

Welcome

Misty: Hello and welcome to Season 2 of 3Es in a Pod! I'm Misty

Melissa: I'm Melissa

Jeff: and I'm Jeff

Melissa: Today we are getting you reacquainted with the podcast, talking all things Learning Management, and as always sharing a way you can Engage, Equip, or Empower your students.

About Us and 3Es

Jeff: First, let us say welcome back. We are a few weeks into the school year, and it is still a very fluid situation, but we are back! While some of our students are still at-home learners, others are with us face-to-face in the classroom and that is worthy of celebrating.

For anyone new to the podcast, we'll start off by introducing ourselves. I'm Jeff Wiseman, Director for Digital Learning and Library Services for LEISD. I'm a former middle school social studies teacher, and began serving in the area of digital learning because I enjoy helping students and teachers succeed and achieve their goals.

Melissa: Hi everyone! This is Melissa Heckman. I joined the Lobo famiLE in 2013 as a first grade teacher at Oak Point Elementary. Prior to that I taught Kindergarten in Carrollton Farmers Branch. I moved into Digital Learning January of 2016 and have loved working with teachers and sharing my love of instructional technology! On a personal level, I am happily married to Mr. Gavin Heckman. We have an 18 month old daughter who keeps us on our toes, and a border collie who "speaks" his mind - he barks at everything! So excited to be joining the round table again for another season of 3Es in a Pod!

Misty: Hello! It's Misty Joaquin. This is my 14th year in education all here in Little Elm. Before becoming a Digital Learning Facilitator, I taught middle school English. I am one of the Canvas admins for the District and the one who sends those weekly Canvas emails to Strike, Walker, and the high school. I have a great husband, a beautiful sassy daughter, and a crazy lab-mix. I love Dr. Pepper and hitting the snooze button on my alarm.

Online Instruction Best Practices

Jeff: “Online learning” has become the name of the game for the 2020-2021 school year. Most of us have some kind of online instruction in our teaching this year, whether it is using a learning management system with your students or fully teaching a class online to At Home Learners using Zoom and your LMS. Even though the environment has changed, our duty to provide high quality instruction for our students still remains. To help with that, we wanted to review some best practices for online instruction today, sharing with you some ideas for ways you can set up your students for success.

Melissa: When possible, avoid lecturing for more than 20 minutes. Students will check-out after too long, just like they do in class. Use breakout groups, go noodle brain breaks, stand and stretches, etc to break up instruction, and give them time to process and reflect.

Jeff: Let students know what the end goal of each session is. This helps students focus and guides their attention. Students will know what they are being asked to do and what they need to pay attention to. Remember, at-home learners have a wide variety of distractions, as do our in-class learners!

Misty: Be specific in instructions for what you expect and what you want students to submit. Your students don’t automatically know what you want them to do. We also know they sometimes forget what we tell them. It is really helpful and a best practice to put written directions or audio/video directions in with every assignment.

Melissa: Create a regular routine of when you post work and, if possible, make your due date consistent. A common naming convention can go a really long way! Examples: HW--Assignment Title, CW--Assignment Title. Other ideas include using day of the week text headers to organize work or using the date in the title.

Jeff: Think outside the worksheet. There is more to online assignments than digital worksheets. Ask yourself what you want students to show mastery of, then think of how they can show this to you. Is it through a design they create, a video recording, or maybe working on pen and paper and submitting a photo?

Misty: We will be sharing more tips like these in our future episodes. We want to leave you with a reminder to also manage your own health and well-being! Reach out to others, use your PLC, join Facebook groups, take a few nights a week to NOT work from home!

Learning Management Systems

Melissa: I have really enjoyed hearing such wonderful feedback from teachers about the difference Seesaw has made for them and their students. While I know it takes time to learn, I promise the pay off in the end is worth it!

I did want to share a few reminders:

1. If you choose to change the name of your class, please include your name or subject taught. Most students have multiple classes they need to switch between, so if you change the name of your class to 1st Grade At Home they may have no idea what class that actually is. It could be their homeroom, art, music, or PE. So please help them out by including your name or the subject.
2. Remember, when you need to differentiate for activities for certain students you can make a copy of the activity, modify it for your students who need the differentiation, and then assign it to only specific students. You do not have to always assign to the entire class.
3. Lastly, if a student is removed from a class during the school year and moved into a new class, the work from the original class will not show up in the new class journal. However, that work will still be available through historic portfolio data for both the new teacher and the student to view.

But overall, if you have any questions or curiosities don't hesitate to reach out! You can refer to the Seesaw FAQ doc, the Canvas training courses, or the Seesaw Help YouTube channel.

Jeff: I hope our teachers in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades are rocking and rolling with Google Classroom by now. There are two things that I want to share with you about Google Classroom related to rosters and grades that I hope will be helpful for you. First, I wanted to remind you that we have connected Google Classroom to Focus, so we can create new classes in Google Classroom every time there is a new class created in Focus, as well as enrolling students into their new classes if they are new to the campus or if they have a schedule change. However, we have chosen to not automatically remove students from the classes because we wanted to give you the chance to backup student's grades from Google Classroom before they leave the original LMS class. You can still remove that student when you're ready.

Also, this is just a reminder that when students leave your Google Classroom class, their grades do not transfer with them. So you will want to always enter your grades in Focus as you are grading. This way you won't be surprised by "losing" students' grades and work if they leave your online class.

Misty: What Jeff just said is also true for Canvas!

My Canvas peeps get weekly emails, sometimes twice weekly, and when things are off the charts crazy they might get a third email from me. So, some of what I am going to hit on here has actually been covered in those emails, but sometimes it helps to hear it again!

Parents can create their own Canvas observer accounts, but they must get a pairing code that is generated by their student. They can then use that code to pair up with their student on the browser or the Parent app. Information for parents is available on the LEISD website.

Having a co-teacher is a great safety net. If you are out for an extended time, a co-teacher can help make sure lessons and modules are published. The great thing about Canvas is that you can access it from anywhere, but if you are on work restrictions, you might need someone else to have access to your course.

Another safety net? Having your work built for the next few weeks. With that said, remember those best practices we talked about earlier! Mix it up with discussion posts, videos, offline work, and more. Canvas has several 3rd party apps that can be used within it, such as Flipgrid, Edpuzzle, and Nearpod. If you feel like you are always doing the same thing, try bringing in one of those 3rd party apps to change things up.

I would love to hear from my Canvas users, what do you want to know more about? What features do you love? Reach out to me!

Also, if there is anyone that wants to be interviewed for the October podcast, please email Jeff, Melissa, or me! We want others to get to hear what you are doing in your Seesaw, Google Classroom, or Canvas classroom that is working!

Resources Available

Melissa: We want you to be aware of the resources available to you to help you build on the positives!

Jeff: Don't forget about the Instructional Playbook available to you in the Curriculum Course in Canvas. This valuable resource has over 130 vetted instructional strategies that support Authentic Literacy in the classroom. Many of those strategies also have digital learning counterparts or extensions!

Melissa: Another resource available to you are the LMS FAQ docs. These are living docs that will be updated as new questions arise. Check them when you have a Seesaw, Google Classroom, or Canvas question! Don't see the answer you need? Don't forget that Seesaw, Google Classroom, and Canvas all have built in help sections as well. This

is also true of online tools such as Nearpod, Flipgrid, Edpuzzle, etc. While we always welcome your questions, sometimes the fastest way is to go through the FAQs or the help docs.

Misty: Some of the most loved resources we have available are our Youtube playlists. If you are a video learner, make sure you are subscribed to our channels so you don't miss out when we post new videos!

Empower

Misty: As a refresh for new listeners, each episode we look at how Digital Learning can support our District Mission to Engage, Equip, and Empower each learner. Today we are looking at engaging and empowering through SEL. Social and Emotional Learning is a vital part of any classroom, but can feel like an extra challenge when supporting virtual learners. Here are some ways you can incorporate SEL in your remote (and in-person) classroom.

Jeff: Have discussions with your students about how they are feeling. Ask them what they are excited about or concerned about. Consider giving students different scenarios then discuss how a person might feel or act in that scenario.

Melissa: A great activity is one called Smiles and Frowns. Once a week, give students a chance to share a positive (smile) or negative (frown) thing going on in their lives. You can also do this as a written discussion in your LMS.

Jeff: Every couple of weeks, send an emotional check-in form to your students. Ask them these three questions: 1. How are you feeling this week? 2. Would you like a check-in from one of your teachers? 3. If yes, how should we contact you?

Misty: Need more prompt ideas? Here are a few! Think about your five favorite peers. What qualities do they all have in common? What is the difference between your real life and the way you represent yourself on social media? How has reading changed you? What would your friends say is your best quality?

Closing

Melissa: That's it for this episode. If you are interested in being interviewed for an upcoming podcast, please email Misty at mjoaquin@leisd. If you want to follow up with a member of the Digital Learning team to ask about something you heard in today's podcast, feel free to reach out to Jeff, Melissa, or Misty. You can also Tweet us at @LEISDDigLearn. Thank you for joining us, and don't forget, podcasts are more with a

friend, tell someone you can find our podcast on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, and more. And please take care!