Transcript

[0:01] (music)

Derek Bruff: [0:05] This is Leading Lines. I'm Derek Bruff. We're back with another episode exploring the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on higher education. This time I'm speaking with one of my colleagues here at the Vanderbilt Center for Teaching, Cynthia Brame, about the Online Course Design Institute that we launched in May to help our faculty get ready to teach online this summer and possibly this fall. In past years, we've offered a course design institute for our faculty colleagues in May that was in-person, three days long and enrolled maybe 18 faculty. This May, the Institute was entirely online, two weeks long, and had 73 participants. And then two weeks later, we did it again with another 72 faculty. And the plan is to keep offering the Online Course Design Institute every two weeks all summer long. My colleague ,Cynthia Brame, was one of the designers of our new Institute, and she's been one of the Institute facilitators since we launched on May fourth. Cynthia has been at the Center for Teaching since 2012. She's an Associate Director at the Center and the Principal Senior Lecturer in Biological Sciences, where she teaches large enrollment biochemistry courses. At the Center, she acts as our liaison to the STEM departments on campus and leads the Junior Faculty Teaching Fellows program, among other duties. She's the author of the book, *Science Teaching Essentials: Short Guides to Good Practice*. And prior to working at the Center, she was Associate Professor and Chair of Biology at Centenary College in Louisiana. I'm excited to have Cynthia on the podcast to talk about our new Online Course Design Institute. I hope our conversation will be of interest to those in faculty development and instructional technology, who are supporting faculty during this very challenging year, but also to faculty who were planning their own upcoming online courses. (music)

Derek: [2:02] Well thank you, Cynthia, for being on Leading Lines I'm excited to have you on the podcast, at long last.

Cynthia: [2:07] Thank you, I'm glad to be here.

Derek: [2:12] Let me start off. We'll talk about the Online Course Design Institute here in just a minute. But I want to start off with a question I've been asking our guests lately. Can you tell us about a time when you realized you wanted to be an educator?

Cynthia: [2:24] Sure. I mean, I guess in some ways I almost knew that I wanted to do this from the time I went to college, because I went to Centre College and I had a really great experience with my faculty there, really gifted classroom teachers and good relationships. And so I left Centre thinking that I wanted to do something like that in my future. And in graduate school, I went into graduate school in part because I loved my content and I just became more and more in love with how bio-chemistry and pharmacology and cell biology could explain the world, when I was in graduate school and so thought, you know, at some point I wanted my career to lead me to being a professor and being able to share that with, with students. So, you know, it's not too big a surprise that a few years out of graduate school, I found myself in a faculty position at Centenary College, a small liberal arts college. And I was getting to do that thing that I thought I wanted to do, where I was sharing this beauty of how biochemistry, cell biology could explain the world with my students. But really, I don't think that I thought about being an educator until about the third semester that I was there.

[4:01] So I was teaching, in much the way that I had seen classroom teaching done before. I was giving lectures. I was trying to do a really good job giving lectures and sharing how beautiful and explanatory I thought my content was. But then one day, my third semester teaching at Centenary, I looked out at my students and I thought this is not working for them. Wow, I wonder what they need. And that was really transformative. That I think is when I really decided that I wanted to be an educator. Because I quit thinking about myself and what I was doing and started thinking about what my students needed to move forward. So, that was a big deal. I remember the moment very clearly.

Derek: [5:02] Yeah, clearly you do. Yeah, that's really interesting. That moment from to use some language from the literature, from being kind of teacher-centered to student-centered. And realizing that on some level, like if what you're doing isn't kind of landing with them and they're not learning, then it doesn't matter, right?

Cynthia: [5:22] (laughs) That's right.

Derek: [5:22] And wondering like, is it, Is it working? Is it, are they getting anything out of it? Well, and now you're here at the Center for Teaching and you still teach in the biology department, but most of your day job is working with faculty and other instructors on campus. And I, I would, I would argue that you think a lot about what they need and kind of what they're learning, as they approach their own teaching. And so that leads us to the Online Course Design Institute. Can you tell us why, this feels a little artificial because I was part of all these conversations. But I'm going to I'm going to pose these questions to you, Cynthia. Why, why did the Center for Teaching launch this Online Course, Design Institute this summer? And what, what, what needs were we trying to meet or what what goals did we have for it?

Cynthia: [6:09] Yeah. So as you well know, Vanderbilt shifted to remote teaching and learning in the middle of the semester, this spring. And faculty really rose to the occasion. They worked hard. They were very thoughtful in trying to ensure that students had a positive experience finishing out the semester. But by and large, they didn't have a lot of time to learn about good practices in online teaching. They were, they were responding in the moment. And so as Vanderbilt decided that summer courses would be online, as we face a fall where some of our courses will be online and we need to be ready to shift. We wanted to provide an opportunity for our faculty to be thoughtful and prepared and feel really ready for what the summer and fall will bring. So we wanted to give them an opportunity to, to learn about some of the principles of online teaching and learning, to experience what some of those principles can look like in practice, in a course. And we wanted to give them a chance to sort of put those in place in their own courses so that as they go forward, they'll feel confident, they will feel competent, they'll feel prepared for what the summer and fall brings.

Derek: [7:45] Yeah, yeah. So how do you go about doing that? What, what, what are some of the ingredients or the structural pieces of the Online Course Design Institute?

Cynthia: [7:53] So you can, I think, you can sort of talk about the structure of the Online Course Design Institute in two ways. So we can talk about how we structured it, the asynchronous component of it. And then we can talk about how we've decided to structure the synchronous component of it. So in terms of the asynchronous component, what we've tried to do is create a course like experience, so our participants will have the opportunity to go through and be students in an online environment for many of them for the first time, right? So many of them have not been students in an online course before. So in that asynchronous component, it's, we, we designed a two week experience where participants go

through ten modules, one for each of the ten working days in that two-week period. We ask, we ask participants to commit a significant amount of time. So we intend for them to spend three or four hours a day. And within each of the ten modules that make up this two week experience, we have sort of a structure where participants get to experience different ways to engage with content, different ways to interact with each other asynchronously, different ways to build and share pieces of their course, much as students would share assignments or different pieces of work that they were doing. So you can think of the asynchronous design, I think in that way.

[9:43] You can also think about the synchronous element. So one thing that we decided to do is that within each module, we would have sort of a repeating structure. Participants would engage with content. As I said, they would have some sort of asynchronous interactions and building. And then, in most modules, we also have some synchronous interaction by Zoom. And the way we decided to structure that is that we would divide our participants up into cohorts of generally about six people. So at any given time, we've got about 75 participants going through the institute, but they mostly interact with the six people in their cohort. And the reason we decided to do this is because we think some of the best learning comes from when faculty talk to each other about what their course looks like, what they're planning, and they, they get ideas from each other, they give feedback to each other and it can be just a super productive experience. We thought doing this in a cohort, of six or so, would allow for the people within that cohort to really get to know each others' contexts in courses. So the kind of feedback that they can give over that two week period would be richer. Does that answer your question sort of about the structural elements?

Derek: [11:10] Yeah, I think so. And since I've had a hand in shaping all of the cohorts, we've offered the Institute twice, we're in our second offering right now as we record this and we've got another one coming up. I mean, I enjoy the kind of matchmaking that happens, when I see who's applied and who might facilitate and how can I put six or seven people together that I think will, will have rich conversations, based on common challenges or common contexts. That's a lot of fun. Can you say maybe a little bit, because these are facilitated cohorts, can you say a little bit more about the role of the facilitator and who those people are?

Cynthia: [11:48] Sure. Yeah. So CFT staff members, at this point, each of the cohorts is facilitated by a CFT staff member. So in, for example, in the Institute that we have going on

right now, I'm facilitating two cohorts, you're facilitating two different cohorts, et cetera. And so my job as a facilitator is to essentially play the role that an instructor would in a regular course. So I read participants posts to the discussion board, I give responses, I connect people when I think that's useful. And then, in our synchronous interactions, I help, I help ensure that we hear from each of their participants, give them each a chance to share out what their questions are, what they're developing, and help, try to help people see common threads, as we move through that experience. So I'm happy to say that going forward we're going to have additional people acting as facilitators. So we have the BOLD Fellows Program. So BOLD stands for "blended and online learning design." And we're going to have BOLD fellows who are faculty who had participated in the Online Course Design Institute. And then are going to facilitate that experience for a group of their colleagues, probably from within their own or, or adjacent disciplines. So that will be a really, really good way, I think, to extend our reach to get some, some different perspectives and have more, more people helping faculty move through this institute.

Derek: [13:45] And I'll add, I think for the BOLD fellows, it's a really, it's a nice professional development opportunity for them. I'm expecting, I mean, I've learned so much by helping to design the institute and helping to facilitate and by fielding questions from my cohort. And so we'll have faculty, who kind of have that experience, as well.

Cynthia: [14:03] What would you add about the role the facilitator in the Online Course Design Institute?

Derek: [14:13] I mean, I think one of the challenges that I, that I've been facing is that often one of my cohort members will throw out a design challenge, design question, something they're struggling with, something they don't know. And then everyone just turns and looks at me, as if I got all the answers. And sometimes I have answers and sometimes I don't. But I'm also kind of like I don't want to be the answer guy, right? Like I, I, I do think that there's a lot of value in the peer-to-peer discussion. And the other folks in the room sometimes don't have a lot to share, but sometimes they have perspectives to share that I would never consider. And so I think part of it is kind of balancing. Yes, I I actually have a lot of expertise in this area and I had some useful tools or strategies or examples to share. But I also want to create space for the folks in the room to kind of bring their perspectives to bear and their experiences. And that's where I start. I have to be careful to make that space because otherwise I'll fill the vacuum. And then I don't get to benefit from the wisdom of the group. And I've learned a lot about teaching online from the conversations I've had with my

cohort.

Cynthia: [15:24] Yeah, yeah, I completely agree with that. And all the participants that I've had the privilege of having in my cohorts have had so much to offer. So I think in no case have they taught online, but they all are very thoughtful and creative teachers. And so you're right, giving them the time and space to think about how to translate that experience teaching face-to-face into an online setting. And thinking about what lessons we can all gather from that is one of the real benefits. Yeah.

Derek: [16:09] I would add that that I also have these moments where I feel like I'm pulling back the curtain on the design of our Course Design Institute and reflecting on the choices we made as, as instructors, right? And that often are, often the faculty participants are thinking about that, right? As they encounter the institute, they're experiencing it as a student, but they're also wondering, "oh, how did they do that or why did they do that?" And sometimes, though, they don't, they don't have that kind of level of reflection and they're focused on their own courses and their own designs. And so I think it's helpful to have those moments in the cohorts where we, we pull back the curtain a little bit and talk about the choices we made to help faculty think through some of the choices that they might, make.

Cynthia: [16:51] Yeah, absolutely. One of my favorite things to do, as we move through the institute, is to encourage faculty to, to reflect on their experience moving through this as students, so that they can take that experience and use it to inform their own design decisions. Because they are, they are going to, they're not going to be identical to their students, certainly, but they're going to sort of be able to think about how their students are likely to move through a course in a way that, you know, I'm further removed from that. And so using their experience in our course to inform their own decisions, I think is one of the greatest benefits that I think faculty are getting from this experience.

Derek: [17:42] Yeah, yeah. Well, so I have a couple more questions about the design of the institute, but, but I want to kind of follow up on that. As you've been working with faculty in the Online Course Design Institute, what seemed to be some of their big takeaways? What are they learning through this process that's then informing the courses that they're designing?

Cynthia: [18:05] So this is really fun to hear. So one of the big takeaways has been really

cool. It's that online teaching and learning can be fun and productive and not a drear, dry experience. And I know that many people who are listening to this podcast probably know this already, but a lot of our participants didn't know that. And so their realization that this online learning experience can be really, positive is a huge benefit, because it allows them to move into their experiences in the summer and the fall with a great attitude about how they're going to engage their students. Another big takeaway, that's really related, is that a lot of the participants have said design is key. And design of your course such that you promote teaching presence and promote social presence, which as you know, Derek, are parts of the Community of Inquiry theory that designing to really focus on promoting those two pieces, is just huge. And you know, I think that that's something that we tend to do easily in a face-to-face setting, but it's something that we can design for an online setting. And so I think that has been a very important lesson.

[19:40] I also think that one of the lessons that our participants really didn't expect to take away is just how useful are learning management system, Brightspace, can be. So at the end of our first institute, we asked what are some of your big takeaways? And almost uniformly, the groups said, "man, Brightspace can do a lot of stuff. And I didn't know it could do all of these things." So just learning to lean into the tools that you have to, to enact this sort of learning experiences that you want for your students has been an important takeaway for our faculty. I feel like I'm forgetting something, but those are three big ones.

Derek: [20:36] Yeah, I would echo. I think the, our cohorts have talked a lot about the, the importance of design. And I think we spend, our cohorts have talked a lot about teacher presence and social presence. And so I think everyone kind of was aware of the challenge of social presence online. Because again, a lot of faculty are coming from spaces where or experiences where they, they don't, they've not felt a lot of social presence online, right? I think I'm a little different that way, right? Like I have Twitter colleagues that I've never met in person that I consider friends, right? Like I know you can do social presence through a lot of online tools, but I think a lot of our faculty haven't had those experiences and they were worried about the loss of the in-person rapport, or the banter, the back and forth with their students, the body language they see, right? So it's interesting, I think they knew social presence would be a challenge online. And so they've been very eager to learn about options and tools and ways to kind of go about that, right? Whether it's using video or storytelling or different communication channels with students. I don't think they were as attuned to the need for teacher presence online. And I've been kind of describing this as, you

know, you have teacher presence when your students know they're in a designed learning environment and that there is a designer who is there who wants them to succeed. And so we kind of do this. We take it for granted in the face-to-face classroom that the teacher is in charge. And they've set the syllabus and they have a lesson plan, right? And that there's a design behind everything. That's so important online. And you have to use different tools to kind of do the design and communicate the design. But then it's quite possible to construct an online course, where there really is a clear design and there's kind of intentionality behind everything. And I don't know that our faculty expected to have to work on that quite so much. But, but they, but they they've seen it as something that's really critical.

Cynthia: [22:37] Yeah, absolutely. And I would emphasize the intersection between teaching presence and social presence. So I've heard a few of our participants say, yeah, they've thought of online courses as being the "set it and forget it" approach. And that they've now recognized that no, in order for students to have a really positive experience, the, the instructor has to engage with students on a regular basis. The form that, that interaction takes can vary a lot, but that ongoing interaction is really important. So that's been that's been a really big important piece.

Derek: [23:22] Yeah, yeah. And I think, and a smaller takeaway is, is actually the role of graphic design and how it plays into this. We've been fortunate to have Rhett McDaniel from the Center for Teaching on our team. He's got a background as a graphic designer. And he gives us great icons and logos and such and PowerPoint themes. And you know, it's not just aesthetics, although, aesthetics are important. It's also helping students navigate and way find in the course and clarifying your expectations through both words and images, right? And, and I think some of our participants have learned that they can do this. It's, you don't have to be a graphic designer to do that well. You can use some kind of free and easy to use tools to add a few layers of graphic design that help your students know what to expect.

Cynthia: [24:14] That's interesting because one of the things that I wanted to mention was, was how when we were designing this Online Course Design Institute, how we would bring different lenses to what was most important to the design. So we, the CFT senior staff, worked together to build this Course Design Institute and we did it pretty darn fast, but I think we did. I think we leaned really heavily into the backwards design process. We spent a lot of time together thinking about what our goals were, what our particular objectives for the different modules were. I think that was really key. But one of the big takeaways for

me was how we each brought, sort of we wanted to, we all wanted to model different parts of good course design for our participants. We thought about it. We emphasized different pieces of it. So for example, I think I really wanted to model how to use visual elements to help orient participants and to help them maintain interests. And I really wanted to demonstrate how intuitive flow through a course can provide a more positive experience. I think you really wanted to model how you can use different tools, both inside and outside of Brightspace to promote that interaction, social presence, right? And that makes sense given what you just said about having friends you've never met in person on Twitter. I think Stacey really wanted to give participants the opportunity to practice using some of the tools to help them feel empowered going forward. And the other, Joe and Heather and Rhett brought different lenses to it. I think that each, each of us brought sort of a different emphasis to what we thought was really key to that design. And it ended up giving us a much richer institute than I think any one of us would have been able to put together solo.

Derek: [26:38] Most definitely, yes. Although, as is often the case, collaboration takes time. And I know I had, I felt a lot of tension because I knew the more time we invested collaboratively together at the beginning of the process to scope out our objectives and to get a sense of the big picture and what are modules would look like, the better it would be. But man, we were under, deadline. I just kept wanting to say, "ok everyone, go build your modules, go, go away, let me do mine." And even then we wouldn't do it, right? Like, we paired up on the modules so we would still have a little bit of that collaboration. When we finally did get to the divide and conquer stage. It's been fun, I mean/ And I'll just, a little reflection here. I've realized as the director of the Center for Teaching, that we need projects for our senior staff every year where we are working together as a senior staff, where we have to collaborate together. It helps us learn about each others' strengths. It helps us learn from each other. It helps us kind of calibrate our priorities and values, as members of the staff. And collaboration can be sometimes hard, but it's it's there's a lot of value there, as well.

Cynthia: [27:54] Yeah, absolutely. And this in this particular case, the collaboration felt a little more stressful because we had a hard deadline. We had 75 people starting at 9am on May 3. But I would say that that collaboration usually ends up with a hard deadline, one way or another. And so I'm I'm really proud of what we accomplished and if we have to do something like this going forward, that's OK. We can do it. We can end up with something that we're pleased with.

Derek: [28:35] Well, let me ask then about, we've talked a little bit about some of the challenges, right? The time crunch was certainly one of them. What are the things have you found a little bit challenging, especially as we've kind of gotten into it with the faculty and the Institute?

Cynthia: [28:50] So this, this sounds a little bit silly, but one of the things that is a little bit challenging is just managing that own cognitive load. So the last two weeks I had two cohorts, I think had 13 people total in those. Now I have two more cohorts with 12 different people and we have particular things we want to discuss. But often other elements will come in. And I sometimes can't remember if we've already talked about it or not.

[29:33] For example, yesterday with one of my cohorts, this idea of desirable difficulties and productive failure came up. And I had this moment where I thought, I don't know if I've talked with this group about this before, yesterday or if it was my earlier group today. And I actually think that this, the fact that we are, our synchronous interactions are via Zoom is enhancing this challenge. Because I think if we're in a face-to-face setting and we're teaching two different classes. We have different visual cues, right? We're in a different classroom setting, or we have different students that sit on the front row wearing different clothes. And so we have visual cues that help us orient to where we are and what we've done in that space before. But when we're, when most of our synchronous interactions are on Zoom. Like I'm sitting in the same chair, I'm looking at the same computer screen. And the people on my Zoom window are not the same, but they're a little bitty, icons. So they don't provide the sensor and help for me to manage that. So that's one thing that's been a little bit of a challenge.

[30:57] Something that is perhaps more interesting, but also more expected, is that in, in any given cohort, I have participants with different needs. Okay. So this is like teaching any class. You always have students with different needs. So in a given cohort, I might have somebody who is teaching a required class for 200 people that is going to be all online. And a different participant who is teaching an elective class with 15 people that right now, they think is likely to be hybrid. We still need to think about the same principles of teaching and learning, but sort of the options that are open to them, what good practice might look like in those settings is really different. And so sort of managing that, so that all the six pushes, events, each with their somewhat different needs gets what they need is, is just an ongoing challenge. But again, it's not unexpected, right, it's part of teaching.

Derek: [32:08] Yeah, and I would say I have a similar challenge where we'll have five or six of us who need to share out and get feedback on their learning objectives or their assessment plans or whatever the thing is we're looking at. And, you know, 60 or 90 minutes is actually not enough time to do a deep dive with all of them. And so I've just come to the point where like we'll do three and we'll do a deep dive on three. And I'll pick a different three people the next time. And I'm I'm, it's like I worry, right, that some folks are not getting the feedback they need. But I'm trying to attend to who's asking questions and who's participating. So we may be focusing on one person's plans, but if I'm hearing from several other people, I'm I'm hoping that they're getting something out of that conversation as well.

Cynthia: [32:54] Yeah, one thing that I have not done yet, in the Online Course Design Institute is to use my breakout rooms in my cohort. And I think I need to start doing that. I don't need to be there for all of it, right? That's one of the lessons that our participants are knowledgeable and thoughtful and can provide a lot of feedback to each other. So if I'm in one breakout room and another group is working the other one, then that's okay. So that's a lesson I'm trying to make some use of, myself.

Derek: [33:33] Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, let me ask a couple of questions. I'm imagining folks out there kind of looking at this and wondering like why this or why that? Why, why didn't, why didn't we make the Course Design Institute entirely asynchronous? Why do we have these Zoom sessions, you know, four days a week with our participants?

Cynthia: [33:54] I think that there are a couple of good reasons for that. So one of them has to do with the Vanderbilt context. So, so Vanderbilt, as an institution, really buys into the notion of residential high touch education. So that's, that's what our faculty think of, most of the time, when they think of their teaching. And that's what we as a Center for Teaching think most of the time when we think about doing, working with our faculty. And so I think we wanted to respect that that's the place where we're all starting, right? That we think that this synchronous high touch interaction is really important. Now we have also worked in several days where we don't have these synchronous sessions. Because we want to illustrate that when you have this relationship established, you can have really productive asynchronous interactions, but I think we start where we are. And where we are is high-touch, high interaction sort of place. And so Zoom seemed like a good way to go. Another piece is that, one thing we heard from our faculty at the end of the first Online Course Design Institute, is that the accountability of those daily meetings was really important for them. Several of them said they signed up for the Institute in order to keep them accountable. And that this

interaction where everybody was expected to participate in the, in the moment, was important for helping them prioritize, prioritize this work, which they want to do. But you know, everybody's busy and other things will rise to the top sometimes. Is that helpful?

Derek: [35:59] Yeah. Yeah, yeah, that's great. I think, I think those are great answers. And your second answer kind of leads into my next question about the kind of practicalities is that we're asking a lot of faculty over these two weeks. I mean, we're advertising it as about four hours a day for ten working days. That's that's a good chunk of time. I know we both gotten some kind of push back from faculty who, who might want a shorter experience to get them ready. Why four hours a day? Why is that? And again, it may not work for all faculty, but I think, I think it has been working for a lot of faculty in our institute. And I'm curious if you could speak to kind of why that much time on task?

Cynthia: [36:43] Well, I think that there, I think that what we're asking faculty to do is hard and requires some real engagement. So we're asking them to learn about how to, how to enact teaching and learning in a different context, right? That they really haven't considered before. We're asking them to engage as students in that environment, which takes some time. We want them to experience what it's like to spend a chunk of time doing this. And then we also want them to have a chance to practice doing some building, right? So I think of this as a learn and build experience where you're taking in some new ideas. You're discussing the new ideas with colleagues, and then you're using those new ideas to begin to design or redesign your own course. So you can do any one of those pieces in a shorter amount of time. But to do all three of those pieces, I think really requires a significant investment of time. And I think it's really important to recognize that at the end of it, you have some pieces of your course that it's not exactly plug-and-play, but you have some real important pieces of your course that you can use going forward to make the rest of your development time much more streamlined and efficient.

Derek: [38:24] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. They're working pretty hard.

Cynthia: [38:30] Yeah. I hear that a lot.

Derek: [38:32] But it's great, right? So like, you know, last week we finished our first cohort in the Thursday sessions, where one of these kind of show and tell sessions and I got to see just how much my cohort members had built. Mostly they were showing up, in my cohorts, they were showing off the modules that they'd built in Brightspace. But, and I think part of it is

also, there's a lot to figure out. I've heard this from some of the faculty, either faculty who don't have a lot of teaching experience and are really appreciating the course design piece of this, right? Thinking through the, or the backwards design, thinking through the learning objectives really carefully. What do I want my students to get out of this? How does that map onto assessments? How does that map onto the activities that I give them? I've heard this from some of our senior faculty too, who haven't thought about their courses that intentionally in a while because they've worked well and they haven't kind of had to kind of take them apart and put them back together again. And so, and that part takes some time too, right, to really think through the actual kind of teaching and learning pieces of it. Yeah. Well, Cynthia, One last question as we kind of wrap up here. We don't really know what the fall is going to look like, but given your experience helping to build the Online Course Design Institute, helping to facilitate it, working with faculty from across campus, what advice would you give to faculty planning for an uncertain fall semester?

Cynthia: [39:57] So what I would recommend, what I'm planning for myself is to develop your course as if it were going to be delivered online entirely. Really design, be very thoughtful about how you're going to establish student flow through that online setting. Think about how you would deliver content, how you would foster discussion among your students and with you, how you would do formative assessment for your students in that online setting. So really think about that and build that out in Brightspace, if you're at Vanderbilt. That's what I would recommend, and then you can keep some of those pieces hidden from your students. So if we're lucky, and we get to have some face-to-face interaction this fall. You can hide the parts of it that were intended to be online interaction. Just make them invisible to students and leverage the face-to-face setting. But you can know that you're ready to shift if you need to. You can tell students as you know, as you're having your face-to-face interactions, we will continue to interact whether we can do so face-to-face or not. If we shift, here's how we're going to do this. So be aware, it's going to look like this if our situation changes. So that's what I'd recommend. Um, you can do so much with a good, with a well-designed online course. So I just plan for that and then use any face-to-face time I got to foster some of that interaction.

Derek: [41:39] Sounds like good advice. Thank you, Cynthia. Thanks for taking some time, today. This is this is the one day this week we didn't have cohort meetings. It seemed like a good time for the interview, but yeah, thanks, for sharing today and thanks for all your hard work on the Course Design Institute.

Cynthia: [41:57] Thank you. This was a lot of fun. (music)

Derek: [42:04] That was Cynthia Brame, Associate Director of the Center for Teaching and Principal Senior Lecturer in Biological Sciences at Vanderbilt University. I'm constantly impressed at Cynthia's ability to be both faculty-focused and student focused in her work at the university and at the expertise she brings to our educational development work. She's been a critical part of the Online Course Design Institute, here at Vanderbilt. And I'm glad to have her on the podcast to share some of that experience with you, dear listener. For more on Cynthia and her work, see the show notes for links to her website and Twitter account. You'll also find a link to some additional information about the Online Course Design Institute. You'll find show notes for this and every other episode of Leading Lines on our website, leadinglinespod.com We'd love to hear your thoughts on how faculty and other instructors are preparing for summer and fall instruction during this very uncertain year. You can reach us via email at leadinglinespod@vanderbilt.edu or on Twitter @leadinglinespod. Leading Lines is produced by the Vanderbilt Center for Teaching and the Jean and Alexander Heard libraries. This episode was edited by Rhett McDaniel. Look for new episodes when we publish them. I'm your host, Derek Bruff. (music) Thanks for listening and be safe. (music)