

Episode 20: Behind the Podcast

Season 2, Episode 20

The L&S Exchange Podcast

David Macasaet: [00:00:00] Welcome to the L&S Exchange, a podcast about teaching and learning in the College of Letters and Science at UW Madison. I'm David Macasaet. Join me and my colleagues from the L&S Instructional Design Collaborative as we explore different aspects of inclusive teaching, feature interviews with instructors, and provide practical advice for educators.

Are you interested in educational development? Have you ever thought about podcasting in a higher education environment? Do you want to learn more about inclusive teaching? Well, on today's podcast, we discuss all three topics and more. Let's go!

Hi, I'm David Macasaet, and with me today are Molly Harris and Laura Schmidli. We had the opportunity to present a poster at the Teaching & Learning Symposium, UW's annual end of the year event [00:01:00] celebrating all things teaching. This was the perfect opportunity for us to turn inward and reflect on what our collaborative process of creating a podcast has taught us.

Molly Harris: Yeah, one of the things that I thought was really exciting and didn't really expect is that we have takeaways from the process of doing some kind of educational outreach. Then we also have takeaways from specifically producing a podcast and that form of storytelling. And then also we have learned so much from our guests.

Laura Schmidli: Taking time to think about the stories we've heard about inclusive teaching and then stitch them together was really rewarding. We put together a handout for the Teaching and Learning Symposium with 10 top takeaways for inclusive teaching, and all of those takeaways are things that our guests have taught us.

We also created handouts with top takeaways for podcasting and educational outreach and even a field guide about podcasting. All of those handouts and resources are on the show notes page for this episode on our website.

Molly Harris: Yeah, when we started out [00:02:00] with the theme of inclusive teaching for the first season of the podcast, I was expecting some of these takeaways that we

ended up with about how to design activities or assignments or assessments, sort of those practical in-the-classroom things.

But one of the things that really struck me from talking to the guests is how much they're doing their own personal reflection, learning from colleagues, observing other instructors, considering their own disciplines and their history. And that sort of reflection and growth of the instructor is something that came out in so many of our interviews that I wasn't really expecting.

I was expecting to talk to people who were maybe already experts, but all of our instructors are still growing and learning in this process.

David Macasaet: That's a great point, Molly. It sounds like you're saying there isn't a finish line in one's growth. Let me just take a step back and talk about one of our intentions from the beginning.

We wanted to amplify local and authentic stories [00:03:00] about teaching and learning across L&S. At the time, it seemed like the kinds of conversations that were happening in general about teaching and learning, whether it be from social media, or through traditional news, what have you, just might not be relevant to the actual needs and experiences of L&S instructors.

So by sharing local perspectives, we could add balance and improve the relevance of the whole conversation around teaching excellence and inclusive teaching. We'd really be doing something valuable.

Molly Harris: Yeah, and that really ties in with the podcast medium. Hearing people's voices adds that extra layer of authenticity versus reading something.

Laura Schmidli: I'm maybe seeing a connection, too, with the keynote from the Teaching and Learning Symposium where the keynote speaker was Dr. Corbyn Campbell. She talked about what I thought of as different spheres of influence, if you're thinking about [00:04:00] changing teaching practices, and that the one where there is a lot of opportunity are those connections between instructors that might happen within a department or might even happen across departments.

But the sort of peer-to-peer, instructor-to-instructor ways that you can get people talking about teaching. I'm curious, I know one of the takeaways, just for thinking about educational outreach overall, was the idea of taking a risk and trying something new. I'm curious, how much of a risk did this feel like?

Were there moments towards the beginning where this felt too risky, or how did you think about it?

David Macasaet: For many years, we helped instructors think about using audio in their instruction, but we hadn't produced anything ourselves. Executing it as a team felt very risky.

Molly Harris: To me, the idea of having your voice be recorded and out there in the public is risky [00:05:00] as well.

It's something that, yeah, we intentionally made the decision that our podcast would be open to the public, not just to, you know, people with a UW NetID login or something like that. And that's sort of scary, especially if you're not used to being recorded.

Laura Schmidli: Yeah. So I think what I'm hearing you say, David and Molly, is that, first of all, recording our voices feels risky, honestly, every time we're in front of a microphone.

And that the pressure to make high quality products and do justice to the great stories of our guests also might feel risky. But the potential reward of sharing those local stories felt compelling enough to try something and try our best. And I do think it's been really rewarding. We're now at a place where we can look back and see that we have this substantial library of content and podcast recordings, and maybe those can help other instructors talk about teaching together or have discussions.[00:06:00]

David Macasaet: Are you ready to take the next step? Take an episode you find interesting—like our interview with Sam Pazicni about authentic assessment. Or our conversation with Emily Hall about teaching in the age of AI—and talk about it with a friend or colleague. And let us know how it goes.

Molly Harris: One of the products of preparing for the Teaching and Learning Symposium was creating a Pressbook, which we've called Making a Higher Ed Podcast: The L&S Exchange. It really records our process from the initial ideas to the different tools that we use. And this is something that I think was really useful for us as a team in our reflection process, but also something that we can keep updating as we learn more and as our process changes.

Laura Schmidli: I know for me thinking more about, can we bring in more voices, add in more people to that mix?

Molly Harris: In the last few months, I've enjoyed attending [00:07:00] meetings of the podcasting at UW community, which it meets pretty regularly, monthly, online usually,

and has different people from our campus community share what they're doing with their podcast. So they might be early on in the podcast formation stage, they might be really experienced, have several years of episodes, but they share a little bit about their concepts, their technology and tools, their processes, their outreach methods. And it's a nice conversation to be able to learn from each other and grow with your own podcast, and also get to share a little bit about what you're doing.

David Macasaet: The podcast, I think, is a great example of out-of-the-box educational outreach, and we're available for questions. So if there's some particular resource or a template that you'd like access to, reach out! We'd be happy to share. And I know we've bounced around a lot today and it's been fun to share and reflect.

Molly, I wonder if [00:08:00] you'll give us the final word.

Molly Harris: I think our process for the Symposium actually had a lot in common with our process for creating a podcast. So we have a lot of collaboration, we work together as a team, we tried out new ideas, and we listen to each other's ideas. And teaching can be the same too, where taking a risk can be really productive if you've built those trusting relationships.

David Macasaet: Summer is a time for reflection. We've enjoyed thinking about our year. As you reflect on yours, what have you learned about inclusive teaching? Let us know. We'd love to hear from you.

The Exchange is brought to you by L&S Teaching and Learning Administration and is produced by the L&S Instructional Design Collaborative.

We record this podcast on the UW Madison campus in Van Hise Hall, which sits atop a ridge [00:09:00] overlooking Lake Mendota. It's a beautiful spot and has a deeper significance because everything that resides here rests atop ancestral Ho-Chunk land, a place their nation has called Dejope since time immemorial.