

Transcript

Derek Bruff: [0:00] This is leading lines. I'm Derek Bruff. I have some good news and some bad news. First, the bad news. We've produced 100 episodes of leading lines, a podcast about educational technology and higher education. And we haven't had a single episode focused on accessibility, by which I mean, using technology to meet the varied learning needs of different students. Now, the good news in this episode, we're fixing that oversight. Unit. Safari is a Senior Instructional Designer at the Center for Engaged Learning and Teaching at Tulane University in New Orleans. She has a PhD in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis on instructional design and technology from Virginia Tech. And her career has focused on the use of instructional technology and sound pedagogy in a variety of teaching contexts. She's also a good friend of podcast producer to Julaine Fowlin. The Vanderbilt Center for Teaching is very own Assistant Director for instructional design. Julaine recently interviewed Eunice about her passion for accessibility in the educational technology space. Eunice shares how she came to this work, what it looks like now, and lots of useful advice for instructors who want to make learning accessible for more students.

Julaine Fowlin: [1:31] I'm delighted to be interviewing Eunice Ofori. She's a Senior Instructional Designer with the Center for Engaged Learning and Teaching at Tulane University. Eunice is a dear friend and colleague. We both did our PhDs at Virginia Tech, go Hokies. So, over the years I've gotten to learn about unisons, passion for accessibility. And she just as a way of addressing accessibility issues in a meaningful way, both as an instructional designer and as an instructor. So, I felt this dual perspective that you bring to accessibility would be so beneficial to our listeners. And I'm just excited to have a conversation with you today. Welcome Eunice. **Eunice Ofori: [2:16]** Thank you, Dr. Fowlin.

Julaine: [2:19] Alright. So, a live I find everyone has a story around their passions and interests. So, I think we'll start out by, um, what's your story Eunice around accessibility? **Eunice: [2:33]** That thank you for the question. I'm really very passionate about accessibility, but that did not happen until probably in 2015, somewhere around 2015 when I had already started graduate school. So, one of my children, I have three boys and one of

them, the middle boy, had lots of different challenges. When he was little, his speech was delayed, so he wasn't talking at 2.5. And so, we ended up going through his developmentalist and he was diagnosed to be on the spectrum. So, that was the beginning of when I spotted learn more about what autism is, what are some of the ways. So as a parent, I went into full gear. I'm like, Okay, I need to be able to put my parent hat on and I need to be able to figure out how to help my child because I see potential in him just like any other typical child. So, I started really looking for opportunities to maybe change, has already started my graduate program and Instructional Design at that time. And, and I started looking to see if there's any programs or whatever I needed to do and take certification or anything I could do in my own power to learn more about this, to learn more about ways that I can help support my child. And the more we grew in this, he started talking. He's doing amazing right now. And he was on IEP for a for a long time and now he switched from IEP to 504 plan, which is more of accommodation. So that's a huge improvement for him. And his wife with him over the years has given me so many different perspectives, you know, from as a parent, as an instructor, and that's an instructional designer. **Julaine: [4:28]** Awesome. So how would you say that has no shape to your career goal in terms of what you're doing right now with accessibility?

Eunice: [4:38] Thank you. So, it has shaped my career goal has kind of evolved over the years. And so now my career goal is to provide equal access to education for all BY engaging nourishment and support and academic communities to develop and teach innovative research-based teaching and lead an experience that's used in sound, pedagogical strategies, and instructional technology. And so, it kind of sounds long, but then my goal switched from, okay, I'm really interested in because when I started graduate school, my area of interest was in distance education. And I ended up writing my dissertation on a message designed for mobile learning. So, I went more into how do we designed a message? Because my child is a visual learner, he needs to see the contents and he needs to be able to see it in a meaningful way to understand that. So, that also translated into my goal and my desire to make sure that every person, regardless of your ability, whether you have any form of disability or you don't whoever you are in that teaching and learning process, my goal is to be able to help you to succeed and just as so it ties in well with my child and my, you know, the challenges that he had and had come back. So, I always think to myself, how do I translate that and have a wet with him with early intervention and speech therapy and developmental services for him? How do I channel that into my work as an instructional designer and my wet as an instructor? So that has really informed who, what my career goal

is. And I'm really a big advocate for accessibility and inclusivity for everybody. **Julaine: [6:26]** That's amazing the alignment and transformation. And so, a lot of times we have like these broad terminology I always like to ask the people who I talk to, like what does accessibility? Because we use these terms and sometimes we just use them because they're quote unquote buzz terms. And so yes, there is a formal definition, but I just like to get from you why does accessibility mean to you? **Eunice: [6:54]** Yeah, great. That's a great question. So, to me, accessibility means that you are providing an equal playing field for everyone, including students who have disability instructors, trainees, and trainers. And so, whoever is involved in any academic or in any process, whether it's teaching or instruction or in whatever capacity, accessibility provides a place for everybody. It ensures that and everyone in that process or teaching and learning process is fully able, able to access content and confident enough to teach that. So, it's not only for, because I work with in practice, I consulted with instructed to help them to develop their causes. But then you also realize that you need to think about not just the students that you are designing the cost for, but for the instructor. Also how you can help support them and make sure that they have access to that content. I'll access to training material, also access to things that would help them to succeed as instructors. So to me, accessibility is making sure that because there's different abilities, right? In any form of institution or in a classroom, or in a form of training. Everybody have different ability and I believe that everyone has something to bring to the table. So if you have a fish and if you have an- and that's actually my all-time favorite quote. By its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid, because you cannot compare a fish to, let's say a monkey, right? If you are asked both of them to climb a tree, then the monkey would definitely be able to climb to the top before you know it, but then the fish would just be lying there, right? So, what how do you, um, do a session that everyone an opportunity to succeed in every capacity they find themselves. So that's how I see a sensibility.

Julaine: [8:52] I think that analogy, so like so awesome to compare what are abilities are with the task set is even. And one thing that just came out to me is the idea that equal does not mean same or providing each person with an equal opportunity requires that individualized attention to what does this person need to be, like you said, on the same playing field as the other person. And so, as a follow up a little bit in terms out, you keep mentioning accessibility and inclusion. Do you mind elaborating on that link between accessibility and inclusion? **Eunice: [9:31]** Yeah, That's great. Yes. So when you, when a content is accessible, when accessibility is at play, then it means that so accessibility comes before

inclusion. Inclusion is making sure that everybody is fully unfolded in the process. Everyone is fully able to participate, right? So why is everybody able to participate then you are actually including everyone. But if that isn't day, like for example, my child would need- like if you are telling a story, like at home, I have three boys, so I tell a story or will read a story. This child would want to see the story written down because he's a visual learner. So, he just will not be able to process does the spoken language. So, if I'm telling their story about the same time I've written the story in maybe 10 bullet points. I got your point one, point two, point three. It means that I am including him and all his brothers because he would want to see it. So again, and inclusion, what would happen only when everything is accessible. So, if you're able to make it accessible and I'll give you another example also. I know you probably asked me this person later. I feel like it fits in better here. The semester I'm teaching a course in education in a diverse society. And one of their students requested for an e-book version of the textbook. The textbook is only am texts only write a paper, paper only textbook. So, a sudden, it made me think about the fact that why is this an active what e-book, right? And this student actually has accommodation. He has at a time and a half for the tests. So, I started thinking about it. So, it means that probably the student would want that text book to be read to them, right. I feel like even for me who does not have any disability, sometimes I want that text to be read to me. So that process of advocating for that student, an advocate, it really that every textbook, if you are able to find an e-book version of that textbook and include that, then that actually included everybody. So then it's accessible and it's also an inclusive for every single person. **Julaine: [11:54]** Thank you. So, my job and I really like where we're going with the conversation because a lot of times when we talk about accessibility and evening inclusion, we kind of see them as kind of add-ons, but if we embed them in the way we're thinking, it will happen automatically. And these are things that enable good learning because they're, always see the learning as more like a membrane. And a part of that is if you're not accessible and you're not eating them, you can even prevent learned from starting because those are kind of like a blocks related to students having that motivation and the resources that they need to succeed. So speaking about that, as you talk about your passion and the things that you're doing with advocacy. You do have to do a little bit more. And so, some instructors may be a bit apprehensive about accessibility. So what is your recommendation for thinking about accessibility when designing a course without being overwhelmed? Like we have instructors may not have had children with needs or they're not trained in church, bell diviners. They're probably not tech savvy. Where do, where do you recommend starting with them?

Eunice: [13:11] That's a great question. So, there's this thing that if you, if you designed with accessibility in mind, everybody benefits from it. So, think about the fact that, for example, a course I taught in the spring, and I created a course with a really good navigation, like every single page of the course, every single module look exactly the same. And this was a graduate level course. And one of the, you know, the course evaluation, one of the students said that this is like the most organized course, and it really set me up to succeed, right? So just something as simple as I'm creating a similar page, consistent event page titles and headings for every single page, right? So what accessibility you don't want to do is design the course and fit accessibility into it. You want to think about it at the beginning. And when you think about it, when you start at the beginning to think about accessibility, you are able to think through, okay, how do I make it? Put yourself in the shoes of their student? Will I be able to access this content in the most feasible way that makes sense for them. Or you could even ask a colleague to see here. Take a look at this. What are your thoughts about that? Do you think it's intuitive enough, Right? So, you know, just cut in something as simple as making your course navigation as simple and easy to navigate as much as possible. So someone who has disability knows that. Okay. If I go to this page, I know where to find my readings, I know where to find everything. Someone who doesn't have a disability. And though you have created consistent navigation, that they are able to look at the course content and they are able to follow it better. They are confidence in the line and they are able to succeed once they have all the tools they need. So, something as simple as that. And then also, there is also inbuilt accessibility features already available for you that you may not be aware that it's there. So, for example, Microsoft Office has been built accessibly for the PowerPoint Microsoft web. And, and even you know that Microsoft sheets, right, the MS Excel and show all of that. All you need to do after creating a document in Microsoft Word or in PowerPoint is to just click on Check Accessibility. And then what it does is that it's great. It gives you suggestions on how to make it accessible, right? So, something really as simple as just using the already built features that are already in there and falling. And same as Google as well. And we will have inbuilt accessibility features that you could also use. So just scanning through that and just one time and just kind of looking at it, taking one step back and looking at it from the eyes of the student and to see if this makes sense for them. So really, it's not doing too much, but it's really thinking about your students putting them in front of you, looking at where you are going with them and how to make it a little bit more flexible and a little bit easier for them to access the course content.

Julaine: [16:28] I think that's amazing that you talk about utilizing what we have. I will put

some links below for our listeners. In terms of everybody uses Microsoft, everybody uses Google. Well, I shouldn't say everybody, but a lot of people use Google. And so, kind of understanding that access, accessibility features are already built into these tools. We just need to find it and sometimes it's just a check. As you mentioned that it was so funny. I attended a panel discussion on recently and it was hybrid. And one of the speakers, she was on virtual and we were all in the same space. And for some reason the audio was so bad and most of us in the room, we didn't need accessibility. But then soon catch live caption was a savior for us, right? And as I look at back, and so it just kind of reminded me of the conversation that we had going because the audio was just so not good. Every time she laugh or something, it was just not very clear. But they live caption enabled all of us who did not necessarily need this accessibility, accessibility feature. But it was just so super helpful. And so that came to mind as you were talking. I recall you sharing experience about a student who was able to survive in your class without you even knowing. I think that's a beautiful story to share with our listeners. **Eunice: [17:55]**. Yeah, so I think I mentioned earlier that I developed and taught a course in Essentials of Lenin and teach. And so I had no idea and no one in the class had any sort of accommodation. I know what the rigid because usually I am as a goldmine center is what we call it 80. Every school has its different name. And they would reach out to tell you that all students have accommodation, give them a time and a half, give them extra time, double time. But I didn't have any, so I had no idea that anyone in the class had any form of disability. And so about halfway through the class, we were actually talking about accessibility. And one of the students just share his experience. It's like, you know, I'm really appreciative of, you know, the PowerPoints you create and how useful it is for me. I'm completely blind in one eye and I have some vision in the other eye. So really he was right. He was like, I really like, and this is one of the great experiences that I have had with the class because and I didn't even know. I thought about accessibility at the beginning. So, I'm like, okay, how do I make the color contrast better, right? How do I make sure that the students actually see the content or Ubuntu assess the content. So it wasn't really am I open it? And from that point onwards, this student would volunteer to share his experiences. And it was great because these student that I was teaching wet way, we're training to get the a teaching certificate as teaching assistance. So, this was good to really have someone in the class, and I would never have known this. So, if I didn't create the courts would accessibly in mind. This is halfway through the course, right? And that's already set in there. Student up to fear, to fail right from the beginning. And it was amazing for me to know that really whatever I was put in place, I've already put in place in the cause and whatever I was doing was very helpful for that student. So yeah, it was

such a great and an eye-opening experience for me. **Julaine: [19:59]** I thought it was amazing, like you said reinforcing is how accessibility is not an afterthought, but something that we should think about from the get-go. And it really helps all learned, so you did share with us some of the technologies such as the features in Google, you also mentioned Microsoft. And so, what other technologies have you found most useful to address accessibility issues, especially free ones because we don't necessarily want, oh, well, some universities don't have a budget for additional technologies, and so do you mind sharing some of those with us?

Eunice: [20:34] Yeah, absolutely. So, all that, all these tools I'm going to share and it's pretty much free depending on the university. So, my university, Tulane University has Office365. And a lot of universities are ready have that tool. So, Office 365, the PowerPoint version of Office 365 that have live captions already embedded in it. So, I use it every single time that I'm doing any presentation. So, I personally benefited from live captions when I moved from Ghana here. So, I always I'm a big advocate for that because I thought that language was very, and I put American talks really fast at a time that I started graduate school because I wasn't used to it. So live captions is already embedded in PowerPoints Office 365 version of PowerPoint. I thought the desktop option or the Cloud-based one, you already have that. Adobe Acrobat Pro also has, well yesterday, actually just found out yesterday that they do have read aloud. So, if you have Adobe Acrobat Pro, there is that, that functionality, one to check for accessibility to their students can actually read a lot. So, if you have an article that students can open an app or save it as a, as a PDF. When they open it yet able to read it out loud to themselves. So, and wants to them that I encountered yesterday was telling me this is a lifesaver for her if she's in a medical school and she's a busy mom with two kids and a family woman. She's like, every time I'm cooking, this is a lifesaver for me. I'm reading my articles, I cook, so that sets me up to succeed. So, Adobe Acrobat Pro or any version of PDF that you have that already have inbuilt accessibility features that you can point out to your students. Another tool that I really love also is immersive reader. So, a massive reader. It's also a free tool that you can add as a Chrome extension. So anytime that you want to read an article, it can read it out loud to you. And then there's also like speech to text them or text-to-speech tool. So, for example, the Google suit also already have and the Google Sheets, Google document and a Google presentation document software already have and speech to text. So, for example, if somebody is not able to type faster or they have some sort of physical disability, they can just say what they want and then the computer desk types it for them. And this is three, it's all

already embedded in there for you to, to use. And, and then another, another tool that you know, something that I think it's also useful is OERs. So get with your library and figure out what OER. So, so all you out. What does a full name of- **Julaine: [23:33]** Open educational resources? **Eunice: [23:35]** Great. Thank you. Yeah, it has education. So a lot of these, even now, most of the textbooks and stuff that they've been encouraged to go get into like an OER format. So find out what the library has. And I actually went and found out because of their student who approached me about an e-book version. The library would add, would purchase most of the time when you reach out to them, every library might have a different policy, but our library, you can just request an e-book and a library will purchase it for you. So, if you have the opportunity at the beginning of the semester to find out, are they able to version of the symbol? Is the library able to purchase that for you or the students have the option to actually purchase an e-book or a physical book? These are just simple things that you can do that are pretty much free for you and to help you with accessibility in your classroom.

Julaine: [24:32] Thank you so much. I always look at lives as we all have to operate within the sphere of or when somebody then the spare our power. And by virtue of being instructor or faculty member, we do have a certain amount of and I feel like it is within our power to see your librarians as our allies that reach out to them. And it just dawned on me that here we are talking about things that are available to faculty. But I feel that this faculty knowledge is helpful because they can implement this in their course, but they can also share it with the students because sometimes students are not. Yes, you have these departments that work with students. But unless somebody really has an accommodation or something like that, they may not even know of these features. Like you can open this in Adobe and it can read to you that type of thing. So that's really good to know about that guy there, these things and how we can use our power as an instructors is just to seek out these resources and presented them to our learners. So, that's amazing. Thank you. So right, yeah. So, right now you're creating a course for pre-service teachers as part of a special education addition certification mindsets. I feel like the way how we think about it's like you said, think about accessibility parents and be like that's a mindset. So could you share some of the mindsets are ways you're thinking about accessibility and how you're integrating back into the course. **Eunice: [26:01]** Yeah, that's great. So, with the course I'm creating right now and I'm looking at it from the perspective of a pre-service teacher who is actually going to a K-12 world and to teach. So, I'm looking at introducing them. So that courses divided into three sections. So, there is the introduction and there is the exploration, and then there's the

application. So, you always want to think about, okay, so these two then, so let's say they have, they don't really have that, the required knowledge and skill. So, we are looking at what is instructional technology and what is assistive technology? How is that important? And then from there we'll move on to. Helping them to actually explore some of the assistive technology tools. So, looking at and technology and tools and strategies to help with verbal epiphysis didn't have a verbal disability. What are some of the tools that you can use for that? And I could also kind of think about technology and tools to help with and communication to help with like staying still. You know, it's that has so many different tools that they are going to actually explore. And as part of the explosion is also to look at how do you actually incorporate this technology into your classroom, right? How do you effectively, I'm incorporate assistive technology into your classroom and how how does that look like? And how do you evaluate? What does the ongoing evaluation look like for your students? So, one day they explore all of these, then we are now coming to a point where we are looking at, okay, how do we actually design your courses? How do we design with accessibility in mind? How do you personalize and using UDL principles as an example. And so, then the students will have the opportunity to actually create lesson plans and incorporate this into that, you know, how they can actually use the technology integration modules, help them to think about how best to do this. And then also in moving onto that, our last module, we'll probably talk about assistive technology and professional development. How to, because with technology, technology keeps changing, right? So, you as an instructor, what are some of the strategies that you can use to stay on track and to stay on that trend in assistive technology and instructional technology in general, and how you can actually help your students to transition. So even though we are looking at K-12, we are also looking at how to help your student transition from a K-12 of world into the higher education and helping them to succeed in that way. **Julaine: [28:46]** Thank you so much. So, my so by UDL, universal Design for Learning.

Eunice: [28:50] Correct. **Julaine: [28:51]** And so as you are talking about technology integration model, and is there one that you found helpful that you want to share with us today? **Eunice: [29:01]** Yeah, absolutely. So that you know, there are so many different technology integration models. So, by the one that I feel is the most simpler for anyone who is just starting to use technology. Getting a little bit more comfortable by using that technology is SAMR model. SAMR model. SAMR model is a framework that was created by Dr. Ruben Puentedura that categorize for different degrees of classroom technology integration. So, the S stands for substitution, augmentation, the M stands for

modification, then the R stands for definition. So, really you are looking at the four processes, but you are moving from an enhancement stage more into more of a transformation stage. So dependent on wherever you are, whether you are comfortable with technology. So, like for example, that first step is substitutions. So basically we substituted substitution. You are looking at, it's a type of technology that would act as a direct substitute to what you already have. One example is if you always give their student's paper texts, you can, you could consider using the LMS to put the same texts there in the LMS. So that's using the technology to substitute what is already they ask their students to write an essay and using Google Docs and haven't tested them collaborate using the Google Docs, right? And so that's substitution. And then we'll ask you substitute. You can kind of move on towards the augmentation where the students are actually using the technology to access a direct substitute of a functional improvements. So, if you are able to improve upon and just not just substitute in it, but then making it a little bit better. So, like I mentioned, collaborating with your colleagues, right? So, you can use Google Docs instead of using a paper. You can translate that into a Google document, but then you can go another step to use that as a collaboration tool for your students. So, that's moving up a little bit with the use of technology. And then you can also move, move up a little bit. So, depend on how comfortable you are. Move up to the modification stage where you redesign and you are rethink and you know, looking at maybe a tool like Poll Everywhere and to use to find out what students already know as a form of formative assessment and, or using the Zoom Polling and functionality. So that's making it a little bit modify and it's not as asking students questions, but really going a little bit step further. And then the final stop is redefinition. And so really creation of new tasks, creation of new dance. And that was previously inconceivable. So, once you get to the redefinition, it's at a stage where is not possible without the use of technology, is not possible to do that particular activity. And there are so many different tools there for you that no matter where you are on this, on this stage, and where are you at a substitution stage. It's okay, just thought where you are and then as you keep going and getting a little bit more comfortable, you can move up and move up to augmentation, move up to modification and read the definition.

Julaine: [32:28] Thanks for sharing. I like this model because I like anything that views a journey as a continuum. And so, no matter where you are on this journey, can start. And it just Can I meet at sometimes and longtime ago and accessibility started. I know a couple of faculties wanted to like scan PDF's. But then at the time, but scan would give the paper PDF as an image. And at one point in time there were they, it wasn't clear to them why that wasn't

accessible or acceptable. Because nothing can read the image because the format is like a JPEG. So sometimes we have good intentions, but we have to make sure that the substitution is in a format that is accessible. That's great. So we're coming to the end of our time together. The last words that you'd like to share with our listeners today. **Eunice: [33:25]** Yeah, so I just want faculty to know or instructional designers or instructors that accessibly may sound that it's a big word, it's a buzzword, but it is doable. And you already have resources available to you at your disposal to do that. So, utilize those resources, you'd utilize your TAs and all of that already built tools that are available for you and to use accessible as possible. And you have the ability to be able to make your course content accessible to all your students to make sure that everybody is fully involved and able to access and confidently assess the course content that you are providing feedback.

Julaine: [34:10] Thank you so much, I've learned a lot and I really appreciate you spending the time to share with me and our listeners. I'll just show technology can enhance accessibility for all. And I feel like you provided lightest fresh perspective on how we should all think about accessibility and embedded in just our way of being. And Eunice, Dr. Ofori, it was a pleasure connecting with you, just a joy. And thank you again.

Eunice: [34:38] The pleasure is mine, thanks for the invite. **Derek Bruff: [34:44]** That was Eunice Ofori, Senior Instructional Designer at the Center for Engaged Learning and Teaching at Tulane University. Thanks to Eunice for taking time to talk with us and thanks to Julaine for another fantastic interview. If you know me, you know, I like a good conceptual model. So, I was excited to learn about the SAMR model, SAMR for educational technology, use that Eunice mentioned. Like Julaine, I like a model that facilitates growth through small changes over time. And SAMR seems to work well for that. I also really like exploring that redefinition level of the model where technology allows for the creation of new previously inconceivable tasks. That's where I would slot something like a course podcast, where the technology allows students to connect with an audience far beyond the confines of the classroom. Or maybe a social annotation experience through perusal or hypothesis, where students are collaboratively annotating a text. I guess you could do that by passing a reading from student to student. But the technology certainly enables something that would be challenging to pull off without the technology. If you'd like to learn more about the SAMR model, check the show notes for a link. I've also included links to more information about Eunice Ofori and her work. Thanks again to do lane for bringing us this interview. Leading lines is produced by the Vanderbilt Center for Teaching and the gene and

Alexander heard libraries. You can find us on Twitter at leading lines pod and on the web at leading lines Pod.com. This episode was edited by Red McDaniel. Look for new episodes. The first, third Monday of each month. I'm your host, Derek breath. Thanks for listening. See you soon.