

# The Rise of Virtual Learning

BMO

## Road to Recovery: Expert Conversations

### **Eric Boles:**

Hello and welcome to another episode of Road to Recovery: Expert Conversations. I'm your host, Eric Boles. Of all the disruptions the COVID-19 pandemic has caused, the immediate need to transition from a physical school environment to a virtual one was significant. Education systems that have been evolving to incorporate more technology into the classroom now had to rely on it to reach and educate their students. Parents became teachers and full-day caregivers, and this was a continued stressor that affected how they were able to do their jobs. My guests today have been at the forefront of these developments. Jeff Silber is a Managing Director covering K through 12 and Higher Education for BMO, Kelly Richmond Pope PhD, CPA, and Associate Professor at DePaul University, and Gina Jeneroux, the Chief Learning Officer at BMO. Thank you all for joining me today. And for those of you watching on LinkedIn, we will be taking your questions live at the end of the stream. So comment with your questions below. So we're gonna jump right into it. First question: how has the use of technology evolved in schools over the past 10 to 20 years? And I'm gonna begin with Jeff.

### **Jeff Silber:**

Thanks, Eric, and thank you again for having us, appreciate it. So 10, 20 years ago, if you would have stepped foot inside a K-12 classroom, it probably would have looked like what it looked like a hundred years ago, where you had a teacher standing in front, maybe sitting in front, getting up once in a while to write on a chalkboard, students sitting at their desks, maybe once in a while interacting with the teacher, certainly not interacting with one another. The technology was there, but schools didn't have it and they weren't using it. You fast forward, the United States put in a program, something called E-Rate, where they spent billions of dollars to make sure that schools got access to the internet. I think 99% of public schools now have a fiber connection. So what you've seen is not only is the connection evolved, but you've also seen an improvement in hardware and software, again, a lot of it through the E-Rate program. Textbooks are still being used, but they're being supplemented with real-time information. History is dynamic. If you wanna watch the launching of a space shuttle live, you can do that with your classroom, instead of reading about it. Supplemental learning, we used to have the tear sheets in the math book. A lot of that is done on the computer. You've got something called adaptive learning where you can actually focus on a specific area. If a student's having problems with fractions, he or she can keep on getting those problems until they master it. So what technology has done is made education a lot more personalized and a lot more interactive. It's much different than it was when I was a kid. That's for sure.

**Eric Boles:**

Yeah, myself included, Jeff. Thank you so much for that, Jeff. Kelly, how about yourself?

**Kelly Richmond Pope:**

I think about my first teaching days when I used to use the overhead projector and I thought I was high tech then. So you've definitely seen the evolution of being able to Zoom or have people Skype into your class from another time zone. So the evolution has made the classroom far more dynamic. I think that it's interesting to see the different generations trying to utilize the technology in the classroom. And I think what Jeff said is really important in the higher education space. The technology was there, we just didn't always use it. We love to lecture and walk around the classroom and hold our hands at the podium, So technology really can allow you to do some different things. So it's really made the classroom far more dynamic than it used to be, even 15, 20 years ago when I started teaching as a graduate student.

**Eric Boles:**

Gotcha, gotcha. Even before we go to our next question, we understand that's how it's impacted obviously the education environment, but before we do that, I wanna point out again, if you are watching this live on LinkedIn, please post your questions, please. We will get to them. So thank you so much for that answer, Kelly. Gina, this question is gonna be for you, because what was that evolution like for how corporations evolved their learning programs?

**Gina Jeneroux:**

Thanks Eric and excited to be here. At BMO, we're fortunate to have a corporate university called BMO IFL or the Institute for Learning and it opened back in 1994. So we've had it for 26 years. It's this tangible proof point of our investment in learning, but we started out in much the same way that Jeff and Kelly were saying, focusing more on face-to-face classroom, more on formal classroom. So we were about 80% in class and 20% distributed. Back in 25 years ago, that could be paper, could be very rudimentary e-learning. And over the last 25 years, we've really tried to shift to meet people where they are, so a lot more mobile, palm-of-your-hand learning, anywhere, anytime. We do about 20% now, centralized classroom, and those are for the things that really matter most where we're really needing to bring people together to interact and collaborate and connect and focusing in on the foundational skill building and more of the broad range of skills through other channels and really trying to be more adaptive, as Jeff was saying, and more virtual and digital, as Kelly was saying. So I think some of the trends we're seeing from a corporate perspective are very similar to what we're seeing in broader education.

**Eric Boles:**

Gotcha, you said a word there, Gina, cause it's not just around virtual learning or just around education. I think a lot of us have been forced into this, and that word was adaptive. And going from 80% being face-to-face and 20% being virtual, and now that's switching, just for sake of context, we may have a lot of companies out there who aren't at that level, may have the technology, just haven't made I would say behavioural change that led that direction. Talk to us a little bit about, was that a difficult transition, like from the human standpoint of making that change, not just the technological change.

**Gina Jeneroux:**

It's a great question, Eric. I think so much of it has to do with even changing our own mindset, so disrupting ourselves in the learning space. So over the last few years, we've really focused on expanding our focus as a team. So as we brought new people into the team, it's not just the formal educators that we've had in our group. We've brought in more videographers, photographers, social media people, graphic artists, musicians, et cetera. So we have this really eclectic group of people who challenge the status quo and they're able to bring their skills to tackle solutions in a very different way and also learn from each other. So we're able to practice what we preach and really try to encourage everybody within our own team to be learning new things every single day and to be pushing and challenging each other to create different experiences for our employees, to make it easier for them to learn for their job, for their career, for their interests and for the future. So I think starting with our own disruption is so critical because it keeps us pushing forward and keeps us challenging what we're able to provide so that it's not the same old, same old. We really are trying to create consumer quality experiences for people within the company and continuing to push the balance so that people want to learn and not just need to learn.

**Eric Boles:**

Well, thanks so much for that, Gina. Anytime I hear organizations go through that must change, even change for the positive. I always want to know what was the mindset internally that allows those driving the change to be what I like to call inspired practitioners, like we're not just talking about it, we're actually doing it ourselves as we bring everybody else with it. So that's great to hear that's what BMO did. Question number three, and I'm gonna begin this with Kelly. So in March, when schools abruptly closed, how did that impact educators?

**Kelly Richmond Pope:**

Well, I think it felt like jumping out of a plane at 15,000 feet and you didn't know if the parachute was gonna open or not. That's how it felt. So depending on how you taught your class, you were either prepared or you were, over the weekend, trying to figure out how to prepare. I think luckily for me, I've always taught my class for a virtual environment because I traveled a lot. So I always wanted to make sure that I thought about that out-of-class experience, but it was scary, especially for some of my more seasoned faculty who might not embrace technology in the same way as some other faculty. And even just today, we received an email from our President and Provost saying, due to the rise of the number of

coronavirus cases, most of our classes are going online, because we had an option of various modalities, and now, most everyone is going online. So if you were thinking that you were planning your class for a face-to-face environment and you find out three weeks before that it's not, they were back in that March, for me, it was March 13th, we're back in that feeling again. So I think if you always plan to be virtual, then to switch on to go face-to-face is an easier way. So I started planning virtual. So when I got the email this morning, I was like, "OK, no problem," because you fool me once, but you're not gonna fool me twice. So I was prepared this time, but I'm not sure if everyone took that approach. If you noticed the school districts around the country, if you were waiting for that determination, face-to-face, and then the light switch goes off that you're gonna go online, you're back in that scared mode again. So it'll be interesting. The fall may look very similar that the spring did, these emergency triage-type teaching environments, but it's a scary place right now for educators.

**Eric Boles:**

Thank you for those answers, Kelly. For those of you who are again on LinkedIn Live listening, we love to hear from you as well. So please chime in and let us know all these things that have impacted you. Now I like to move that same question over to you, Jeff. I mean, when we talk about the way these changes so abruptly impacted educators, if you would speak it from your perspective.

**Jeff Silber:**

Sure, and I'll focus on the K-12 area. Yeah, I liked Kelly's analogy, a plane and jumping out at 15,000 feet. I think what you found with a lot of K-12 teachers is that they were still packing up the car on the way to the airport. So they haven't even gotten there yet, excuse me, and there were some school districts that obviously better prepared than others, but for the most part, they were just trying to get to the finish line. They just wanted to get to the end of the school year using whatever they had, Zoom, Google, YouTube, Khan Academy, you name it, just put something out there just to make sure that we can finish the school year, and then we'll worry about it later. There were a number of issues that schools and school districts found. First one was just student access to technology. I talked about the schools getting the fiber access, but I think only about 85% of US households have internet access. And even if you do have the internet access, do you have the hardware to access the internet? Many families do not. And a lot of school districts had the money. They were providing laptops or iPads to students, but a lot of times there weren't enough and students had to share. So even if you have the hardware, you couldn't use it, and then bandwidth was another issue. Everybody was online. You were competing with your siblings and your parents who were probably working from home. Number two is probably just the faculty access to technology. I remember seeing a picture early on in the pandemic of a bunch of teachers in a Walmart parking lot, sitting or standing around their cars, accessing the hotspot, trying to teach their classes. So that was difficult. And many teachers, especially the K-12 level, even if they were comfortable with technology had never taught online. So that was a whole another experience for them. And then finally, in your introduction you talked about the impact on parents, that was crucial. I'll speak for myself. I'm not an educator. I can't teach my kids.

That's why I send them to school. A lot of parents had to really supplement what teachers were doing and were really uncomfortable and not prepared. So there were a lot of issues going on. I don't think anybody wants to go through that again.

**Eric Boles:**

What you just said right there, Jeff, like the combined impact on so many people, so accurate. I have a couple friends who are educators and the number of thank you notes and well wishes they receive from parents were unbelievable because of the experience of now parents having to teach their own kids and realizing the difficulty of it. But one other thing you brought up around access, I saw stories, videos and things as well, is so many students hanging around an Apple store or hanging around any place that had wifi. They were doing the same thing to get access, but because of the pandemic, it also didn't allow people to gather together, which also made the learning experience very, very challenging. Gina, how about you when it comes to, from a corporate standpoint and how you all even went through this process for BMO?

**Gina Jeneroux:**

So some very similar themes, I think, but as a company, our first priority was the health and safety of our customers and our employees. So that was where we focused first. And we went from, on March 13th, we moved from having about 5,000 people who would typically work at home to having more than 30,000. So about a third of our workforce continued to be face-to-face with customers, either in our branches or working in call centres and so on trying to make sure that we were supporting our customers through a really uncertain time. For the people who ended up working at home, a lot of them had a really rapid transition into working at home, perhaps for the first time. So as we were trying to get technology enabled and trying to get people up to speed so they could work effectively at home while managing the situations with their families, while being an educator to their kids, et cetera, we tried to work through all of that in the most humane way possible and human way possible. And when it came to learning, we had actually invested in a mobile platform a couple of years ago, and that enabled us to support and empower employees to learn whatever they wanted whenever they needed for their job, for their career, for their interest and for the future. So when we shut down the corporate university and shut down all face-to-face learning in that timeframe, we started putting more and more content up or directing people into some of the offerings that were available in a virtual and digital way. Some of our first priority were things like resilience and well-being and helping people actually manage through some of the challenges and uncertainty in life as we were going through the early days of the pandemic. We have continued to put content at people's fingertips around the technology and tools that they need to use remotely or at work, being able to use MS Teams effectively, et cetera. And we focused on trying to build virtual leadership capability, because I think we're really relying on leaders more than ever to be able to engage their workforce, and those could be people in the office, at home, or in any of a number of locations. I think that puts a very different focus on leaders in how they show

up and how they communicate and how they collaborate and really be able to help people feel part of a team through this period of uncertainty. So I think some of the actual focus on learning was very similar to what Kelly and Jeff said, but we really started from that people-first place of being able to focus on health, safety and support.

**Eric Boles:**

Gina, you have something going through my mind where we've put a lot of responsibility on leaders in leading through this change, but you just said something that really hit me, which is even learning how to lead virtually, let alone leading already, but to have to lead virtually, especially when you naturally gravitate to a lot of face-to-face, all those kinda dynamics. That's a competency in itself that's new I think for many people who haven't been practicing it. So that is a great insight. Before we get to this question number four, again, if you're watching on LinkedIn Live, please send in your questions or comment. We will get to those, but question number four leads into what I like to say, our new reality, this new reality, this sense that we're gonna go back to the way things were or I can just wait out this change we're going through, and then go back to the way it was, I think it's a dangerous mindset to have. So question number four asks: now that we're through the initial shock and as we start another school year, how will curricula need to be developed for this fall and beyond? And I wanna begin with you, Jeff.

**Jeff Silber:**

All right, great. So I think most districts, once we got through that finish line, have spent the past few months evaluating what happened and trying to plan as best as possible for the upcoming fall. The most important part is redesigning your curricula for flexibility. A lot of schools are still deciding, as Kelly had mentioned, even as of latest today, probably even next week, what they're planning on doing for the fall. You might start out in class, God forbid, there's an outbreak. You've got to send all the kids home to quarantine for a couple of weeks and you bring them back. You need to be flexible. I know it's not that easy, but you've got to design for as much flexibility as possible. That's probably the most important thing that the school districts are doing right now. Number two, as I mentioned before about the access to technology, I think we need better planning. I've seen and I know in my district, our local library is opening up to make sure that students that don't have internet access, don't have the bandwidth, can come to the library where they're physically in the library, standing outside in the parking lot, making sure that they get access. So I think that's important as well and I think we've had time to plan a little bit better, so that should go a little bit smoother. Faculty training, as I mentioned earlier, we've seen a lot of districts proactively training faculty, finding the folks that have experience not only in the K-12 sector, but even folks like Kelly in the postsecondary sector, teaching K-12 faculty how to teach online. So I think the teachers themselves hopefully will be better prepared. And last, but certainly not least, parents. Again, we're not expected to be teachers, but we are expected to help, and it's vital that parents are involved with everything going on, knowing what's happening, knowing what's expected from them as well to make sure that the kids get the best education possible.

**Eric Boles:**

Great, Jeff, great. Again, thank you for those who are watching live. And I just wanna remind you, remember, you can ask questions. I will get to those momentarily, but when you mentioned flexibility, how do you design that flexibility? So Kelly, I wanna begin that with you.

**Kelly Richmond Pope:**

Well, I think, adding a little bit to what Jeff said, I think when you think about curriculum design too less is really, in my class, at least, I'm focusing a little less on the discipline and focusing a lot more on the engagement aspect of the assignments, because if you're not engaged, you're not learning. So I think before, in face-to-face, I might be focused on, okay, are they gonna get these accounting concepts, because eventually they're gonna sit for the CPA exam. I'm really now focusing on curriculum that is engaging because the engagement factor leads to retention. So I think when you focus on engagement, you quite naturally start to focus on flexibility. If a person doesn't have internet access or has a low internet access speed, then maybe using video might be a challenge for some. So I think when you think about how we're moving forward, we're learning a lot more about our class, our learners. For example, I start my class with a one-on-one with each of my students. I send out a survey, getting information: Do you have a laptop? Do you have a tablet? Do you only have a phone? Do you have wifi at home? These are questions I probably never would ask. I even ask, has anyone in your family suffered from COVID? What are you dealing with? Because I need to understand the mental health of the learner so that I can develop curriculum that sort of wraps around whatever their current situation is. So I think that as an educator, it is pulling on our heartstrings in a different way, because before we could just focus on the discipline, focus on the content, but now we have to focus on the human being in a different way that we didn't do before. So when I think about the advances I've made, I feel like I'm a much better educator now due to the pandemic, because I had to be more reflective in the way that I was communicating, not only with my students, but online, my online presence for my class as well.

**Eric Boles:**

Oh, Kelly, thank you so much. What I like about what you just said is we've definitely shifted to a "both-and" world and head and heart, no longer we're just reaching heads. So, thank you. Last piece of this question is gonna be for Gina, and then afterward, we're gonna go into some Q&A. So Gina, you answer the same question. How did you design for that flexibility?

**Gina Jeneroux:**

And I agree with so much of what Kelly said, where it really is about the whole person and being able to support people where they are and in what they're working through. In terms of the actual learning content, I think about it in terms of the what and the how. So increasingly I think we've had more and more items, they're almost like Lego blocks, where

we're creating very small bursts of things that could be assembled and reassembled in different ways to meet the needs of the business and of our employees and so we can be much more nimble in how we're able to quickly respond. That includes eBooks, and animated shorts, and video, and short-burst classes, and different micro and nano learning, et cetera, making sure more things are mobile, that they can be played on a phone, not just on a computer, and really being able to be super flexible there. But the how we design it, I talked a little bit about the change in composition, but also we've been done increasingly more agile teams where we're actually rapidly designing things with business and with employees as partners to co-design so that we're testing, experimenting, learning. It's not like you wait six months to do a big reveal of a program. We're actually continually testing things so that we're able to much more quickly get things into people's hands when they need them so that they're getting rapid support, so they can do their jobs. They can meet customer's needs and feel well supported and be able to have the results that they need. So I think we've changed really everything about how we think about learning and how we think about supporting the business and our customers.

**Eric Boles:**

Gina, this just triggered, there is a quote years ago by a gentleman, name was Eric Hoffer. And his quote simply said, "In times of change, learners inherit the earth while the learned, the know-it-alls, are beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists." It just feels like we're in that place, but what really moves me is how many of, especially with the three of you who are on the side of driving content, on the side of delivering, but you're also so engaged in the learning process yourselves, which, I just love that. Like your learning's happening simultaneously as you guys are teaching and growing, and it really helps that, what I like to call that cycle of learn, practice, teach, learn, practice, teach. It just continues to cycle around. That is right on. Oh, I wanna go into some Q&A with some questions that we've been able to receive, and I see one right here. Our first question comes from Samantha and she asks, "What can companies do to substitute for in-person orientations for new employees who may be starting in a virtual setting?" And Gina, I'm gonna ask that question to you. Hopefully it was clear enough.

**Gina Jeneroux:**

Thank you, Eric, and thank you, Samantha. It's such a great question. And one of the most important things in getting somebody on board, whether they are new to the company, or new to role, or returning from a leave, is helping to make sure that they feel connected to the team, to the company, to the work that they're doing. So that cultural aspect of it is actually one of the most important. So in many ways, that starts with the leader. So as we've been pivoting to more virtual onboarding, we've actually really focused in on helping to make sure that leaders have best practices, have tips, have tools, to be able to understand how to get people up to speed with the technology that they need because so much of the work now is remote and technology enabled, to make sure that they have consistent practices and consistent ideas about how to regularly engage with, communicate with the people who are in their team and really helping those new employees be able to



have regular practices and regular connections with the broader team so that they feel part of something bigger than what they might see every single day as they are working from their home or whether they are new to a socially-distanced office. So we've really started with leaders. We've also started with taking inventory quickly of what do we have, so what can be repurposed fast, and where do we need to wrap new context and new virtual elements around it? So in some cases it's actually about being really nimble and being very human and equipping leaders to do the right things to engage people, and then to be able to start to layer on those additional resources and experiences to help people feel part of the company, and part of our purpose, part of our vision, and doing the right things for our customers.

**Eric Boles:**

Thank you so much, Gina. Again, we love to hear from you, those who are watching right now. Let us know what you think. There has been a few additional questions, and I think this is one that probably impacts a lot of us, which is, there are still a lot of questions about when people can actually go back to physical spaces. So if that's going on, how do you teach through that uncertainty? Like how do you teach through that? I'm gonna begin with Kelly and Gina because they actually work with students and employees in the process. So Kelly, let me begin that question with you.

**Kelly Richmond Pope:**

One of the things that I did is really adopt a point of view initially. So we're gonna be virtual. We're gonna be virtual for 10 weeks, or we're gonna be virtual, we're gonna be virtual for five weeks. And I really tried not to bring up, or we could be changing, I'm not sure, I tried not to introduce that type of uncertainty so that they could feel that they could adapt or get situated around a common theme. "We're gonna be online for 10 weeks and this is what it's gonna be like." I think sometimes you can introduce fear when change comes 'cause no one really likes to change. So that was one of the things that I found was really helpful to teach through the pandemic is just saying, "This is how it's gonna be." I also ensured them that this is the same class I would offer if it was face-to-face. So we have speakers. Now they can just Zoom in. I'm accessible, here's my email, here's my phone number. I'm available on the weekend or not. I would let them know how they could reach me. So I wanted to assure them that it was the same class, just a different format, but the same content and the same accessibility to me. So really what I'm saying is I'm a big proponent of synchronous learning because I think you can stay connected with people in a better way and wrap your arms around them if you need to, if you're with them alongside in the learning process, as opposed to always the asynchronous way. So that was just one of my strategies is just really just making sure that they were certain that "This is how it's gonna be for the next 10 weeks, and so get ready, and we're not gonna change." So I really appreciate the leadership at DePaul for making a decision at the beginning before classes started so that people could adapt and adjust as opposed to what you said, Eric, when some schools may have students on campus, and then we have to send everybody home. That creates a level of panic. So I

appreciate our leadership in having the forward view of saying, "We are gonna start this way and so we can plan" because it's hard to plan. It's hard to plan when you don't know.

**Eric Boles:**

Yeah, that is so good. Kelly. I say it's hard to be confident and confused at the same time. So that level of clarity you're able to really-

**Kelly Richmond Pope:**

Absolutely.

**Eric Boles:**

Establish really, really makes a difference. Thank you for that, Kelly. Gina, how about yourself?

**Gina Jeneroux:**

I think very similar. As our business leaders were making decisions about what needed to happen in the company to navigate through the pandemic, we really needed from a learning standpoint, to be able to support those decisions. So whichever way the company was going and whichever way our employees needed to go, we had to respond and support that. And like Kelly was saying, once you make a decision, once you chart a course, you don't wanna add additional uncertainty through the learning process. So it's making sure that people know what they can rely on and what you're able to provide. So some things right out of the gate, we said, "We're pausing on this. Other things we would give clear dates or indications on when key decisions would be made around programs." And when it came to the actual delivery itself, like Kelly was saying, some things work really well in a synchronous environment and are appropriately placed in the classroom, but with the classroom not available, we had to make decisions about the things where we would pivot quickly to create virtual offerings so that we could create just enough, just in time so people could build the skills that they needed to do their job. And then there were some things that we'd always wanted to transition out of a classroom. And I think the CEO of Microsoft talked about how many years we've advanced in only a number of weeks in technology. And I think that gave us the opening to be able to pivot quickly and actually create true virtual solutions and focus on things that may never go back to the classroom space, and they shouldn't. So we've been able to be much more deliberate in where we path things and what kinds of experiences we're able to create for people to meet them where they are, and also meet them where the business needs need to be because of our customers.

**Eric Boles:**

Well, that's right on, not only finding opportunity at a difficulty, but I like the question you all would function with, is how to not only survive this change, but how do we thrive through it? which is a different question when you're looking for solutions. We do have a question

that just came in, and this is a one last question and I wanna make sure we get it. Our next question comes from OB and the question is, "How does an organization like BMO deal with evaluating employee performance in view of the demands on parents to be educators, or how does BMO identify and evaluate an employee with little kids and the reduced productivity due to these demands?" Wow, great question, and you can answer Gina, you can answer Jeff, and Kelly, even if it's a different setting, I would love to hear your thoughts around that, and that's how we wrap up.

**Gina Jeneroux:**

It's such a great question. And our first focus was making sure people had the support that they needed. So we provided additional days off if people needed them to be able to manage through the uncertainty of trying to get their kids set up and try to focus on education, or to focus on elder care, or whatever it is that people might have needed in those days of uncertainty. I think we've also, through virtual team meetings and so much of the work, I think there's been a real shift in seeing the human side of people. So you have a lot more kids who enter into the frames during video meetings and you have pets walking across desks in front of the screen, and that's okay. I think it actually helps us see everyone more as humans and as people and really seeing them in their home environment, and that's great actually. And I think as we moved along, I think one of our focus, on virtual leadership capability, has been around managing two objectives. So it doesn't matter as much exactly when people do the work that they need to be doing. So we need to provide the support for them to be able to manage their family and manage their personal situation, but if the best time for them to be doing something might be 10 o'clock at night to be able to meet a deliverable, that's fine. If you're managing to outcomes, you're not managing to, sort of seat time, I think that opens up a lot more opportunity for people to find the rhythm and find the opportunities that work for them, with their families and their own personal situation, and then, more than anything, we need to continue to be flexible in this environment because there's still a lot of uncertainty and we need to make sure that we're setting people up for success to do their work well so that they can meet the needs of our customers who are going through the same kinds of uncertainty too.

**Eric Boles:**

Thank you, Gina. And because of time, what I wanna do here, you guys can either answer the question, but more importantly, if you just wanna leave a little summary, Jeff, just a thought you may wanna leave with the audience, as well as you, Kelly, and then I'll go ahead and close it off. So, Jeff, I begin that with you.

**Jeff Silber:**

Yeah, we were talking about dealing with uncertainty, and I was talking to a district administrator last week and he basically said, "You plan for the worst and you hope for the best," and I'm optimistic that last spring was the worst and hopefully it gets a little less worse as we go forward and we do whatever we can to kinda get through that.

**Eric Boles:**

Thank you, and Kelly.

**Kelly Richmond Pope:**

I was thinking about the question you just asked Gina about the evaluation process and I'm optimistic. I really don't know the answer to that because I wonder if people allow you a certain bandwidth of the dog, or the cat, or the crying baby, but then at evaluation time, it's like, Well, did you get it done? Did you figure out how to handle that? Did you figure out how to manage that because you still have a call? I don't know. It'd be interesting to see where we end up and I use my teaching evaluations that happened. When I think about how I was evaluated, students would still say, "I liked the class, but I would have preferred for it to be face-to-face." Well, I don't have any control over if the pandemic happens or not. So it just made me think that we still have a level of, maybe we're not all being realistic about the way we evaluate where we're living and how we're living. So I hope people are able to take our circumstances into their evaluation when employers are being evaluated or when faculty are being evaluated, and even when students are being evaluated because now they have more demands. So I don't know. Maybe on our next call, we'll talk about that.

**Eric Boles:**

Oh, I wanna thank you. First of all, thank you to everyone who's watching right now who watched this episode of Road to Recovery around expert conversations. I'm really, really grateful to our experts here for being so candid, vulnerable, and open with all of us. I do love the mindset of this transition of being flexible, valuing in some cases, productivity over presence, which means more concern with the result versus how we get it 'cause it has to change with the time we're living in. So I must acknowledge that we had a lot of good questions, but due to time, we were not able to get to all of them. So over time, if you can visit [bmo.com/expertconversations](http://bmo.com/expertconversations), that is [bmo.com/expertconversations](http://bmo.com/expertconversations) for great additional information. We'll be very grateful. So once again, thank you. I am honoured to be your host with going over these expert conversations and also learning from these wonderful experts we had today. So with that being said, look forward to seeing you all next time.

**Jeff Silber:**

Thanks.