**Maritez Apigo Interview**

**Learn how to create an equitable online learning environment.**

**AS** [00:00:00] It's a pleasure to have Maritez Apigo. For the last two decades, Maritez has taught English and ESL at community colleges, middle schools and high schools in California and Hawaii. She has been teaching online since her master's in English and TESOL from San Francisco State University in 2012 and holds an Online Network of Educators, also known as @ONE, Certificate in online teaching and design, and an @ONE advanced certificate in online teaching principles. Currently, she's the distance education coordinator, the Open Educational Resources Coordinator and an online and hybrid English professor at Contra Costa College. She trains faculty on online teaching pedagogy at the college, district, and state levels. She's an @ONE online course facilitator of four courses and an online course reviewer. Her passion for social justice, equity, innovation and student success are illuminated in her work, and when she's not teaching students or training faculty, you might discover her behind two turntables deejaying in the dance studio, working on her dance technique or at a soccer field cheering on her two young children. Welcome to the Student Success podcast!

**Maritez Apigo** [00:01:16] Thanks. Thanks for having me.

**AS** [00:01:19] Well, I always start all the podcasts asking guests about a particular hobby or talent, something that they wouldn't mind sharing. And when you sent me your information, you already gave me that info. So I want to dig here into this, this first piece of deejaying. Tell us about the deejaying.

**Maritez Apigo** [00:01:37] Ever since COVID hit, there hasn't been much deejaying happening because of, you know, just people not being allowed to gather indoors. But there's so much about deejaying that kind of connects and has parallels to the work that I do in academia, because so much of deejaying is about selection, and composition, selecting the right songs, putting them all together and taking your audience on a journey from beginning to end. And that has parallels to teaching students a lesson by having to select content, designing activities and packaging all of that together so that they flow seamlessly.

**AS** [00:02:35] I love, by the way, the metaphor. My first question about that is, so what are your jams? What music do you DJ? Do you have any favorites?

**Maritez Apigo** [00:02:46] Yeah, I love to deejay hip hop, funk, soul, R&B and reggae. Those are my jams.

**AS** [00:02:56] Nice. Now, I don't know too much about that world. It was funny way way back in the day, I grew up in New York City. This was early, mid 80s in my neighborhood. We had no money, but we knew someone who was able to get this deejay gear. And we went to his apartment like, what is this mystical magic that he is showing us what he can do with records? And we were just blown away by it. And then years later, I think it was already started in the 90s. There were some doing it with CDs, which I don't get how to do that. So what do you? Are you still old school? You work with records or do you do CDs or you do both?

**Maritez Apigo** [00:03:43] Well, I do have an extensive record collection. I don't know, maybe thousands of records. Because that's how I started was as soon as I learned how to how to mix two songs together. You know, I saved my coins and bought two turntables and a mixer and started digging for records. And then my collection just kept growing and growing. And when I used to show up for a gig, you know, we would literally have crates of heavy records. You know, I had one of those kind of record crates that had wheels on them so that I can just pull them. But, you know, over time, with everything moving digitally, the technology now is really about playing MP3s and off of your computer. So the tech, there's technology now where you show up to a gig and you have your laptop with your music on it and it plugs into a system with two turntables and a mixer. The songs that you play are on a control record, so it looks exactly like a 12 inch record that you can do all of the things you would normally do with a vinyl record with the digital music. So you can, you know, you put the needle onto the record and you can like scratch, you can back spin and you can do all that stuff, but it's off of MP3s.

**AS** [00:05:14] Wow, that's fascinating. The old school way. Sure, you can come in and already have a sense of what you're going to play, but a lot of it is riffing, right? You got these crates there thinking about your lesson planning, if you will, live right and you're like, Oh, and this is the next segment of my lesson. Whereas with the digital, it looks like you can do a lot of your prep, have the songs lined up ahead of time and then just change it up a little bit. When you're deejaying, is that it? Am I understanding that correctly?

**Maritez Apigo** [00:05:49] Well, you can do that with vinyl records or with with your computer. It just kind of depends on what the DJ wants to do, Some come in with like a preset playlist. I'm going to play these songs in this exact order, and others like me is more like, OK, what am I feeling next? You know, what do I want to take the crowd next? So it really kind of depends on on the DJ's approach and how they like to play.

**AS** [00:06:24] Got it. I got to imagine it's so highly underestimated in how to do that well. And speaking on how to do something well, I think one of the most difficult tasks that we can do as human beings when we really try to do this well, is teach. And I think society has those, that have haven't been in education have their own feelings about, thoughts about it, and I still think most of society really doesn't understand that when you're, when you truly care about teaching and learning and making sure your students learn, teaching is hard. It's rewarding, it's fun, but it's not easy. Now, with the pandemic that forced everyone last March to go online. How do you do that well? And so I wanted to focus that for today's episode is could you provide some practical tips to how to DJ, if you will, how to how to sequence, how to do the composition for online learning and also hybrid. How do you do thatt well with equity and social justice intentionality?

**Maritez Apigo** [00:07:46] Yeah, that's a really great question and not one that I can answer in a few minutes, but I can definitely get us started on how we can approach it and some things to think about. Because the COVID 19 pandemic, like you said, it has dramatically changed the landscape of teaching and even online teaching. Pre-COVID, online faculty were this tiny subgroup teaching online classes, which were primarily just in an asynchronous format, just one format and everyone else on campus looked at us like we were crazy. Oh, those crazy online teachers, what are they doing? But then when the shutdown happened in March 2020, that changed everything. So it instead of looking at us like we were crazy, they looked at us for help. And there was suddenly an unprecedented number of faculty teaching synchronously in Zoom, which is not something that we did before the pandemic. And a lot of on campus teachers really, really liked that format, because it still gave them the feel of, you know, your live with your students, you're in a synchronous format. And that synchronous format, as well as the asynchronous format, has continued over the last couple of years and it isn't going away even after COVID. I don't see it going away at all. And sometimes now we even see some faculty doing a combination of both asynchronous and having some required synchronous sessions. Currently, with the Omicron variant, we're starting to see campuses again becoming remote temporarily for the start of the spring 2022 semester. So online teaching isn't going away, it's going to continue to grow and expand. And in fact, campuses are experimenting and innovating right now with the new modality called HyFlex, which does combine some aspects of asynchronous and synchronous teaching. And then after HyFlex, there's probably going to be another modality of online teaching. So that's really how it changed the whole landscape. And what sparked my interest in online teaching pedagogy was curiosity. I was really curious about, you know, how is it possible first for teaching and learning to take place from a distance? You know, I really wondered how online teachers connected with students. How did they develop relationships with students? How did they create a classroom community asynchronously? And that, also was really curious about, how could I apply equity minded and culturally responsive teaching pedagogy in an online environment? That was what inspired me to get trained in learning how to do this. And Geneva Gay and Zaretta Hammond, their work on culturally responsive teaching are really central to my own teaching practice on campuses. And that's what they were writing about on campus classes. So I've applied culturally responsive teaching and these equitable practices on campus, but I wanted to learn how to apply these pedagogies to the online classroom. And Michelle Pacansky-Brock from @ONE. Her work on humanizing has really helped me see the possibilities. I would say one of them is for instructors to convey that you care to students like students really need to know that they have an instructor who wants them to succeed, who cares about their success. And that's really clear, clearly conveyed to them. So if you're not really present and your course design is kind of set up to be this self-paced thing where you, you know, look at some videos, read some material, take a quiz and move on. And you never really actually get to hear from your instructor is not going to convey any kind of care. Zaretta Hammond talks about warm demander pedagogy. She explicitly focuses on building rapport and building trust with students and still holding high expectations for them. So that's something that I strive to do. You know, one of the things I do is even before the class begins, I'm making sure that I start with giving my students a welcome package. So even before the class begins, they're getting a welcome email from me with my introduction video, you know, talking about how I can't wait to meet them and I lead them to my liquid syllabus, a link to that where it has my, you know, my course policies. And I really designed my course policies around flexibility and not using deficit minded language and punitive language, but really more supportive and asset based kind of language. So instead of no late work accepted in all caps and three exclamation marks, instead, it's if you can't meet a deadline, contact me, let's create a plan for you to succeed. So really, looking at the language of my syllabus and my policies and making sure that they are welcoming to students and conveying that care. I'm serving my students in that first week and finding out about them, finding out, you know, I want to identify which students of mine are language learners, English language learners, which students of mine are working full time while taking my class. Who are the parents of young children? All of this information will help me best serve them. And then when they reach out to me in an email or a message, I already know where that students coming from. And then as the course goes on, you know, I'm always sending them a video every week. My weekly video announcements do all kinds of things like could review material. We just learned we could be previewing the upcoming week and what's happening. I could be giving them praise on a big assignment that they just completed. I can be giving them some feedback on their work, so make keeping that instructor presence ongoing throughout the course is important to not just at the beginning. And then also, as the course is going along, I'm always keeping my radar on any kind of students who are going to need individualized support. So as soon as a big assignment is due, I'm looking to see who didn't turn it in and giving them a nudge. So I'm always being aware of, you know, who might need additional individualized support and not letting any of those students fall through the cracks. And then there also may be some students who need to meet with me one on one and will jump on Zoom. And you know, I can give them some tutorial on whatever it is they need help with. So, those, I would say that all of that goes under how we can convey our care to students. And then another thing I think is really important is more focused on the student to student interaction, and it's what Luke Wood calls being community centric. And this is really focusing on designing rich student to student interaction activities so that the students are working together and interacting with one another, not just me in an online class. Students should also know who else is in the class and be working together with them, right, with their peers. So I'm intentionally designing activities for students to work together, doing things that's going to foster relationship building between them, fostering a classroom community that they feel they're a part of and they belong to. And since so much of our online teaching is well, since we want to move away from deficit minded thinking and more towards the asset based approaches, our students, we have to recognize that our students come to our classrooms with so much right, they have rich cultures, life experiences, backgrounds, their identities. So how can we design our online courses to build off of what they bring? And that's the approach that I go in when I'm designing my student to student interaction. I want my activities that to allow students to share stories from their lives, make connections with other students and still applying. What they're learning to, you know, the course content, right? I think it's important to really think creatively about going beyond those traditional asynchronous whole class discussion forums, which online teaching has been using for years and years because they don't really foster that connection in the relationship building that we hope to see. There's students who are speaking on a panel at the online teaching conference a couple of years ago. And one of the students said, I hate discussions, hate them. She said that they're not organic. They're forced. I don't get to know who's in the class through these whole class discussions, so they don't really support the types of authentic connections that we want students to make with each other. So thinking about how you can break your whole class up into groups is a way you can get them interacting with one another better. So instead of a whole class discussion, you can think about group discussions and how can small groups of people be discussing your course content? And then there's more of the back and forth like in real life, more authentic conversations where there is, instead of post once and reply to peers is really contrived. And getting students to to peer review one another. Have them give feedback on one another's work or drafts of work that they're going to be submitting is another way to get them interacting. I'm not the only one creating videos in my class. My students are also creating videos, so they get to see and hear each other and speak to each other. I love to use Flip Grid for that, where students can respond to each other through video. I'm not afraid to do group projects even in an online environment. So if there's a group project that that was done in a on campus kind of setting, how can that be done in an online class? And it's definitely possible to still get your students working on group projects online. I'll share one more thing, and that is an inquiry project that I did a few years ago. I interviewed some online students who who primarily take online classes, and I put my findings into a video. It's called online student voices, and it really captures from the students place what they found to be the challenges in online classes and also advice they have for online teachers. One of the things they said was that it's important to be clear and organized in your online classes because students, they have a hard time navigating an online class that's disorganized where they can't find what they need. There's not a clear flow, and it just what they said. It kind of looks like a mess. It's hard for them to learn when, when the modules or the the materials they need to go through are not set in an organized and clear fashion. The clarity is also really important for when they have to do assignments. They want details. How long does it have to be? You know, all of they want all the details because, you know, you're not standing in front of them to to answer questions. So it's important in our design to make sure we have that level of clarity for students. Consistency is also really important so that students know what to expect as they're moving through your course. They're not having to relearn like, OK, wait, next week. This week is totally different than last week, right? And they're having to relearn your structure in addition to the content. It makes it, it's just another level of challenge for them when they're already, when they're already trying to just learn the materials alone. Students also asked for their instructors to really be present. So that means that if a student reaches out to you to respond, respond, you know, be responsive is what they asked for. And it kind of surprised me to hear that because I'm like all online teachers responsive. But, you know, I kind of learned that not everyone is quick to respond to students. So I think it's really important to get back to them when they send you messages, you know, in a day or two at the most. Because they can't move on if they have a question about an assignment, so being responsive is really important. They said that they would love for their instructors to show their personality, so they want to also get to kind of know you as a human being. So don't be afraid to to show who you are. They love to see videos of their instructors so that they can hear you and see you. They like when instructors send them reminders. Reminders don't hurt. They help students stay on track, and they also enjoy receiving feedback from their instructors. And all of those ways, ways we can show that we are being really fully present with our students. One of the students I interviewed said you can tell which teachers want you to succeed. So I think to them, it's pretty obvious if a teacher wants them to succeed or not and all of those things really make a difference, is your presence and how you set up your course with clear and consistent. I encourage everyone to be that teacher.

**AS** [00:23:45] Wow. So much there. Thank you so much. Care, kindness is at the center of this. And you can tell which teachers want you to succeed, what a quote. I have some, nuts and bolts questions. Describe the balance between synchronous and asynchronous. How much do you meet with students all at once versus this is your automatic pilot, just follow these directions. What can you tell us a little bit more about that balance?

**Maritez Apigo** [00:24:20] So right now at my college, we have more of like a either or format for the classes. So either classes like fully asynchronous or it's fully synchronous. You know, there are some teachers who are kind of starting to blend the two where they'll have it be primarily asynchronous, but then have required synchronous meetings every week or every other week or something like that. But for the most part, it's pretty much two different formats, and in my classes, they're primarily asynchronous. But I do hold a lot of optional synchronous sessions. You know, I do the office hours, the traditional office hours, but I found that people don't show up to those. And so I turned my traditional office hours into what I call writing conferences because I teach English. So we're mostly working on students writing, and they love to have me take a look at their writing before they submit it to get my feedback. So, you know, there's no grades involved in having a writing conference. It's all about how can it be better? So I turned my online, my office hours into writing conferences. And so what I do is I have my students sign up for an appointment, stick a 20 minute slot. I even have an incentive there where they can get extra credit points if they come. So there's nothing to lose, lots to gain. And now my office hours are like filled, filled with students who want to come see me. I also offer kind of a get it, get some help session before we have like a big essay due, and in that, it's like more of a small group, those who show up. I just kind of go over like what the expectations are again, point out resources that are available to them and then answer questions. So my synchronous sessions are optional. And then the ones who are teaching more in like the synchronous format they most of their time with the students is on Zoom live. And so they're really only using canvas to submit assignments, not really to work through learning materials. Yeah. So I think that's like the biggest difference that we're seeing in those two formats.

**AS** [00:27:01] And what you're suggesting is that the format, when they're entirely online, here's your canvas, here's my videos. Here's these sporadic go have a discussion with your peers. It's not as caring, if you will, than to be present to have those sessions with students. Put them into groups. You're finding that regardless, even pre-pandemic, that's what helps students be successful.

**Maritez Apigo** [00:27:31] Yeah, yeah, definitely. I think that with the distance education, you know, you definitely want to be moving students through your course together. So unlike a correspondence course where there's really no teacher presence at all, I mean, you don't probably don't even need a teacher for those courses because students just work through at their own pace. You know, the quizzes are all automated and self graded. And so think of what would be the opposite of a self-paced kind, of course, where you actually have a live human who has warm, friendly presence in your course. And it can be felt through as the students work through the materials as they read and hear your voice, as they see you on video, as they get feedback from you on their work. That's where we see a lot more students being successful.

**AS** [00:28:29] So my next question is about, the obstacles that we often hear, the pushback that we hear about online teaching things like you mentioned, that you have flexible policies to turn in work. And I've I've heard, well, you know, if you do that, you're not preparing them for the real world. We got to prepare them for the real world. And I'm like, there's flexibility in the real world. Something else you hear a lot is all this just cheating is rampant online. And for those, just those two things for now, how would you respond?

**Maritez Apigo** [00:29:05] Yeah, I do hear those those types of comments a lot with the first one for flexibility. I think we need to to stop for a minute and just pause to remember that students have been signing up for online classes for a reason, and this is definitely pre-pandemic after the pandemic, we all didn't have a choice, right? But students have been signing up for online classes because they don't have the privilege of coming on campus for classes five days a week or all day. These are students who have full time jobs. Students who are caring for young children or caring for older family members. These are students who have a whole bunch of reasons for not coming on campus. And you know, if it weren't for online classes, they wouldn't be able to get an education. So they're coming with the need for flexibility. And so I think in online classes, it's even more important to be flexible if it's between a student being successful or not. Then, of course, right, like let's support the student success. And if that means giving them an extra week, then I give them the extra week because that means they're going to be successful in my class, right? Rather than, you know, dropping or failing my class. And, you know, I also kind of reflect back on like when I was a college student and I was the kind of student who, you know, waited till the last second to turn something in like, Oh, it's do you know, Friday at 11:59 p.m., OK, I'll I'll get started on it Friday morning. I'll have the whole day, right? That's who I was in college. That's not who I am today. So I don't think that we should be mixing up who those students are in college and expecting that to be who the person is going to be, as you know, in their careers and later on in life. Right? I mean, I was a teenager, totally different person, you know, after college. So I don't think it's fair to say that, you know, we're not adequately preparing our students for the real life by being so strict or so punitive with them during the time that they're in college.

**AS** [00:31:59] And if this was a complete disaster and everybody was taking advantage of you as a teacher, you probably wouldn't continue it. So it shows that level of kindness, are there once in a while some students might take that? And of course, you know, we have that once in a while, but to paint them all with this broad brush that they're all just taking advantage and we're not teaching them to be responsible. I love the fact that you use that, you know, who you were when you're, although you still look like a teenager, you look really young. Thank you for sharing. And how about the all cheating is rampant online? And can you speak to because there's been a lot and I've actually done, I wrote a piece on this many years ago on equitable grading practices, and you might be familiar with a book that a lot of faculty are reading. I'm using with some of the faculty inquiry and action pedagogy groups that I work with is the Ungrading one. If you're familiar with that, so can you speak to this whole cheating and tell us a little bit about how you approach grading?

**Maritez Apigo** [00:33:06] Yeah, yeah, definitely. The love the Susan Blum book that you're mentioning, a lot of the faculty are reading that on my campus as well. We have some book clubs going on with that. As far as the, you know, the cheating, the rampant cheating goes, you know, it was part of my online training to address this. And I think it needs to be baked into our course design. Is that how can we design, of course, to to prevent cheating, right? And you know, I think we need to go in with that lens, whether we're teaching on campus or online, right? How can we design the course so that students can't cheat or it's it's really, really difficult to cheat? And in the online modality, you know, some people think, oh, it's easier for them to cheat. So I think it's important to, you know, think about how are you going to design your assessments so that not every single student is turning in the same thing and that it goes really beyond rote memorization and only one answer how can you integrate more critical thinking and authentic kind of assessments so that students aren't submitting the same thing, right? In my class for their research project, my students are selecting different topics. So there's not just one topic that the whole class is doing. And so they're researching their own individual project and every product looks different. And I think that can be more authentic assessments can be applied to all the disciplines, even the STEM disciplines where, typically they're about multiple choice kind of answers. And there's only one right answer. But how can we kind of push our students thinking up on Bloom's taxonomy, where they're doing more application, they're doing more creative, creative kind of assignments rather than just regurgitating answers. I think if we move towards that kind of assessment approach, we would see less cheating because it would just be difficult or impossible for students to copy someone else's. And the question that you ask about the ungrading, I think it's so important that we're finally looking at this now because grading really takes away so much of the learning that really should be the focus of our classes. And instead, students are working for points rather than working to learn and so to bring it back to a focus on learning, I think is so important. And grades have traditionally been designed to weed students out right to create like a competitive type of environment among students, when instead, I think we should be looking more towards where not only some of the students succeed, but that every single student in the class can succeed and can learn. So I'm really excited and about what could come out of the ungrading practices and more equitable grading systems that we're seeing today.

**AS** [00:36:53] So you covered so much about being kind, being caring as a as a teacher, as we begin to wind down and gosh, you offered so much, you discussed how you're present, how you put together a welcome package, how you provide flexibility, how you have a liquid syllabus, I'll add that and what that is to the show notes. And maybe you describe a little bit. You have a survey to get to know who your students are. And so when you communicate with them, you know where they're coming from. You have these weekly video announcements. You provide these as needed, one on one tutorials, you have the student-to-student community. You're doing so so much. Thank you for sharing all of that. Because HyFlex is something that still faculty are grappling on how to do this well. Can you tell us a little bit more what that is exactly? And in your view, how can you be effective with that approach?

**Maritez Apigo** [00:38:02] I think that right now, since it's so new and is so experimental, there's not really one way it can look. But some of the ways that we're seeing it being done right now are to combine aspects of asynchronous and synchronous and providing the most flexibility for students. One way I'm seeing it being used is that where the course is partially asynchronous and then partially synchronous. But the synchronous time students can choose whether to come on campus or to log on to Zoom. So in a classroom on campus, the teacher would need to have the technology with microphones so that everyone in the classroom on campus can be heard. There would be a camera that would be recording the classroom on campus, and then there would also be speakers so that anything that the students say on Zoom can be heard by those on site. So, it's really interesting because students have that flexibility like, Oh, I'm working today, let me hop on Zoom or, Oh, I'm off, let me, you know, let me go on campus. We're seeing that. And then another way that I'm also seeing HyFlex being used is that for even the most flexibility is that students can do any one of the three and take the class asynchronously. They can take the class synchronously or they can take the class on campus and they can also bounce between that. So maybe for one module, they're learning the materials on Zoom, maybe the next module, they're they're booked with a job all week. They're going to jump on asynchronously and then maybe the next module, they're free, so they come on campus. So it just kind of depends on which format your college is leaning towards. But iit provides another level of flexibility for students to learn the material through different modalities.

**AS** [00:40:22] I think that's the future. I heard the other day someone say, well, we got to, we got to live with with COVID, we just got to live with it. I'm like, What do you think we've been doing? We are living with it and we're trying to adapt. I see this as the future, but I also see this as having tremendous potential backlash or just reluctance to do this, because it requires, just back to the DJ'ing and requires that it's almost like having three turntables, you're like, All right, I have a group here with me that's dancing. That's, you know, I have my music there, but wait, I have another another group that's dancing, but they're dancing by themselves in their rooms.

**Maritez Apigo** [00:41:13] There's a of tech going.

**AS** [00:41:15] Right, and then the next week it could be flipped or many of those people that were in person, now they're dancing here with me, they're dancing in their rooms. And so it just takes another level, I think of prep, especially because you want to create a community with students, the student-to-student community, and you just have to have better preparation, especially for the group projects, right? Because if some of them choose to come in person and some choose to go, how are you going to structure that? So it's just another level of preparation. Absolutely goes back to what I've been saying from the very beginning. Teaching is hard work when you do it well. Back in the day when I started in K-12, you know, people don't really know educators. Oh, all teachers, they get to work from eight to three. No, you know, a good teacher and really good effective teachers putting 60, 70, 80 hours a week to teach well. And so I just think the PD is going to be really key here and not these kind of one offs, but some kind of community of practice around how to do HyFlex, where faculty can come together on a regular basis to learn from one another to express frustrations, but also express the wins. And so I think that is the future. Now back to the liquid syllabus. Can you explain what that is? I've been working with a campus to help them implement that, actually. And so since you mentioned that, if you wouldn't mind.

**Maritez Apigo** [00:42:56] Yeah, yeah. The liquid syllabus is something I learned from Michelle Pecansky-Brock, and it's one of her humanizing practices. She has a lot of resources on this, too. If you want to link to any of them, the liquid syllabus takes, you know, the traditional either paper or PDF syllabus and puts it onto a website or a web page that students can access it also by their mobile devices, which we're learning that more and more students are. That's where they're doing. Their learning is on their phones. So it's mobile friendly, and it also allows you to put in your videos very nicely embedded in there. So, you know, I have my welcome video on there, and it includes a learning pact where, students know what to expect from me, but also what I would expect from them to be successful in the class. So those are some of the things that are included in the liquid syllabus, and it's before the students, you know, I send it out a week before the class begins, before they're even in canvas and so that they can get a feel for the course.

**AS** [00:44:17] What I've noticed is that there's been two camps that have been emerging. It's really interesting since the pandemic. So as you know, there's record low enrollment. And so the blame in one camp is being put well, it's it all has to do with students are online, they hate online, and that's why enrollment is down. And there's another group that's saying, no, you know, online, when done well, can provide flexibility, et cetera. And I'm of the camp that it really depends on what the student's goals are for a particular semester, so for example, for a student who is studying automotive technology, it makes sense to have some electives as part of the program that are in English, in humanities, social sciences, where you can teach, like what you do, right, what you do, and then there's those courses that you have to be very safe, obviously, that you have to use your hands and actually learn how to manipulate things. And so to me, it's not either or. When I ask students they're saying, I go to actually several community colleges because in this one, they do this so well. This one, they do that so well. So they're shopping around, they're shopping around for what you mentioned, right? You mentioned the findings from your interview with students. They want faculty to be clear and organized. They want consistency. They want you to be present and responsive. They want you to show your personality. They want those reminders. What are your thoughts on on this? I express mine. I just think it depends on the semester what a students learning they can choose. But it's not an all this camp is right in that camp is right. What are your thoughts?

**Maritez Apigo** [00:46:17] Yeah. Well, I mean, I think that, you know, the pandemic has definitely done a number on our enrollment. So let's not forget that it's not just about online classes or on campus classes that it's really like about the pandemic that's happening right now, right? You know, I think that's doing a number on our students or, you know, trying to survive in school might not be a priority at this moment at this time. So, I thought it was really interesting because we surveyed our students and we wanted to know what modality do you want to take in the next semester? And right now, we offer asynchronous online classes, synchronous online classes, hybrid, which by that we mean partially online, asynchronous and partially on campus. And then the last one is on campus, and I was really surprised because we hear so much about the push to reopen campus. We've got to get everything back and running on campus, got to reopen and that was not what the survey showed us. There was only about 20 percent of our students who wanted to take an online class, 15 percent said that they liked the hybrid modality and it was about 20 percent said they liked the synchronous courses. And then the last large majority of the biggest group said that they wanted asynchronous online classes, that's the way that they're going to be able to continue in classes next semester. So I mean, I think you know who, we if we hear from the students, that's what they want and that's what they need right now during this pandemic, then I don't think we should be pushing to reopen when there's only a small percentage that want that right now. You know, maybe if things change with the pandemic, the surge goes down, we might see a change for fall 2022. But I think that so much of a student's experience in an online class really has to do with the teacher. It really does. And so we're constantly pushing professional development opportunities for our faculty so that they can learn how to do it better. When students come into my class, Oh my gosh, you know, this is like the best online class I've ever taken. Just like we got to get our faculty trained, we've got to invest in that quality so that that there's more of a consistency around the experience of an online class. Because right now there's such a range, depending on who your teacher is.

**AS** [00:49:24] If you were deejaying right now and we're closing out with some music, what are a couple of songs that you lead us out with?

**Maritez Apigo** [00:49:36] I guess one of them would be We're Gonna Be All Right. Kendrick Lamar. That song is more about the racism in the United States, but I think it also can relate to what we're talking about with them having to teach online, even though that's not what we signed up for and having to deal with all of the struggles around the pandemic, even though none of us want to be doing that right now, and it just seems to be getting worse with this surge. So just a little bit of reassurance is we're going to be all right.

**AS** [00:50:15] Beautiful. Thank you so much for participating in the Student Success podcast.

**Maritez Apigo** [00:50:20] Thanks so much for having me. It's my pleasure.