

Two Profs in a Pod - Transcript

(00:17) Tenisha: Hello, and welcome to Two Profs in a Pod. I'm Tenisha.

Beth: I'm Beth.

Tenisha: And we are faculty and faculty developers at Glendale Community College in Arizona. And we like talking about teaching, learning, and other stuff. Now, of course, as usual, we are always always always excited for each episode that we have here on Two Profs in a Pod. And we are so excited because we have the Center for Teaching, Learning and Engagement crew here with us,

(00:42) Tenisha: also known as the CTLE on our campus. And we are excited to have them. So we have multiple people on today. So I'm going to start with the first person that we're going to introduce. We have Polly here. So Polly holds a master's degree in sport and exercise psychology and a bachelor's degree in psychology. Polly has trained professionals at all levels since 2002, and has been an adjunct instructor at GCC since 2005.

(01:06) Tenisha: In addition, Polly served on many GCC committees and sat on the Adjunct Faculty Association Board of Directors for two years. Polly strives to make her training environments informative, fun and engaging. And she embraces innovative approaches to facilitate learning. So welcome, Polly.

Polly: Well, thank you so much, Tenisha and Beth for having me here. This is exciting, especially to be on what I believe is your final episode.

Beth: Final season. Much better.

(01:42) Beth: Polly let the cat out of the bag. Listeners, this is our last season. Yes, it is. So, you know, more on that a little bit later. But thank you, Polly, for putting that out there for us.

Polly: Thank you.

Tenisha: So up next.

Beth: All right, next, we have our center director, Meghan. She holds a master's degree in instructional psychology and technology and a BS in psychology from Brigham Young University, a master's degree in communication and a professional writing graduate certificate from Northern

(02:16) Beth: Arizona University, and a certificate in ESL teaching from Duke University. Meghan has taught education, English composition, interpersonal communication and ESL

courses. Before coming to GCC, Meghan worked at centers for teaching and learning in Utah and North Carolina. But all that counts now is us. Welcome, Meghan.

Meghan: Hello. I'm so glad to be here.

Beth: Thank you for joining us. We're glad you're here, too.

Tenisha: And next, we have here a Jenn.

(02:40) Tenisha: Jenn holds a master of fine arts and digital film and a bachelor's degree in career and technical education with extensive experience as an educator and former program director. She has designed and led programs in digital filmmaking and video production, visual effects and animation, leveraging her 15 plus years industry expertise to enrich her work. In addition to her role at the Center for Teaching, Learning and Engagement, Jennifer is an adjunct faculty member in film

(03:17) Tenisha: and media production at GCC. A dedicated advocate for her students, she inspires them to unlock their full potential by fostering creativity, critical thinking and professional growth. Welcome, Jenn.

Jenn: Well, hello, everyone.

Tenisha: Yes, we're excited to have you here. Thank you for joining us on today. So yes, moving on to the next piece. Well, I do want to say we are having a conversation with the CTLE group because as Polly has announced,

(03:46) Tenisha: this is our last season. And so we wanted to talk with people that we get to see every day but that our listeners do not really get to hear from. We know we have a lot of listeners who work at centers across the nation. So thought that we might also be able to give you something useful, you know, in your own daily work. So we're going to start with, you know, we all work in a Center for Teaching and Learning.

(04:07) Tenisha: What does that kind of mean for you? And at GCC, we have the added term of and engagement. So you can speak to that too, if you wish. We'll start with Meghan and then go to Polly.

Meghan: I love working in the Center for Teaching, Learning. And I love that we have engagement in our title too. To me, it means that we get to help people. We get to be a resource and a support for faculty and staff.

(04:30) Meghan: And we get to be a part of their path to improving themselves, professionally and helping their students. And I love that we have engagement in our name because it allows us to do things to bring people together, to foster relationships, and to have a good time.

Tenisha: Thank you. Polly.

Polly: I don't want to go after Meghan anymore. So I look at the CTLE as if we are a hub for teaching, learning and engagement. And really, I just look at it as an opportunity to help each other, help other people on our campus, as well as build community and strong relationships

(05:09) Polly: across GCC and across Maricopa District.

Beth: Moving on. We are lucky to have a team of instructors. So how does your work here influence your teaching? Jenn.

Jenn: I really like learning from the instructors around me. Some of them have such interesting and wonderful ways that they engage with their students and solve kinds of problems that I would have either never thought of or it's something that maybe I would have been struggling

(05:38) Jenn: with for years. And they come in and ask for help on something else. And through some discussion, discover that they've got a brilliant solution that many times I wind up incorporating into my course because they all have such a wide variety of experience. It's quite helpful to collaborate with.

Beth: Thank you. And up next, we are going to throw it back to Polly.

Polly: So there's some good and bad.

(06:03) Polly: I have seen some poorly designed courses, and I understand sometimes the confusion that students might experience because of that. So it makes me work a lot harder to make sure that my courses are not creating problems that are going to inhibit student success instead of foster it. I also see people really demonstrating some outstanding innovation, which inspires me to do the same. And then finally, the CTLE is often the first place that learns about new technology, new things that are coming

(06:37) Polly: out. So it's always really exciting to get to be the people that say, hey, this is really cool and it's coming out. Come in and see us so we can show you how you can use it in your class.

Beth: Awesome. Thank you. And Meghan.

Meghan: One of the things I love about working in the CTLE and this job is learning myself and immersing myself in the research and what other people are doing, attending conferences. And I love that this job allows me to take all of that information and knowledge and

(07:08) Meghan: apply it into my teaching and see how things work. It's also really helpful to try something and experience what works and what doesn't work and the hiccups that you can encounter so that I can then support other faculty in implementing those same teaching ideas, technology, tips, things like that.

Tenisha: So I love that we're all just borrowing ideas from other people. It's almost like, I mean, yes, we're here to assist faculty in assisting their students.

(07:37) Tenisha: But come on, who's assisting who here?

Polly: So I had the opportunity to go to the Arizona Master Teacher Seminar, which is sponsored by Maricopa Community College several years ago. And when we went, one of the themes was great teachers are thieves. We steal the great ideas that other people are coming up with.

Tenisha: Don't tell anybody. Yeah.

Beth: OK. So now one of the things that we've experienced recently, you know, that little thing called the pandemic, a lot of us implemented practices during remote

(08:16) Beth: instruction, maybe even slightly after that, once we had come back to a little bit of in-person teaching. So I'm kind of wondering for our listeners here, if you could talk about, you know, what are some strategies that maybe you implemented during that time period that you've kept? And let's start with Meghan.

Meghan: I think since during and since COVID, worked a lot just to increase the engagement in online courses and really try to make them feel a lot more like the interaction and the communication

(08:50) Meghan: and the relationship building that happens in an in-person course. So I think that has been a major focus. Also offering a lot more choice in online courses. So students can kind of come into the space where they're at and also be more motivated about the assignments that they're doing or their final product and their output and implementing different tools. I love Padlet.

(09:13) Meghan: I love Perusall and other things that I can use to engage students. And I've really increased my usage of those since COVID.

Beth: Awesome. Thank you. So engagement and Polly.

Polly: So I would say for me, the main thing that I kept was teaching my class in a live online format. So instead of us coming to class every Monday night at 5:45 and staying in class until 8:25, which is a very, very long Monday, especially for our adult learners that have possibly already worked eight hours, nine hours during the day, that teaching a class

(09:54) Polly: where somebody can join it from the comfort of their couch, from their kitchen table, from a their office at home, I've even had students join class when they're on a bus riding from home, has really been able to allow students to be more comfortable. And I've often had students say that, one student recently just said, I said, what was the best thing about the class? And she said, being able to come to class in my pajamas.

(10:18) Polly: So it's a more casual environment, but I think because of the time of the class, the length of the class, it's really been helpful for students and for myself as well. The other thing that I'm cautious about is with the pandemic, we really opened up a lot of people's eyes to a lot

of the great technology tools that Meghan was just listing. And I have to be very thoughtful and I encourage people to be very thoughtful

(10:40) Polly: about limiting the number of tools that you're using in your class. If you think about how much students have to learn about technology before they can even start to learn about the course content, we wanna make sure that we're not overwhelming them. So for me personally, they have to know how to use Canvas, they have to know how to use Zoom, and they also will have to know how to use a tool that I called, it's called Genially in my class.

(11:02) Polly: So I try to really make sure that I keep my class technologies limited so that the focus can be on learning the course content, not the technology needed to be successful in the course.

Beth: Great advice. Thanks, Polly. Jenn.

Jenn: So I think some of mine is similar to what Polly's is with the students being able to choose what they like to do and giving them some options. But a little bit further for me is I've learned to be more flexible with them,

(11:31) Jenn: not just on their time and just of how they learn and what they need from me to learn. So for example, in a classroom, I know what information I'm giving them, and I can see them, and I know if somebody's paying attention or not paying attention. And in an online environment, I don't know that. So my class is a hybrid and the online component is so much stronger than it ever was before because I have been able to take

(12:03) Jenn: the things I learned in COVID that we absolutely had to put everything completely online to be, if I was not there, can this student find out what I'm talking about or find more supplemental material without having to wait to find that out from me. For if they're two o'clock in the morning, I'm obviously not gonna answer them at two in the morning. And I want them to have as many things as they can. So for me, it's the flexibility,

(12:30) Jenn: but in also having more focused segments for them so that when, if they missed class or even if they were at class and wanted more information, that they have both of those components available to them.

Beth: Love it, thank you, everybody. Jenn, why aren't you available to them at two o'clock in the morning? What's wrong with you?

Jenn: Yeah, I'm too old for that now. That's very honest and very real. I'm sleeping. I will answer them quickly,

(12:56) Jenn: but two in the morning's pushing it a little bit for me.

Beth: Yeah, yeah, absolutely, so. All right, so we talked about how your work here influences your teaching. How does your teaching influence your work in the CTLE? So we'll start with Meghan on that one.

Meghan: Yeah, I love, I find that my teaching influences my work here because whenever I encounter a challenge in my course or I hear about students encountering a challenge,

(13:23) Meghan: it's like a spark to try to think about what adjustments I can make or what things I can change to help to compensate for that challenge. And so it will lead me to look at what other people are doing, to look into the research, to think back to many of the awesome things that I've heard over the years and come up with some ideas to try out. So it's just a really great back and forth to see what problems there are

(13:54) Meghan: and what new solutions I can find and try out. And sometimes they work and sometimes they don't, and you just have to kind of keep trying new things. So I love that process.

Beth: All right, thank you. Polly.

Polly: I've been teaching here for a long time, since 2005. So I'm coming up on my 20 year anniversary. The majority of time I've taught has been an adjunct, but I've also taught several one semester only classes. So I've carried adjunct loads.

(14:19) Polly: I've carried full time loads. And I think what that has done has given me a very big broad band of experience as far as different types of teaching, how students have changed over the years, how my teaching has changed over the years. When I started, I had these really strict boundaries and I came in and I was, you know, very, very strict. I'm thinking back to the old days where I would go to college and the instructor would stand in the front of the class

(14:48) Polly: and I'm in there with 800 other students and you're not allowed to ask a question. You have to write the question down and pass it. So while I wasn't quite that strict, that was kind of where I came from. So over the years, my experience has changed quite a bit. So when I've had such a broad experience and I've changed so much myself, I think I can be very relatable to people that come in. Just this last semester, now I always think,

(15:15) Polly: am I really gonna have a first? This can't be a first. Last semester, since I was teaching in Zoom, I actually had a student who told me she wasn't gonna have her camera on because she was in the hospital in labor.

Beth: Wow.

Polly: I kid you not. And the next day I'm like, so everything come out okay? She's like, yeah, it's a baby girl. But to the main point is just, I can relate to the people that are coming in and they're having some of these troubles

(15:42) Polly: and I think they can relate to me because I can share some of my experiences that I've had. I can share some of my failures that I've had. They're like, oh, I did this and it was a horrible idea, but this is what I've learned with it. So being able to share those opportunities, I think is what would best be summarized that the teaching has influenced my work at CTLE.

Beth: Thank you. All right, we're gonna finish on a very positive note

(16:06) Beth: and that is looking back over the past year, and I will share with our listeners right now that we are recording this episode in December, 2024. So we are at the end of the semester and you will not be listening to this until probably January. So yeah, we're in a period of reflection. So I'm asking what has been your biggest success in the last year and who wants to answer that first?

Polly: Well, Polly and I can kind of answer that together.

(16:37) Jenn: Have at it. Do you wanna say what it is?

Polly: I think everybody, well, I don't know. You go ahead, you announce it.

Jenn: So I think the Gaucho Goofy Golf that we did for mainly staff, faculty as well, but I think that's kind of our, we're very delighted about that and it's been a wonderful thing all the way around. So summers are really long around here. We work four 10-hour days and it can be boring, it can be, and it's hot outside,

(17:09) Jenn: so you can't take these walks. You can't, it's just, they're quite tedious. And Susan Bedgar from OIT walked by one day and she was like, you have a hula hoop here. And I'm like, yeah, those 10-hour days are brutal. We'll do anything to pass the time. And I go, here, I've got this little putting machine. And so we were putting and she's like, you guys should do some golf this summer. I'm like, okay. So Jenn and I talked it out and we just went for it.

(17:34) Jenn: Every week they came in, they had a different putting green to put on. Every week, we went through a lot of cardboard building some of these designs. I think we got in a little over our head. We did not expect people to be so excited about coming to the CTLE to hit three golf balls.

Beth: And when Polly is saying they, Polly and Jenn invited folks on campus to form teams.

Polly: Yes, we have.

Beth: To compete against each other.

(18:02) Beth: I think we had 18 teams between three and five people. We had over a hundred people participate and we had faculty, staff, all of our administrators also participated. We won't say where their teams ended up, but they still came. And there was just great campus buy-in. People were talking about it in their meetings. They were asking each other, hey, how did you putt? And then we found out that they were going home

(18:27) Beth: and they were talking about these, how their golf course was for the week. People came by, they were videotaping each other putting. It just really brought a lot of excitement and fun.

Jenn: Yeah, and a lot of people said this was the best summer they had. And they were even sharing with their families. So they would tape what it was and then be like, look at me putt. And then you'd hold the thing for them and watch it.

(18:50) Jenn: And then they'd say, I just send that to my kids or my husband and then they'd get back. And it was funny way to kind of break down those barriers of even where people are. Because when you have a VP that's on the floor with a billiard stick trying to hit a golf ball across the room. That was Nova. It was kind of fantastic. So, and it was also a really, really lovely way for everybody to meet people that they don't normally get to talk to

(19:20) Jenn: because they're big and campus is hard to go and see different people that you may not interact with. And to me, the most beautiful part was when they would come in and they'd be like, oh, I just sent you an email. And that'd be the first time they ever realized that they communicate with this person all the time, had no idea who it was.

Polly: So I think that's kind of been huge. I also loved it when sometimes the entire team

(19:47) Polly: would come in together and putt together. If they weren't there with a team, but there were other people there, whether they were with a team or not with a team to putt, it was just very encouraging, very supportive, getting to meet each other. and it just really seemed to bring us together as a community.

Beth: Love it, yeah. Meghan, do you even want to go after that?

Polly: We had an unfair advantage on that, but you have to say.

Meghan: You kind of did.

(20:13) Meghan: This was in Meghan's department. It wasn't like she had nothing to do with anything.

Meghan: Well, I'll say I'm proud of all of the amazing things that we have done to support the campus community with such a small staff. And I think we provide amazing learning opportunities, whether they're FPG or fun things like Polly and Jenn are talking about, and Polly and Jenn are fabulous at bringing the fun. But we provide so much to our campus community

(20:42) Meghan: with not a lot of people because we have a very dedicated group of individuals sitting right here that are always willing to help and go above and beyond to make people better instructors, to help them make their students more successful, and to help them enjoy their jobs a little bit more. And so I think it's really impressive what we've done and our annual report that we worked on this year. It speaks to that,

(21:13) Meghan: to all of the amazing things that we've been able to do. So I'm just really proud of that.

Beth: So you're proud of the annual report.

Meghan: That is one thing I am proud of.

Beth: That is something to be proud of. It was a lot of work. It wasn't as fun as golf, but it did have some pictures of golf in it. So I guess that's all right. Okay, awesome. So we do have a regular segment on our show, What's On Your Radar? And so usually Tenisha and I will talk about,

(21:40) Beth: hey, what's something coming up that we're excited about? And maybe it's a conference, so it's related to higher ed, or maybe it's a book that we're reading, or maybe it's just something personal that we're excited for. So we're inviting you to share in that segment with us. So Polly, why don't you tell us what's on your radar?

Polly: Well, absolutely the holiday break is on my radar. I mean, I'm on the two day countdown here, folks.

(22:06) Polly: So I'm trying not to check out, but I'm trying to finish this stuff up. So the break is on my radar. My husband watches a lot of football. So when there's football on, there's nothing else on. And Netflix has recently dropped a whole bunch of new episodes of some of my favorite series. So I'm just kind of biting at the bit, wanting to watch those. So those are all on my radar. And as far as professionally, AI is on my radar.

(22:33) Polly: The tools that students can use to be more successful, but also not only the tools, but how to use them properly is right there on that burner.

Beth: Jenn.

Jenn: Mine is most definitely Christmas with my family and my friends. I love Christmas because family comes in and I am very, very excited to see people that I only get to see once in a year or once every couple of years, depending on who it is. So that to me is very, I'm very excited.

(23:02) Jenn: I'm like a little kid. I don't care about the Christmas part. I just am very excited that so many people are coming in. I like my people.

Beth: Meghan, what's on your radar?

Meghan: Well, Beth and I returned from the POD conference in November in Chicago. And so I am excited about continuing to look at the things that we learned there and seeing how we can bring some of that stuff to GCC. And as it's coming towards the end of the year,

(23:34) Meghan: I'm excited about setting goals for 2025. I love a good list of goals. So that's exciting. And then I'm looking forward to seeing Wicked over the break with my girls. So those are some of the things on my radar.

Beth: Good times. So Tenisha, why don't you go?

Tenisha: Well, just to piggyback off of Meghan, it is definitely the movie Wicked, which I've seen a couple of times and I will be seeing it again over break. And I am a fan of the musical.

(24:05) Tenisha: I've been a fan for a really long time. I was super excited for the movie and it did not disappoint. So yes, excited for seeing the movie again.

Beth: Okay. And I have to go with Polly's first answer, which was just really looking forward to a break and getting some time off and having some downtime just to kind of relax and yeah, not having to think as much.

Tenisha: Awesome. All right. So we're about to wrap things up here,

(24:32) Tenisha: but before we jump into our wrap up, I just want to say a heartfelt thank you to the CTLE crew and all that you do. You do so much. I can personally say that I am definitely a better instructor because of all the work that you do. So thank you. And all of you deserve all of the flowers. So thank you for what you do. So if you enjoyed listening to this conversation and want to join in, connect with us on Blue Sky,

(25:00) Tenisha: follow at 2propsinapod, or leave a comment on our blog at 2propsinapod.blogspot.com. Remember, spell out the number two. Other ways to show your support, subscribe in your favorite podcast app, write a review on Apple Podcasts, or tell your colleagues about the show. 2 Profs in a Pod is hosted by Beth Ayers, English faculty, and Tenisha Baca, communication faculty. The show is brought to you by the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Engagement

(25:31) Tenisha: at Glendale Community College in Arizona. And signing off for the final time.

Beth: Final time.

Polly: Final season.

Beth: Final season.

Beth: Don't cut their episode short, Polly.