

Podcast Episode 3

Why It's Time to Humanize Teaching

Interview Excerpts

On Humanizing Teaching & Empowering Educators

In *Remix Podcast Episode 3*, Karen talks with **Atyani Howard**, Chief Program Office for the New Teacher Center (NTC), and **Carlo Ramirez-Truse**, the chair of the New Teacher Center student advisory committee. Throughout 2021, Karen has been engaging in conversations with the New Teacher Center staff and student advisors and in this conversation, Karen, Atyani, and Carlo explore key aspects of New Teacher Center's focus on disrupting educational inequity through its commitment to humanizing teaching and empowering educators, centering learners, and disrupting the system.



Karen: We could talk a lot about equity and what that means. It's another of those words that is in everybody's mission statement. What struck me as different about yours is that not only that you talked about humanizing teaching, but you led with it. Can you say how that ended up being the top priority and what do you mean by humanizing?



Atyani: I think just philosophically the way I view teaching it is a human exchange. And so, in order for that to be true, we have to center humanity as much as we center the technical elements of the craft of teaching. And if we reflect back on some of the unfortunate impacts of reform agenda over the last 20-30 years, we've really gone quite far into privileging, centering, and valuing the technical elements of craft.

Our theory at NTC is really that we need to come back into balance. We need to have a new conversation about what the purpose of education is. And our belief is that the purpose is to really support people in shaping their own experience and creating agency and access for them to

apply criticality and understanding to whatever it is that they want to contribute to the world.

And if that's the orientation to the purpose, then the process has to come into alignment with that.

You also have to support the people with making philosophical shifts and becoming truly more human, human beings. And so at New Teacher center, we are really thinking about how do we help educators really weave a web of connectedness between themselves, their content, their craft, and who their students are in ways that disrupt and create high quality experiences that lead to true and lasting equity versus equity around the edges.



Karen: Humanizing teaching. Empowering educators. You put those two things together as one. Why empowering? What do we have to empower educators to do in order to give them permission to humanize teaching?

Atyani: I think we're empowering them to view teaching as an extension of themselves. There's so many pundits who would talk about, we really teach more of who we are than the subjects that we teach or the pedagogy that we know. And yet we've spent a lot of time as a field diminishing that element, and we've also never really designed schools from that premise. So for me to feel empowered, to create the kind of, I love the word Carlos used, "atmosphere", where children feel seen and valued and understood and supported and can bring their selfhood into the academic space to



achieve some of the energy that Carlos is describing, teachers have to have those kinds of experiences as well.