

Hello and welcome, everyone,
to the closing keynote session.

I am so very excited to have
Karen Yoshino of Van Allen Strategies here with me today
to discuss the future of higher education and
rethinking current processes and strategies.

Just a couple of reminders.

Many of you have been with us for the previous sessions,
but just in case, I

want to make sure that you know that we
welcome and encourage your questions
through the live Q&A feature here in Zoom.

We'll be sure to address them at the end of this session.

Also note that we are featuring
Verbit's live integration with Zoom today,
and this enables you to view
a live transcript throughout this session.

To enable the transcripts simply click on
the arrow next to the CC button on
the bottom menu bar and then you may
choose "View Full Transcript."

During our time together today,
we're going to take a look at
the opportunities that are presented to us in
higher education because of the COVID-19 disruption.

Yes, I said opportunities.

We're going to take a brief look at the fall semester.

I will then shift our attention to the future and focus on processes, curriculum, and technology.

Before we begin, Karen and I would love to introduce ourselves. Karen?

Thank you, Misty. I'm so happy to be here today.

My name is Karen Yoshino with Van Allen Strategies.

I am a consultant in higher education, specializing in assessing student learning outcomes, designing competency-based curricula, developing online program plans, and more recently, accelerated transition to online.

Love that, Karen, and I am Misty Cobb.

I am a Senior Customer Success Advocate at Verbit and I have spent some 20 or so years in higher education and focusing in education technology.

My area of research interest is in transformational learning, specific to faculty professional development for online teaching and learning.

It's my distinct pleasure to have the opportunity to facilitate this session, to hear from Karen, and then to have your voices represented here today as well.

Karen and I would love to get

started by sharing a poll with you all.

Let's kick off with you all sharing with us,

does your institution have

a clear plan for bringing back students,

all or some of them, and your staff, in

person for the fall semester?

Danielle, if you will start the poll for us,

the options are going to be yes,

no, it's day-by-day,

or you're still unsure.

Let's take about 10 seconds or

to give you all an opportunity to weigh in.

About five more seconds.

About half or so of you participated.

Let's take a look at the results.

Yes, there is a clear plan, most of you say,

and then it's equally represented against

no, unsure, and day-by-day.

Very fascinating.

Let's dive on in, Karen.

I've done some reading recently.

Let me close the poll question,

and I loved your July blog post.

You noted there that various reasons exist

that technology may or may not have

been adopted at our institutions.

Many of us moved online in the spring.

We may have found ourselves at varying degrees of readiness to continue the business of education in ways that were equitable to our former experiences.

I would love for you to expound a bit more on the people, technology, and process that's critical in this stage of continued transition. Specifically, what differences, if any, can we expect in the fall semester and in the upcoming academic year?

Great question. Before I dive into the data that we're looking at here, let me take a step back and refer to that blog that you read. Of course, it was geared towards the near term. We have this disruption in the spring, and it exposed what I call giant fissures in higher education.

There's that negative aspect. But I'm arguing in this blog that this is a great opportunity because we can now see what the fissures are, we can begin fixing them.

While I'm going to talk about the fissures, I'm going to move as quickly as I can to

that opportunity and the positive side of that.

That's the short-term spurring of writing that blog.

But then I want to try to talk about the longer

term as well. There was a recent article

that talked about a survey that Pearson did.

This is their August report,

it was a global survey of,

I think it was 7,000 students.

The basic takeaway from that survey

was more than three-quarters of students around

the world believe that education will

fundamentally change because of the pandemic disruption,

and students further see that online education will

A: Become a permanent fixture,

B: It takes the focus off of traditional degrees as they

see them as being more out of reach, and

C: That learning is much more self-directed.

That sets the framework for what I'm going to talk

about in terms of the data here.

These data were published July 29th. Now,

I just want to emphasize how

recent that is, in the Chronicle of Higher Education.

It's a study of 3,000 US colleges and

universities, asking them what

their plans were for opening in the fall.

As of July 29th,

I'm going to argue that the level of

preparedness is shaky in higher education.

Twenty seven percent at that point in time were TBD.

They weren't sure what they were going to do.

The inferences that I take from

these data are that 28 percent of students that are

fully and primarily online are best

positioned for facing the risks of

regional or campus outbreaks during the fall,

causing yet a second shutdown.

39 percent that are planning to be fully are

primarily in-person are at risk,

and those even more at risk,

the 33 percent that are either TBD or other,

I'm not sure what "other" means,

are also extremely at risk.

What is the risk? You wanted me to talk about

people, processes and technology.

Let's start with the people.

We know from bits of data

that students in the spring of 2020 were

frustrated by their online learning experiences.

This tells us that there's big quality issues going on,

unpreparedness issues to be able to convert

quickly and convert effectively to online.

The students were frustrated, faculty were frustrated.

They felt under prepared to be teaching online.

Finally, parents were left wondering about

the thousands of dollars that they had spent on that semester's tuition, and wondering about the future as well.

These approaches, you had a speaker earlier, I think Corey from GMU said, although there was a lot of forgiveness in the spring, that forgiveness is likely to be less elastic if there's a second disruption in the fall causing a second campus shutdown.

Secondly, that shutdown was very brief in the spring. It came at the spring break.

If it occurs early in the fall, or midterm in the fall, that disruption is going to be longer lasting.

The experience, if it's a negative experience, or a frustrating experience, again, will be stronger and more lasting.

So the implications for institutions is this could lead to shifts in enrollment away from those institutions whose online experiences are poor to those who have, who deliver, a high-quality experience.

Actually, your last speaker, from Coursera, saw a huge boost in enrollments, moving towards that quality online experience.

So I don't know what's going to happen.

But my basic question is,

can institutions make the
turn they need to make in order
to shift quickly with
a second disruption, and can they make that turn?

Well, part of that lies in
how they're currently using technology.

We know that most institutions have learning
management systems in place on their campuses.

We know that many are offering online courses,
or indeed, online programs, or hybrid programs.

We know that they have
that experience of building out courses,
delivering them online and
know how to do that basic functionality
of building out, delivering online.

In those very same campuses however,
there are a hefty percentage
of courses that are delivered face-to-face.

There's the risk, right there,
are the face-to-face courses.

Yes, they're using technology.

How effectively they're using technology,
how broad that technology adoption is,
is a big question.

Is a big risk, let me say.

Let me turn to processes because processes is all part of
this complex mix of stuff that has to go

on in order to be able to make
that turn from face-to-face to online,
from traditional to more innovative
and personalized and flexible formats for students.

My observation from working with
higher education institutions across
the United States, indeed,
around the world, is that
formal professional development for faculty to
develop their skills in taking that
turn into the digital era are rare.

Yeah, they have workshops.

They have brown bag lunches.

Faculty can get together episodically,
periodically to share best practices,
but it's not systematized.

Institutions need to think
about what they need to start putting in
place in order to
develop the knowledge and skills and competencies
to be able to prepare faculty,
to be able to teach online.

So that's one issue.

Let me say as a side note to that,
I think that institutions also need to
start disaggregating the role of faculty.

We just keep piling everything onto faculties' backs.

They need to know technology,
they need to know curriculum design,
they need to know assessment strategy when really we
should be providing them with
greater support in those areas.

They were trained in their graduate institutions to be
subject matter experts in their disciplines.

They were not trained to teach.

Then we pile all these teaching responsibilities on them.

Okay, I went off script, Misty.

You're going to have to keep me straight here.

No, I'm having to resist my own temptations as well.

Then there's the framework of the credit hour.

The credit hour is just a fancy way of saying,

we are measuring learning

by the time that students spend,

butts in seats. It's really seat time that

the credit hours are, and

this framework is across the United States.

It's reinforced by all of the accrediting agencies.

We know that just sitting in a chair does

not give you learning.

It doesn't demonstrate learning, so alongside

this framework of the credit hour we have to

develop in the institutions elaborate

grading systems that sit beside

the seat time in order to come up with

a model of what this educational delivery is.

So this is very restricted.

It restricts us to how many hours in

a course are expected

for participation by both faculty and students.

How do those hours translate into a term.

Whether it's a semester or a quarter, already we

see institutions have started chunking up those periods,

those terms into seven weeks or smaller units,

begin to try to create

more flexibility to accommodate students' lives.

A lot of them work and that progress towards

a degree looks a lot

more doable if it's in shorter time frames.

We're starting to move back towards that.

In fact, the Department of Education

has expanded the concept of

seat time to allow for competency-based frameworks.

I'm going to talk about that more later.

But I'm going to read for you how

the US Department of Education

defines competency-based education as follows:

Transitioning away from seat time

in favor of a structure that creates

flexibility allows students to progress

as they demonstrate mastery of academic content,

regardless of time, place, or pace of learning.

Competency-based strategies provide flexibility in the way that credit can be earned or awarded and provide students with personalized learning opportunities. Great statement.

Excellent.

A lot of institutions have considered that, but very few have really incorporated that into their educational models.

To complicate the issue of seat time, there's the issue of the tying of credit hours by the federal government to federal financial aid.

That complicates and restricts institutions from being innovative and moving towards these new eras, because some of this stuff is fuzzy.

Another thing that is restrictive about the federal regulations is the phrase "regular and substantive."

In order to prevent online learning from becoming just a correspondence course, they have promoted the idea of regular and substantive interaction between the faculty and the student.

Still in debate, still developing in terms of policy and regulations, but again, another restrictive

concept that really hobbles our ability to move quickly and move well into innovative practices that provide a better learning experience and a more effective learning experience for students.

Pulling all of these factors together to move towards the new model is a daunting task, I recognize that.

Institutions are strapped for funds, particularly now.

The cultures and values of the institutions are that, well, we have to do this ourselves.

They will turn internally and use staff to do this or faculty to do this, when they already have full-time jobs.

So resources are scarce.

The idea of moving towards what student expectations are, where online learning is a permanent fixture, where traditional degrees are less emphasized, and where learning is more self-directed, just seems like an impossible task given the traditional model of educating.

Karen, all of these things that you say are very fascinating to me and it makes me think of a comparison that you made between higher education and banking, and this was, I believe, in a more recent blog post that you did earlier this month in August.

For everyone's sake, if you're not aware of this post, basically the transformation in banking industry we've all likely experienced and it supported new ways of delivering the same services while attracting and retaining clients.

I know that during COVID, I've changed banks and made some changes into the way that I was managing my finances.

Now in all fairness,

I think that the change and the transformation that's required in higher education is far more difficult and multifaceted than that that you might have experienced or that bankers and thought leaders in that industry would have faced.

I would tend to agree with that.

Karen, unpack for us, if you will:

In terms of higher education, what does such a paradigm shift really entail?

My favorite topic is to talk about an article that was written by Barr and Tagg in 1995.

Yes. The transitions are very complex and they are going to require a lot of blood, sweat, and tears.

However, my argument is that if you don't know what the desired end state looks like, it's going to take you longer,

the quality is going to be bad.

But if you know what the desired end state looks like, then you can develop processes and protocols and you can organize to reach that desired end state.

Well, Barr and Tagg, in 1995, gave us that.

I encourage everybody to read this article.

I'll tell you later what it's called.

It's down below the slide.

What Barr and Tagg did was they gave us two paradigms of what we're doing now and they called that the "instruction paradigm," and where we need to move to this desired end state, and they called that the "learning paradigm."

And really, what they are arguing, what I got out of the article was, now we've spent so much of our time providing, designing, delivering instruction when we really should be focusing on producing learning.

The concept for the basic assumption that we use is that we are transferring knowledge from the faculty member to the students, when, in fact, in the learning paradigm, we should be designing the curriculum to elicit learners' construction of knowledge and discovery, instead of time being held constant and learning being

buried in the instruction paradigm.

The old bell curve.

Learning varies, time is held constant, seat time.

In the instruction paradigm,

learning is held constant and the time can vary.

Students can take as much or as little time as they

need to master the content, right?

In the instruction paradigm,

courses start and end at the same time.

It's an industrial model.

In the learning paradigm,

the environment is ready when the student is ready,

and it's there for them to progress at their own pace.

In the instruction paradigm,

we have to think about covering material.

However, in the learning paradigm,

it's more focused on specified learning results.

What are you supposed to know, think,

or be able to do when you leave this course?

I'm going to make that very clear for you,

and then I'm going to align my content to that,

those competencies,

and then I'm going to assess based on those,

and then we're going to give you, like

your credit score has this progress model,

and see where you are on reaching those. So

your progress is very transparent to you as you go along.

Right now, they talk about in the instruction paradigm end-of-course assessment, yes, we always talk about finals.

In some courses, all students are getting is a midterm and a final.

They have no idea where they stand in the course in between those times.

But in the learning paradigm, we've got preassessments, we've got some formative assessments, and we've got summative assessments, and they're chunked into learning units rather than the whole course.

I guess it has to do with stakes and the angst that you build with a student moving towards that final. I'll get that.

Finally, the degree equals accumulated credit hours. Back to seat time again.

Where, in the learning paradigm, the degree equals demonstrated knowledge and skills.

That's kind of the paradigm that set us up.

Now, if I think about what that means, the learning paradigm element of producing learning, that aligns with demonstration of mastery and steps away from seat time.

Eliciting learner discovery and construction of knowledge. Well, that aligns with self-directed learning, which we talked about earlier, where learning is held constant and time

varies aligns with self-paced programs,
as in the DOE definition of competency-based education.

The environment is ready when the learner is,
aligns with the concept of anytime, anywhere.

Access to your education.

Specified learning result aligns
with the idea of competencies.

Pre, during, and post assessment,
aligns with that credit score
speed dial that I was talking about.

The degree equals demonstrated knowledge and skills.

Again, steps away from seat time.

I'm arguing that this is the desired end
state. We don't have to get there all at once.

We can take bits of it.

Indeed, it is a difficult turn for all of us to make.

It's taken me years to understand
this model and be able to then
explain it to others in a way that they can use,
but it takes a long time.

What's an example of how we'd apply that on our campus?

Let's take a look at what
a competency-based model looks like in the next slide.

This is a simplification of what
a competency-based model looks
like. It would be applied to a course,
but I'm looking at a learning unit.

A learning unit means a module,
or something even smaller, a lesson,
where you apply competency-based theory.

A student comes into the course,
takes the talent assessment.

The institution determines what level of
mastery they will accept for credit.

Let's say it's 85 percent. If
that student takes that entry exam,
which is very similar in level
of difficulty to the summative test,
they go straight through credit for
that module. They already know
what's in this learning unit.

They can move on to the next learning unit.

If they don't pass at
that level of mastery, then they engage with the content.

They take formative assessments
that help prepare them for the summative assessment.

They take the summative assessment.

Meanwhile, there is a lot of coaching, mentoring,
answering of questions going on in the
side. This is more the, what did they call it,
stage on the stage versus guide on the side.

It's that kind of a model where there is meaningful,
regular and substantive interaction
between the faculty and the student to help prepare

them to demonstrate mastery of these competencies or whatever are involved in this. They take that summative assessment, they either pass it and go on for credit for that unit, or they re-engage again and the institution, again determines how many times are we going to allow this cycle of taking the assessment or having to retake, re-engage with the content.

That's basically a competency based model.

Are you getting any questions in the chat about this right now?

Someone has raised their hand and then, Danielle, I see one item in the Q&A, but I'm unable to view it.

If you're able to assist us. Someone was just asking if they could view Karen's beautiful face as full screen rather than the chart.

Not really a question.

It must be one of my friends.

But no, but you, but this is a great session, please keep going.

Karen, should I move on to the next item?

Well, let me just say one more thing, my notes here.

This also, in addition to anytime, anywhere, self-paced, it allows for us to begin thinking about

not that big four-year degree at the end,
but to create a model of stackable credentials,
micro credentials and so forth that are transcriptable.

They have the ability to see if they are on a job,
and they've just taken a course
that enhances their professional
skills. They can advance their professional portfolio.
Perhaps even their pay.

This is an argument through,
for the competency-based education framework.

Now, that is a huge corner to turn, is it not?

Institutions just will need to go

back to basic assumptions

about what they're teaching, how they're teaching,

and how to learn to name those competencies,

and then to align their curriculum to that,

the content to that,

and then to develop assessments that reflect that.

They're going to have to learn how to be skilled at

creating a rubric to cut down the time on grading.

They're going to have

to, hopefully, be supported by an army of

instructional designers who will do all of

that stuff for them so that they can concentrate on

A: Teaching and interacting with students, and

B: Designing that curriculum in

a very powerful way that they can turn over to

the instructional designers who have just been setting it up in an online course.

Excellent. So let me stop there and ask you,

Missy: Are there any gaps and what I've said or is flowing okay for you right now?

It's flowing beautifully for me.

I resonate with a lot of what you've said just based on the research that I have done and then in my experience in higher education and in working with institutions across the United States and the globe.

I am really tracking with you.

It's just you look at this and you think, "Oh my gosh, how will we ever get there?"

Well, in my first blog,

I don't know if you've got a chance to read it, but I made a big case for the use of project management structures and processes in institutions.

Institutions need to adopt project and process management skills and criteria to help them get from where they are to where they want to be. Right now it's a system of terrible committees that meet once a month and people don't pay attention to it until just before the committee meeting.

Progress just goes in fits and starts and it takes

way longer than it needs to and sometimes just founders because it's so exhausting because people are in reinventing the wheels themselves.

They don't have people internally who have this skill set that we're looking at here on the slide to be able to devote complete attention to moving that institution from where they are to where they want to be.

What you're looking at, and you can Google "improvement cycle" and come up with many replicas of this that have the elements of plan, develop, execute, maintain, evaluate and improve, all of those things are very common. But what I've done here because when you Google that, they're all equal in the pie chart.

What I've done here is, I've really tried to emphasize what is it that project management brings to a higher education that would be of value. And they're weighted by the elements.

Now, at Van Allen Associates, we have definitions for each of these and I'm not going to go through all of them, but I'll give you an example from each.

For plan, let's take the term "clarification."

Clarification, I'd ask the question,
who in your organization is going to
be responsible for defining
the objectives of a project so that
all stakeholders understand the desired end state and
you can keep moving towards achieving
those objectives that are all part of this project?

Let's talk about develop,

I've used the term "qualification."

Who's going to be responsible for
identifying all of the stakeholders?

Those people with the skills and
experience to be able to bring to
the table to build this project out
in the most effective, and robust,
and innovative way and establish
working relationships between those stakeholders
and gain commitment of achieving that objective.

That's what project managers do.

Under execute, I'm going to use the term, "convene."

Convene, who's going to be
responsible for setting the agenda,
scheduling regular meetings of working groups,
sub-working groups, and other stakeholders?

Who's going to keep
the key stakeholders, the leadership involved,
who need to know the progress

and the risks involved with each objective?

Under maintain, I've used "conflict resolution."

Who's going to be responsible for negotiating and

resolving conflicts or differences of

view that arise within that team?

Because they will arise, especially,

when you start to think about academics,

working with technology people,

working with student services and

support people, working with leadership.

All of those people have to be at the table,

even students need to be at the table in

order to develop a program, an approach, effectively.

Finally, evaluate and improve.

Who's going to be responsible for thinking about

the risks that can arise with any decision,

any protocol that's put in place,

and who's going to communicate

the potential or latent problems in advance,

and propose contingency plans to the working group?

Those are just some examples.

Right now, the way higher education

is managing any type of

project or initiative, even strategic plans,

provided they don't get put on the shelf

until the next strategic planning cycle,

they're assigned to people who already have

full-time jobs and they don't have time to cover all of these responsibilities and functions.

I'm going to argue that on a given campus, certainly there's not going to be a single person who has these skill sets and are trained for them.

Thirdly, when you talk about bringing all those divisions or units together, having a person who has the positional authority to influence and shepherd a project through cross functional, complex projects means that either a provost or some combination of CIO and CAO are going to have to take that, and they have very demanding jobs, and so the time that they can devote to these functions is very minimal.

Excellent points, Karen, and I'm just blown away.

I would love to have another hour with you today and continue to learn.

Am I out of time?

Unfortunately, we are up against the end of our time together.

Danielle, I wanted to check and see about any questions that we should take.

I have one that I can pose and

then would like to move us to go ahead and wrap up today.

Is there anything in the Q&A

that I need to address, Danielle?

Someone asked about the role of the LMS provider in this,

if you wanted to address that quickly.

But otherwise we could follow up

after as well if your question,

Misty, is more relevant.

No, actually the question I had was

on that topic as well, Danielle. Thank you.

LMS providers, because they know

all the functions of teaching and

learning they built it into their tools,

are teaching mainly how to operate the system,

how to implement it,

how to use the functions and tools.

If you go to a training,

they're going to teach you every bell

and whistle whether you use them or not.

They're not going to ask you many questions

of why are you doing it this way?

LMS providers can really help

move the industry in a direction towards the digital era

by providing the type of

innovative design consulting services

that institutions really need to have in order to

be able to move the needle towards

where those students are expecting.

More online, more student initiative,

and redesigning the curriculum to focus less on

that four-year degree and into stackable credentials.

Excellent, Karen.

Karen, I want to just personally thank you.

I have thoroughly enjoyed learning

from you as I always do

when we're able to spend time together

today. I want to thank all of the participants.

So many of you have stayed with us, even

though we have ran over a bit, so thank you.

We'll be sharing the slides,

you all will receive notifications about the recording.

All of this will be available to you on demand

for you to watch later and to share with your colleagues.

I do want to make sure that you all are aware.

Should you have friends or if you yourself

are also involved in K12 education,

we have an event called

K12 Back in Session that's coming up.

I do encourage you, again,

to participate in that,

or to share that information with your colleagues.

We'll be having that event on

September 15th at 11:00 a.m. Eastern.

In the meantime, please do reach out to myself,

my colleagues here at Verbit,
Karen and all the other
excellent speakers that we've had today,
should you desire more information
or if you have questions.

I wish you guys a great rest of
your day and hope that you all stay safe and well.

Karen, thank you again so much.

It was so great to have you.

Thank you, Misty. Thank you, Danielle. Bye, everyone.