

# Transcript

[00:00] [background music]

**Derek Bruff:** [00:10] Welcome to "Leading Lines," the podcast for Vanderbilt University. I'm you host Derek Bruff, Director of the Vanderbilt Center for Teaching here in Nashville.

[00:13] In this podcast, we explore creative, intentional and effective uses of technology to enhance student learning -- uses that we hope point the way to the future of educational technology at colleges and universities.

[00:24] In this episode, I talk with Gilbert Gonzales, assistant professor of health policy here at Vanderbilt. I met Gilbert a couple of years ago at my teaching center's Course Design Institute. The theme of the institute was, "Students as Producers."

[00:36] We worked with faculty to explore ways to engage our students, not just as consumers of information in the courses we teach, but also as producers of knowledge. Gilbert got the idea to have his health policy students produce a podcast and that's just what he did.

[00:50] If you go on SoundCloud and search for Health Policy Radio with Gilbert Gonzales, you'll find it. I really liked how Gilbert put together his podcast assignment and I'm excited to share his story here on our podcast.

[01:00] [background music]

**Derek:** [01:04] Well, Gilbert, thanks for chatting with me today about your teaching and the way that you've used technology. I'm happy to have you on the podcast.

**Gilbert Gonzales:** [01:11] Thank you.

**Derek:** [01:12] Can you start by telling us a little bit about the kinds of courses you teach at Vanderbilt and maybe a little bit about who your students are?

**Gilbert:** [01:19] I'm a relatively new assistant professor here at Vanderbilt. I'm in the Department of Health Policy in the School of Medicine. I teach mostly in Peabody for their Health and Human Services students. These are typically undergraduate students who are juniors and seniors interested in different careers in healthcare.

[01:40] I tend to teach undergraduate juniors and seniors in their health policy and healthcare courses. I teach one course in the fall, one course in the spring.

[01:49] In the fall, I teach Intro to Health Services, which is a broad overview on the American healthcare system. We discuss providers, insurers, financing, how is healthcare delivered and what are some of the big problems in American healthcare.

[02:06] In the spring, I teach Health Policy and Advocacy with Tara McKay. This is one of the cross-college teaching initiatives on campus through the chancellor's office.

[02:19] With this course, we teach students basic health policy and then we teach them how to engage in the health policy process with the policy makers and health advocates.

[02:32] Those are the two courses I'm teaching right now and it's mostly targeted for undergrads.

**Derek:** [02:36] OK, undergrads. I've read a lot about the university course, and I know we looked at that when you were in our Course Design Institute a couple of years ago. That's definitely a fun course. Your podcast project that I want to talk with you about, that's in your health services course?

**Gilbert:** [02:52] Yes, that's correct.

**Derek:** [02:54] Tell us a little bit about that podcast project. Where did you get the idea for this project and what did it look like in practice with your students?

**Gilbert:** [03:04] Great question. When I started teaching, I had no idea I would ever be using a podcast assignment. I got the idea from here, from the Center for Teaching through one of

the courses that was offered. I believe this may have been...

**Derek:** [03:20] The Course Design Institute?

**Gilbert:** [03:21] ...the Course Design Institute.

**Derek:** [03:24] This is a three-day thing we do for faculty every May and try to walk them through your course design process.

**Gilbert:** [03:31] Right. One of the speakers was from environmental sciences.

**Derek:** [03:35] Earth sciences. Earth and environmental science, Luisa Dos Santos. Yes.

**Gilbert:** [03:38] Yes, and she came and spoke to us about different assignments that she was doing in her class. Coloring books, timelines maybe, and podcasts. She showed us some examples of her undergraduate students using podcasts that may have been on YouTube on different earth and environmental science topics.

**Derek:** [04:04] It was kind of a science communication piece, right? They were learning this complex topics and then try to communicate them through various media including audio.

**Gilbert:** [04:12] Exactly, exactly. I thought that was a great idea that I can use in my classroom, because healthcare topics are often also very complex and complicated. It often involves new language or learning. You have to learn the differences between an HMO, a PPO, a POS, different types of health insurance types.

**Derek:** [04:37] Sure, yeah. I get confused every October when I have to make my own selections.

[04:42] [laughter]

**Gilbert:** [04:42] Exactly. Learning healthcare is a lot like learning a new language. I thought a podcast assignment would give my students a chance to practice that language of healthcare. I also use this for another reason. The other reason I thought a podcast would work for my class was that we really only have so much time to cover so much material in the classroom...

[05:06] But students are interested in a lot of different healthcare topics. Quality of care, specific types of providers and some students might be interested in random countries and what they're doing. I just don't have time to cover all those topics in the class. A podcast allowed students some flexibility to explore some of these topics in more detail outside of the classroom.

**Derek:** [05:31] What was the assignment? What did you tell your students that they needed to do?

**Gilbert:** [05:36] The goal was for students to either do an individual or a team-based podcast that would be about 15 minutes long. They had a list of health policy research articles to choose from.

[05:51] In the syllabus, I provided them 20 articles that I thought were very interesting in the last two to five years in health policy research. These were articles that caught a lot of media attention in my research field, in health policy.

[06:08] I allowed students to either work on a podcast on their own, or in pairs, and they were required to select one of the articles from the list and complete a 15-minute podcast.

**Derek:** [06:22] In their podcast, are they summarizing the article, are they trying to explain the article for like a lay audience?

**Gilbert:** [06:33] Exactly. They're trying to do what you would hear on NPR, National Public Radio.

**Derek:** [06:38] Gotcha.

**Gilbert:** [06:38] "A new study in the Journal of American Medical Association just found this." I want them to read that article, understand what the researchers were trying to do, what they were trying to answer and what they found. Translating it for a broader audience.

**Derek:** [06:59] I'm imagining, like an NPR audience, right? Adults in the United States who probably have a college degree but may not have any kind of particular specialty in this area.

**Gilbert:** [07:10] Exactly. They were required to discuss the background and the purpose of

the research study, explain what data and research methods were used. All the students were required to briefly describe the results and some of the limitations of the study.

[07:30] And then they had to do one of the following. They either had to describe the implications of the study for a health policy or healthcare practice. What does this mean for patients? What does this mean for healthcare policy in the United States based on all of your study?

[07:47] They could also describe what it meant for families and everyday people. What does a research study on the Affordable Care Act, for instance, mean for everyday families?

[07:58] They could also, at a time, connect the research study to the election. This class was first conducted last fall, during the presidential election. They had to connect it to, maybe, what were the presidential candidates saying about the healthcare topic that they were reading about?

**Derek:** [08:20] I'm curious. Have you offered a version of this assignment that wasn't a podcast? Like a research paper or something, or is this a new piece to your course?

**Gilbert:** [08:28] This is a new piece to my course. I had never assigned a paper or an essay. Those types of assignments scare me...

**Derek:** [08:39] [laughs]

**Gilbert:** [08:39] because, at the end of the semester, I don't want to grade 20, 15-page papers.

**Derek:** [08:47] Sure. That's not always fun. [laughs]

**Gilbert:** [08:50] It's not always fun. Some people like it, but for me, I thought that I would enjoy hearing 20, 15-minute podcasts instead. I could do this while working out at the gym, or going for a walk around the university. I could do my grading somewhere away from a desk.

**Derek:** [09:08] I want to ask more about grading in a minute.

[09:11] One thing that occurred to me is that if you think about just the number of words that would be in a 15-page research paper, versus the number of words in a 15-minute podcast episode. It's a much smaller amount of content, in some ways, because it's audio.

[09:26] I guess my question is, do you lose something when you go to that shortened form? Or is there something else that you gain by the concision that's necessary?

**Gilbert:** [09:36] I don't think so. Before I had the students record their podcast, I had them submit a script. A script was something that was due earlier in the semester before they had to actually record their podcast. Some of these scripts were either 10 to sometimes 20 pages double-spaced long...

**Derek:** [09:57] Wow.

**Gilbert:** [09:57] depending on how much students relied on other audio for their podcast. This varied. Some students used music, some students saved space for interviews with faculty conducting research in the specific topic area and some students did interviews with students or with providers that they knew.

**Derek:** [10:23] I guess I was imagining that each episode of the podcast would be one or two students talking through what they had to share. It sounds like they used different sources of audio, used interviews, existing audio clips?

**Gilbert:** [10:36] Exactly. Yeah, yeah.

**Derek:** [10:39] More editing and creativity on their part, perhaps, and less just kind of reading the paper into a microphone.

**Gilbert:** [10:44] Exactly. They were required to make it interesting. That was one of the elements in the grading rubric, was to make sure that it demonstrated creative expression.

[10:59] Some of the students created mini-commercials.

**Derek:** [11:01] [laughs]

**Gilbert:** [11:01] Some of them walked around campus and interviewed students on different

topics. They were very creative in how to make it interesting for the audience.

**Derek:** [11:14] You said they had to submit a script, were there other parts of the process that you had built so that you could have helped them along?

**Gilbert:** [11:22] I think what really made this assignment successful was spending an entire day in the class teaching them how to do a podcast. Walking the students through the steps on how to record sound on their phones, how to move it onto their computer and to edit it.

[11:43] We spent a class just walking through how to make a podcast and how to edit it in Audacity.

**Derek:** [11:52] Okay, I was wondering if you... you gave them specific tools to use.

**Gilbert:** [11:55] Exactly.

**Derek:** [11:56] It sounds like your students didn't have any real technical problems, from what I hear.

**Gilbert:** [11:58] No problems at all. They learned it very quickly and I didn't have any complaints.

**Derek:** [12:05] In this case, you gave them a particular tool to use. You spent a little class time orienting them to it.

[12:09] This is kind of how I do WordPress blogging in my class. Sometimes I'll just let my students figure out whatever tool they want to use for a particular assignment. I want my students to use my WordPress blogs, so, I take a little class time and walk them through the basics. Usually, after that, they can figure the rest out on their own.

**Gilbert:** [12:27] Right. I think it's important to spend class time on how to do some assignment.

**Derek:** [12:35] In this case, we're looking at capturing the audio, editing the audio, finding music that they can use that's royalty free, that kind of thing?

**Gilbert:** [12:43] Exactly.

**Derek:** [12:46] Gotcha, and then you had them submit the audio files to you and you put them up on SoundCloud...

**Gilbert:** [12:51] Yes.

**Derek:** [12:51] ...which was your distribution method.

**Gilbert:** [12:53] Right. They submitted their final assignments on to Blackboard, and that's where I was able to download them, listen to them, grade them, make sure that everything was appropriate for sharing online.

[13:10] I didn't have any problems with poor language choice, for instance. I wanted to make sure that all the audio files were appropriate for broader audiences and accurate.

**Derek:** [13:23] I imagine some of that accuracy checking happened at the script stage, as well.

**Gilbert:** [13:28] Exactly.

**Derek:** [13:30] Were there any student-produced podcasts that you didn't feel comfortable sharing publicly?

**Gilbert:** [13:35] No.

**Derek:** [13:36] But you reserved that right? If one of them didn't meet the standards.

**Gilbert:** [13:40] Yeah. Absolutely. I thought they were all appropriate to share. I uploaded them to SoundCloud. Then I shared it with my networks in academia. I was able to go on Twitter, or also Facebook and say, "Hey, look at this podcast that my students did on a study that you completed. Check this out."

**Derek:** [14:02] Wait, you were able to share the student podcasts with some of the researchers...

**Gilbert:** [14:05] Yes.



**Derek:** [14:06] ...that they were citing and talking about?

**Gilbert:** [14:07] Yes.

**Derek:** [14:07] That's really awesome.

**Gilbert:** [14:09] Yeah, and they loved it. They loved it.

**Derek:** [14:12] Yeah?

**Gilbert:** [14:12] Yeah. Of course, because someone's talking about a research study they completed.

**Derek:** [14:16] Yeah. That's fantastic.

**Gilbert:** [14:17] That's exciting. That's what researcher love to have done.

**Derek:** [14:22] Right! Someone read their work.

**Gilbert:** [14:24] Exactly!

[14:24] [laughter]

**Gilbert:** [14:24] Exactly, exactly. Someone read their work.

**Derek:** [14:27] What was the student reaction to the assignment?

**Gilbert:** [14:31] One of the things I'd built into assignment was to give extra credit for the podcast with the most likes on SoundCloud. Students shared this broadly with their social networks through Facebook and through Twitter, through their circles. Their friends were able to hear what they've completed in this class through this assignment.

[14:57] Someone received a lot of likes and a lot of clicks, up to 173 for one podcast.

**Derek:** [15:07] Wow.

**Gilbert:** [15:08] It's shared broadly through their networks.

**Derek:** [15:11] That's 173 plays of that podcast episode?

**Gilbert:** [15:16] Yes. 173 plays for one podcast episode. The pair that received the most, here it is -- 265 plays.

**Derek:** [15:24] Nice.

**Gilbert:** [15:24] This team was able to share this podcast with at least 265 clicks.

**Derek:** [15:30] [laughs] I'm slightly jealous because some of our episodes, the "Leading Lines," haven't had that many plays yet.

[15:35] [laughter]

**Derek:** [15:36] We use SoundCloud as well. I think it's been a really easy to use platform for us. We actually spent a little money so we have the paid plan so we get some analytics and more storage.

**Gilbert:** [15:47] I also had to pay for the standard minimal plan. I think it's \$99 a year. Just so I could have a little bit more space to add more than I believe four podcast at a time.

**Derek:** [16:03] I find it really easy to use and it's nice to get the analytics. It's a good platform.

**Gilbert:** [16:08] I agree. Super easy to use.

**Derek:** [16:10] Let me ask a little bit more about audience. Part of this assignment is the communication piece, as you said, practicing the language of healthcare.

[16:22] I'm curious, I'd like to hear your thoughts on the role of audience in this particular assignment. How it helped or how it didn't help, or maybe, what was hard for students, in trying to pitch their communication in a particular way to a particular audience?

**Gilbert:** [16:43] All the students knew that this was going to be uploaded to the Internet, and that they would have a chance to connect their names and pictures if they wanted to, their faces, to a broader audiences online.

[17:00] I think that really raised the stakes on the quality of the work, because they knew that

whatever they submitted to me at the end would be available for the world to hear. I think that they responded positively to it.

[17:18] This was the first time I experimented with podcast in a classroom. I initially showed them just a blank page where I would upload these files. I'm really looking forward to introducing this assignment to my fall class this year because now, it's no longer just a blank page but it has 15 podcasts, and examples of 15 different podcasts.

[17:44] When I introduce this assignment in the fall, I think the students will really see that this is going broad, this is going worldwide online. This podcast assignment will be made available to everyone and they'll actually see that before studying it.

[18:01] I'm hoping that the quality of the work might even be higher or better this next year.

**Derek:** [18:06] Yeah. I think part of it is the recognition that it is public and they can see examples of how things have had a real audience in the past. From talking to other faculty who do this kind of non-traditional assignments, I think also seeing the examples of past work, will, for a lot of students, they'll see that and say, "Oh, one, I know what Professor Gonzales is looking for now. I have a sense of what the expectations are. Two, I can do that. Those are real students and they made that, so I can do it, too." For a lot of students, they're like, "I can do it better."

**Gilbert:** [18:38] Exactly. Right. Better, right. Exactly.

**Derek:** [18:42] I look forward to hearing how your next batch of students reacts to this assignment. I do think it's a little bit different the second time around. Are there things you would do differently the next time?

**Gilbert:** [18:53] I gave them way too much flexibility and what I expected on the script. Some scripts were 15 pages, 20 pages long, double-spaced. Some scripts were just a one or two-page outline.

[19:06] I think next time I will ask that everyone write a full script. That way, I'm not surprised in the end, and that I feel more assured that they are on track to completing this assignment.

[19:23] But with that, I lose some of the magic that happens in a podcast and in audio. I don't

want them to sound like they're reading a script, but I think that I would want something a little bit more fleshed out than a one-page outline.

**Derek:** [19:41] I can get that challenge. When I think about the podcasts that I listen to, like, *The Memory Palace* or *Radiolab* or *99% Invisible*, those are well-planned podcasts. It's clear that they're not just improvising.

[19:56] Now sometimes, they collect audio that's more improvised but they put it together in intentional ways. I think really good podcast content is really well-planned, but these are also professionals who can have a script and read it in a way that doesn't sound like it's a script.

[20:12] I mean, I run into this challenge with the *Leading Lines* podcast every episode, because I generally have a script for my intros, and I wanted to sound as naturally as possible, but I'm also trying to be really intentional about what I'm saying.

[20:23] Striking that balance is tough, and I would imagine for students who are doing for the first time, it would also be pretty tough.

[20:28] I guess the advantage of having a full script, even if they don't stick to it that closely, is that it gives you a chance to give them some really good feedback before they actually do the audio production.

[20:37] Well, tell me a little bit more about grading. You said you might listen to them while you're at the gym, but I assume at some point you have to sit down and assign some points to things.

**Gilbert:** [20:46] Exactly. I rely on a grading rubric. I have five criteria. One, did you talk about the things I asked you about in the study? Did you talk about the background, the research objectives, the data, the methods, the results, the limitation?

[21:01] Two, did you connect it to health policy or healthcare practice or to families or the election? Did you translate the study for what it means to everyday Americans?

[21:13] Three, was the script submitted on time with few mistakes? The script was part of the grading criteria.

[21:21] The fourth element was creative expression. I wanted my students to really be as creative as possible to make an interesting podcast.

[21:30] I didn't want them to just read a research paper to me, but I wanted some music to be incorporated into the podcast. They were required to use other audio source material.

[21:42] It could have been interviews with faculty, with students.

[21:46] Some students used audio from different news stories. Maybe they went to YouTube and they saw an ABC News story about opioids, for instance. If they were working on a podcast about the opioid epidemic, they scraped or they pulled that audio from some other news source and included it into their podcast. "Here is..."

**Derek:** [22:19] "Here are the headlines."

**Gilbert:** [22:20] "Here are the headlines." Exactly.

[22:23] Then, the last thing that I wanted was to make sure that it was completed professionally and ready for broad audiences. Professional development is always something that I try to work on in my classroom.

[22:36] These are juniors and seniors who will be entering the workforce or interviewing for medical or graduate programs. I want them to use this as an opportunity to practice and build their professional skills and development.

**Derek:** [22:49] Did that make sense to them? Do they realize, "Oh, yeah, actually..." Their names and, indeed, their faces are attached to these podcasts, the way that you had set it up. Was that something that some of them saw as, "Hey, I'm actually building my online portfolio through this."

**Gilbert:** [23:05] I don't know. I'm not sure if they knew that this first time because when we started this assignment, it was still a blank page.

[23:12] Now, some of the students are entering medical school or working for healthcare consulting firms. Now they have this online record of this podcast assignment. They have many opportunities to let me know if they don't want their podcast presented online.

**Derek:** [23:31] They can opt out of the sharing online?

**Gilbert:** [23:34] Yes.

**Derek:** [23:34] They still had to do the assignment and turned it into you?

**Gilbert:** [23:37] Yes.

**Derek:** [23:38] If they really wanted to, they could opt out of posting publicly?

**Gilbert:** [23:39] Yes. That's included in my syllabus, in the assignments, and I send them a reminder just to let me know. "Send me an email if you don't want this online."

**Derek:** [23:50] My understanding of all the kind of relevant federal laws around student privacy says to me that's the approach to take. You can ask them to do whatever, but if you give them the chance to opt out of the public piece of it, then it gives them the control.

**Gilbert:** [24:06] Exactly.

**Derek:** [24:06] That's the main idea. They get to decide what gets shared publicly and what doesn't.

**Gilbert:** [24:10] Exactly. In this century where everything is online and you're entering the workforce, it's important to manage your online record.

**Derek:** [24:22] None of them opted out, but I can imagine students who, maybe they did it and they felt like they could have done a better job, and they decided that, "This doesn't represent me as well as it could, so I'm going to opt out."

**Gilbert:** [24:36] Exactly.

**Derek:** [24:37] The other thing I like about your rubric...We had a group that met at the Center for Teaching last year looking at teaching with podcasts. We looked at some other examples of rubrics. Some of the rubrics were just kind of bean counting rubrics. Like, it has to be between 12 and 14 minutes. It has to have at least two different music clips or whatever.

[25:01] What you were looking for in terms on your grade were these elements of the podcast that are tied into your learning objectives. Your students actually have a fair degree of latitude on how they meet those objectives.

[25:15] You want to see some creativity. You want to see some audience engagement. You want to see something kind of professional-looking. You've given them enough guidelines to know what they're shooting for, but you're not just bean counting your way to a grade at the end.

[25:27] You still have to look at it with your own kind of expert critical eye, or ear, I guess.

[25:33] [laughter]

**Derek:** [25:33] I walked right into that one.

[25:35] [laughter]

**Gilbert:** [25:36] Yeah, I think so. I think giving them as much flexibility really persuaded them into having fun with this assignment. In the end, it led to very interesting podcasts that I enjoyed listening to.

**Derek:** [25:51] That's great. Well, are there other ways that you use technology in your teaching?

**Gilbert:** [25:56] Not yet. This was my first time incorporating new technology into the classroom.

**Derek:** [26:01] You used this podcast project with your fall course on Health Systems, and then you taught this course in the spring with Tara on Health Policy. I'm wondering if there are any things you learned about, from the podcast assignment, that influenced how you taught that second course?

[26:18] There wasn't a podcast piece to it, but I'm wondering if there were elements of the podcast assignment that kind of shaped how you approached that second course.

**Gilbert:** [26:22] I think your idea is about having the external audience? How have you

described this in the past?

**Derek:** [26:32] Students as producers.

**Gilbert:** [26:33] Students as producers.

**Derek:** [26:34] That's our little tagline.

**Gilbert:** [26:34] Yes, students as producers. Knowing that some product that they're working on in class will have a broader audience besides their classmates and their professors, really encourages the students to do good work and professional work.

[26:55] In the spring class with Tara, Professor McKay, we visited the State Capitol and we took along with us policy briefs that we designed in the class. These were on different healthcare issues like the opioid epidemic or the high uninsurance rate in the State of Tennessee or mental health issues in the State of Tennessee.

[27:20] I learned from my fall class that if they're aiming for a broader audience that's outside of the classroom, they're going to do good work.

**Derek:** [27:27] I'm thinking about some of the work that I'd done in my own writing seminar is having that particular external audience in mind. I find helps to really hone my students' writing.

[27:39] You could ask them to write a policy brief for a hypothetical audience. The genre of the policy brief would give them some nice constraints to work within and it might do some good word.

[27:51] Knowing that they are going to share that thing they write with an actual policymaker, it does kind of step up their game, I think.

**Gilbert:** [27:57] It raises the stakes, a lot.

**Derek:** [27:59] That's good.

**Gilbert:** [28:00] The policymakers responded very well to the two-page, front and back policy



brief and policy memos that we took with us.

[28:08] One emailed me the following day after I visited saying, "Thank you for sending this. I'm sharing this with my partners in the Coalition on Mental Health. Thanks for visiting and if there's anything we can do, let us know."

**Derek:** [28:24] That's great.

**Gilbert:** [28:25] It was nice to have that email the next day. It felt really good.

**Derek:** [28:29] I find that our students are often capable of doing really impressive work. It doesn't all have to be kind of practice. There are some courses and some contexts where you keep in the course and you let students make mistakes.

**Gilbert:** [28:40] I think that's what they want. I think that's what they really want in school. They've done plenty of quizzes, plenty of essays. They want new opportunities to learn and the podcast helped.

[28:58] It also not only taught them how to speak about healthcare, but it gave them a new skill set on how to record sound, edit it in Audacity, and now they can see that, they can share it worldwide on SoundCloud. That's a new skill set that they have for possible employers that they'll have after graduation.

[29:19] It was I think a creative assignment that they really liked and loved. I think they want more of it.

**Derek:** [29:29] Gilbert, as you look at your own teaching, say, over the next three, four years, what are you hoping to do with educational technology? Or what are you hoping the educational technology will do for you?

**Gilbert:** [29:42] I'm really hoping to try to find more ways to bring technology into the classroom. In this digital world that we live in, it's so easy to connect our class with the world.

[29:56] I'm always thinking about new ways to have students engage with that world, whether it's through a podcast that other people are listening to, whether it's using policy briefs to present to lawmakers.

[30:18] I'm trying to find creative ways for students to engage with the world and even try, I think at the peak of it, would be to make a difference, or to make that change that so many of them want to do during their time here at Vanderbilt.

[30:35] That's the goal -- to find an assignment that I can bring into the classroom that actually makes a difference for someone outside of the classroom. Some kind of healthcare topic or issue or problem, to kind of work on that in the classroom.

[30:58] I think technology will be the way to do that. I just haven't figured it out yet.

**Derek:** [31:04] [laughs] Fair enough. Fair enough, right? But, like with the podcast, you've actually got, I think, two main ingredients that I think technology provides. One is the ability to connect with an external audience, right, through the public phasing piece of the project?

**Gilbert:** [31:18] Yeah.

**Derek:** [31:17] But then also the creative expression piece using audio. I imagine some of your students hadn't done an audio project in the past. They've probably written a lot of papers, but, like you say, getting this new skill set to make an argument, to persuade, to explain something through sound that might open up some doors for them in the future.

**Gilbert:** [31:39] I hope so.

**Derek:** [31:41] Well, Gilbert, we've got one question we ask all of our guests.

**Gilbert:** [31:47] OK.

**Derek:** [31:47] We talk a lot about digital educational technology on the podcast, right? Things with an Internet connection or a power switch. Do you have a favorite analog educational technology?

**Gilbert:** [31:57] I'm not sure if this is an analogue equipment or an analogue type of technology, but one of my favorite things to do in the class is to bring in guest speakers from the community.

[32:12] In my health policy courses, I can't always do the best job of teaching them how to

run a hospital because that's something I've never done. I can't tell them what the everyday life of a medical provider is. That's just not what I do on a daily basis. I'm a researcher.

[32:31] So I love to bring in healthcare experts who are working in healthcare every day who are hospital administrators, who are running nursing homes or delivering medical care in prisons. Bring them to the classroom and tell us, "What are you doing? What are some of the major challenges in your career? What are your recommendations for fixing those problems?"

[32:58] I always ask the same to all of my guest speakers and that's, "What are you looking for when you're hiring a young professional?" Because those young professionals are sitting in my classroom learning, and trying to enter these different careers and different professions.

[33:11] I try to use those as opportunities for professional development and to introduce them to different healthcare careers that some of them may not have thought about.

**Derek:** [33:21] I'm curious. Do you see some particular value in having them physically present in the room? Because you could Skype in a lot of people from a lot of different places.

**Gilbert:** [33:29] I have never Skyped anyone. I've always relied on my local community partners or different organizations. It builds my social networks in healthcare. That way they know who I am and what I do at Vanderbilt, but I also get a better understanding of what they're doing in my community in Nashville or in the greater Nashville area.

[33:56] I also like to invite them in because some of our guest speakers are also young professionals. Some of them have only been out of college for two to five years. I think that tells my students that this is what a young professional looks like. For some of them, they get the image that if this person can do it, I can do this, too. I can be a healthcare policy expert. I can be a healthcare advocate, too.

[34:26] I think having them in the classroom really makes a difference.

**Derek:** [34:29] That's great, Gilbert. It's been fun to talk with you about your assignments and just the focus you put on your students and connecting them with the resources that are going to benefit them and help them make a difference in the world. Thanks for being on the

podcast.

[34:42] [music]

**Gilbert:** [34:46] Thanks for having me.

**Derek:** [34:48] That was Gilbert Gonzales, Assistant Professor of Health Policy at Vanderbilt University. I loved what Gilbert had to say about designing assignments for his students that give them opportunities to make a difference in the world outside their classrooms.

[34:59] That's an example of a course design approach that we call "students as producers" and it's a useful framework for thinking about how to make use of technology in our teaching. If you want more examples of this, you can go back in the podcast feed a little ways.

[35:12] Episode 24 featured Helen Shin having her students do creative digital projects in lieu of the traditional research paper. Episode 22 is an interview with Humberto Garcia who also had his students do some pretty creative projects.

[35:27] And back in episode 13 I interviewed Tim Foster who had his Portuguese language students contribute to the Portuguese language version of Wikipedia in a really interesting way.

[35:37] I'm teaching a first-year writing seminar this fall. It's on cryptography, codes and ciphers. I've been so inspired by Gilbert's podcasting assignment that I'm designing one of my own. In fact, the week this episode releases I should be telling my students about their podcast project and what that's going to look like, and get them started on that.

[35:56] I'm really excited to see the creative ways they find to use audio to tell stories about the history of cryptography.

[36:02] If you'd like to hear the podcast that Gilbert and his students produced, you can find a link in the show notes. You can find those show notes on our website, [LeadingLinesPod.com](https://LeadingLinesPod.com). We welcome your comments and question there and on Twitter where our handle is @leadinglinespod.

[36:15] You can find me on Twitter, too, @derekbruff. I would love to hear how you've use technology to support nontraditional creative assignments.

"[36:22] Leading Lines" is produced by the Vanderbilt Center for Teaching, the Vanderbilt Institute for Digital Learning, the Office of Scholarly Communications at the Vanderbilt Library, and the Associate Provost for Digital Learning John Sloop.

[36:32] This episode was edited by Rhett McDaniel, my colleague here at the CFT. Look for new episodes the first and third Monday of each month. I'm your host Derek Bruff. Thanks for listening.

[36:37] [music]