



A Sneak Peek into The Teaching Professor Conference: Enneagrams, Emotion Science, Embracing Culture and More!

SPEAKERS

Ashley Harvey, Tierney King, Jane Sutterlin, Dr. Tarsha Reid, Liz Norell

Tierney King 00:01

This is the Faculty Focus Live podcast. I'm your host, Tierney King, and I'm here to bring you inspiration, energy and creative strategies that you can utilize in your everyday teaching. This week's episode is sponsored by The Teaching Professor Conference. This year, join us in person or virtually to pursue your passion for teaching. So I'm pretty excited because today we're meeting up with some of our Teaching Professor Conference presenters and have we got some amazing presenters. Now, I wish we could talk to all of them for this podcast, but thankfully, if you sign up for the in person or virtual conference, you'll be able to meet most of them via sessions, plenaries, poster sessions and more. So if you go to www.teachingprofessorconference.com, you'll find all the information you need. Our in-person conference will go from June 4 through June 6 in New Orleans. And our virtual conference will offer on-demand access from June 7 through September 30. So today, we're going to meet a few of our presenters and get a glimpse into what they'll be presenting at The Teaching Professor Conference, and kind of why that topic is so important to them and other instructors. To start, we'll chat with Liz Norell, whose session is called, Transforming Classroom Culture. So to start us off, tell us a little about who you are, what topic you'll be discussing at the conference, and then why you selected that specific topic as your choice.

Liz Norell 01:32

Sure, thanks for having me. So I have been teaching for, I'm getting close to two decades. And you know, I think all of us who teach in classrooms, especially college classrooms, we sort of find ourselves after many years. And I've just come to understand that the more that I have done to understand myself, and what motivates me to be in the classroom, and to feel comfortable with myself, has enabled much greater, more satisfying relationships with my students and between my students. And so this session is really just all about why it's important for higher ed faculty to do that inner work, so that they can be as present as possible for their students, and be as authentic as possible in the classroom.

Tierney King 02:26

And so in your session, you talk about how rewarding it is to witness some of these "aha moments" or those those "click moments" where it clicks for students. So personally, for you, what is the best "aha moment" or "click moment" that you've ever witnessed in your own classroom?

Liz Norell 02:42

I hate questions that ask me to choose just one, or like the best because there are so many. But, you know, I want to share the story of one of my former students who now actually works at my college, which is Chattanooga State Community College in Tennessee. So this student took my class, she was coming back to college after a very strange adult life. She was in her probably 40s when she took my class, it was a night class at one of our remote campuses. So when I say remote, I mean like in a very rural community outside of Chattanooga. And I always think of that classroom is like the place where all the chairs went to die. It was just mismatched furniture. It was a night class, we were the only people on the campus. So it was this sort of strange scenario. But she at the time, I was arranging my class so that you were basically earning points by doing a variety of different activities, and once you hit the point total that was associated with the grade you wanted, you could just stop. And she hit that like before midterm. And because she just was consuming all of this information, and I remember saying to her after midterms, you know, if you wanted to stop turning in work, it would be okay. Like, I want you to come to class, but you've got your A. And she said, "But I learn so much from every assignment, why would I stop?" And you know, that kind of inquisitive spirit, I don't know that if it's like that single moment of aha, but she just had this sort of enthusiasm that you see in children when they learn something. She had that every single day, and still has it today. Like I said, she's graduated, she went on and got her bachelor's degree, and came back to work at our college and still texts me, you know, regularly to talk to me about things that are connected to our class, and that was almost eight years ago.

Tierney King 04:41

Very cool. And so another thing that you mentioned in your session that you're going to talk about is meditation and the Enneagram as tools that you used for cultivating presence, and kind of what inspired you to use those tools and kind of briefly tell me how you use those tools in In your own classroom.

Liz Norell 05:01

Yeah, so I wouldn't say that I bring the Enneagram or meditation explicitly into my classroom. But I do certainly find that those tools infuse the sort of general way I am in the classroom and the way I talk to students, and but that really all for me started in 2016 when I went through yoga teacher training, and I did that at a time when I didn't have my current job. And I was adjuncting and teaching a lot of classes, a lot of different places. And I just was really drawn to this idea of yoga teacher training, even though I wasn't sure I wanted to teach, or at least teach that regularly. And I just found that my presence in the classroom was changing in really noticeable ways. For me, as I went through that training, then I did some coach training and like life coach training and I've learned about the Enneagram and other tools. And I've just found that each of them has given me a foothold into understanding where my impulses are in life, what I'm looking for from other people, how I contribute to relationships. And what I love about the Enneagram is that it doesn't just describe who you are, but it tells you kind of how to recognize those things that stop you from getting what you really want, and how to use that and make a different choice in the moment. So for me, if anyone's listening, I'm an Enneagram type two, I'm like a classic type two. And so I know that I'm always kind of hustling for other people to accept or approve or like me, and that often manifests as trying to fix other people's problems. I mean, it makes sense why I'm a teacher. But what I know now, having done some of this sort of self exploration, is that when students come to me with a problem, my initial instinct is to try to solve it for them, so that they'll like

me. And when I sort of became aware of that, then I could step back and say, "Okay, this person probably doesn't need me to solve their life. They just need me to be supportive." And so I can shift my orientation to one that helps students solve their own problems, while having someone that they can trust and who supports them, and who believes in them. So, you know, those kinds of things I do often start my classes are in my classes, especially in the last year, by just asking students, "How are you?" And I typically ask it twice, because when you ask someone, "How are you?" They say, "Oh, I'm good, I'm fine." And then I'll say, "No, but really, how are you?" And you know, just kind of check in and have a moment for us all to, to talk about the things we're struggling about, because then we see that we're not the only one who's doing so. So those are some of the tools. And I'll talk more about those and some other tools that you can use in the classroom and in your teaching, so that you can feel more authentic and more present for your students,

Tierney King 08:01

Kind of going back to the Enneagram, will you have the people attending your session take the test? And will you give them kind of tips for each, like, based on each one that you are, here's how you can go forth? You know, with your strengths and weaknesses?

Liz Norell 08:18

Yeah, I will have a very quick test. It was my first introduction. And it's really good for workshops, and you know, I'm I will be happy to talk to anyone afterwards about how to think about that type in the classroom. It's one of my passion pursuits is just learning more about the Enneagram and how it can help us. But I won't go too deeply into it in the session just because there's so much to cover. But consider this an invitation to anybody who wants to talk about it more, because talking about teaching is my favorite thing and talking about the Enneagram is a close second or third.

Tierney King 08:55

So next we're going to talk with Ashley Harvey, who will be presenting her session, Seven Strategies for Embracing the Emotional Labor of Teaching. So just start us off, Anshley, and you know, tell us a little bit about yourself. And then why you decided to talk about this specific topic at the conference and why it's so important to you and all of us.

Ashley Harvey 09:16

Sure, and it's so nice to be here, Tierney. Thanks for this opportunity. So I've been teaching for close to two decades, you know, mostly full time, and I learned about the idea of emotional labor, you know, in graduate school a long time ago. It was a term that was coined by Arlie Russell Hochschild in the 1980s to basically talk about this internal labor that we do to manage our feelings to create like, an appropriate external display. So it has always stayed with me, you know, in something that service workers do when you go to a restaurant, right, everyone's having to do a lot of emotional labor. You know, medical workers, nurses are having to do a lot of emotional labor to keep people calm, and then there's its counterpart in the home, you know, Typically, it's women historically who've been doing a lot of emotional labor, right? Irritated that someone isn't doing their chores, but having to manage that emotion to kind of get them to do it in a nice way, right? So I've always been thinking about it. And then I started thinking about it more once we started having all these students success trainings, right how to retain students may help students be successful, how to create a positive classroom climate, you know,

all the teaching strategies that we learn about, for example, in Faculty Focus, or you know, at The Teaching Professor Conference, but I started realizing there's still this huge invisible component, you know. Everything that we have to do that I have to do to get myself in the right place to teach a class when I don't feel like it, or to respond to an email in a positive way when I want to be cranky, right? So I started thinking about there's all this invisible labor I'm doing. And I just started paying attention to it in myself. And I really didn't start thinking about strategies for it until I got assigned to teach this class on early childhood, social and emotional development, and how preschoolers, preschool teachers basically needed to promote that in kids to help have them be successful academically. And as I was teaching my students about how they needed to, as future preschool teachers, pay attention to their hot buttons, or examine their beliefs about their role, or their beliefs about challenging behavior in kids, I started thinking like, "Oh, maybe I need to be doing these things, too. Maybe I need to know what my hot buttons are. Maybe I need to examine my beliefs about what is my role as a as a college teacher, you know, and how am I framing students' kind of behavior in perhaps, you know, negative ways when I could be reframing that?"

Tierney King 11:47

And so for the past year, you know, instructors, they've explored these invisible emotional labors. And so they're associated with online and in person teaching. So what's one thing that you do personally to keep your positive emotion and energy at bay when you're facing one of these invisible labors?

Ashley Harvey 12:07

Yeah, I think it's, you know, there's no easy solutions. I think everybody comes up with their own strategies, but mine are, first to just acknowledge that this is a lot of labor. What I'm doing, this emotional labor, is a real thing, you know, and it takes a lot of energy on my part. So I kind of validate that. And then the second thing is I just try to keep myself out of negative rehearsal, right, it's normal to have those kind of negative thoughts like, the student really didn't read this, they're not prepared, you know, those kinds of things. But I try to, you know, reframe things, right, put myself in their shoes, acknowledge the times that I wasn't as prepared, or couldn't find something on a website, you know, and, and I also try to broadly not fall into the trap of "kids these days," you know, "they're not as good as we used to be." And I hear some of my colleagues do that. And I call that the student decline perspective. And I try to move more towards the student transformation perspective that's modeled after the family decline and family transformation perspective that was developed by Stephanie Coontz in my field. And so I tried to see students as always changing, you know, always transforming, a lot of times for the better. And what I tried to reverse in my mind is all the good things about them, how accepting they are of diversity, how open they are to talking about things like emotion or mental health, how self aware they are, how they challenged the status quo, right? So I keep myself out of the negative rehearsal, kind of keep myself more the positive rehearsal if I can. And I remind myself, and this is something I rehearsed about my role, students deserve to have a teacher that likes them. Just like no one wants a preschool teacher who doesn't like little kids, no one who is teaching college students should not like them, right? We owe it to them to like them. And so that's something I remind myself up to,

Tierney King 13:58

You know, when people attend your session, what do you hope that they kind of take away after viewing your session?

Ashley Harvey 14:05

Well, research on emotional labor and college professors says that the more we can genuinely experience positive emotion, rather than suppressing negative, or faking it, right, the more we can get ourselves to genuinely experience positive emotion, the less exhausted we are, and the more we enjoy our jobs. And so my goal is to help people first just validate all the emotional labor that they're doing, and then come up with some strategies, maybe that they'll hear from me, maybe that they'll hear from somebody else in the workshop, about how they can feel that kind of genuine positive regard for their students so that they can, they can enjoy their jobs more and be less exhausted.

Tierney King 14:46

Next, we're going to talk with Dr. Tarsha Reid, who will also be presenting at The Teaching Professor Conference. She'll present her session, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy for African American Students. So to start, let us know who you are and explain the topic that you'll be discussing at the conference and why you selected that as your topic, why is it so important to you?

Dr. Tarsha Reid 15:08

Okay. Again, my name is Dr. Tarsha Reid. I have been teaching for approximately 19 years, 16 years in public school, and three years on the collegiate level at Livingstone college. I am interested in the topic of culturally relevant pedagogy or culturally relevant teaching, because that was the topic of my dissertation, which was culturally relevant teaching strategies from the perspective of the urban science teacher. And having the years of teaching experience, I've seen where African American students have been lagging in the achievement gap, and trying to fix that lack in achievement gap between African American students and white students. We as teachers have to build that encouragement and that engagement and motivation for those students to want to learn. So in order for teachers, or educators, to really motivate African American students in the content, we have to know a bit about their culture, we have to build relationships with them in order for them to identify with the content that you're trying to teach.

Tierney King 16:29

So normally, when I asked these questions, I ask, you know, what will the instructors gain from attending your session? And for this one, because inclusivity and diversity is such an important topic, what will the students gain from instructors attending your session, and be able to take back into the classroom and benefit the students? So what will those students gain from their instructors attending this?

Dr. Tarsha Reid 16:54

Students, directly African American students, they will be validated in the classroom. They will be validated for their racial and cultural differences, as well as recognized for their voice in discussion. The instructors will be able to connect with them on a more personal level in order for them to engage in their content. So it would recognize the African American student as being important to that teacher, and important to that lesson.

Tierney King 17:28

And then kind of lastly, what do you think the most important lesson you've personally learned from this last year is when it comes to inclusivity diversity or equity in the classroom?

Dr. Tarsha Reid 17:40

Oh, yes. Student culture and identity are extremely important. In this era of racial disparities with African Americans, it is crucial that African American students are acknowledged for their cultural differences, life experiences, and academic expertise. It is important that teachers and student relationships are built so we can dismantle any type of racial biases that are created prior to the classroom. African American students need to understand that teachers care for them. And that they have a lot to say, and we are here to listen.

Tierney King 18:27

Up next, we're going to talk with Jane Sutterlin who will be presenting at The Teaching Professor Virtual Conference with her session, Using Online Tools and Learning Science to Spark Curiosity and Amplify Learning. So to start us off, kind of let us know who you are and then why you chose this topic specifically to talk about at The Teaching Professor Conference.

Jane Sutterlin 18:48

Thank you very much. I'm excited to be here. I have been, let's see, my background is in elementary education. That's where I started in my learning process and was really motivated, and probably my favorite grade to teach was kindergarten because those children are so curious about everything that you talk about. And in fact, don't even mention that there's snow outside because you've lost them for quite a while, and I, you know, it just sparked my curiosity about where does that go? By the time they get to high school, where does that passion excitement for learning go? So as I continued on with my career, I became a technology specialist in high school, worked with high school teachers trying to incorporate technology into their classroom. It was during a time where laptops were a big new mobile technology and coming out and trying to help them balance that excitement for the technology, but yet use that to help with learning instead of it just being an activity. And so I've always been really motivated in using technology for learning and not just for technology. Then I moved on to higher ed, and realized that a lot of faculty that I work with also are similar to kindergarteners and that they have about a 15 minute window of excitement and attention span. And they were reporting to me just how frustrating it was to educate college students that would sleep through class, not be motivated, be shopping for shoes, bringing their laptops. You know, they weren't really excited about technology, because technology often meant it was a distraction, and they weren't watching them. So I have always been really motivated about what makes people learn and what gets them excited about it. So I started looking at research into learning scientists. And if I had to redo my career over again, I think I would be a cognitive scientist, because these people are amazing. And they know a whole lot about how people learn. And so what I started to do with faculty that I work with, and I work at Penn State and the College of Earth Mineral Sciences, and I work with online education and face-to-face students, but as I started to work with them, it was how about we try to build in some activities that encompass learning science, because I don't think students really understand themselves, how they learn. So they're struggling with how to study, they may have gone through high school, and been able to sit in that classroom and

absorb all that information, and then do brilliantly. And then they get to college and there's a shift of expectation where they have to take ownership in their learning. And what does that look like? So they get to the first exam, they've studied like they've always studied, and they don't do as well. And they're crushed. And they come to the faculty and say, "What did I do? I studied." Well, they're not necessarily studying the way that we need to study to make that learning durable. So I started to look into that. And so a lot of my talk, will be covering that, like, what does that learning science look like? How can you incorporate learning science into your classrooms, and then this past year, I've gotten super excited about emotion and how emotion science also intersects with this learning science. So that's the piece that has been missing in my entire career, because as a teacher, you would be like, this activity was great. The kids loved it, we got great learning outcomes, you do the same activity next year and it bombs. Why? Why does that happen, right? So this emotion science is kind of connecting a lot of dots for me. And because as I've been learning that emotion really drives our motivations, our interest, our distractions, especially this last year during the pandemic, so emotion is really key as well. So I've incorporated more of how we can capture emotion and curiosity, and get students to be excited about the content. And then also bringing in the learning science to help them make that learning durable, and then throwing in the technology because we have to have technology. One, not only is it interesting and exciting, but also can pique the interest and keep the curiosity going for the students. I'm excited to see where the future goes. Because I think we've learned a lot this year, people are thinking more about how learning works in their classroom and what works for students. I think they're going to meet those needs better. And I think students expectations are going to be different going forward.

Tierney King 23:30

For more information on The Teaching Professor Conference, visit www.teachingprofessorconference.com or check out the link in the episode description. We can't wait to see you in person or virtually at the conference.