Moving from Hope to Action: Putting Equity into Practice in Open Education
Opening Plenary: 2021 M.O.S.T. State Summit

TRANSCRIPT

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In case you missed the opening session, I'm MJ Bishop, I direct the Kirwan Center for Academic Innovation, which is leading the Maryland Open Source Textbook initiative, the M.O.S.T. initiative, in collaboration with Maryland Online, the Maryland Association of Community Colleges, and the Maryland Independent College and University Association, commonly known as MICUA.

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In this role, I get the distinct pleasure of introducing our first keynote speaker of the 2021 M.O.S.T. summit, Dr. Angela Haydel DeBarger. Dr. DeBarger is a program officer in education at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

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Her portfolio addresses the intersection of the deeper learning and the open educational resource strategies with the aim of creating inclusive, purposeful, and coherent learning experiences for students and teachers. Previously, Angela served as Senior Program Officer for Lucas Education Research at the George Lucas Educational Foundation, where she led elementary

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and middle school project-based learning initiatives. From 2002 to 2014, she worked as an education researcher at SRI International, where her research focused on improving classroom pedagogy, specifically assessment strategies, to promote student learning

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and engagement in science.

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Angela has a Bachelor's from Stanford, then did a little side trip to Michigan for her master's, and back to Stanford for her doctorate in educational psychology.

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She's a native Californian and enjoys spending time with her two boys, and if you're lucky and on a Zoom call, you'll get a chance to hear one of her boys practice the clarinet. Maybe he'll be working on that in the background here, in a little bit.

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What's not reflected in Angela's bio is what I've come to know about her over the years and why I'm so excited about her keynote presentation today, titled as Annika said, *Moving from Hope to Action: Putting Equity into Practice in Open Education.*

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I think you'd only been in your position maybe for about a week when we first met, Angela, at the Open Ed conference in Anaheim in October 2017 seems like eons ago now, where Angela patiently listened to me

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while I excitedly shared all the wonderful work that was happening here in Maryland around OER. She quietly ate her lunch and when I finally finished and pause to take a breath,

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she asked me some of the most insightful questions I think up to that point I had been asked about our goals for M.O.S.T. and the things that might be possible to accomplish through a statewide OER initiative.

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It was clear to me almost immediately Angela's strong commitment to education, and her vision for expanding the conversation about OER into Hewlett's existing deeper learning work, which was aimed at the time at preparing students to achieve at

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high levels. It was obvious to me right from the start, Angela is an individual of integrity, imagination, dedication to quality and caring for others, and our collaboration since then has just only continued to bear that out.

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And by the way, I'm not just saying all this because she funded us. It really is true.

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However, with respect to the funding I do want to note a couple of things. Since that initial meeting, Angela's support and the Hewlett Foundation's support of M.O.S.T. has made it possible for us to triple the number of M.O.S.T. faculty mini grants, expanding them

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beyond just adopt/adapt to also grants that support the creation of new materials and evaluations of existing adoptions. At the same time we've been able to provide much more proactive support to faculty in how to go about doing that important work,

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which has been tremendous.

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Further, the funding that we've received has made it possible for us to expand the grant program into supporting several institution level projects, all of those M.O.S.T. funded grant projects from Fall of 2020 are being shared here at the summit today and

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tomorrow and I hope that you'll get a chance to take advantage of hearing from those folks and the great work that they're doing.

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In addition, the three-year award that M.O.S.T. received has allowed us to support the work happening at the institution level through our M.O.S.T. Commons, which is also being presented during the summit, begin exploring sustainability models, shift the conversation

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about OER from just being about being more affordable to the role that OER can play in supporting student success. And now begin to really dig into understanding the role that openly licensed, fully accessible instructional materials can play in

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advancing our conversations about equity and inclusion in our instructional practice. So please join me in thanking Angela for her support of our work here in Maryland and also welcoming her to the M.O.S.T. summit.

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Thank you so much MJ. Thank you

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for that for that kind introduction and I'm so glad to be here and to have been invited to participate and be part of the summit. It's also really encouraging to see such great participation from across the state of Maryland.

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And also one other thank you – I want to send appreciation to those of you who shared a few questions with me in advance. I'll plan on answering those throughout the talk.

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So I'm really excited about the theme of this summit. Many of us have been talking about equity and inclusion for some time now. And we need the time and the space to really go deeper and understand what this means for our work in OER and open education.

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I think it's something we can all work toward whether we're on the earlier side of our journey in open education like me – I've really only been deeply working in this space for about four years -- to those who've committed their careers to this work.

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And as a program officer at the Hewlett Foundation, I get to collaborate with teams that really span the gamut, and I enjoy learning about the diversity of perspectives and entry points into open education. It's been an interesting time to be at the foundation,

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too, coming into a strategy that's about 20 years old and thinking about what needs to change to be more intentional about how we can address equity and inclusion.

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And so I thought I'd start by sharing and giving a bit of a window into what this journey has looked like for me at Hewlett, and as a Black woman working in philanthropy.

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I mentioned the foundation's work in OER is about 20 years old, and Hewlett has a practice of updating strategies every three to five years. So the last year or so was a moment to take some time to refresh and rethink our approach.

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And, broadly speaking, our work in open education has always been about the vision that every learner should have access to the knowledge and information that they need to learn and that everyone can be creators of knowledge. And by everyone,

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I mean from K-12 teachers to higher ed faculty and staff, and also students, from students learning middle school science to community college students to children in community libraries and Africa.

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And I really do believe even the youngest learners should be supported and encouraged as sense makers and creators.

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And part of what we found as we were examining the strategy, and in talking with grantees and educators and students, is that prioritizing the development of resources almost above all else was not enough.

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We heard from students that the cost savings from OER are definitely incredibly impactful, but at the same time, students have a vision for what they aspire to accomplish by building on their college experience.

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And this isn't about memorizing facts from a textbook. They want to explore their passions and faculty want to help them develop these, too.

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So in listening to students and educators, we realized that treating OER as a replacement for traditional materials, taught in traditional ways, is not particularly equitable for learners, and not necessarily helping them to realize their full potential.

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So in our strategy we decided we needed to shift to address holistic changes in schools and classrooms, looking moreso at the learning that happens through adaptations, through interactions among faculty and students, and this meant shifting to prioritize

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pedagogy and practice in support of, and with, OER.

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And so now, in our strategy we have three new lines of work. One explores how open educational resources and practices can enable more responsive teaching and learning.

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And this includes a focus on developing more inclusive OER and supports and tools so that educators have what they need to use OER effectively.

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The second area explores how partnerships with school systems, from K-12 districts, postsecondary institutions, can create supportive conditions for educators to adopt, use, and customize OCR.

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And this also includes work around policies and incentives to sustain OER initiatives.

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And then the third area, we're continuing with field building, but with a new focus. We want to make sure that diverse perspectives from around the world are continuing to shape the field.

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As many of you know, OER is a global phenomenon with many of its enduring successes coming to fruition in regions like Latin America and Africa, and we really have a lot to learn from each other.

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So when our strategy process concluded last April, I was really pleased at the time with where we ended up. I felt like our strategy honored and built on past work, and also set some important new priorities, and we'd figure out a way to weave diversity,

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equity, and inclusion throughout these new lines of work.

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And then we turned to develop a learning agenda, to get more granular around key questions and research to prioritize -- putting the strategy into practice, more or less.

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And at that point, it became really clear that we hadn't actually done enough in the new strategy to demonstrate equity and social justice, and racial equity in particular.

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We weren't specific enough about who the learners and communities we wanted to learn with are, and certainly not enough in an asset-based way in terms of lifting up their strengths and experiences that they might bring to inform our work.

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Philanthropy likes to focus on challenges and problems to solve. and this lens was all too present in the strategy.

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We also didn't directly acknowledge the systemic injustices that have harmed Black and Brown students as a central problem for the education system we're trying to change.

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I came to realize that our grant making is only going to be effective to the extent that it roots out those injustices, including structural racism.

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So I started to wonder, does open education have an equity problem? Why didn't this surface more so in our conversations with the field? And how did I miss this?

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I was troubled by this.

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And I've also had to come to terms with how the foundation may have perpetuated or exacerbated inequities throughout the course of the strategy. We've privileged the legal and technical elements of OER over the relational and the personal.

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We've offered greater and more consistent funding to White-led organizations and elite higher education institutions in the global North.

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And we've accepted, even help promote, more narrow definitions of quality, prioritizing rigor and learning knowledge, but lacking attention to areas like belonging, care, and building trust.

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So reflecting on this, I've been driven to be much more ambitious and explicit about how we will go about addressing equity and inclusion, and even dismantling systemic racism, through our work in open education.

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And it gets me thinking, what do we hope for, in our work in open education?

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The twin pandemics of COVID and systemic racism have made inequities more visible and created more opportunities for change.

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So what kind of vision or future do we imagine if we're truly centered on equity and inclusion?

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What would our classrooms look like and feel like for students?

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What would it feel like to teach?

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What would it look like if administrative staff helped in creating a culture of growth and self reflection?

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What would it look like, what would it feel like if the experiences of Black and Brown students were centered in our schools?

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And I do believe that open education can be a means to addressing these questions.

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And in thinking about this idea of hope for a different future, I've been taken with a piece that Jeff Duncan-Andrade wrote a while ago about hope. He talked about how there's been an assault on hope with a disinvestment in schools and students that have

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given rise to false hopes, "the enemies of hope," he calls them, and he cautions us against these, because if we're not careful, these false hopes may distract us from realizing a more equitable future with OER.

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The first false hope, he calls "hokey hope." This is the notion that if students just work hard enough, they follow the rules, they can be successful in college and live the American dream.

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Good students are the ones who are able to contort and prevail through.

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And of course, hard work matters. But this kind of hope ignores the inequities that youth have to navigate before they get to school, and the inequities and resources and supports in their schools.

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So how might this hokey hope show up in how we do our work in open education?

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What about in the creation of OER that's not easily editable or adaptable, or in the use of homework and assessment systems that prioritize particular ways of knowing? How about in the mindset that only particular institutions can create better quality,

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more rigorous OER that would benefit all students?

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In addition to these things, we also need to watch out for when we're creating false stories about equal opportunity.

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And this relates to Duncan-Andrade's second false hope, called "mythical hope," and he gives the example of mythical hope that some believe that racism had ended when Obama was elected president and the reality that a single event, in and of itself, cannot undo

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systemic inequities.

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And when I think about our work in open education. I think about the mythical hope of OER as the solution to systemic problems in education.

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I don't hear it as much these days because there seems to be the growing recognition that OER are not a panacea.

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OER are a means to an end, an arrow in our quiver, as I've heard MJ Bishop say, a tool we coordinate, along with other efforts at institutions, to create opportunities for student success.

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And we're learning that OER is less successful when it's a standalone initiative, it really needs to be integrated with other institutional initiatives focused on equity and resourced accordingly, so that faculty and staff have the time and resources

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they need to put OER to good use in their classes.

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And yet as all of you know and have experienced, changing educational systems is difficult work, and from the student perspective in particular, these systems can be really complex to navigate.

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So it also contributes to inequities if we leave students to figure this all out for themselves.

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This relates to the third kind of false hope, what Duncan-Andrade calls "hope deferred." The notion that there's some possibility of future success for students and leaving them on their own to figure it out.

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Hope is deferred when there's a gap between students' most pressing needs, and educational opportunities that may be may be available, and then no support to bridge that gap.

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Now certainly in terms of access to learning materials, OER are a significant bridge, but only focusing on access to new textbooks is a missed opportunity to more deeply engage with students.

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It's a missed opportunity to develop learning experiences in the classroom and throughout institutions that help them build on their own experiences and interests and realize their goals in life.

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Now critical hope, in contrast, rejects these kinds of false hopes.

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It's an active commitment to remove inequities and directly address personal feelings of hopelessness and despair that may be present.

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One of the jobs of educators is to restore students' sense of hope, and this can take many forms, when students are given opportunities to make connections between what they're learning in school and in their lives.

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They feel a sense of control and hopefulness because they're developing the resources to deal with what they're encountering in their lives. When learning includes the space to interrogate ourselves as humans, whether we're educators or students, and to

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take a close look at our lives, our beliefs, our actions, and to acknowledge difficulty and pain, and find a path forward.

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These kinds of relationships and experiences give us hope in ourselves and each other that we can be successful.

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And then there's an element of critical hope that has to do with standing in solidarity with communities, struggling and healing together in the collective work to challenge problematic policies and practices.

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So working toward this critical vision of hope is part of the work we need to do to achieve equity and inclusion and open education.

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And while this all might sound abstract, I feel like we're already making progress, and I wanted to share a few ideas about what equity and inclusion in open education might look like in action, and especially in addressing race, culture, and identity.

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One starting point is to take some time to examine how the learning experience can look and feel different. Materials and teaching practices are really important here, in how culture can be surfaced and addressed. In her book on *Culturally Responsive Teaching*

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and the Brain, Zaretta Hammond talks about how culture operates at multiple levels -- a surface level, an intermediate or shallow level and at a deep level, and she represents this as a culture tree.

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So at the surface level we recognize things like holidays and songs, food, clothes, stories.

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The next layer down, the shallow layer, is where we find unspoken rules, and these are ideas like concepts of time, ways of handling emotion,

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theories of wellness and disease.

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And at the deep culture layer is where the collective and the unconscious beliefs and norms reside. You know, notions of fairness, concepts of self, spirituality and worldviews, and I really love how she talks about deep culture as embedded

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in the root system. It's what grounds and nourishes us.

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It's intensely connected with emotions and trust.

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And also, shallow culture and surface culture emerge from this. And they also may shift more so over time as our social groups and our environment change.

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And I think about how this shows up in our work in open education, when we're thinking about materials, for example, addressing deep culture means going beyond surface-level changes.

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It's not always going to be a simple remix -- changing out pictures or stories or case studies to be more inclusive. It requires interrogating learning goals, text choices, structures. We have to look at assessment practices and question the assumptions underlying

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these. Whose worldview and whose values are driving how learning takes place and why is that? And is there space to have an explicit conversation with these about students and include their perspectives?

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And I know this is different than the kinds of material that exist in most classrooms, but I think, wouldn't it be great if even college textbooks engage students in this kind of reflection at the intersection of culture, language and identity?

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And so, I wanted to actually share some of the work that OpenStax has been doing.

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And they've been taking a hard look at what it means to address equity, inclusion, diversity as an organization and also in their materials.

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As many of you know OpenStax is known for their open textbooks, and I'll admit that college textbooks for introductory courses may not be the first place you think to look for examples of deep culture.

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But I want to talk about the work that OpenStax is doing because they're expanding what's possible with OER, and in their latest development efforts they're intentionally reaching out to authors of color and looking to their expertise to create and

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shape content. I'm pretty excited about one of their new books coming out soon for English composition. The lead authors are Dr. Michelle Robinson, Director of Spellman's Writing Center, and Dr.

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Maria Jerskey at LaGuardia Community College and the book is more of a student-centered approach to the exploration of rhetorical and communication skills.

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And so here with this course, students are going to learn about different literary genres, inspired by culturally diverse writers, poets, artists, and researchers, like Ta-Nehisi Coates and bell hooks, and drawing from these authors' works, students are

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going to be asked to reflect on questions like, "Who are you?" and "What ideas and experiences do bring?"

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"How can you join and expand the discourse community?"

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And I believe one of the student projects will be inviting them to write their own memoirs, where their lived experiences then become part of the content for the course.

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So in my mind, this approach to English Composition reflects critical hope by showing how it's possible to connect rigorous pedagogy and students' realities, and it opens the door for students and their teacher to examine their lives, to examine the joys

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and pains and learn from these experiences and move forward together.

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Now while this is a great example for English composition,

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I can imagine some of you may have this question. This was one of the questions that was sent in advance, and so I wanted to be sure to address it.

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The person asked, "What are some first steps one can take when curating OER to ensure that the materials are not biased or that they represent a broad worldview?" So unfortunately, we don't have great OER like this OpenStax English Composition book for every course

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or topic. And so, in many, if not most, cases, faculty and teachers are pulling from their own sets of resources. So they really have to interrogate materials if they want them to be inclusive. Gholdy Muhammad, in her *Cultivating Genius*

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book, talks about how texts should drive cognitive goals for learning, as well as critical analysis, and social cultural goals, including identity development.

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So as educators consider texts, or in this case, OER, for use in their classrooms, she said they can ask themselves questions like these:

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What is worthwhile for learning in my content area, and how will it expand my students' intellects?

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Are there multiple modalities I can use with my students like images, sounds, videos, or performances?

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And how will this text advance my students' learning of identity of themselves and other people and cultures? And then, how can do my texts agitate the oppressors of the world?

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So I think intentionally interrogating materials with these kinds of questions is one way to move forward.

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And then this question from Fred was related. Fred asked, "How can faculty members recognize whether the curriculum fosters equity, and what questions can they ask to answer these equity questions for all students?"

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And I really want to pick up on the second part of this question since I talked a bit about the first already.

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What does it mean to be supportive of all students, after you found materials that you think will be relevant?

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And I think implied in this question is the idea of how to be responsive to every student, so that they experience agency and joy in learning.

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I believe that care is foundational to agency, and agency becomes possible when learners are in an environment where they're heard, recognized, and appreciated for who they are and what they inherently bring to expand our minds and our hearts. And to be truly transformative,

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faculty would need to be intentional about ensuring that students whose voices have been left out or marginalized are part of the decision making about what they're learning and how they want to learn.

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So for example, we'd like to see opportunities for students to bring and share their personal experiences. Assessments might include time for students to reflect on what progress looks like from their perspective.

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So all this to say that materials alone only do so much to realize critical hope and deep culture. To realize this vision for learning, I think that work needs to take place in classrooms centered on trust and caring relationships, and from this foundation

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of trust and care come the agency and the joy in learning and sensemaking together.

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Brené Brown talks a lot about this too. She says vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, and joy.

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So cultivating environments where we allow vulnerability creates the space for difficult conversations, opens the door to more collaborative problem solving, more ethical decision making, and even our adaptability to change. And it takes many of us, particularly those of us who've embraced academia as part of our identities, to shed the unproductive layers and habits we built up to shelter ourselves,

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to protect ourselves from the harms we've experienced in being able to get to where we are right now.

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And these protective layers can limit our hopes. They make it harder for us to step into our work on equity and inclusion.

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So if we want to do this work, we may have to unlearn some things and find spaces where we can explore new practices with others. And this is part of what open educational practice is all about.

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We all need safe places to learn and share what we're learning.

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This summer, I really needed to take some time to come to terms with the emotions I was feeling, the anxiety, exhaustion I was feeling and processing the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and others, and also the learning I felt like

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I needed to do to figure out how I could take action.

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And so one of our grantees, Bates College, offered the opportunity to join their S-JEDI learning community. So S-JEDI stands for social justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, and I have to say as a Star Wars fan it also appealed to me.

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But more to the point, S-JEDI was part of a broader program that Bates led called *Sustainability Challenges for Open Resources to Promote an Equitable Undergraduate Biology Education* so it's a long name, they call it SCORE or SCORE-UBE for short.

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And over the summer they launched their S-JEDI learning community.

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And even though I wasn't an undergraduate biology educator, they were quite welcoming in inviting me to the sessions, and I got to meet faculty, university staff, and also some other leaders of open education organizations who had joined this community.

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And in the sessions, we met every Monday for an hour, for about six weeks, and we talked about these kinds of readings and shared videos, readings like these [see slide for titles] that helped us build a common language around race and racism,

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connect ideas, such as critical inquiry, to OER, and connections also looking at implications for undergraduate STEM education.

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Really what I loved about this community was that it was a space where we could openly express what we didn't know, what we hope to learn, and without judgment, share how we were making sense of how these ideas applied in our context.

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I actually felt a bit of a loss when the six weeks ended, but I'm encouraged that there are a growing number of these kinds of learning opportunities becoming more available in OER communities around the country.

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And, for example, I wanted to let you know about work happening in California.

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The College of the Canyons and the Community College Consortium for OER developed a program called *Open for Anti-racism*, for faculty across the community colleges.

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They were realizing that while many institutions were calling for change and adding equity into their strategic plans, these weren't necessarily translating into teaching practices that affect students' learning experiences.

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And they also didn't see that there were many opportunities to explore systemic racism through an open education lens or look deeply into anti-racist teaching with support from peers and experts in the field.

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So they developed this four week course, which is more like a workshop, for faculty to explore how OER and open pedagogy can be tools for anti-racist classroom practices.

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And in this learning community, faculty also have access to peer support and coaching, as well as monthly webinars to hear from experts on anti-racist pedagogy, open education, research on structural barriers to equitable learning.

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And then, after these experiences, faculty develop action plans to apply what they're learning and redesign their courses. They're going to be wrapping up the spring so I'm really curious to see the outcomes and changes that faculty are making in what

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and how they teach. And to get into the idea that there are lots of ways to begin this work, Jen Klaudinyi and Amy Hofer and others have been facilitating a professional learning course on equity and open education for faculty across institutions in Oregon,

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and in the first part of the course, faculty cohorts learn about the basics around open licensing, and then the course expands to topics like culturally responsive teaching, universal design for learning, and open pedagogy and similar to the Open for Anti-

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racism course, in the second part of this experience, faculty apply what they've learned and they redesign a course that they've been teaching, and knowing that this all takes work and precious time, they pay faculty to participate in the course.

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So to bring this all back to how this impacts relationships with students. I believe that when we build these communities of learning and care for ourselves, we're better able to care for students to acknowledge their histories, to foster solidarity with

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students and support them in their journeys. And this reflects critical hope too.

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Even so, it's not easy work, and I imagine even after completing these courses, educators continue to grapple with questions like "How do I create a space where everyone feels valued and a sense of belonging?"

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And is this really possible when what equity looks like and feels like for some people may be different for others?

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And this relates to a question that Maha [Bali] raised, she asked, "How do you deal with situations where equity for one marginalized group of people may infringe upon another group of people?"

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And I'm not sure if this is what Maha had in mind, but her question reminded me of one of my kids who can sometimes struggle with a really open-ended questions and he also doesn't particularly like drawing.

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And I think sometimes his teachers include these kinds of questions because they think it'll be more engaging and give students more options to show what and how they're learning, but for my son, these kinds of questions can create a lot of anxiety. Reflecting

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more on Maha's question, you know, I think we can attempt to put everything we think we know about equity and inclusion into practice. and it still may not be truly equitable for everyone.

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And there are certainly elements related to accessibility and universal design for learning that are foundational starting points. I'm not sure it's always possible to pre-design texts, assessments, or prompts for classroom discourse in ways that are going

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to always work for everyone.

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So then I come back to vulnerability, and I think about being willing, as learners ourselves, to be flexible and to change when we discover that something we're doing isn't working for the people that we want to engage and connect with. I also think it's

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about making sure that others, and maybe in this case students, have choices about how they participate, and authority to name or call out when something isn't helping them learn, and that this feedback is taken seriously, that educators make changes as a result of what they're hearing from students.

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I also think about the importance of being aware of naming and acknowledging socio-political context in which schools are situated, and how they play a role in contributing to inequities.

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You know when we're talking about addressing equity for every learner, we need to understand how educational systems are influencing what's valued and what's being taught in learning and assessment systems.

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And, you know, this relates to something that Bettina Love talks about, she talks about schools as mirrors of our societies. Schools and school systems are micro ecosystems of our larger society.

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Again, concepts of time, notions of fairness, how competition and cooperation are addressed, are all embedded in how our school systems operate. And so, while equity, inclusion, and justice may be possible to achieve in a classroom,

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they are going to be difficult to sustain if our institutions' policies and practices are not aligned and supportive of equitable teaching and learning. And if institutions are replicating or ignoring these inequities.

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And this relates to a question that Colleen asked.

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She asked "Frequently, OER materials are available online. During the pandemic, we faced challenges with students who have either no internet access at home or insufficient internet access at home, which raised another equity issue for us.

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How can we simultaneously address equity problems related to expensive texts, and internet access?"

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And to me, her question really grounds some of the challenges with equity and systems change. And what I see here is an honest acknowledgement that OER are only part of the solution.

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The pandemic has made inequities that have long existed even more visible, including limited access to the internet, which limits students' opportunities to access OER and other learning resources that they need. So expensive texts and the digital

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divide are both reflections of an inequitable system.

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And we know that access to the internet is far from equal as well. BIPOC communities, low-income households, are disproportionately affected, even when accounting for income disparities.

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So, if schools choose to ignore this and choose to focus only on one dimension of the problem, we're back to the realm of mythical hope and Colleen's question really moves us toward critical hope by surfacing the multiple complexities that students need

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to navigate and she asks us to deal with them.

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We can't think about the need for high quality learning materials and access to the internet as isolated problems, knowing that if we address one area, like creating culturally responsive OER, students may still not get what they need.

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And I believe there's a way for schools to play more active roles in addressing these problems. For example, some schools have been working to extend high speed internet service to families in their communities.

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And I think there's even a greater role for these kinds of connections between schools and their communities to address issues like this one and others.

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I also think there's a role for schools to more intentionally integrate OER within institutional policies and practices, so that it can be equitably accessed and used by educators and students.

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And it's clear to me that equity with OER will not be sustained when it's an add-on or stand-alone initiative at an institution. Again, it needs to be explicitly connected with institutions' vision for equity and student success and resourced accordingly.

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We need to acknowledge and address areas like Internet access and accessibility in relation to and in concert with any OER development.

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And we also need to consider the systems and structures to support faculty and staff in this work as another dimension of equity.

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OER has largely been a grassroots movement with strong leadership and commitment from faculty and librarians. In order for them to do the work they want to do in changing teaching and learning with OER, they need support from their institutions in

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terms of recognizing labor, supporting coordination, for example between libraries and centers for teaching and learning around curating materials and instructional design.

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And this relates to Cassie's question also: "How can we ensure equity for access when the digital accessibility of OER is not always tagged or searchable?" And to me this speaks to an opportunity for greater collaboration and coordination. Creating an effective

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learning experience for students often requires integrating multiple skill sets. And yet this expertise may be distributed in an institution literally and physically.

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If we think for a moment about who on campus has expertise in finding OER, in creating OER, or in creating coherent and accessible digital materials.

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Sometimes it's a faculty member, sometimes a librarian or an instructional designer.

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And in the case of Cassie's question, specifically there can be a disconnect between the creation of OER and sharing it in a way that makes it easily accessible for others within and beyond and institution.

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And this kind of disconnect can make it harder for open education to take hold and expand beyond the most dedicated faculty.

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So [as] a key aspect of addressing equity and learning and supporting practices that sustainably bridge and build expertise within an institution, we have to address this notion of "How do we sustain these practices and embed them within institutions?"

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And I'd also say the same needs to exist for coordinating across institutions. Why should different states systems reinvent policies and practices when they can learn from each other?

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And so we also need to be asking "What does collective work look like when we change systems so that systems are oriented to support open education initiatives to advance racial equity and social justice?"

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And recently I've seen real change in system leaders' commitment to working collectively to support equity in open education. And one of the groups I've had the pleasure of getting to know, and who give me hope, are the DOERS[3]. And the "doers" name really says

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it all. This is a group of state leaders who want to create change through open education.

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And really addressing equity as a core focus of their work.

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And as I understand it, the group was hatched around a time that a couple of state systems were starting to get substantial funding to support OER initiatives, and they thought "Wouldn't it be great if we could share what we're learning and help each

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other, as we go?" So this collaborative has grown from something like four or so founding members back in 2017, including the University System of Maryland, to now members from over 28 states and provinces in the US and Canada, who serve over

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6 million students. And these leaders are not only looking for ways to support OER. They're making headway in more equitable and sustainable integration of OER in their education systems.

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One of their working groups is developing an Equity Through OER rubric, as a guide for educators and students.

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And this rubric is really a self-assessment tool to support reflection and action. It helps identify how well an institution is attending to multiple dimensions of equity and foregrounds the role of OER in addressing equity gaps.

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Now the rubric is still in development or else I would have given you a preview, but I understand it will be available soon so stay tuned.

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What I can share from what I have seen is that it's going to include dimensions related to student, practitioner, and leadership perspectives.

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So from the student perspective, it will examine areas like range and availability of OER, access to technology, and student awareness of OER.

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And from the practitioner perspective, there will be questions about pedagogy, content, infrastructure, and infrastructure in this case referring to things like staff support, IT support, coordination with bookstores, and OER course markings.

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And then from the leadership perspective, it'll take on topics like budgeting, OER equity goal setting, professional development, and faculty tenure and promotion recognition.

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So again, stay tuned for more, I think we'll be hearing some things soon. I actually want to spend a little bit more time around the tenure and promotion because the DOERS[3] are quite serious about how to further recognize faculty and staff for their contributions.

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They believe that if we recognize the care and devotion that educators are committing to their students, it helps sustain their ability to continue this work, not only financially but also emotionally.

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So while individual institutions or departments differ, as you probably know, most tenure and promotion guidelines address teaching, research and service.

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So the DOERS[3] mapped out how in OER might fit into these three categories.

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And as an outcome of the effort, they developed this tool which was recently published in the New England Board of Higher Education practitioner perspective series, and the matrix helps guide faculty about how to include their work in OER

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in their tenure and promotion portfolios.

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Now while this was created with individual faculty and staff in mind, the DOERS[3] encourage tenure promotion committees to adapt and use the document as guidance for their faculty. It is published as an OER so you can remix away.

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And I think they're very interested to learn how this tool is taken up, so if you do decide to use it,

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be sure to share how it goes with your colleagues and others.

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Okay. So, while I wholeheartedly believe that our systems need to change and reorient in the ways that we see emerging from the DOERS[3],

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I don't want us to get caught in the false hope that we have to wait for systems to change before we can make a difference.

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As Ella Baker said, "strong people don't need strong leaders."

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There's personal work that we can each be doing on an individual level to be strong leaders ourselves. And what that work looks like is going to depend course on who we are, our backgrounds and experiences, the context that we live and work in, and

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the relationships that we have with our friends and colleagues.

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So in the spirit of vulnerability, I want to share a little bit about the personal work that I've been doing, and I don't have any slides for this so maybe I'll stop the screen sharing for a moment.

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Okay, so one of the things that that I've been working on is trying to build greater self-awareness, particularly around noticing this critical voice that has a very strong presence for me. It's that voice that pushes for perfection that ruminates on

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the things that I could have done better in meetings, things that I should have said or done differently or focusing on the little things that need to be fixed around my house instead of enjoying the space around me.

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For me it's also about noticing when negative feelings are triggered, like anxiety or resentment. And I'm coming to learn that I usually experience these things first in my body like a tensing up with something negative or sense of warmth and openness

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when I'm at ease.

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And so far my default pattern, my coping mechanism when I'm under stress, has been to ignore these feelings and to push through, or to fixate on the fixing of things.

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And I don't know why that is. I wonder if in part it comes from feeling like I need to prove myself in certain ways to be recognized as relevant and important or not wanting to be seen as weak or inferior because I'm paying attention to emotions. But what

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I'm trying to understand is that, and what I'm coming to understand, is that these patterns of behavior are not authentic to who I am or who I want to be.

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And I think that they keep me from realizing my full potential.

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They keep me from more deeply connecting with the people I care about -- with my family, my colleagues at work -- because they can sense the reservation even when I think I'm pushing through. You know, if I'm ruminating about thoughts about myself,

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I don't have the space or the energy to understand what others may be experiencing or feeling or make responsible choices to be more helpful to them.

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So being stuck in my head is the very opposite of what I want to be doing if I want to live more so into equity and inclusion.

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And so I wonder like when you think about what you need to be ready to lead your work on equity and inclusion, what is it that you would ask for, for yourself?

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And what is it that you need to learn, and better understand about you, so that you're ready to connect with your family, with students, with colleagues, and be an advocate and ally in your communities.

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So, in wrapping up I wanted to build on this idea about how we can each have agency in realizing critical hope. And as I talked about earlier, in the classroom,

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this could mean taking time to interrogate texts and materials, both in terms of how they're advancing students' intellects and curiosities, and also in how they offer opportunities to develop students' identities of themselves, and understandings of other
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people and cultures.

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It also means creating the space for deep culture, to create a trusting, caring environment where students are able to share their stories, their concepts of self,

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their worldviews. And then their expertise and their lived experience can help shape the learning experience for others. I believe that the heart of this work is really about developing a culture that values learning, care, relationships, more than metrics.

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And our efforts also have to extend beyond the classroom, because the default is that schools mirror our societies with all of the inequities. So school leaders can challenge this and taking agency and ownership here might mean changing policies to make

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it clear how open education advances institutions' goals for equity. Or it could look like creating opportunities for educators to learn with each other about new practices like open pedagogy and inclusive approaches for teaching and learning.

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Or it could be ensuring that faculty and staff receive compensation and recognition for the time they're taking to create more open educational resources and practices. And then coming back to the personal level, at the personal level, it may be about

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creating and protecting space for learning -- the learning and reflection that you need to grow.

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Or it may mean orienting more toward listening to students. I think there are things that we can each be doing that don't necessarily take more time, but that may be a change in orientation or perspective, and so on that note, I wanted to end with a poem,.

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A certain day became a presence to me;

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There it was, confronting me -- a sky, air, light.

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A being.

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And before it started to descend from the height of noon.

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It leaned over and struck my shoulder, as if with the flat of a sword, granting me honor and a task.

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The day's blow ring out, metallic - or was it I, a bell awakened,

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and what I heard was my whole self, saying, and singing what it knew:

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I can.

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Thank you for this opportunity to share a few ideas, and if there's time, I'm happy to take any questions.

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Wow, I don't know how we do this in Zoom but please join me in thanking Angela for an absolutely amazing presentation.

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Good job. Thank you. Absolutely. Thank you.

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Thank you. It was awesome.

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Hard to do standing ovations and now you all know that [inaudible]. Totally amazing. Don't ruminate about any negative thing - it didn't exist.

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Absolutely. Thank you for that.

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So while we're doing the standing ovation virtually, any questions for Angela please go ahead and type them in the chat or if you want to raise your hand and come off,

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we'd be happy to have you come off mute.

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Everyone was captivated.

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I'm also happy to take questions later if something percolates for folks after the session or

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after the summit, I think you all know how to find me. Absolutely. We do. Well, as I, as I told you, I knew this was going to be absolutely amazing.

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Angela, thank you for sharing so much with us today about your insights and your thinking and thoughts. You know it's been it's been an incredibly interesting year, and, you know, obviously, the evolution of the Hewlett Foundation's thinking and your

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leadership there has just been tremendous for all of us. I don't know if you're seeing the chat but "I feel empowered and emboldened. Thank you, particularly for the poem thanks for your presentation."

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So, really appreciate it.

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Thank you and I will say again like I'm always learning so you know I think it's a work in progress for me to both for me personally and the strategy at the Foundation so I welcome ideas that anyone would like to share.

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Again, after the session as well.

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Thank you.

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Well, Thank you again for your time.

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Please again join me in a round of applause. And we'll let you get back to your day out there in sunny California, and really appreciate your time with us.

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Okay, thank you. Take care. This concludes our session. We hope you will join us at 4:30 for our poster showcase. You'll have an opportunity to hear from our awesome 2020 M.O.S.T. grantees and all the hard work they've been doing over the last year to create more OER and more opportunities for our students. So I really hope you'll take some time, come check out their projects, you'll have a chance to talk one on one with anyone you're interested in. See you at 4:30. Thank you!