do in these instances.

And so my ability to embrace and understand all my identities helps me figure out how to counsel the student in a way that makes them feel comfortable about the fact that sometimes they just can't do class.

XETURAH WOODLEY: Yeah, I would agree with that. I think part of what we struggle with now are these preexisting notions of what's acceptable behavior from students in classes and what isn't.

And the pandemic and COVID have really heightened our awareness about those things that we need to consider when it comes to health and well-being of the whole person, not just the fact that they're a student and they should fit in some mold. I'd say the same is true about teachers.

So to build on what Mary is sharing about, I'd say that part of the challenge is this preexisting notion of what it means to be an online teacher, what it means to be an online learner, what it means to be in an online environment.

So I think part of what we bump up against are these notions that, as long as a class meets quality matter standards, then somehow that class meets all of the needs of students. And that's just not true.

Quality matters may address some of the-- or any kind of quality standard that's being applied toward online courses meets certain design element standards, but it doesn't really address those needs of students who bring different abilities, different ways of being, different ways of knowing to a classroom.

It certainly doesn't focus on the valuing of that diversity and those different ways of being. And so even pre-COVID, we saw a lot of focus for some of us who teach from-- teach online and culturally relevant and responsive ways, we started challenging those pre-existing notions of what qualifies as good online instruction.

Well, what qualifies as good online instruction is any kind of instruction that could reach students where they are to help them meet their educational goals.

And so when we shift these notions that online classrooms are about teachers and shifted instead to, how do we center learners, but not in some kind of deficit model of what a learner is.

In other words, coming from a space that students in online classes are-- they have to meet, like Mary said, have to meet some standard that isn't about the majority of students that are in our classroom.

If we're coming from that perspective, then we're doing a disservice and putting our students at a disadvantage in the online classroom. Instead, who we should be as educators are educators that are willing to see a whole person as a-- the student as a whole person as a whole being whose beingness and spirit is coming into the classroom.

And how do we educate that person, that spirit, from that space, instead of coming up with these practices that are based on old notions of what should be good quality online instruction.

Old notions like-- it's an old notion to believe that a student has to live 400 miles away from the university in order to be considered a distance student. No, distance is not just-- it's not about physical proximity as much as it is about accessibility.

So we have students that live across the street from the university or we have students that live across the street from the college or community college, that because they are parents-- because their life they have work full time.

They're parents. They're caring for elderly parents, even. They're part of the sandwich generation. They cannot have access to higher education in the same way someone who is 18 or 19 can, who lives on campus.

So then these notions that online education should only be about distance education for people who live a certain number of miles from the university, that needs to shift.

Those are one of those existing notions that we're challenging that needs to shift because the reality is people can live right across the street and they have no access to your university, no access to our community college because we are restricting the ways they have access to telling them you have to come to a classroom only during this certain time or else we can't teach you.

Or we tell them, yeah, you can take an online class as long as you're 50 miles away from the university. Or as long as you take the class in the way that we say you have to take the class, instead of us being willing to adjust and really meet the needs of the whole existing-- the student as a whole.

So anyway, just adding on to what Mary had said. I would say there are all of these preexisting notions that we need to challenge, especially as we're looking at educating students that are students of color, students who come from different gender identities, students who are coming to us with different levels of ability and none, even in our online classrooms. Anything else for you, Mary, on this one, on this prompt?

MARY RICE: No, I appreciate those thoughts a lot. I think it's really important to consider the discourse that dominates about things like distance education, and online learning, and qualifying, and also the notions of readiness that predominate as well.

So readiness being a euphemism for doesn't need much support. And we've got to figure out how to take those down, abandon them, and address really the problems are. So I got a-- as a journal editor, I get articles, for instance, that talk about female's motivation in online courses to do something like maybe STEM learning.

And they want to talk about using-- how to make these women fit and motivated to do online learning instead of how to compensate for sexism. And for the fact that we have this notion in our head about what online learning-- we've provided you a syllabus. We've provided you an objective. And so what's wrong with you that you can't do this?

XETURAH WOODLEY: I think that we-- I remember a conference that I went to, a big national conference. And I'm sitting in the distance learning online learning SIG, special interest group, as we're doing a roundtable.

And I remember one of the professors there saying, she read an article. And in that article, they said that people of color struggle with online learning. And so she goes, I don't even know why we're encouraging them to do it, as I'm sitting at the table.

And I said, well, I'm one of the authorities on online education. And I think that you need to read more than one article. And some of us do research in this subject matter.

And I brought out the data for her. And she just couldn't understand how that article could have been biased in any way against students of color in an online environment. And so for me, I agree with you. I think that it's challenging these notions about, who's prepared, who's ill prepared.

And those students that get checked off as ill prepared sometimes are the students who bring a different voice or a different idea to the classroom that doesn't fit in the pre-existing model in the pre-existing paradigm or notion.

Instead of, how do I shift my teaching so that it accommodates for that difference, rather than saying it's just not valuable, not a contribution? And that student just needs to change. I think part of it is shifting that mindset as well. All right, Norm, I think we're ready for prompt two.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: OK, here we go. Talk about how transformed teaching practices shift our perspectives of learners, and have us begin to envision online students as whole people? Should I hand this one off to Xeturah first?

XETURAH WOODLEY: Yeah, I'll take that one first. So I've been talking about what it means to start looking at a whole person. When we looked at pulling this presentation together, I looked for a graphic that really did show a little bit more about what I mean about looking at, not just students as whole people but teachers as whole people as well.

Oftentimes, we come to the classroom as educators. And we're told who we need to be in front of the class or who we need to be in that online classroom. And then we're told about who our students are.

And the who we're told the ideal student is, is not the person that we see show up in the classroom. Instead, we see someone like this learner that you see on the slide. So she is a person of color. She has a child on her hip as she's doing her work in the classroom, in her virtual classroom.

There's a second computer there, probably her partner or spouse is there working with her. Maybe even one of her children is there working on their class as well.

The reality is, who we are as people and individuals is more than one thing. That's why we talk about intersectional identity. So Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the phrase or came out with a definition of what it means to be intersectional.

And it means looking at more than just one part of an individual, instead looking at those places and identity, there are so many more things that make up who we are as an identity. And it's understanding where those identity points intersect to make up who we are as a whole person.

So when I introduce myself, I'm introducing myself, not just as a professor but who I am for my family, who I am for my friends, who I am in my community because that's all of what I'm bringing to the classroom.

What we offer is that students are bringing all of that to the classroom, too, especially in an online environment because I see online education as a space of liberation for students. It could potentially be a space of liberation.

It's their ability to-- it gives them an ability to access learning environments and learning about content that they need in order to achieve their degree or work requirements, whatever it is that they're going for and to improve the quality of their life, the quality of the lives of their family and their communities.

And so if we start understanding that a student just isn't a student. It could be a sibling. The student can be somebody that's a spouse. A student is a learner, yes, but they're a worker. They're an employee. They're a sister, a brother, a family member.

There's so much more to who they are than just someone coming to the class to learn. And if we understand that, then we can start designing and creating environments for a whole person, not just for one part of a person called learner.

I'd say the same is true about teachers. Who we are as educators is more than just a teacher. I'm more than a vice president. I'm more than a professor. I'm more than all of those things.

I bring all of that to the classrooms I design online. And all of who I am contributes to what student-- the design of my classes and what students get to engage with when they're in the class.

So I think part of what we propose in the book, and in our research, and in our writing, really, is that we shift the perspective from seeing learners as-- from seeing human beings as solely learners and instead seeing them as whole people, bringing all kinds of cultural capital into the classroom. That's how I'd start the response on this one. Mary, how about you?

MARY RICE: Yeah, I think those are good thoughts. And I really appreciate what you said in terms of explaining how you generated the slide. And I also appreciate those understandings about intersectionality and how they layer together to make privileges in some contexts and out of others.

So like being a mother is a good one, where there's some circles you might go into where that does carry a lot of privilege. And there's some circles you go into where it doesn't. And to think about that as well.

So in my institution, the undergraduates particularly don't just have one job. Actually, they usually have two, sometimes three different part time jobs. And what I understood during the pandemic was that my students were very likely to be essential workers. So they didn't-- they had the sorts of jobs where they had to go to work at Walmart, or the gas station, or whatever and do those things. And that positioned them differently than other students.

And also, you have students that travel back and forth from the sovereign lands, from the 19 Indigenous Pueblo, three Apache groups, and the Navajo Nation between New Mexico and Arizona.

And so sometimes they weren't letting people in and sometimes they weren't letting people out. And there's also differential access to the internet in those various places. And so understanding how to provide the education.

And again, I like what you said about helping them meet their goal, instead of it being all about the goal that I might have for them in my head is very important.

So with the grad student, some of them-- some students do want to take a traditional graduate student route where they're looking for position like the one I have on the tenure track. And others of them want to do community engaged work.

And you shouldn't treat them like one group is superior than the other because that's what I like or I understand also about the concept of entanglement that we talk about in our book is how there's no me without you.

And instead of thinking about things in a verticality all the time, like, is this new normal better than the old normal? Is this early part of the pandemic better than the later part of the pandemic? It's really a horizontal notion about, well, it's just different.

And in some ways, we have the same problems that we had before, but they play out in different ways. But instead of always having to think about the rank, OK, what's different now? And what are the challenges that we have?

And also thinking about affordances as well because it certainly is an opportunity to include, through online learning, people in groups and folks with different sorts of goals that haven't traditionally thought that they would be able to participate in.

But we'll miss it. We'll miss it if we're too busy thinking about, do you qualify? Are you the right kind of learner? Can we fix you and make you fit?

And that goes for teachers as well, in terms of teachers also bring these intersectional identities into their classroom and their teaching. And sometimes they may not feel allowed to express them, or leverage them, or importantly, use them to understand student experience.

And so we all get under institutional pressure to act in those ways. So I work sometimes with Latino Indigenous teachers who go into K-12 classrooms.

And they are expecting to live a narrative of how they were treated when they were kids, instead of using this opportunity of having a teacher who shares cultural and social identities with students to do something different, to live out a narrative of language, and culture, and viability.

XETURAH WOODLEY: That's so good. I was thinking, as you were talking about all of the pre-service teachers that I teach. I'm teacher K through 12 teacher prep educator.

And so that is exactly part of what the responsibility becomes is really having them find ways that they can subvert the dominant paradigm, the systems that are in place that have K through 12 teachers focused so much on testing and focus so much on these preexisting notions of what can and can't be qualified in your classroom, when in fact, what the students really need is someone who can engage with them.

They need more instructors that look like them, more instructors that can engage with them about what they're experiencing in their day to day as students of color trying to survive the K through 12 system, the public system and even the private system.

And so it's teachers understanding, finally, who they are as whole beings and finally finding ways in which they can still engage with their students even in those very restrictive environments.

Online education gives people an opportunity to do that with their students well beyond what they would normally do in a 9:00 AM or 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM classroom. So it's really introducing to those teachers opportunities they can use even in K through 12 classrooms.

But I agree with you, I think that's part of what teachers even struggle with because they're not-- because they are-- we all have intersecting identities. Yeah. All right, anything else for you on prompt two?

MARY RICE: No, I think we're cruising toward prompt three.

XETURAH WOODLEY: We're doing good. We're doing good. We're doing good on the time, see? We're just trying to make sure we do good on time. All right, great.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: Y'all are doing great on time. There's going to be plenty of time for questions as well from our audience.

XETURAH WOODLEY: Great.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: So prompt number 3, tell us about ways we can embrace the entanglements in online teaching. And I'm going to hand this off to Mary first.

MARY RICE: Excellent. Yeah, so I hinted at that word, entanglement, earlier and thinking about how we're all in this together. And rather than a hierarchy, there is a horizontally to it.

I work a lot with accessibility and thinking about students with disabilities or who have been identified as such. And you can't have a person who is disabled without having some notion of abled. And that's the entanglement that we run up against.

And so then we have to think about, well, if we are all in-- if there's some entanglement to our identity where we have to understand these against each other and what other people can bring, then it would also stand to reason that this notion of teacher centeredness versus student centeredness isn't going to be productive in the long run. Instead, it's really about centering, if anything, identities, and belonging, and those sorts of notions as well. So we want students to embrace the opportunities to express their voices and offer their unique perspectives during class.

And I do a lot of this in my own class with thinking about arts based responses to reading and to having them think about that because I do a lot of teaching writing and writing pedagogy, as well, in order to move those things onto the landscape. But it's that kind of entanglement and understanding the way in which we're connected, ultimately, and that our fates are sealed together. They really are.

And that in order to really challenge some of those historical notions, that we have to interrogate how it is that we landed in these places with this notion of centering one person or one group over another instead of our mutual communal and belonging.

XETURAH WOODLEY: That's really good. That's really good. I love how you're talking about we have to recognize that we're all in this together and that there got to be ways in which we can engage with our students in those new ways.

I'll add this to what you're saying. Prior to the pandemic-- so now I'm going to tell the truth about some stuff. Prior to the pandemic, everybody in the world was like-- all of us in the world that is online education, I should say.

We were out hustling. We were out trying to get people to put their content online. We were really engaging and having these conversations about criticalities online, trying to invite people to come play with us online, come teach online, all of that.

And at some spaces, we were facing resistance. People telling us, no. My subject matter, my discipline cannot be taught online. No, I have to see those students face to face or else they're not getting a real education. Nope, all of it has to be done face to face.

Well, then the pandemic hits. And all of a sudden, the naysayers were like, look, how do I get my stuff online to do it? Because I still got to get a check. I still got to get paid. The university still needs those students taking classes.

And suddenly, it became an environment that it was OK to somehow be able to teach in. But then people brought all of their racism with them online. They brought all their bias against students online or their bias against, even, their colleagues online.

And part of what we need to do is unlearn some stuff. So we need to learn from what happened and look and look at all those entanglements that happened coming into the pandemic. But now, let's learn from what we learned from putting everything online.

And let's unlearn some stuff. Let's unlearn this notion that all the students, the students coming to our classroom, have to be tabula rasa or else they can't-- or else they're not

going to learn anything in our classes or they don't bring any kind of pre-existing knowledge to our class or our online classrooms.

Let's stop and unlearn this notion that online education isn't a viable and valuable contribution to the lives of so many people, both students and teachers. Let's unlearn that.

And instead, replace it with an understanding of what it means to embrace the entanglements, to embrace those spaces in which we find ourselves, coming together both as students, coming together both as student and teacher and embracing the notion of being able to teach one another in an online environment.

I like what you're saying, Mary, about it's not just about being student focused or being instructor focused. What it would be like if we were focused on teaching and learning that is this mutual thing that happens between the educator and the learners online. If we can shift our thinking to that, unlearn some of our pre-existing notions and instead embrace where we are today.

That would be worthwhile coming out of a pandemic, as we're looking more readily at what there is for us to do at universities, and colleges, and community colleges across the country about educating people in an online environment. So I agree with you and support you 100% in what you're saying.

MARY RICE: Yeah, I think that's a good point to make about how a lot of times we-- people just brought the worst teaching practices online, instead of thinking about the affordances that really could be.

And it stands to reason that there was not much of a sense of all of these possibilities because there was some resistance to coming and teaching online.

And some of it makes sense because teacher educators, for instance, were often just told summarily to go teach your class online as if it were the same thing as going down the hall and teaching in a different room.

But really, if you're going to do online teaching, it's about a transformation of our whole thinking about the connections between teaching, and learning, and setting.

And that we have to think more about those things than we should be thinking about stuff like what tech tools we're going to use, for instance. So we think a lot about who we're going to give our money to for particular tech tool.

And oftentimes, there's a notion of, well, if it's free, then it's better. And sometimes that's true because I like open educational resources. But if we're really going to

embrace entanglement then, again, we're thinking about, what am I trying to teach in this class?

Who is coming into this class? What are their needs? What are their strengths? What kinds of resources do I already have? And what do I want them to know? And then how am I going to teach them is really the last question to ask in the train, when often it's the question that traditional instructional design asks us to ask first.

And then we get-- that's how we get into these spaces where people who need captions, for instance, have to beg for them. But things like you were saying, the racism's remarkably accessible.

XETURAH WOODLEY: Yeah, it's no problem everywhere.

MARY RICE: Getting access to that, but if you want other sorts of accessibility, then you can't get access to that.

XETURAH WOODLEY: No or you got to try, as a teacher, to try and find it free because the university or the college doesn't want to fund the accessibility stuff, but they'll fund a new weight room for the football team.

It's just those kinds of crazy notions that still plague us in higher education. All right, Norma. So before I get back on my soapbox-- [LAUGHTER] look, y'all need to know who I am. So I'll always just be me.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: I was about to jump on that soapbox with you when you started talking about weight rooms and things.

MARY RICE: Well, we need to make sure that if we're going to spend time and money on online learning, that we need to make this a matter of collaboration between the people who are expecting to teach the courses and the learners.

And I understand that there's some constraints that people operate with up at the administrative level. But often, it's like, well, we picked this, use this, do this instead of any attempt to think about who is going to do this, and what support they need, how long.

Because that's the other thing is it's often-- you have to do this immediately. And the emergency teaching in 2020 was a good example of how that happened to everybody or most everybody simultaneously.

But even before that was happening to teachers where they would just-- summarily, you've got to have your new syllabus the next day. And of course, that's deeply

upsetting. And people only associate online teaching with that abrupt shift. And we don't want that. We want lots of time and lots of opportunity to do this well.

XETURAH WOODLEY: And a lot of support to make sure that we can build online classes and that we really can teach well. We can build them well. We want to get all the support for that as well. All right, I think we have enough time for questions.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: Yes, we do. I do want to make a comment on this prompt. Before we were talking about the teacher centered versus student centered versus learner centered. That was something that jumped out at me in your book because it was early on in the book.

And I had not really thought about it in the way that you had presented it in terms of-- you can't always be just learner centered. You can't always just be teacher centered. You've got to make those shifts based on the circumstances, based on what's relevant at that time, what those students are bringing into the classroom as humans and shift accordingly.

And I don't think that's something that I had really-- I talk about it, but I never really thought of it as an entanglement that I need to be aware of and I need to be able to shift as those things prompt me to shift.

Does it need to be teacher centered right now? Does it need to be more student oriented? Does it need to be more learner oriented? So I found that rather intriguing. And so when Mary was talking about that, I was like, oh, that's early on in the book. And that got me to thinking.

XETURAH WOODLEY: Remember, we come from-- none of this happens in a vacuum. We all have worked in higher education. And what happens in higher education is we see the pendulum swings from one side wound to the other.

And so you're completely teacher centered. And then all of a sudden, somebody goes to a conference and they're like, no, we have to be calm. We have to be student centered. And then, no, we have to be faculty centered. But what if we focused on learning. What if we were focused around people being a learner and not just the person who sits in the student seat as a learner, but the person who sits in the teacher chair as a learner, too. What if we shifted that, that could help us bring back to the middle as we need it and do exactly what you're saying, Norma. Sometimes it needs to be faculty centered.

I still lecture. And so there are times when I need to lecture to my students, but it's not all the time. A lot of times, we can have discussion. So I think it's finding that balance in your online course.

MARY RICE: Well, and the advent or the ascension of hybrid learning is only going to make these issues even more important because of the way in which HyFlex models particularly demand a teacher to be in all places at all times.

With the synchronous stuff and with asynchronous stuff, and you've got to be-- I've got to go on to campus. And I've got to be there for three hours even if the students don't have to be.

And but if I get sick, or if I don't show up to class, or the technology fails. So that's another thing is being entangled with the technology. And the technology has to be your partner in some sense. Then we don't have class.

XETURAH WOODLEY: The matrix falls.

MARY RICE: You have to rely on the student center.

XETURAH WOODLEY: The whole matrix falls apart at that point. OK, yeah.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: OK, we have a question from back on the first prompt. I'm going to read it as is because I don't want to miss out on the point here. My college doesn't have a distance requirement for online courses, but it does have a requirement for all online instructors to use the college's LMS.

But the LMS really shorthorns teachers and students into really a linear way of teaching and learning. Should colleges afford the opportunity for teachers not to use the LMS if doing so affords flexibility?

XETURAH WOODLEY: So I'll answer from my perspective. I've taught on a lot of learning management systems over the years. I think the first one I taught on was-- we were starting with Web Course in a Box. Y'all remember how that was in the '90s.

And so we start Web Course in a Box. And we put that on whatever the homemade platform was because they didn't have web. And then we went to Webct or something. I've been on Webct, Angel, Desire to Learn, Blackboard, Canvas. I'm a for real OG online teacher.

I found ways to have every LMS work for me and my students in some way. Again, that's because for me, I see the LMS as just a place in which I can house information to share with my students, but it doesn't become the teaching that happens.

So I think that each university has different rules about whether faculty are required to teach on one platform or more. I know at UNM, I think they have two platforms, at UNM.

MARY RICE: We used to have-- back when we had one system. I'm going to try not to name names because I don't like to advertise for companies. But we had one sort of a system. And instructors were allowed to not use that system if they didn't want to. But now we have a new system. And there's been a lot of pressure. We'll put it that way. We still have some academic freedom in trying to decide how much of the course material to put in those online spaces.

Like you said, if there's some accessibility problem with your learning management system, then you can offload it to any number of shared spaces that will allow-- things might be better to read for screen readers.

When we were doing the transition, I set up a cloud space for my students so that the stuff could be on there because it was more accessible then. And so there's those sorts of things.

But you have to-- at your institutions, you've got to get on committees. And you've got to spend time doing advocacy work. And you've got to weigh those commitments against the other things that you want to do with your career and the other things that you feel like you need to do.

But I would definitely-- ask anybody at my institution. I don't usually-- you don't have to wonder what I think. And I have been raising these issues, and being in those meetings, and saying those things.

And giving feedback is an important part of being intersectional and in doing and embracing these entanglements as well. So where we don't just sit there and pretend like we're fine when we're not fine because that's what the institution wants us to do.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: Can I put my two cents in on this one?

XETURAH WOODLEY: Yes, go ahead, Norma.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: Coming from an LMS perspective. And Xeturah and I have been on all the same LMSs forever for 25 plus years. The linear aspect of it is something that the platform companies are trying to deal with because they have heard that the structure is just very two dimensional.

And more recently, a few of the bigger companies have tried to make changes, not only in their structure but in the way they offer professional learning to use their tools in a way that's more three dimensional.

And I have to advocate a little bit for LMSes because it gives you a dashboard of data. It gives you a way to follow your students and see, where do I need to intervene? What student is not progressing through the course as well? What student is falling off, and not watching the videos, or not doing this?

And it gives you that information, that real time information that you need to do those academic interventions so that you don't have a high DFW rate. So you don't have those students that fall off and say, I don't feel included. I don't like this.

I'm not an auditory learner. I'm more of a visual learner. And you can get in there and find out those things. This is where working with a good instructional designer and say, look, I feel like my class is too flat. It's too two dimensional. It's too linear.

And have that instructional designer help you be an innovator in making that course three dimensional so that it is more engaging to the students. That's just my two cents on it.

XETURAH WOODLEY: Norma, that's because you understand what having an instructional designer is. Some of the community colleges have done-- we don't have instructional designers. We're getting some but we don't have those. And so then the faculty becomes the instructional designer.

But I agree with both of you. I agree that there is a great stuff that the LMS provides. And I say that because you and I have been teaching online. And we know what it's like not to have an LMS. And trying to teach a listserv, email, online course. My God. And so just bad.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: Before the day of satellite courses, when you had the satellite dish and you beamed out on TV for a little, yeah.

XETURAH WOODLEY: Yeah.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: We're showing our age.

XETURAH WOODLEY: Yeah, so for us, LMS might work. But I agree with Mary. I think that you need to get on committees because the university or the college is not going to immediately change just because you're showing them that it's linear.

You have to be on committees. You have to do the work to really show how it's impeding teaching. And work with your administration to get other options available for you and your students.

That is, like Mary said, if that's a priority for you, then I agree with her. You should get on some committees and work to get that changed.

MARY RICE: Well, and students do have a cognitive need for structure. And the LMS supports that in some ways, potentially. But they also have an affective need for the ability to innovate and to make choices. And so it is-- and LMSs aren't very good at sitting in that tension. But I think we've probably got to move to the last question.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: We have one more question that we can squeeze in, I think. Do you find the idea of the online modality as inferior, almost as a set up, considering the idea that some faculty bringing the worst into that modality? I find myself trying to bridge the modality gaps by focusing on good teaching.

MARY RICE: I like how she has framed it or how they have framed this as a modality rather than a technology. I think that's really a useful way to think about it because sometimes people do think that online learning or online courses are all about the technologies and not about really a modal thinking.

So I do believe that technologies come into play. And like I said, they were made for people who weren't us. And so we have to say to ourselves, this was-- I have the same problem with my graduation gown.

And they have-- it's got all these little hooks on the inside for the kinds of clothing I don't wear, like men's dress shirts. And the women all gather around and we help each other put on these things, figure out how to do a best fit.

And then we walk out there very proud of ourselves, actually, rather than feeling bad but proud of ourselves that we get to wear this thing that wasn't made for us.

And online learning is a modality. We have to think of it, in a way, as this same robe issue, where we've got to be completely confronting about the fact that this was not a space that was-- and technologies that were made for us.

In fact, most online technology tools weren't even made for education. They're made for business and to some extent health. And then we help each other. We gather around and we help each other get these onto our bodies.

And then we're very proud of ourselves for the adjustments that we were able to make and the way we were able to proudly display this thing that wasn't built for us.

XETURAH WOODLEY: That is excellent. I have nothing to add to that. That's excellent, except to say I will be borrowing that image. And everything you just said, I'm committing it to memory. I'll look over the video again because I'm using it, girl. I'm using it. That's excellent.

MARY RICE: Use it. This is shared space.

XETURAH WOODLEY: Excellent. Thank you.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: So we have run down to the end of our hour. So I really would love to thank Dr. Woodley and Dr. Rice for spending their lunchtime or their day-- well, actually, lunchtime for all three of us, with us today and sharing your thoughts, sharing your knowledge, just your perspective in terms of where those entanglements are and where that intersectionality needs to be.

I feel that your presentation was very thought provoking. I've got to go back now and read a few of those chapters in the book. But thank you very much. It was very insightful. It was a very engaging presentation.

We do ask that our audience take a few minutes out to complete our survey for today's presentation, using the link that's going to be put into the chat for you. If you've got something else to do right away, don't worry. We will send you the link for the survey in the follow up email.

One quick reminder, we encourage you to visit the Every Learner Everywhere website and our resources page, including our workshop page for upcoming articles and upcoming events.

And I would like to just thank everybody, our audience, for attending today and interacting with us on this webinar. We look forward to seeing you at future Every Learner Everywhere events. And I hope you all have a wonderful day. Thank you very much.

XETURAH WOODLEY: Thank you everyone. Have a great day.

MARY RICE: Thank you. Thank you for coming. Feel free to contact us.

XETURAH WOODLEY: Yeah, contact us.

MARY RICE: We like everybody.

[LAUGHTER]