

Transcript

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Derek Bruff: This is "Leading Lines." I'm Derek Bruff. Happy New Year. We're starting our 2019 season with an interview with Anna Bostwick Flaming, Associate Director at the Center for Teaching, and the Office of Teaching, Learning and Technology at the University of Iowa. Anna heads up the faculty development programming for Iowa's active learning classroom initiative called TILE.

Listeners may remember that we launched our 2018 season with another interview about active learning classrooms, also with someone from the University of Iowa. Check out episode 32 of Leading Lines for my conversation with Cornelia Lang, who teaches astronomy in TILE classrooms in Iowa.

Cornelia is one of 500 instructors at Iowa who have participated in Center for Teaching workshops on teaching and active learning classrooms. 500 instructors. When I heard that figure at the POD network conference last fall, I sought out Anna to learn about the ways her center prepares and supports faculty to teach well in these innovative learning spaces.

In the interview, Anna talks about the origin of the active learning classroom initiative at Iowa. She describes the kinds of programming her center offers to prepare faculty to teach well in these spaces. She shares some very concrete strategies for teaching in active learning classrooms.

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Derek: Anna, thanks for time with me here today at POD. I'm glad we were able to find a quiet room for our little chat. Let's start by having you tell us a little bit about who you are, your background and how you came to this role at the University of Iowa.

Anna Bostwick Flaming: Absolutely. My name is Anna Bostwick Flaming. I'm the Associate Director of the Center for Teaching at the University of Iowa which is part of the Office of Teaching, Learning and Technology.

I've been part of the Center for Teaching for about four, five years now and working with TILE for about the last three or four years. My background is in History and Women's Studies. It turns out that Humanities are a really natural fit for active learning classrooms, even though we know that the history of active learning classrooms tells us that STEM was some of the first popularizers and users of active learning classrooms.

Derek: I'm going to come back to that for sure. Tell us about the TILE initiative at Iowa. How did it get started and what does it look like now?

Anna: About eight years ago, a couple of things converged. We had a massive flood on the University of Iowa campus. There was a need to revitalize some classroom spaces at the University of Iowa.

A number of pretty forward-thinking administrators brought together a group of people to think about what might it look like to design some new classrooms that would allow students to be actively engaged in their learning.

One of the things that they did was bring together not only folks that were designing classrooms spaces but also folks who were thinking deeply about pedagogy including Gene Foreman, who is the director, still is, the Director of the Center for Teaching.

Derek: I find that kind of exciting in some of the classroom redesign initiatives that I have either heard of or been intentionally involved in, we had one on our campus where I was involved but...well along in the process...

Luckily, I mean, we had a Dean who was pretty savvy about pedagogy and so the classroom ended up pretty great actually, but to have teaching-center folks, to have pedagogy folks involved so early in the process is pretty exciting. How would you say that kind of shaped what happened?

Anna: Active learning classrooms and including the TILE initiative at the University of Iowa are very much about collaborative learning and collaboration is not just about what students

do in the classroom, it's embedded into the history of how TILE was formed.

The Center for Teaching was part of the conversations early on, the registrar was part of the conversation early on because they're responsible for classroom scheduling. Having all of the right people at the table from the very beginning is really crucial to making sure that you are thinking through a complex initiative like this without missing any of the finer points because everyone is bringing a different perspective to the table.

Derek: Now Iowa has several TILE classrooms and what does TILE stand for?

Anna: TILE stands for Transform, Interact, Learn, Engage. Sometimes folks will think that the 'T' stands for technology, and I really love, and I can't take credit for this, this [inaudible 4:34] me, I love that the T doesn't stand for technology because it's not just about the technology in the space.

In fact, we have created some that have very limited technology. It's about how can those spaces help to support the kind of learning and teaching that you're hoping to do anyway.

Derek: Yeah, and we can talk more about the technology piece but this was something we interviewed Dean Christopher Brooks on a podcast about a year ago and he pointed me to some research that indicates and, in fact, it may be some of the lower tech components of an active learning classroom that do the most good in terms of student learning and student engagement.

Can you describe, just so our listeners can have a picture, what does that kind of high-tech classroom look like at Iowa and what does the low-tech active learning classroom look like?

Anna: The very first TILE classrooms that were built were built on the scale-up model, and that's the active learning classroom designed by Bob Beichner at North Carolina State. Those are round tables. Professor Beichner, he is a physicist, spent a lot of time thinking very deeply about every nuance of the designs that he was developing in his teaching.

We have the round tables of the specific dimensions that he had figured out, worked out really well for his students. Each round table seats nine students. There are multiple tables in each classroom space, and we have classrooms that seat different amounts of students. Each round table has its own monitor, large LED screen. Then the classroom also has some large

projector screens.

Individual tables can project their own work onto their own individual monitor. Then the instructor has the capacity to determine that maybe table two has come up with some really intriguing idea, and they can then project that information out to all of the screens or maybe to only half of the screens so that students can compare and contrast what table two did compared to what table four did.

Students are engaged not just in developing their own ideas within their small groups but also in comparing and evaluating between and among groups.

Derek: I've seen a couple of these classrooms. I got to visit Iowa a few years ago. Another key feature is there's really often no center of the room. There's no central focus point.

Anna: Exactly, yeah. The instructor's station is usually in the center of the room. One of the first things that happens when students or when faculty enter the space is they notice there is no front of room. Some people will react by saying, "Well, this is a poorly designed room. How am I supposed to lecture in here?"

Some people will react and say, "This is a wonderfully designed room." [laughs] "My students will be able to talk to each other in here." A lot of the faculty development we do around these spaces is about exploring what's possible in these spaces, what they're well-designed for, and what won't work as well in these spaces.

We actually did a survey with faculty in 2014 or 2015, and we asked them a lot about what are the various affordances in the classrooms that they most appreciated.

In addition to a lot of them really appreciating the technology and the way that allowed students to share information with each other and with the instructor, a lot of them really focused in on the whiteboards and on the ability to be in seating patterns where they could actually see each other.

If students are in chairs that are nailed down to the floor and in straight lines, they can maybe turn to a neighbor, but three in a row, it's really hard for them to have a real conversation.

Derek: I was at dinner last night here at the conference, and we had nine people around our

table. Similar size, and even then, four people talking in a noisy room can be a little challenging. That's when we're actually looking at each other.

Anna: All of the very highly technology-laden classroom spaces do have those features of wall-to-wall whiteboards and round tables, but we realized that there was a need for classroom spaces that didn't need as much of the technology, didn't need laptops provided, didn't need monitors everywhere. They just needed flexible seating and a lot of whiteboards.

We built two spaces that are just like that. Instead of round tables, they're movable, very flexible individual student desks. The actual desk part can move up and down and left and right so that students can bring the desk part together into whatever configuration makes sense, and instructors are able to put students in groups of three, in groups of six, or in groups of four, or whatever is most appropriate for the activity that they're doing.

They have all of the whiteboards so that students can be working simultaneously, see what each other is writing, maybe getting ideas from what another group is doing. The instructor can stand right in the middle of those classroom spaces and see, "Wow, this group is coming up with an idea that I maybe did not expect anyone to come up with."

They can draw attention to it or help coach in that way, or maybe they can see that one group is struggling. They're not writing anything. Maybe they're so deep in conversation they're forgetting to move forward, or maybe they're totally suck. That's the first group that the instructor might go visit.

Instead of being in a room of 81 students and not knowing how any of the students are potentially processing information, they have a really quick read on how almost everyone in the room is processing information, and that's powerful.

Derek: I was talking to my colleague, Peter Newbury, at the University of British Columbia. I was talking to him about whiteboards, and he pointed out that if students are working in small groups and not using a whiteboard and instructor wants to know how they're doing, if they're struggling, what questions they need, he or she has to go over and basically eavesdrop.

That can change the dynamic of that small group conversation when the instructor sits down with you. With the whiteboards you can see from a distance what they're up to and figure out

which groups need that kind of intervention, which is subtle, but it seems really useful.

Anna: Absolutely. It makes learning visible and visible from far away.

Derek: You mentioned the faculty development work that you do. What does that look like at Iowa? How do you help prepare faculty to teach well in these very nontraditional teaching spaces?

Anna: From the beginning, the Provost Office understood the importance of faculty development in these spaces. We actually have a model where basically anyone who participates in faculty development gets priority access into these spaces. Demand for these spaces is so high that priority access means access [laughs] at the University of Iowa.

The registrar actually keeps a list of everyone who's participated in our professional development, and we just had a big celebration because that number is at about 500 now.

Derek: 500 faculty...

Anna: Yes, 500 faculty.

Derek: ...have gone through this workshop preparation.

Anna: Yes. Through one or other of the iterations that we've had over the last eight or so years. What's really exciting about that is that that includes graduate students, that includes instructional staff. It includes clinical track. It includes tenure track. We're involved with faculty who are teaching all kinds of courses in all kinds of disciplines from all kinds of professional tracks within the University.

TILE has been an engine for cultural change around the way we think about teaching and learning, which is really exciting. The registrar keeps this list of who's been part of that professional development, and that's how people get access to the classroom spaces. That professional development has evolved over the years. In the early years, it was a multiday institute.

The very first one, Bob Beichner actually was part of it and led it. We went straight to the top. [laughs]

Derek: The big guy, great.

Anna: There was a core group of fellows from a bunch of different disciplines, and some of them came in as complete skeptics. One of my favorite examples is Allison Bianchi, who is a professor in sociology. She actually directs the Center for the Study of Group Processes at the University of Iowa.

This is her wheelhouse, and one of the things she thinks a lot about is how do group dynamics affect people, especially people who might be underrepresented, who might find that group interactions leave them out of conversations rather than include them in conversations.

She came in as a skeptic, someone who thinks very critically about places where group dynamics can cause problems, and she left as a huge advocate [laughs] for TILE. We actually bring her back to talk to new TILE faculty pretty frequently.

She's also consulted at other universities to talk about the specific strategies that instructors can use to ensure that if there's some kind of problematic group dynamic developing that instructors know how to either arrange groups or intervene in groups to ensure that everybody is having equal access in order to be wrestling with whatever the material is at hand.

Derek: Could you say more about that? It's my own bias sometimes that I've seen all the research in active learning, I've seen group work go so well in the classroom. Even in a traditional lecture hall if I'm doing a think, pair, share or a clicker activity where students are turning to a neighbor, for me it's very energizing to hear 100 statistics students all talking about statistics at the same time.

Sometimes I can miss the fact that some of those pairs and trios are actually not functioning very well. What advice would you give to a faculty member who's wanting to make sure that small group activity is actually as inclusive as we want it to be?

Anna: There are a couple of techniques that can be really powerful, and these are things that we talk about in our professional development and that people like Allison use all the time. They came out of research by Elizabeth Cohen and others who actually look mostly in the K-12 world because that's a space where these things can really be important issues as well.

Things like starting the class by talking to students about their previous experiences with group work. Some students have had great experiences. Some students have had the kinds of experiences...You're smiling, and I think that happens a lot when we discuss this. Some students have had the experience where they feel like they end up doing all the work for everybody else.

Derek: Frankly, I think a lot of academics felt that way. Those of us who pursue higher education and now teaching it, often our undergraduate experiences with group work weren't great.

Anna: There could be a couple of dynamics happening in those cases. It could be that someone is dominating a group and ends up doing all of the work, and is leaving other people out, or has decided that someone has not a lot to contribute. It can mean that some folks are just not interested in contributing.

One opportunity early in the class is to let students do some pro-con brainstorming about group work, and from there to generate maybe even in their actual small groups or maybe in a large group a list of guidelines for how they might interact within small groups so that they can ensure that they get the positives of group work and so that they have a means of navigating through the potential problems that they might experience in group work. That's one really powerful technique.

Another is, we talked earlier about how TILE classroom spaces make it really easy for instructors to move about a space, so they can see whether groups seem to be productive and moving forward, and everyone's contributing, or they can see whether people seem to be stuck someplace. As they observe students, they can check in with different small groups and see how those dynamics are evolving.

If something is happening where a student is repeatedly getting interrupted by another student, the instructor can intervene in a subtle way by saying, "Oh, you know, what this student said is actually a productive conversation for this group to have."

They can actually transfer some of their authority as the instructor to that student who maybe was being dismissed a little too quickly by some of the other students in the group. Sometimes students get the idea that active learning means the instructor's not doing anything.

I think most faculty find that actually they are way more engaged [laughs] when they're facilitating in a space like this, and that's because they're keeping up with things like that.

Derek: From talking to your colleague, Cornelia Lang, who was on the podcast, you may have 80 students in the room. Some of these active learning classrooms are fairly large. You can't talk to every student every hour, but the ability to circulate in a class session and check in with lots of different groups of students, it's really powerful.

Anna: It really is.

Derek: What do you think instructors find challenging about teaching in these classrooms for the first time? Are there some misconceptions or some fundamental models that they have to change up in order to use these classrooms well?

Anna: The faculty development that we do currently...we're not a brand-new initiative with lots of resources to deploy in the same way that brand-new initiatives sometimes have.

We no longer do the multiday institutes, we aren't able to bring Professor Beichner [laughs] a great time anymore, so we have two afternoon sessions, and the idea is to provide an opportunity for instructors to sort out a lot of those initial struggles in this space with other colleagues who are thinking to do the same thing as opposed to during the first week of class.

The sessions are very much modeled to be active learning sessions. The facilitators do very little lecturing of any kind in some ways that you say it's amusing and [inaudible 18:57], and that anything that's just knowledge transfer that happens using our LMS prior to the sessions.

Derek: You're modeling some of the teaching practices in this training sessions.

Anna: Exactly. We're just thinking about where is the TILE classroom, as a limited resource, where is it most useful to deploy certain kinds of teaching strategy? When students are not in that space altogether, what kinds of teaching strategies make more sense for that kind of environment to calibrate according to what resources you have on hand.

In these afternoon sessions that we do -- we call them TILE Essentials. A faculty gets to experience being in a role of a student. We start out by putting them in the student seats,

and the facilitator will look around the room and say, "Tell me what you notice about the space." Within the first four seconds...

[laughter]

Anna: ...the participants are not only enjoying the role of the students and recognizing that there are things like the fact that sometimes their back is to other students who might be speaking, or sometimes their backs are to the facilitator themselves and what that does in terms of audio.

We all read lips more than we think we do, and what that says about accessibility, but also about what student expectations might be in that room.

We do a big brainstorm about, "What's different about this space or what's distinctive about this space? What implications might it have for teaching and learning?" Not only is that a nice activity to bring into the classroom from day one, it's something that participants can deploy [laughs] right away.

Derek: Sure, because their students may not have been in a classroom space like this before. To actually use that activity with the students to clarify expectations and reduce confusion, yeah.

Anna: Then, it also gets the whole group on the same page about, "What are some of the things we need to be mindful about?" The rooms that have a lot of technology, there are a lot of screens. Potentially, you might have multiple different things being projected at the same time.

A student might not know where to look. [laughs] If you're saying, "Oh, and look at Figure One," and then you move the slide forward. If Figure One was only appearing on one of those screens, a student might miss it. Even practices like saying, "Now, if I can direct your attention to the large projector screen, let's look at Figure One for a moment here."

Derek: Cornelia talked about how she might have a list of something on the document camera on one screen. Then, she would have some images or data on the main screen. Of course, the students have their own screens. I can imagine that you might need a little navigational help.

Anna: It's a wonderful opportunity to be able to see all of those things simultaneously. You have to make sure that if everyone's supposed to be directing their attention to one thing, that everyone is, in fact, directing their attention to one thing.

That's how we spend the very first five minutes of the session. A lot of the sessions are on the same kind of model. Participants are experiencing the role of students.

They have opportunities to think through what was hard about being a student in the space, what was overwhelming about being a student in the space. How frequently might students need a moment just to pause and reflect as individuals on what has just happened.

While this is a great space for collaboration, we know that for collaboration to be really productive, people also do need a minute to figure out what the takeaway from [laughs] all of this was. Particularly, that might happen as individuals.

We have previous TILE faculty come in and demonstrate, we call them module, and we use that term pretty loosely. Basically, what it is is a well-aligned activity.

Something where the TILE professor has identified as a specific measurable learning objective, has figured out what the assessment that is well-aligned to that objective would be. Then, has created an activity that will require students to be engaged in thinking through that process, maybe even identifying a process that hasn't been explained yet, discovering for themselves that process.

The participants get to behave as students, get to see what it's like to be drawing on whiteboards or putting notecards in order, or Post-Its everywhere, [laughs] or whatever the activity might be.

To not only think about it from the role of student, but then afterward to do some Q&A and debriefing with the veteran TILE instructor about, "What was your strategy in bringing all of this together? Why was it so important that the assessment be aligned with the activity and that the activity be aligned with the learning objective?"

One of the things that can be provocative in these spaces is start designing around the space. While that may be a lot of fun, if your course doesn't accomplish what you need it to accomplish in terms of student learning, then that will be disappointing to students.

If you have some really exciting learning objective, and students are doing activities that are part of this engaged and exciting learning objective, and then the final assessment is not well-matched, they're going to perceive all of that active learning as busy work because students tend to think of assessment as a way of figuring out what's important to their instructor.

We spend a lot of time talking about alignment, a lot of time talking about the strategies and the strategic thinking behind course design that happens in these spaces, and also about what it feels like to be a student in these spaces.

Derek: The alignment's really key because you've got all of these affordances, you've got all these tools, and you could do an activity that's very engaging, but it might not be a great activity for the actual learning objective.

Anna: Exactly.

Derek: You mentioned the disciplinary differences. Can you say more about that? I do think that a lot of the attention to active learning classrooms has come out of the STEM community, in part because it's such a different format, a different structure for classes that have traditionally been taught in large lecture halls. That's not always true.

In humanities, for instance, they've often had smaller, more discussion-oriented classrooms. Can you say what are some of those differences? Do you see differences in how the spaces are used across the disciplines?

Anna: Sometimes, but I'll say one of the most exciting things about the faculty development is that we're bringing in groups of faculty from all over campus. We'll have a nursing person sitting next to a philosopher.

One of the interesting things about teaching in these spaces is that when we think about the methods as much as the content, a lot of those things work really well regardless of discipline.

Many different disciplines think about process. They might think about process to different ends or different kinds of process, but the strategies for getting students to contemplate process might look similar.

One of the things that happens is that an activity that's done either by a veteran TILE instructor, or at one point we have opportunities for the participants in the faculty development to try out their own modules for the very first time on their colleague and to have a fun, interactive session where they brainstorm together.

A faculty member who does a demonstration might well find that someone from a radically different discipline has a strategy that will work well for their own content. We all benefit from getting out of our own silos from time to time and seeing what folks across campus are doing, and that's something that's really exciting about these active learning classrooms.

When they were first built, the story is that there was a lot of concern that faculty wouldn't be willing to leave their home buildings to teach in these spaces. That has turned out not to be true at all. People are so excited by them that they are willing to walk across campus.

When they walk across campus, they'll often arrive at the classroom space to see someone from a really different discipline wiping down the whiteboards having taught something radically different. They'll say, "Oh, that's so interesting how you use postcards to do that." [laughs] Those organic conversations sometimes happen as well.

Derek: For those of us who work at teaching centers, we get to see this play out a lot, but faculty, who are in their own little bubble sometimes, think that "Oh, so and so teaches English not Chemistry. What do we have in common?" Often there are important differences certainly, but there's a lot in common actually.

Can you give an example from the humanities, I think would be interesting, of a module or an activity that you've seen in these spaces?

Anna: There's a professor of Spanish who did a really interesting activity -- that I've seen modeled -- where she had students do a jigsaw activity, an activity where small groups, each looking at different aspect of a question. In this case, they were looking at an image that was depicting a Spanish term that could have multiple meanings.

After they had done that in their own small groups and figured out what they thought each picture was depicting, they then mixed up the groups. Then, they had one member from each different picture interacting together. Because they were all coming with their own expertise and some element of the question, that ensured that everybody was participating.

They were able to have this robust conversation about how language is context-specific, how this particular term had all of these different meanings depending upon what assumptions you were making, what does that mean for translation, and what does that mean for the way we think about words as being precise.

Derek: That's a fairly low-tech activity but the room allows you to have one set of groups and very quickly move to a different set of groups. The group activity works better because students are looking at each other and engaging. Then, you have that piece with instructor circulating and eavesdropping, help out here and there. I love that.

Also, the jigsaw idea that each student has their own experience or expertise that they're then bringing to a heterogeneous group, that works really well. It depends on the learning objectives. Often, you're wanting students to appreciate the complexity of something. It's a great way to bring that complexity in very directly.

As you say, there's a reason to hear from every student in the group because each student is the only one from that first set of group that has that perspective and that expertise. I love that.

Anna: The veteran TILE instructor demonstrated that activity with a group of brand-new TILE instructors. In the debrief, we talked about the importance of what the instructor is doing during that activity.

The important piece is that in that first half -- where students are all in homogeneous groups -- they're all looking at the same image, that they come away with an appropriate understanding of that specific piece of the puzzle so that what they brought to the heterogeneous groups was appropriate for the conversation moving forward.

She was watching to make sure that that conversation was proceeding well.

Derek: Some kind of calibration and feedback in the first round of groups so that they're really productive. That enables the second round of groups to also be productive. These are subtle things. If you're just used to lecturing half of your class period, you may not think about all of the dynamics.

Anna: I think that's why the faculty development is so important because until you've

participated in something like that, or watch someone else facilitate in something like that, it's really easy to miss those nuances.

You'll probably figure them out the first time you do them, but if you participate in this development prior to your first time in the classroom, you know going in -- what are the potential pitfalls, what are the opportunities here to pull something extra out of an activity that you've developed.

It's exciting that faculty make the space to be thoughtful about their course designs and about the way they facilitate these activities prior to being in the classroom. It helps set them up for success.

One of the cool things about the TILE program is we no longer have stipends. We don't do a lot of advertising beyond just making sure people are aware of the dates and times that we're hosting these sessions. Organically, we get a couple dozen people for every session. I think it's because people recognize that it is calibrated to benefit them.

Derek: Our podcast is called Leading Lines. We try not to predict the future, that seems a fool's errand, but shape the future. If you could imagine active learning classrooms three to five years out, what would you want them to look like, what roles to play, what would be different?

Anna: I'm thinking about two different sets of colleagues I have in the Office of Teaching, Learning and Technology. That unit is really exciting because I have the opportunity to collaborate with folks who come at this from a slightly different perspective.

We have an assessment unit. They're often involved in helping faculty to figure out how student learning outcomes are being affected by teaching in these spaces.

We also have a learning spaces unit. They're always keeping an eye out for new technologies that might facilitate some of the things we want to do. We're already experimenting with some things. One example is a throwable microphone. Maybe Cornelia Lang mentioned that in the interview you did with her.

That's been interesting because we've discovered that while that's a lot of fun in a TILE classroom, in some ways, it's even more fun in a large lecture space with fixed seating where

a lot of instructors have that experience of having that center of the large lecture where you just can't get to students. Now, you could throw a microphone.

[laughter]

Anna: Our assessment unit has been really thoughtful.

Derek: It's like a foam-covered device, right?

Anna: It's like a foam-covered device, yeah. Our assessment unit is being thoughtful about how does that sort of thing affect student motivation, what if students are intimidated by this, how does it affect accessibility for throwing things at people. We're figuring out what is the best way to deploy this and when is it appropriate to deploy this.

Any technology, we want to put the pedagogy first. That's one example. Another one that the learning spaces technology team has recently implemented is small iPad, so that instead of being tied to the instructor podium, instructors can be navigating the classroom space.

If they see something interesting, they can go ahead and bring up a student's monitor to everyone's screen, without having to run in the middle of the classroom.

Derek: From the tablet they can run the screen from the room.

Anna: Exactly. It makes the lack of front of the room even more decentralized. The front of the room, or wherever the instructor might be could be anywhere in the classroom space in any given moment.

Those are a couple of things that we're playing with now. I'm so fortunate to have colleagues who are so enthusiastic and engaged, being part of the TILE program.

Derek: It's tied to what you said about the collaboration, that Iowa started in a very collaborative structure where you had people from different backgrounds and expertise. That seems to be continuing.

I also like the idea of taking some of the lessons we're learning about structure and engagement, the importance of technologies in the active learning space and trying to bring

that into other teaching spaces because most campuses can't reinvent all their classrooms overnight.

Thinking about, "Well, what if we had a throwable mic in a stadium-scene large lecture hall? How does that help us change things up? If we're going to do a renovation, we don't have a lot of money, how do we do an active learning classroom in the cheap and still get the best out of it?"

Anna: Yeah. Exactly. Our faculty are really partners in that because they say, "I teach this class in the top classroom but my other class is stuck in this large lecture hall and so these are the things that I'm figuring out how to sort of hack the classroom space," and those are really fun conversations.

Derek: Absolutely. Well, one of the things that we encounter a lot in our work kit and my teaching center is faculty tend to kind of teach us the way they were taught, so just getting them into a different classroom, getting them talking to colleagues, getting them to observe someone else teach. All of a sudden their tool box just gets more full, and it's great.

Anna: Teachers, they want their students to learn, so sometimes these conversations become about faculty buy-in. I don't like that language because I think our faculty are already bought-in. They want to be successful in a classroom, and they want their students to be successful in a classroom.

Our role is to just provide a space for them to have an opportunity to think through some of those things. It's amazing what they come up with.

Derek: That's great. Teaching is such a creative act. I think sometimes we underestimate the role of that. We have a final question. We ask all of our guests, I think you knew this was coming. We talk a lot about digital educational technology on the podcasts, because that's really a space a lot of us are trying to figure out and map, but technology doesn't have to be digital.

Do you have a favorite analog educational technology that you like to use in your own work or when you're working with [inaudible 37:03] that you'd like to recommend?

Anna: Honestly, the whiteboards. [laughs] I'm such a fangirl for whiteboards. I love

whiteboards because they're erasable. It's a big part of learning and teaching. It's about iteration. They really make that possible in a way that doesn't feel unfriendly.

I'm a big fan of the giant Post-It notes when you don't have a whiteboard or the right tool. If you have to cross something out, you have to see it crossed out and maybe that effects you in some way.

Derek: Or you're less likely to put something down because it doesn't feel finished.

Anna: Exactly. The same thing with typing notes in a Word document or something. There's that cursor blinking at you, demanding things. [laughs] A whiteboard is this space that's meant to be creative, you can throw things up there, rearrange things, draw lines between them, and use multiple colored markers. I think it really facilitates creativity.

I do it when I'm thinking about my own to-do list. I do it when I'm working with a faculty member on course development. I love seeing the way that people use it in the classroom.

Derek: Me, too. That's great. Well, thank you Anna. This has been really fascinating. Thanks for really taking some time to talk about an actual learning classrooms.

Anna: Well, thank you. It's my pleasure.

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Derek: That was Anna Bostwick Flaming, Associate Director at the Center for Teaching in the Office of Teaching, Learning and Technology at the University of Iowa. I spoke with Anna at the 2018 POD Network Conference in Portland, Oregon. POD is a professional association for educational developers. A place for a teaching center people like me connect and learn from each other.

If you're in educational development, that is, if you work with faculty or grad students to help them teach well, you want to go to POD.

I met Anna through Wayne Jacobson, Director of Assessment at Iowa who's a POD colleague of mine from way back and I've worked with Jean Florman and Anna's boss at the Center for Teaching, who's one of the most thoughtful and hardworking educators I know.

Before it get too sentimental about my POD colleagues, I should mention that if you're interested in the TILE active learning classroom initiative at the University of Iowa, check the show notes for links for further information. I'll throw on a link to my collection of classroom photos on Flickr, too.

I get to visit lots of college and university campuses and I like to take a few photos of innovative learning spaces when I travel. In the Flickr album, you'll find photos of Iowa's TILE classrooms and a number of other active learning classrooms.

Also it has links to episodes 32 and 33 of Leading Lines, which also focus on active learning classrooms and a brief lit review on active learning classrooms I posted on my blog last year.

For final show notes as well as past episodes with full transcripts, visit our website leadinglinespod.com. We're on Twitter and Facebook too, just search for Leading Lines podcast. We would love to hear from you and connect with you that way.

Leading Lines is produced by the Vanderbilt Center for Teaching, the Vanderbilt Institute for Digital Learning, Office of Scholarly Communications at the Vanderbilt University libraries and the Associate Provost for Education, Development and Technology is John Sloop.

This episode was edited by Rhett McDaniel. Look for new episodes the first and third Monday of each month. I'm your host, Derek Bruff. Thank you for listening.

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Transcription by CastingWords