Transcript

Derek Bruff: [0:00] This because leading lines, I'm Derek Bruff. 2020 was a very hard year for higher education. But one positive thing that came out of that year was a greater attention to issues of equity and access for our students. The shift to remote and online teaching during the pandemic seemed to make more visible to faculty and administrators. The challenges that their students had been facing for some time. Access to technology and the Internet. Challenge of taking care of younger siblings or older relatives, food and securities, financial challenges and more. As we start to look ahead to 2022 and beyond, how can higher education continue to attend to these challenges? Particularly as more institutions are taking advantages of the affordances of online and hybrid teaching. To help us better understand and respond to the equity and access needs of our students. I reached out to a colleague, I met through my professional organization, the POD Network to Xen Daniel's is an Assistant Director at the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching at the University of Michigan. She has a doctorate in medical anthropology and, her current scholarship focuses on promoting equity and inclusion in teaching and in faculty development. She's been practicing equity focused teaching and online environments long before the rest of us, we're figuring out how to teach on Zoom during a pandemic. And she's deeply committed to helping other instructors reflect on and improve their teaching practices. In our interview, Tazin shares her journey into this work. Steps both big and small that faculty can take toward equity focus teaching and her vision for the future of educational technology and higher education class. Taz thanks for being here on leading lines today.

Tazin Daniels: [1:57] Great to be here. **Derek: [2:01]** Looking forward to a conversation. I've got one question. I don't think I gave you this one in advance. But can you tell us the time that you realized you wanted to be an educator? **Tazin: [2:11]** Okay. So, my father, he's retired now, but he was a college professor of business. And he taught business at Dhaka University in Bangladesh, which is where I was born. And also came to the US, did his MBA and his PhD

and taught all over the country, everywhere from Suny Albany to Michigan State to Cal State, Fullerton, LSU. So, I think it's safe to say that I've grown up on college campuses. **Derek: [2:41]** Yeah. **Tazin: [2:41]** I know there's military brats. Perhaps I was an academic. I had a lot of respect for my dad, especially when I would go and see him teach just how much passion he had and helping his students. Um, and I think that was actually a big part of the reason why I pursued a PhD and kept going instead of just like a lot of folks spec them, getting a bachelor's them and finding a job. So, right. But I think another piece of that is the research that I did as a PhD student. So, my, my background is in medical anthropology and my dissertation research looked at Adderall use among undergraduate students. So, so as procurements, enhancer as a medication and as a recreational drug and kind of slippery boundaries between those three uses. And I got a really close look, right, as anthropologists living and interviewing and kind of really interacting with the students. Just how broken our education system really is. And so students, instead of carrying about academic integrity and learning and well-being, we're really prioritizing academic performance over all those things. And so, a lot of that is not just about how we design courses, but also just the larger systems of power and oppression that students are trapped in. And so, knowing all of that, I kind of had a goal of making the system better. I'm making my mark and I think that's a big part of how I got into faculty development as well.

Derek: [4:10] Yeah. Can you say a little bit about that transition? Because medical anthropology to faculty development is- **Tazin: [4:15]** Yeah. **Derek: [4:16]** I've run into very often- **Tazin: [4:18]** Is there a traditional career path? But somebody, or if it's a great, it's a great intro question. Yes. So, I would say that at heart, I'm a coach. I have done all kinds of coaching. I coached rowing for ten years. I have Training and Executive and ADHD coaching. And so, I have a lot of fun kind of meeting really talented people and helping them achieve the next level. And that was part of the work that he does, a grad student when I was the online course coordinator for our department. So, this was back in before 2010. So, and as a grad student, I was selected to do this because I was one of the few people that actually had gotten some training in how to teach online through the school of education. And it was advertised as a position where I would be, you know, helping coordinate things like designing syllabi and all the course development pieces and helping people write scripts and things like that. But it turned out that a lot of my work was being a coach, sometimes a therapist to faculty who are really reticent about hopping on the online bandwagon. And I would say like, I learned a lot from that experience. And one of those things is that their concerns around o is online teaching going to result in poor

quality? Or am I going to lose agency or control once these classes are recorded? You know, those were valid concerns. And I think because I could have those conversations with them, we're able to develop better structures and processes to help them over that. But kind of in that. So, I had that piece as well as my dissertation that I think really got me interested. And then I currently work as an assistant director at the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, CLT at the University of Michigan, which as you know, is very wonderful place to start a career in this field. Surrounded by very talented colleagues and a great history of, you know, helping people be the best that they can the classroom. So, I think those two things together really yeah. Set me on this path. **Derek: [6:25]** Yeah. Yeah. Well, and I think your teaching center is coming up on its 60th anniversary.

Tazin: [6:32] Yes. Yes. And congratulations on was at 35 for Vanderbilt? **Derek: [6:36]** Yeah. 35. Yeah. Well, let's talk about 2020 for a minute. Yeah. And the, the effects that the pandemic had on teaching and learning in higher education. Most campuses shifted to remote online hybrid, different forms of instruction that many faculty were not used to engaging in and many students were not used to engaging in. And I kept hearing a lot of expressions of concern about issues of equity and access. And I think in some ways, the pandemic teaching seemed to make more visible. Some, of these concerns about equity and access that had somehow been invisible before. And so what did you hear concerns like that. And what were they and why do you think they weren't on the minds, at least the front of minds, of faculty prior to 2020? **Tazin: [7:35]** Yeah. That's a great question. I think. You know, even on the question you're asking the word that kind of struck me as visibility, visible vs invisible. So, I appreciate that you're acknowledging that these things have always been there. The pandemic, of course, exacerbated a lot of those issues, but in many ways it unmasked those issues. And we can talk in detail about those issues are. But I think this notion that, oh, all of a sudden, I'm realizing my students have care responsibilities or some of them don't live in their own apartment. Or they can just go and study whenever they want to or that they don't have food and security and other kinds of things. I think we have to remember that higher education is not immune from systems of power and oppression like racism, sexism, ableism, et cetera. It's a product of those things. And it's been designed over hundreds of years to benefit certain people over others. And so I think we have to remember that this is not a new thing. And that in fact, the outside world, outside of our classrooms is always impacted student experience and student learning, as well as who's even in those classrooms. But I think because of the pandemic, it was really brought face-to-face. I mean, I know I've taught big lectures before, Derek. I don't know about you, but sometimes

it's easy to look out into a sea of a hundred faces and just, you see this homogenous group, Ray and perhaps, you know, a little bit superficially, but we're quite literally transported into the students homes. And because of all of the different kind of traumatic experiences that people have had, they've had to bring those personal parts of themselves to instructors to share things like my family is, is experiencing a COVID outbreak or I'm not able to afford to come back to school this semester because of X, Y, and Z. And perhaps those aren't things that our students would have been forced to reveal to us in the past.

Derek: [9:23] Yeah. And I think about those, those lecture halls with 100 students. And I, you know, in a case like that, I can pretty easily experience only three hours of a student's life each week, right? The three hours they spend in front of me. But there's so much more to their life outside of those three hours. And yeah, I didn't have to I didn't have to pay attention to the other x minus three hours of the week, right? Right. But I think the move to remote teaching made a lot of those other factors more salient to the instructional process. **Tazin: [10:00]** I think there's a couple of things I'd add also to that. One is both you and I are at predominantly white institutions. And so I think if we look to our colleagues who teach at HBCUs and tribal colleges and community colleges. Things are not so novel, right guys institutions are designed with kind of keeping student experience and you know, holistic approaches to student learning at, at their minds. So I think context is important. The other thing too, in terms of like revealing some of these things about students, is it goes both ways, right? I think as a consultant, I was working with a lot of faculties who themselves were experiencing things like financial stress and care issues and mental health and burnout. And a lot of I think the work that I was doing was trying to build bridges between those two populations, right? How is it that you, as an instructor, you want to be flexible but at the same time, your stressed out, burnt out and feeling guilty about it. How do you express that humanity back to your students, right? **Derek: [11:05]** Yeah, And I heard all these conversations happening with faculty and their students that having these kind of moments of shared humanity that the pandemic brought out.

Tazin: [11:19] So I think in terms of like the shared humanity piece I think is interesting because you know, what I'm noticing and I've talked to a lot of my colleagues about this as like when we think about the role of the instructor and how much, just like ideologically that has had to shift, right? When people say, when you're in a classroom for three hours, your main responsibility is make sure you show up on time, have the paper straight

ahead, right? Perhaps there's a conflict or something in the moment or whatever, but those things hopefully are few and far between. But now right, the borders between classroom and home life are so blurred. And I think this is where the equity thing becomes front-and-center. Because once you start to realize like, oh, it's not just this one student has this challenge, but it's a whole population of students. There's actually systemic patterns and, and how these resources are distributed or who's being left behind. And I think once you know that that's where I think people perhaps feel the need to at least listen about equity. But certainly, there's a lot of resistance and a lot of challenges. So that's something I to I talk a lot about in my work. **Derek: [12:30]** Yeah. Yeah. Well, we had a lot of faculties at my campus and other campuses. I know who fairly experienced teaching were in-person but were new to online in any form. Much less the peculiar form of online teaching in 2020. How do you think the challenge of equitable teaching is different in the online context from maybe more familiar in-person contexts? **Tanzin: [13:01]** Sure, So I think maybe taking a step back. There are many things that play. So, so one is when faculty come to me, or department chairs or administrators and they want to think about doing equitable online teaching. My first question is, do you know equitable teaching? Right? Because there's also a difference between an equitable versus inclusive versus anti-racist. And they're not necessarily in contention with each other, but there's different focuses and different histories. And people have spent their whole lives studying these different pedagogies and developing them. And so, I think really a lot of it is about marrying those mindsets together. And really thinking through what are, what are the, the philosophies or principals or approaches that you can use to make your decisions. Because as you know, faculty would love for us to provide a huge kind of comprehensive list of strategy hits the things that you can do. But the first is to develop that mindset and that's a lifetime's worth of work. And so things that help with that our education, right? So go out and learn about the kind of assorted history of higher education and how racism and classism and ableism has shaped what we see is traditional face-to-face learning, which in fact is not by default benefiting a lot of students that are, that are in our classrooms. I think once you do some of the education, I think next is community engagement and getting involved in other conversations, finding other networks, finding mentors, right? Because it's hard to do these things in isolation. Finding people who are at the same level as you are the same point in their journey. And also finding mentors who are a bit more advanced. And I think social identity is really important to consider there, right? There's only so many things I can teach you, Derek, as a woman of color. But there are a lot of things to other people who have the same I've done is I've been thinking about this longer could share with you. So I think it's about building that network. And then I think it's

about a lot of deep hard reflection based on feedback. So asking your students, you know, here's my goal. My goal is to be more equitable instructor, how am I doing? Where can I be better? And creating a trusting relationship that those things can happen. And so I think once you go through some of those steps, even if it's just a little bit here and there, it will start to develop that mindset. So then instead of focusing on strategies, you can ask yourself questions like, how can I bring in an increased sense of belonging for my minoritized students, right? So how do I build community or how can I better structure interactions to offset cultural biases, right, and engage all my learners? Or how can I be more flexible to accommodate diverse needs of my students while also taking care of my own mental health. So there's not a perfect answer to each of those questions, but I think it is about asking the right questions.

Derek: [15:59] Let me circle back to a couple of things that you mentioned. One, you started with education, right? **Tanzin: [16:05]** Yeah. **Derek: [16:06]** Do you have an example you'd like to share of how some of these systemic biases have affected- Let's start with classroom teaching, right? So kind of the traditional settings. You said that, that often students are disadvantage in that setting because of some of these histories and structures. Can you give me an example or two of what that might be? **Tanzin: [16:29]** Sure. You know, I'm very deliberate about using the word minoritized students instead of non-traditional students. Because right there, There's just a lot of politics behind terminology. No, ableism is one that I think a lot of people can easily grasp onto. So, thinking about the design of different classrooms, thinking about, and maybe this is leading into some of the benefits of online teaching is remote and hybrid teaching is people who are hard of hearing and not being able to see transcripts on the screen. Now in Zoom, you can see that much more easily, or people are getting in the habit of producing transcripts. I believe you have one along with a podcast, right, for accessibility reasons. And as we know, universal design, even for me as someone not hard of hearing, but has ADHD, it's very beneficial to you and those transcripts. But also, I think in terms of how we structure interaction, letting students pick their own topics or pick their own groups, group work. And we know that that's a lot of times when biases in stem fields, for example, against women or folks who are non-native speakers. Sorry, non-native English speakers are oftentimes segregated or marginalized and left in a group. Roles that are less than desirable are ones where they can't really show that kind of great skills and assets that they have. **Derek: [17:51]** Gotcha. Thank you. I also wanted to you mentioned the terminology and I'm trying to be conscious of the words that I'm using. Sharia was we're talking. But I also, I think the terminology can change over the years

and I think sometimes hard to keep up with what certainty in terms mean. You use- You briefly mentioned the term anti-racist teaching. How would you distinguish that term from some of these other terms like equitable teaching or inclusive teaching?

Tanzin: [18:22] Yes. So that I think you're exactly right Derek that these definitions are ever changing because we're learning a lot. And, you know, at CLT, we like to say that no one has arrived and expert. I learn just as much from my faculty and the students that I work with as they learn from me. And I think having that kind of attitude makes it a little bit easier when you make mistakes. And so, I think that's something important. But even at CLT, we recently went through a revamp. We no longer use the term inclusive teaching. We talk about equity focused teaching and changing that definition required a lot of hope, a lot of deliberation, revisions, bringing in things of expert and even our definition of inclusive teaching had gone through several iterations. And I think most recently, we also talk about anti-racist teaching. But most recently, what it is we're thinking about the ways that it's not just about making students feel welcome in your classroom, right? The sense of just like, Oh, people are happy and they feel welcome. But really acknowledging the systemic inequities that are at play, right? The invisible system at equities that disproportionately impact people. And when we talk about anti-racist teaching, that is really boiling down on that particular system of oppression in power to think about race. And I can talk a lot about anti-racism, but I think it's important why we've really pick this out is that there's an argument that if you can address racism and have an anti-racist classroom that's actively intentionally explicitly. I'm correcting the issues of racism. Then all of those other isms will start to get result. Because that's about building an anti-racist mindset and you start to apply that to other areas. And so, I think that's, that's a big argument for why there's so much focus around anti-racist pedagogies.

Derek: [20:14] That's really interesting. We add in our teaching center we've had, every year we've had a learning community as part of our teaching difference in power theme. And we've, we've essentially looked at some of those different isms over the year. Yeah, we do, we do circle back to the role of race in teaching and learning. And I think in part because that's where a lot of our national conversations are, the kind of loudest and motion dynamic. But I find that kind of interesting that if, if, if you can kind of change your mindset in that area, I think it's like universal design, right? Like if you're starting to make changes in your teaching practice that push against some of those structures and biases. That's, there's, There's going to be beneficial effects for lots of students, for lots of different reasons. Yeah. And you

yourself may be more comfortable exploring some of these other issues as well. Once you kind of get your feet wet with anti-racist teaching. Yeah, that's really interesting. **Tanzin: [21:16]** Absolutely. It's the hardest one. De**rek: [21:19]** Right? **Tanzin: [21:20]** Makes people feel worse because we think we've come the furthest. But in fact, right, There's, there's still a long way to go. And I had talked earlier about resistances and challenges to equity focused teaching. So, I don't know, That would be interesting to talk about. But I think one of the things that happens when I talk to folks about anti-racist teaching or equitable teaching as they started to realize like, oh gosh, I've been doing this wrong the whole time and you start to kind of spiral. And I'm a good consultant, so I'm able to kind of hold them through that while also acknowledging that I'm a person of color. And so that's also painful for me to see someone who is wider majority recognizing their own privilege for the first time. But once you can get past that and realize that you're taking your first step towards that. Yeah, and I've seen some amazing transformations, if I can call it that, from folks who came in because students complained about them, to know them, starting anti-racist initiatives and their department a cell. Yes. It's very difficult but rewarding if you can get yeah. **Derek: [22:19]** It sounds like there's a threshold concept and there's somewhere like once you can understand. And maybe it's just the kind of the idea of systematic racism, right? That, that, that you're moving from the individual to systems and seen the differential impacts of systems. I think that's I think that's a threshold concept.

Tanzin: [22:37] Yeah. **Derek: [22:38]** Once you understand that you can start to apply that in lots of different contexts and areas. **Tanzin: [22:42]** Beautifully put, but yeah, that's exactly right. **Tanzin: [22:45]** Well, let me ask another hard slash awkward question because I think sometimes when I'm in these conversations, I hear people say, especially folks who are fairly well versed in the literature on teaching and learning that inclusive teaching, let's say to use that term is, is really just student-centered teaching. That many of the practices that are suggested in a workshop on inclusive teaching are in fact, things we might have suggested 20 years ago in a learner-centered workshop. Do you have you, have you heard that? **Tanzin: [23:19]** Yeah. **Derek: [23:20]** How to push back a little. It's like a friendly push back. **Tanzin: [23:23]** Yeah. **Derek: [23:24]** We probably what you're doing, but yeah, I think we're already doing those right. **Tanzin: [23:28]** Right. So, so I will tell you the key difference. I think it goes back to the idea of homogenous learners, right? Like we kind of assume there's this archetype of students and they have things like mental health we have to attend to. And they have things like belonging that we have to attend to. But we're not really thinking about social identity. Because social identity oftentimes can feel very tricky. And for a

lot of the reasons we've talked about language and like, am I actually tokenizing someone if I bring up their identity or starting or a triggering imposter syndrome, right or a stereotype threat by focusing on the fact that you're the only woman in this like engineering co-workers. So, so people tend to avoid thinking about social identity because not only is it hard, they, they don't think they could do it right, or they think it's an appropriate. But I think the thing with inclusive teaching or anti-racist teacher equitable teaching is you really are focusing on social identity because they are so wrapped up in those isms, right? And that doesn't mean that you are now lumping all of your black students as like having homage and experience. But it's again, combining that historical social context with your student. So, you're still centering them. But now you're learning more about them.

Derek: [24:41] right? Yeah, I like that. Yeah. Well, let's refocus a little bit on the online environment. And you kind of framed. You're at your advice and money to go around asking good questions about your own teaching and your students learning. And I'm, I guess I'm wondering again for maybe instructors who are used to teaching face to face but moving to online. Yeah. How did the nature those questions change or are there kind of are there different strategies or different things to attend to and the online environment that might that might not occur to faculty who were still new to that space? **Tanzin: [25:17]** Sure. So, you know, over the last year and a half, we definitely fielded a lot of questions from instructors, some in the beginning and an end. Perhaps you could reflect on if this was similar and Vanderbilt in the beginning it was just how do I set up my Canvas course or my Moodle course or Blackboard course. So how do I, how do I get there? How do I get through the semester? What's required? How do I know all the all the more technical stuff? But then I think once we got to spring and summer terms, that's when people were kind of really starting to observe what the differences are. Because this was no longer just a temporary band-aid, but they had to kind of create something a little bit more sustainable, at least. Who knew right for the foreseeable future. And so that's why you started thinking about some of the major challenges that I think has always been a challenge for online teaching. And a big one is just high attrition rates, right? Students dropping off and making it feel like students are spectators as opposed to like engaged participants. And so, to me, I kind of go back to my inclusive teaching principles, which are around building sense of belonging, building community. And so I think a lot of folks struggle with that even in face-to-face. But online you have to be really intentional. People can't just since you're warm up, you how does it you have to show that or even things like attendance, right? Like having people show up and really having a new mindset of what engagement looks like. And so, so few things that I

would say and I don't one of the things you want to talk about, we're like some concrete steps that people could take. And I think in terms of building community, you know, you have to get to know your students. You have to do no matter how big your classes and maybe the depth at which you get to know them as different, but showing that you're interested, I think can go a long way. So simple things like intake surveys or introduction essays, which I think are much more fun to read our intro videos or podcasts or that audio clips. And also, I think a lot of it is revealing part of yourself, right? Bringing your own humanity to the stage. Something that I was doing a lot, was encouraging instructors to, to share some of the struggles that they're going through during the pandemic with our students, especially when they were late, turning in graded assignments or, you know, they were a 100 percent there because they were stressed out, not just because of the pandemic, but all the racial violence that was happening around the country. And so having those conversations, having those tools upfront. And then I think another thing is, you know, doing things like icebreakers, which sounds really cheesy, but ask some good ones that I can share with your audience. That word really well online. One of them is story of my name, which is one that I share in the inclusive stem teaching project, which is a big hug that I'm developing with some of my colleagues from across the country. And in that I talk about how asking students to share thirty-seconds story about their name. How would they were named, what their name means, nicknames that they've had, what it's like to have a name like yours. And I give an example in that MOOC that really helps people not only learn each other's names, but also feel right about these other humans there. And another one is the culture box, which is where you pick an object. And traditionally you would bring in the object in a little box with trinkets. Even on Zoom, you can have people share things like, I wish her the painting behind me, I don't know if you've noticed that, but that is a painting that my partner painted based on a photograph of my mother who was a traditional Bengali dancer. So in that one sentence, you just learned so much about me that I have right now that my mother dancer, I'm from Bangladesh. And so, I've gotten a lot of positive feedback from students that they really like that an activity. **Derek: [28:57]** That's great. Yeah, I have. So here's my contribution. I've done the pick a Zoom background that, that describes where you are or a place that it's important to you. And It's not too hard to find an image that you couldn't put up on Zoom for a couple of minutes, right? And if there's something in it, and I like your icebreakers also allow students a little, a little autonomy over how much they share, exactly, right? They can be a little more private and still participate for that. Or they can share something deeply personal and participate.

Tanzin: [29:31] And even better we know choice is a huge principle for inclusive and equitable teaching is letting them choose between because, you know, there are some students who have very tense relationships with their names and their family back turns or they didn't know their family. Whereas a culture bucks might be easier. So I think bringing some of those principles. But I think you're right, having choice and also just being careful because I think asking someone and giving them the agency is much different than saying, tell me about the best vacation you've ever been on, right? Yeah. So a lot of good intentions. Sometimes go astray. So I think, yeah, if you have a new idea, pitch it to some people and create some good prompts, right? **Derek:** [30:13] Right, will and, and like you said, the finding a community of fellow travelers, other instructors, right? Who are thinking about these questions because it is easy to think. I have a good icebreaker activity. Tell me about where you went to summer, right, for a vacation. Which on its surface may sound like a nice way to get to know your students. But if you, if you share that with some other people who may realize, some people may have a real hard time answering this for a variety of reasons. And that it might actually isolate them in some ways, right? Right. Yeah. I know they didn't go skiing somewhere fabulous for spring break, right? **Tanzin:** [30:48] Precise like you to do, right by working three jobs or dealing with an illness. I also want to circle back to something that you brought up, which is like, how do you do this in a technology forward way right, in the Zoom backgrounds. Great. Another great icebreaker that I've done and actually did this right after the election. No, no, it was the week before the election, and I'd actually just out of my own volition, created a short YouTube video about like how to prepare to teach during election week because I had started at CLT in 2016. So I had to experience that and realized how under prepared we were or they're not ready that we really were not but I was like, okay, I'm going to create this resource for people outside of U of M just to kind of like some of my best advice of how to prepare. And one of the things that I did was I used Jamboard. Jamboard is so overused now, but it's still so good and so useful in a lot of ways is- **Derek:** [31:46] I'm still angry at Twitter for not telling me about Jamboard August of 2020, like I could have used it all summer. **Tanzin:** [31:52] That's true. That's true. You got to expand your network in different ways I guess.

Derek: [31:55] Exactly. **Tanzin:** [31:57] But I love that you blamed Twitter. That's the classic people blaming technology for, right? So just wanted you to think about that. But also, I think with Jamboard has the function of like inserting images and gifts. And so, I said, you know, this might be a difficult day for us to focus. So, I want you to put in a GIF or an image of your spirit animal. What animal do you strive to be like today? And so that was just a fun

little thing. I had picked a peacock soaring in the air that I was going to be my beautiful, wonderful, classy self and rise above the trauma. And they gave people a moment of catharsis, right? That I was acknowledging the difficulty of the moment, whether it was the election of a pandemic or the murder of George Floyd and all the subsequent kind of awful, awful moments that really ripped us out of reality and were forced back into the classroom. But I think you can use technology as a way to get people to share without so much like weight or so much stakes, right? Because they can choose not to put something there or they can. And for you as an instructor, you don't get to hear from every single student in their voice, but you can read the chat. You can see the Jamboard. **Derek: [33:08]** Yeah. Yeah. Will I often find myself asking guests about small concrete steps that faculty can make? Because I think that's where most change happens actually is through kind of small changes over time in instruction. But I did want to ask you, are there some larger steps or some bigger practices that faculty might grow into over time? And that may be related to the types of questions they're asking themselves about their teaching. But, but I do wonder like what are their kind of bigger, bigger moves to make in the space? **Tanzin: [33:41]** Absolutely! I mean, I talked previously about education and self-reflection and networking, but I think now it's not so uncommon that there are DEI or even specifically anti-racist initiatives on campus that require a diverse group of people to work on those challenges. And oftentimes those are defaulted to other BIPOC or black, indigenous and other people of color to carry out those initiatives. But I think we really need folks who have intersectional identities across all of those spheres to really come together and think about that. And perhaps part of that is to learn, but part of that is also, you know, to be an ally. And even if I can use the term accomplice, which is to acknowledge the fact that these are high-risk things, right? And me getting involved in anti-racist efforts on campus carries a different weight than BYU Derek getting involved in anti-racist efforts and carries different risks and rewards as well. So, I think finding those things on campus nationally, um, and especially if you are way advocating for your students of color and also for your colleagues of color to get equitable treatment in the department. And again, it really helps if you can find some like-minded folks. And that's not always possible in your institution or departments. So, reaching out through national organizations on Twitter. I've met so many other, fellow travelers as you said on Twitter. And really making this a priority because once you have that lens on of equity, you start to see it everywhere. And you started to realize that even though I can't change the whole thing, there's areas in pockets of my life where I could actually make a pretty substantial impact. And so focusing on those. **Derek: [35:20]** Yeah. Yeah, I like that. Yeah. Well, and as you said, continued education, right. Like I'm trying to be intentional with

who I follow on Twitter in which podcasts I listen to books I read so that I can continue to have that. Just see how that plays out in different contexts and different perspectives.

Tazin: [35:38] One I'd also a dirt. It's not just about who you are consuming, but who are you promoting the fact that you asked to be on your podcast? You know, I'm not a center director. I don't I haven't written my own book yet, but clearly there are things that I have learned that I am willing to share. And so instead of just promoting someone who's already been out there for a long time. What are those diverse voices that you can use your platform to amplify? **Derek:** [36:01] Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah, I will shift gears a little bit and talk for a few minutes about educational development. The work of teaching centers and other, other units and folks to help kind of advance the teaching and learning missions of our universities. First, what role do you think these teaching centers can or should play on their campuses to encourage more equitable teaching? **Tazin:** [36:27] I think we need to be at the helm for now. Just let this at the center, which I think is a lot of times people think, oh, we should be at the center, no, we should, we should be at the helm. And maybe that's a radical position to take. And you as a director can figure out how to do that. Let me let me offer some observations from someone who has been in this worked for awhile, but also has limited power from where I'm sitting. We see ourselves as teaching centers of service organizations. And I recognize that for a lot of folks, it's about survival, right? Like meeting the requests of the deans and making ourselves feel relevant and valuable. And you know, with my colleagues, especially at POD, we've really kind of step back and realize that hey, people actually recognizing how valuable we are, they really have reached out and you know, our, our understanding that we're not just here to like set up your online course that we really can fundamentally help you transform something. And especially the pandemic. They had to transform Ray was, do you uttered R be left behind. But I think what we need to recognize is now that we have this positionality is instead of being responsive, I think we need to be proactive. I think doing the research at which we're all qualified to do, especially because we're multi-professional, multi-disciplinary, right? We can use all of our collective powers to think about what that future is going to look like. And also setting examples. And I think something that, you know, we really should all be thinking about is not just how do we improve the climates of our campuses, but also their own centers, right? It's hard to say that we're the leaders and DI, when you haven't taken a hard look at yourself and your own staff and your own practices and policies and your hiring and promotion practices. Are you offering regular DEI trainings for your staff? And actually like not necessary assessing competencies, but not just using them as checkboxes, but really

allowing time for lots of reflection and implementation. And having a really explicit commitment to anti-racism, which two years ago fell really, really risky. And now I think a lot of people are looking for those things. I know my colleagues of color who are grad students, who are interested, faculty development. Those are things that I'm tying them to look for in job descriptions and adds, go and see what their mission statement is. Because without inclusive center, you can create inclusive programs.

Derek: [38:53] Yeah. Yeah. What work are you involved with in making centers for teaching and learning themselves? **Tazin: [39:00]** Oh. Basis. I stated my request to what am I doing to stuff. I'm happy to say quite a bit now, I think as a fellow pod member Professional Organizational Development Network, **Derek: [39:17]** that's the professional organization of teaching center people, among other things.

Tazin: [39:19] Exactly. Yeah, exactly. Yeah, Yeah, No, Great. So I've been a member of pods since 2016 and I've had a lot of experiences. They're both negative and positive. And there are things that, you know, a few years ago, before the pandemic I really thought about or ways that I can leverage this organization to bring about change in my own center? Because sometimes it's easier to make change at a higher level. And then to say, hey, look, the national organization is recommending these things. We should be doing that as a center. So, working from both directions. And some concrete things that I've done. One is me and a number of my very talented, very dedicated, selfless colleagues. We thought really hard and we establish the first affinity space for BIPOC educational developers. So, education developers of color. And we're also doing research about experiences of educational developers. I kind of had nodded to that earlier that this work feels different and has different stakes for us. Yeah. I'm also the incoming chair of the professional development committee at pod. So okay. That would isolation. Thank you. So that was something that I was really interested in for a couple of reasons. And I was very clear about this with my, you know, my application was that you have to tell me that you're on board with these things. Otherwise, I'm not the gal for you, but I want to have kind of like an influence, right? About whom are the people who we are bringing into the organization? Because frankly, it's not a very warm and fuzzy place for people of color yet. And perhaps it will never be, perhaps they're adjacent spaces that people need to be in. But I think we can definitely do better and bring those people and support them in leadership positions. But I think also it's about professional development of our peers. We look at are some of these like IN ED and some of these other, sorry, I'd try not to use acronyms. Institute for new educational

developers and our workshops and pre-conference workshops. And we have things like inclusive teaching as a competency. And then I say, okay, well, what does that mean? Like, how do you know that somebody is it inclusive developer? And the room fall silent. So it's not that people are not invested, but they don't know where to star. And so that's one of my priorities is to think about how do we develop competencies for educational developers. That, that work is not just kind of random, but it can be structured and it can be supported, and it can be in a collective way. So that's something I think long-term I'd like to work on. And also, you know, working on a couple of articles, hopefully in book one day and a book chapter. I know you and I are working on chapters in similar areas around pandemic teaching and what we've learned from that. So I'm hoping that that will be my legacy, is, is how do we make it is inclusive, equitable anti-racist teaching and teaching development is what I would like to dedicate my life to. **Derek: [42:13]** Yeah, well, well, that's inspiring. And I appreciate having your voice in these faces, right? I mean, it's this interesting tension, right? I do think that white straight males like myself, right? Need to be good allies. But, and, and we need to step up and be proactive and think about how are we creating teaching spaces that are equitable? How are we freeing teaching centers that are equitable? But like, I don't have the experiences, I don't have the voice myself. And so, I appreciate you stepping up and taking on these leadership roles that will really enhance our field. Which, you know, I think our field does some things well and something's not well. I came to educational development for mathematics. And the first time I went to a Pod Network conference, I was like What is happening here? We're actually talking to each other and collaborating. And it's a very, very different experience from some others, but that doesn't mean that there's no work to be done.

Tazin: [42:25] Yeah, there's one thing that I'll say about PODD is like these are people who really care. They really do care a lot. And I think part of what the tension is is you can be a good person with good intentions and still realize that there's a lot of room for growth. And I think you know, not just pod, but our institutions, our centers around the world. We're in this moment where we're at odds with the fact that we believe in our hearts that were good people. We care about our students right here, about our colleagues, our neighbors. But yet there all of these injustices happening around us and recognizing not only how we are complicit in those things unknowingly or unwillingly. But how do we now kind of shake off that initial now it's done, it's done moment and take some really important steps forward. **Derek: [44:11]** Yeah. And that's why I like what you said about thinking through competencies and our work, right? So it's the will is important, but then you also need some

skills. Well and yeah, yeah, like that. Well, so I think this is my last question. As I've said here before on this podcast, we don't try to predict the future of educational technology, but we do try to shape it a little bit. What would you wish? This is a very broad question, but what would you wish for educational technology in higher education, say three to five years from now. **Tazin: [44:45]** Yeah, So when I was thinking about this question, I was like, replicator is holiday. **Derek: [44:52]** That would be Earl Grey hot. **Tazin: [44:55]** Yes. **Derek: [44:56]** If you get my Star Trek reference? **Tazin: [44:57]** I absolutely do. I was next generation vehicle by that, yes, I was tickled by that. But aside from that, because you didn't say three to five years, maybe a little further out. I think there's a couple of things, some more like practically I think hybrid education is, could be a very important move in the future. There are some places that do it well and do it correctly and effectively. There are other places who think they're doing hybrid and are just frustrated and are failing themselves and their students. And a big part of that is that we don't have the resources and the technology to make that effective.

Derek: [45:34] And when you say hybrid there what do you mean? **Tazin: [45:37]** Yeah, definition. So in this case, I mean telecast thing. So, a faculty member or an instructor at the front of the room face to face with some students and having other students zooming in via camera. And so that means you have to have a good camera. That means you have to have good audio. That means that every student in that classroom has to have a mobile device to be able to interact with the other students. That means that you should have a GSI or a teaching assistant to be able to monitor the chat. So it can be done. It can be amazing, but you need all those resources. And also I think along with that is proper training, right? Helping faculty realize that, yeah, there's a learning curve, but eventually we want you to be able to bring all the Excellence in your teaching, that creativity, that passion, that Dr. And be able to not only replicate it, but to enhance that across all those different ways. So that we use technology to connect with people and not monitor them. Right. Which I'm sure have been conversations you've been part of too. And if I was going to add to that wishlist that everything was open and accessible to anybody who wants it. **Derek: [46:44]** As long as we're waving the wand. **Tazin: [46:45]** Yeah. Exactly. It's due at all. Exactly. **Derek: [46:48]** Well, thank you so much for this conversation tasks. It is really, really interesting. And I thank you for taking this time today. I hope our listeners get a lot out of this as well. **Tazin: [46:58]** Appreciate that. And, uh, folks ever want to reach out to me, I'm on Twitter @ThePedagogist. Just I know that's a funny term that I'm looking up. What is one who is an expert in the art, practice and science of teaching. So feel free to reach out to me. **Derek:**

[47:12] That's great. Thank you so much**.**

Tazin: [47:13] No problem. **Derek: [47:21]** That was Tazin Daniel's Assistant Director at the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching at the University of Michigan. Thanks to Dean for taking the time to speak with me and for sharing her expertise here on the podcast. I'm struck by how some of the specific practices to being shared are. What I would have just called several years ago. Learner-centered instruction. Asking students in an online course to share a short introductory video is a great way to foster social presence. Regardless of any goals, one might have to be an inclusive teacher. That said, as I've done my own work in this area, reading about structural racism, for instance, both within and outside higher education. It's helped me see some of these practices through a new lens. Yes, active learning instruction tends to improve student learning and student outcomes and stem courses. That's pretty clear from the literature. But active learning instruction also tends to narrow the achievement gaps for minoritized students in those courses. See the show notes for a link to a meta-analysis on that topic. There are structural reasons why some students haven't traditionally succeeded in stem courses. And so there need to be structural solutions to that problem. And doing the work, whether that's reading books or talking with colleagues, can point toward practices that are even more intentionally designed to foster equity and inclusion. Like disease, story of my name, icebreaker. As diseases mentioned, if you're interested in following her work or connecting with her, visit her website, the Pentagon logistic.com, or find her on Twitter at the Pentagon. Just that's a fun word to say. And if you've appreciated this episode of leading lines, you might go back and listen to our interview with Chris billiard In episode 62, where he talks about the wave technologies can be used intentionally or accidentally to enforce race and class divisions. Leading lines is produced by the Vanderbilt Center for Teaching and the gene and Alexander hurt libraries. You can find us on Twitter at leading lines pod and on the web at leading lines Pod.com. This episode was edited by Red McDaniel. Look for new episodes the first, third Monday of each month. I'm your host, Derek. Thanks for that.