Transcript

[0:01] (music)

Derek Bruff: [0:05] This is Leading Lines. I'm Derek Bruff. We have something a little different for you on this last episode of 2019. Last month, I had the good fortune to speak on a panel at the POD Network Conference on the use of podcasts in faculty and educational development. Naturally, we recorded our opening remarks and the audio that follows, you will hear from Jay Todd and Bart Everson from Xavier University of Louisiana, Tenisha Baca and Beth Eyres from Glendale Community College in Arizona, and me, Derek Bruff, from Vanderbilt University about our respective podcasts on teaching and learning. Jay and Bart are two of the producers of Teaching, Learning, and Everything Else, a production of The Center for the Advancement of Teaching in Faculty Development at Xavier. Beth and Tenisha are the hosts of Two Profs in a Pod from the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Engagement at Glendale Community College. We talk about the origins of our podcasts and the structure and missions of our podcasts. And we name a few of our favorite episodes. (music)

Jay Todd: [1:12] My name is Jay Todd. I'm the Associate Director for the Center for the Advancement of Teaching in Faculty Development at Xavier University of Louisiana. I'm also one of the hosts of the podcast, Teaching, Learning, and Everything Else. I'm not going to introduce each of these folks up here because they're each going to take a little bit of time here to introduce themselves and talk a little bit about their respective podcasts. We're going to get to know our panelists and our podcasters a little bit here. With that, I'm going to hand things over to our panelists to introduce themselves. And I think I'm going to ask my co-host and producer, Bart Everson to start things off a little bit.

Bart Everson: [1:54] Thanks, Jay. So yeah, my name is Bart Everson. I work at the Center for Advancement of Teaching and Faculty Development at Xavier University of Louisiana. That's, that's not to be confused with Xavier in Ohio, right? This is the one in New Orleans. We are historically a black college and also a Catholic institution, the only historically black college

that's also Catholic in the whole country. And we've been producing this podcast for over ten years. It's called Teaching, Learning, and Everything Else. (audience claps) Thanks.

[2:33] In that time, though, we still haven't quite hit that 100th episode. We just finished Episode, I think this is going to be Episode 89, that we're recording right now, maybe, maybe Episode 90. I forget. But the point is, as you can see, we haven't gone exactly at a super quick pace. We've sometimes slowed down quite a bit. The concept though of the podcast, I think is pretty simple. It's just conversations about teaching and learning, conversations with people who actually teach, almost always, about things that are going on in higher education, about as the name implies, the intersection of how teaching and learning touches everything at some point. And especially if you talk to a bunch of different people. What kind of I should say, that makes I feel like our approach unique is that we rotate the hosting duty. So I'm not really the host of the podcast, although occasionally, I'll be one of the people having a conversation with somebody else. But it's rotated amongst the different, well, we've tried different models over the years. Our current thing has been lately to rotate it amongst our staff. So I might host, I might have be talking to somebody in one episode, Jay might be talking to somebody on the next episode. Some of our co-workers who aren't here on other episodes, and our director, Elizabeth Hammer, who is right in the middle of the room here, can be heard also talking to people all around the country about different topics. And that's really just, the concept of the podcast.

Derek: [4:20] I'm Derek Bruff. I'm the director of the Center for Teaching at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. And I am part of the team that produces Leading Lines, a podcast on educational technology. We've been doing this for a few years now. We're up to I think 67 episodes, or so. I had this idea several years ago to do a podcast on educational technology. In my day job, I get to talk to a lot of faculty doing really interesting things with technology in their teaching. And I often tell their stories in workshops in other settings. And I thought it'd be nice to kind of have a platform where I could share more of these examples of faculty using technology in really intentional ways. But I didn't think I could do a podcast. We had had a podcast at the Center for Teaching about a decade ago. We stopped. Xavier kept going, which is really impressive. And I just thought, I wasn't sure how I could pull this off. Well, I was in a meeting with some other folks on campus who work with educational technology. And my colleague, John Sloop, and the provost office kind of threw out this idea for a podcast. And I was like, "Hey, that was my idea." And so we decided actually let's just do it together. And so we ended up putting together a team, it's produced by the Center for

Teaching, our Institute for Digital Learning. We've got some folks from the libraries involved. And then John Sloop in the Provost Office.

[5:40] And it's, it's much more manageable when you've got a bunch of people doing it, as I think the Xavier team has found. I'm the host. Rhett McDaniel, from my center is our tech guru and kind of main producer. But we have a lot of folks, six or seven folks on the team, who do interviews. We spent a long time figuring out what we wanted the podcast to be. There were some very lively spirited meetings among this group to determine the mission and the format of the podcasts. But we settled on an interview format. We talk to faculty and grad students and technologists and administrators and others. We take a pretty big tent approach to educational technology. That's one of the strengths I think of having a team is that the librarians are interested in digital literacy. I've got a colleague, Stacey Johnson, who's all about language learning and language teaching. We're looking for kind of intentional uses, effective creative uses of educational technology. And we, we titled the podcast Leading Lines because we're trying to kind of point the way to the future of educational technology. So we tried to do not so much prediction of the future, but exploring folks who were doing some somewhat innovative or creative work to get a sense of where educational technology might go.

[6:55] About 40% of our guests are from Vanderbilt, my institution. We wanted a mix of Vanderbilt folks who are doing interesting things, but others as well. I talk about a lot of targets of opportunity. So I actually, just twenty minutes ago, was interviewing a couple of folks here at the conference for a future episode. So I pick up some interviews at conferences and we have guest speakers come to campus, we'll often snag them for half an hour and interview them as well. We're in a bit of a state of flux with the podcast. Our Institute for Digital Learning was dissolved in May, and John Sloop, bless his heart, has moved on to other areas and the Provost Office. And so it's a little unclear what our team will look like in 2020, but I'm hoping that we can kind of reassemble the team and keep going. We do two episodes a month, about 20 episodes an academic year. And so it's a pretty brisk pace. We may have to scale that back depending on how our partnership's arranged. But I get a lot of value out of this podcast. I get the chance to interview folks who are doing really interesting things and learn more about their teaching practices and how they use technology. And then I can work those examples and stories into my consultations, into my workshops, into a lot of my writing. And so I find it really valuable, even if we don't have millions of listeners, it informs a lot of the work that I do. So that's Leading Lines in a nutshell.

Tenisha Baca: [8:17] Hello and welcome to Two Profs in a Pod. I'm Tenisha.

Beth Eyres: [8:21] I'm Beth.

Tenisha: [8:22] And we are faculty developers and faculty at Glendale Community College in Arizona. If you've ever listened to our podcast, you're very familiar with that introduction. We definitely thought that would be appropriate for the conference on today. So we're really excited to be here to share information on Two Profs in a Pod. We are really excited to be here. We do have a third member of our team. We're not a team of two. We're really a team of three. We're the co-hosts, but we feel like the rock star of our team is really Cheryl Colon, who is our we say "media rock star." Her official title is Instructional Specialist, but we just think she's just amazing. So we're really excited to kind of talk about our podcast. We've been around since 2018. And we really wanted today to kind of share a little bit of not just information or data about Two Profs in a Pod, but also just our narrative and kind of really kind of how we got our start with our podcasts.

[9:19] So what's interesting about us is that we're not faculty directors, we're faculty, newly faculty developers. And when we got our role, I remember we walked away from a meeting and Beth and I started around the same time as faculty developers. And we thought, "what are we going to do?" when it comes to faculty development with our CTLE. But after conversations with our CTLE, we kind of found that there was definitely a need. One of the things that the CTLE, the experience on our campus is that one of the things that was most difficult was getting foot traffic into the CTLE, getting people to come to workshops and seminars. That was definitely a difficult thing and also schedule. So faculty were always saying they're too busy to really come and stop by. So they said they couldn't make it. So they, so they had to teach.

[10:03] So one of the things that we tried to do is, well, how can we find a way to get information to our faculty in digestible ways? And one of the things, for example, that we focused on were like 20 minute episodes, which is kind of like a, a great time for podcasts because of that commute. So a lot of people when they're traveling to campus or maybe they're at the gym, who knows what you're doing in-between your time, you can get that information through the CTLE.

Beth: [10:29] Yeah. I just wanted to talk a little bit about when we first started, what we were thinking of audience and then how our audience has maybe grown a little bit and maybe

even changed a little bit. But how in some ways when we're, when Tenisha and I are thinking about audience, when we're recording or coming up with ideas, how it, it's really the same, right? So when we first started, we were really just thinking about our campus. And so when we were coming up with ideas to talk about, we thought what are campus would really be interested in, right? And so I have a small close knit group of trusted intellectuals that I go to and I know their ear is to the ground and they kind of are hearing things. So that's one way we can get ideas. And then I knew that our campus would probably be interested in whatever we were going to talk about.

[11:19] Patricia Gyan, who is in the audience and works at our district level, CTL, we have ten colleges in our district, was gracious enough to meet with us and help us a little bit with marketing. And they're very supportive whenever Tenisha and I tweet out a new episode, they're always retweeting it and say nice things about it. So we knew that our audience was maybe growing a little bit more to maybe district faculty. And of course we know that our moms listen. (everyone laughs) And when we look at our analytics, my brother is actually the top listener who he's also in education now, so it's okay. So yeah, when we did our first episode, we had like 29 listens. We were like, "Oh my gosh, we have 29 people listening," and that was our moms and our brother. And like basically everybody that we knew.

[12:14] So we know our audience has grown. We get maybe between a 150 to 200 plays in the first maybe seven to ten days of a release. Older episodes are getting a little bit more because they'd been out longer. But still when we're recording, I'm still thinking about that small group of people that I really trust and know that they're going to give me good feedback. And I know that I'm touching upon something that they really want to hear. And that I think helps us because otherwise the audience, I mean, obviously the audiences is educational faculty and so forth, but it gets a little broad and amorphous and it's easier to kind of stay in touch with what's going on on our campus and likely it's going on on other campuses too, so that's what we hope we're hitting. Did I get it all?

Tenisha: [13:02] I think you did, yeah.

Beth: [13:03] Oh, I was going to say one more thing about how, you know, Tenisha and I, we already said that we're faculty, so we just have three release hours each. And when we first started, we just really we kind of did our own thing and they just let us do it and helped us. And just recently we actually blended an activity with the CTL. So we just did an episode on difficult conversations in the classroom. And that really resonated. We actually had people

emailing us the morning the episode came out like within an hour saying, "oh, that was so helpful, thank you so much." And then we paired it with a brown bag lunch in our CTL where people could come and have a conversation in person, right? So we sent out an email, "hey, take a listen to this episode and then we're meeting a couple days later in the CTL. We'd love to have you show up." And we did have a few teachers come in and I noticed they were not the same of the 10% who always come in. It was different people. So that's what I wanted to add.

Tenisha: [14:05] Yeah. That's us in a nutshell.

Jay: [14:10] Thank you all. And just as we've got here, we've got a couple more minutes for this part of it. So I was just going to just ask one question from everybody. If you could just kind of talk about what you think is probably the best podcast episode each of you has done at your respective ones.

Bart: [14:25] Well, that gives me an opportunity to mention something I should have said at the beginning, which is that our most famous interview was Noam Chomsky. So that was, that's what I'm going to call out as our highlight.

Derek: [14:44] How am I going to follow that? How am I going to follow that? (everyone laughs) Yeah. So a recent favorite, I can't pick an all-time favorite, but a recent favorite. I was able to talk to Chris Gilliard, who is known as "hypervisible" on Twitter. And he's an English professor, but he does a lot of work around privacy and surveillance. And kind of the intersection with technology. And I just, one of the things that I have to be careful on in an educational technology podcast is kind of going too far either way in terms of kind of raving about the possibilities of technology or, you know, moaning and gnashing my teeth over all the terrible things that can happen with technology. And so I wasn't quite, I kind of invited Chris on the episode because I tend to go kind of positive in my own work. And so I like to have some voices of folks who are more critical of some of the technologies that we use. And what I loved about the interview with Chris was he was very critical and he brought a lot of really important ideas to the table. And he was also full of joy as a person. And so we had this really fun conversation together, as we talked about some really hard topics. And so I was, I was really glad to be able to connect with him over this. And I think the episode turned out really well. Profs in a Pod?

Tenisha: [16:14] Well, we're all about teaching, learning , and other stuff. And I think one

episode that really encompasses all of that was our interview with the student by the name of Karim. And I'm going to hand this over to Beth. Beth is the reason why we really had this podcast episode, honestly.

Beth: [16:29] And to me it was just fun because it was different. It wasn't, it wasn't just us. We weren't really talking to a faculty member. We interviewed a student who had done an undergraduate research project in Costa Rica for the summer. And so and he was I was mentoring him through that and I actually got to go to Costa Rica for free for a week. So I'm just throwing that out there. But part of his, part of his going and participating in that was then also coming back and talking about the research that he did. So I said, "Tenisha, let's just bring him on and interview him, let him talk about it. And it ended up being a lot of fun to talk to a student. And I can't say that it is one of the episodes that has a whole lot of listens necessarily, but feedback that we've gotten was, "well, that's really neat that you talked to a student and gave that student voice to talk about what his research was."

Tenisha: [17:21] And I felt like it was also what we talked about was very important, which was this idea of thinking you can't do something or thinking, you won't be taken into consideration for something which our student mentioned. Like he, he thought to himself, why, why would they take me? I don't know why they would take me, but he put his name in the hat and that was probably the most memorable thing I remember from that conversation is that he threw his name in the hat and that's something I still carry that with me to this day. That when we have moments where we feel like maybe we're not good enough or maybe they wouldn't pick us, just throw your name in the hat and see what happens. So to me, that was a really impactful and memorable episode.

Jay: [17:58] Excellent. Alright, thank you. I'll just kind of close that by saying, I think two of my favorite ones that we've done recently, we're kind of along similar lines, in that we kind of set aside our usual sit down with one other person or two other people and talk to them. And we went out and talked to the students at Xavier University. We had two kind of big changes take place in the last couple of years. We had a lot of changes take place in the last few years. But two very big ones that were directly impacting the students were we switched to a new learning management system, which I'm sure many of you can, can empathize with. And so after that first, initial, I think semester, so we went out and we just asked students, what do you think of this new system? Because, because the faculty had very clear opinions about our switch and the choices that were made. But we really wanted to let people know what the students thought.

[18:49] It was interesting to kind of hear the students overwhelmingly kind of say that they really liked this switch from Blackboard to Brightspace that we did. And then about a year later, we decided we hadn't made enough changes, so we changed our core curriculum. (everyone laughs) And so I decided to go ahead and kind of do the same thing. What did, what did the student? Because again, the faculty had some very clear opinions about to the new core curriculum. We really wanted to hear and share with people what the, what the students had to say about that. And so I think that's been an interesting kind of shift for us. We've had a very kind of traditional model of interviews. But it's been nice to kind of break away from that a little bit and have these, allow these student voices into this faculty development space that we've carved out through this podcast. (music)

Derek: [25:47] That was Jay Todd and Bart Everson from Xavier University of Louisiana, Tenisha Boca and Beth Eyres from Glendale Community College, and me, talking about our experiences and podcasting at the 2019 POD Network conference in Pittsburgh. Thanks to Bart for recording that audio so that we could all use it on our own podcasts. We had a great turnout for our session that Saturday afternoon, at least 40 people. And after our opening remarks, we split the room into smaller groups based on podcasting experience.

[20:11] Beth and Tenisha worked with the novice broadcasters, which turned out to be more than half the room to introduce them to some of the basics of producing a podcast. Bart, who was our tech guy on the panel. He took a small group and walked them through his audio production workflow, using the audio from the panel he had just recorded, to start to build a new episode of Teaching, Learning, and Everything Else, the podcast that he produces. Jay Todd meanwhile met with a few of the experienced podcasters in the room and there were just a few of them. There aren't a ton of people at teaching centers doing podcasts like this.

[20:50] But I was able to sit down with what we call the intermediate level group. These were folks who had a little bit of podcasting experience, but were interested in doing more or starting leveraging that podcasting experience at the teaching centers that they work with. I met one woman who's been doing a podcast on fencing for quite a while, interviewing centers and coaches and such. So she knows how to make a podcast and she's interested in launching one in her teaching center. I thought that was really cool.

[21:17] We talked about options for building and engaging one's audience, for integrating one's podcast into the other work of a teaching center, inclusivity efforts, for both production

teams and podcast guests and new podcast platforms and formats really. And it was that topic that I thought was really interesting as my small-group talked, it occurred to me that most of the teaching and learning podcasts I listen to have similar formats. Most of them are interview formats like we use here on Leading Lines. And the Xavier folks use on Teaching, Learning, and Everything Else. Sometimes you'll hear a talk show format, like Beth and Tenisha use, on Two Profs and a Pod. But I think the interview format seems to be most popular. It's the one used by two of my favorite Higher Education podcasts, Tea for Teaching, which is produced by John Kane and Rebecca Mushtare, at SUNY Oswego. And then of course, the, I think the biggest podcast in our field, Teaching in Higher Education by Bonnie Stachowiak at Vanguard University. She, she also uses the interview format. I've heard other formats, however, The New Professor, I learned about a few months ago, it's a podcast hosted by Ryan Straight at the University of Arizona. Each episode is a short audio essay, maybe ten or twelve minutes, featuring religious Ryan's voice and some, some well-chosen background music. His audio essays are a thoughtfully scripted, they're well produced, and I think they provide a nice change of pace from the interview-based podcast that I mostly listen to.

[22:28] Back in 2016, Michael Wesch, from Kansas State University, who you've probably seen online in one form or another. He launched a podcast called Life101, with the tagline, "Real stories about real students seeking a real education." Wesch is a cultural anthropologist and he wanted to apply his skills and participant observation to better understand his own students. So he spent a night with some of his students recording the experience and turning it into a podcast episode called Professors Night Out. He only produced that one episode of Life101, but it's a really great episode. He's an effective storyteller and he uses a rich variety of audio from his night out with his students to tell his story. I'd love to hear more from Wesch or others in higher ed using this podcast format, which is really a kind of documentary approach closer to something you would hear on RadioLab or 99% Invisible. I don't know of other higher education podcasts that take that kind of journalistic documentary approach with really well produced episodes that use multiple sources of audio. I'd love to hear more in that genre. It's, it's a lot of work to put something together like that. And I understand why most teaching centers don't have that kind of bandwidth or capacity, but even an episode or two here and there could be really interesting like Michael Wesch did.

[24:07] In the show notes, you'll find links to all the podcasts I have just mentioned and also the ones represented on our POD Network panel. I'd like to thank Jay Todd for organizing our

panel and thank my fellow panelists, Bart Everson, Beth Eyres, and Tenisha Boca. I'd also like to thank Elizabeth Yost Hammer at Xavier University for her role in catalyzing the panel and for starting the Xavier podcast more than a decade ago. I actually have an email exchange between the two of us from 2008 where we swapped ideas for teaching center podcasts. I was in the midst of launching a podcast at, at the Vanderbilt Center for Teaching. And that ran for, I think, 30 or 40 episodes before we petered out. But Xavier University is still going strong more than ten years later. And as I said on the panel, I've been very impressed at their commitment to that work. They have to have the longest running podcast, the longest running university teaching center podcast, certainly that I know of.

[25:02] You'll find the show notes with all those links at our website, leadinglinespod.com. And I'd be interested to hear what other podcasts you listen to in higher education, particularly if they have a different format. I'd love some new recommendations. You can find me on Twitter @derekbruff and the podcast @leadinglinespod. Leading Lines is produced by the Vanderbilt Center for Teaching, The Jean and Alexander Heard Libraries and the Associate Provost for Education, Development, and Technologies. This episode was edited by Rhett McDaniel. Look for new episodes the first and third Monday of each month. I hope you have a great set of winter holidays and a happy 2020. I'm your host, Derek Bruff. Thanks for listening. (music)