

Christopher Richmann: Welcome to Professors Talk Pedagogy, a podcast from the Academy for Teaching and Learning at Baylor University. I'm your host, Christopher Richmann. Professors Talk Pedagogy presents discussions with great professors about pedagogy, curriculum, and learning in order to propel the virtuous cycle of teaching. As we frankly and critically investigate our teaching, we opened new lines of inquiry. We engage in conversation with colleagues and we attune to students' experiences. All of which not only improves our teaching, but enriches and motivates ongoing investigation. And so the cycle continues.

Today, our guest is Dr. Jeff Doyle, Associate Director of Planning and Assessment in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at Baylor University. Dr. Doyle has a BA in biology, a masters of education in counselor education, and a PhD in higher education, all from the University of Virginia. Previous institutions for which Jeff has worked include Lynchburg College, Eastern Mennonite University, Florida State University, the Federal Executive Institute, Shenandoah University, and Appalachian State University. Before serving in his current role, Dr. Doyle served for nine years as the dean for student learning and engagement at Baylor, where he oversaw the Departments of Campus Living and Learning, New Student Programs, the Academy for Leadership Development and Student Activities. Throughout his time at Baylor, Dr. Doyle has taught numerous behavior, leadership and higher education management courses. We are excited to have Dr. Doyle on the show to discuss the full circle of student involvement with the university, from the freshmen experience to assessing program outcomes.

Jeff Doyle, thank you so much for coming on the show.

Jeff Doyle: Thanks, Christopher. Good to be here. I'm excited to chat with you.

CR: Well, you have a lot of experience in higher education, in a lot of different roles. And so there's so much that we could be talking about here, both from the meta level of what the institution does and how the institution thinks about effective education. But you're also a very experienced classroom teacher as well. So I'm sure we'll, we'll find many ways to kind of get into the conversation of effective teaching. But one of the things that I wanted to start out here with you is to talk about--and bring in your perspective as formerly as a dean for student learning and engagement here at Baylor--is how you think that that faculty think about students' non-academic activities. You've had, had opportunities, I'm assuming, to really get to know students both on a personal level outside of the classroom, but also in terms of what students do with their time outside the classroom in that broader like what organizations they're involved in and that kinda thing. So how do you, what is your perspective on how the spheres of the non-academic side of college life and the academic side of college life interact?

JD: Sure. Yeah. Yeah. I think relatively as a Biology major, so I often think pretty practically. So if you take a week of time, it's 168 hours in a week. And you subtract out the, let's say seven hours a night, sleeping let's say 50 hours a week. You come up with 80 something hours. You come up with a 118, then you take out the number of hours in class for students. So an average students in class for about 15 hours a week. Now we used to say that every student should spend three hours for every hour in class, for their class. Then if you look at the accreditation guidelines, they specifically state that faculty should make sure they have two hours of work for every one hour of work in the class. But if you look at national data on what students are actually investing in their classes, self-reported and measuring in different ways, they're basically saying they're spending about an hour out of class for every hour in class. So the reality

then is out of a 168 hours, you subtract some time for sleep. You've got 30 of their hours are being spent in class and preparing for class. And so what you're left with then is about 80 hours where they are awake and they're not doing anything class-related. And so the reality is there's a huge opportunity there to influence students positively or negatively. And that's what the folks outside of the classroom are trying to do, is take advantage of that environment to do something positive while the students are present and awake.

CR: Is there a way that faculty can maybe be gently trained to think about these spheres as non competitive, but more as complimentary? What's your perspective on that?

JD: Yeah, yeah, I'd actually written and researched a little bit on that dynamic over time. Student Affairs basically started in the late 1800s and the profession itself was formed in 1937 with a statement. But it used to be that student services were primarily kind of undergirding and supporting students for success in the classroom. And then when they started to think they warranted some credibility, they develop these theories of student development, which are now taught in graduate programs throughout the country. But I suggest and others do, those theories begin to be a competing framework with faculty. So for Student Affairs, we were saying "we deserve we warrant attention as our own field" and I think that was detrimental. And so in the, in the late 80s, early 90s, there was a movement to focus on learning and universities, which was a philosophy that united those two sides. So if we talk about what are students learning, it brings faculty and student affairs staff together.

The other thing I'll mention is there was a study done in 2014--It's called Purdue Gallup study and you could look it up--It was on 30,000 people post-college. And it asked them what was most impactful in your college experience? And they compared the people who had had engaging professional careers and those who were not as happy or engaged in their professional career. And they went back and they said, "Okay, what was different about their questions in college?" And they found that there they talk about the big three and the big six. The big three were the three variables that had the most impact. So people post-college are most engaged in their work environment if these three things happen. They had a professor who got them excited about learning. They had someone at the college who cared about them as a person. And they had a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their goals and dreams. Those are things I think that again, unite both sides of student affairs. Even, even using the word sides create a dichotomy. But we're all wanting students to be excited about learning. We all want to show them that we care about them and we all want to give them opportunities to be to be mentors.

CR: Do you think that there's room for conversation at a place like Baylor where we are pursuing R1 and research is more and more a part of the tenure and tenure track faculty experience. Do you think there's room for that conversation of saying "the student affairs folks here are actually helping to fill a gap." Is that a good way to put it? I think about the history of higher education and you know, the, the, the liberal arts tradition had faculty that were very involved, you know, 50, 60, a 100 years ago, very involved in student life, like we think of it today. Eating with them in the dining halls. And you hear these almost like romantic stories about how faculty were part of the student life. But now faculty just, there's just so many hours in the day, right? And if they were being asked to do research and grant work, The Student Affairs really comes up into that void. Is that a good way to think about it?

JD: Yeah, That's, that's basically how the profession emerged of Student Affairs, Is that the German model of education in the late 1800s, early 1900s, which ultimately lead them to become this nation that you

wanted to take on the world in a couple of different scenarios, was quite positive and spreading knowledge. It's almost like that was the Sputnik of that time period. And so the United States was like, Man, knowledge is exploding. We have got to get on board. And the way to do that is to shift some of our colleges and create some colleges. You know, that's where a couple of major federal acts were created that resulted in many colleges. But we've got to focus more on the creation of knowledge, which shifted faculties' attention away from the mentoring students as much. And therefore, you then had some major--If you go back to student protests and riots and faculty members at my Alma mater were killed by students accidentally. They are like "We have to have some way of working with our students in a positive framework that, that helps them grow." And so, yes, I think that, that, that has happened and I think the key to look at is when a faculty member goes to their year-end-evaluation, what are they evaluated on the basis of? And it's typically the research production, the quality of their teaching evaluations, and maybe some form of service to the university. But I often think there's many faculty are having transformative relationships on students lives. And that is not captured as much at universities besides word of mouth and hopefully some sort of awards.

CR: One of our watch words, and I don't think Baylor is unique in this at all--but one of our watch words over the course of the pandemic when we were working with faculty and helping faculty to think about their work, and also what we were hearing from faculty about what they were learning, was the importance of empathy with, with students. And it seems to me that this is something that's, that shouldn't just be a pandemic thing that, that has, that has emerged here, but that good teaching, good student mentorship is built on empathy. Part of the pieces, one of the pieces of empathy has to be that as a faculty member, I'm getting to know my students and I know something of what they do, what they're interested in. And so that's one of the things that I think is really, it's, it's mysterious, it's opaque to many faculty. What are students doing when they're not sitting in my classroom on a Tuesday morning at 9:30. All sorts of assumptions may fill, fill in that that set of that particular question. What, what have you learned in your work in higher eds in different roles about what students actually do with their time and how, how might faculty be helped with that knowledge?

JD: Sure. Yeah. I mean, I read or listened to a podcast recently where there was an actual situation where a bunch of young men were stranded on an island and how they survived without any adults there. And it was in big contrast to the book that we read a lot about. You can probably remind me of the name of the book where the children are left on the island and end up killing each other and doing--

CR: Are you thinking Lord of the Flies?

JD: Yeah, that, that book is not reality, at least as we've seen it in, in this one example. And I think what happens is at five o'clock, this campus is 99 percent 18 to 22-year-olds here. But there's no massive Lord of the Flies movement generally there. Many of them are having Bible studies. They're gathering in groups to talk about their growth as leaders and impacting each other. They're spending time listening and talking to each other as they deal with struggles. And because at many colleges, you know, a party or to get the attention of the news or it plays well in movies or entertainment, that becomes a more dominant narrative when really that's a very small amount, particularly at Baylor of students' time.

CR: Let's talk a little bit about your own teaching. What kind of classes do you teach here at Baylor?

JD: I mean, right now I teach in the Management Department. There's a class called mg T3 30 five leadership and organizational behavior. So that's the main one I teach.

CR: So one of the recurring comments--you were generous enough to, to share some student feedback from your most recent classes--one of the recurring comments from your students is that they appreciate the community that you foster in class. And I actually had to copy and paste: this one student had said "this class exemplifies the Baylor mission of empowering leaders in a caring Christian environment." Did you just do cartwheels when you, when you read that, what was your reaction when you read that or comments like it?

JD: I mean, that's what I was going for. I mean, all faculty are asked themselves what are our objectives for this class? And I wanted students to be able to say that. I think that is rooted in part in that I know that students come to college hungry for relationship and more so now than ever before. And I was listening to a podcast on Hofstede's six cultural dimensions of, of the world. And one of those dimensions is individuality versus community. And he looks at, and this has been repeated over years, in 100 nations, which nation is the most individualistic nation in the world? Do you have any guesses?

CR: I'm going to go with the obvious choice and say the US.

JD: Yes. Yes. And obviously there's many other schools, nations at the bottom of that list. So to me the result is we got these 18-year-olds coming in and they're being stripped of most of their support network, right, that they have in their homes. And so they're wide-eyed, they're vulnerable. And they're like, I've heard all these incredible things about college. What's going to happen? And I think faculty often think, I've gotta deliver this content when their students would more likely subscribed to the statement of "I'm going to care how much, you know, when I know how much you care." And so I sort of approach my teaching from that way. So I focus on showing them support and care at the beginning and then try and get them excited about learning. Like one of the first things we cover is that learning should be fun. And if you're not enjoying this class, then I'm not doing my job. And so I spend time meeting with students one-on-one. I give them credit for meeting with me or one of my peer leaders one-on-one.

Another thing I do is that in today's age, and I'm a little off the, off the beaten path here, There's no reason for a group of people to come into a room and listen to someone talk at them. In most cases, we can do that on a screen. We can do it by audio. There's lots of ways to do that. So if we're going to take the time and effort to get a group of people in a room. Let's make better use of that time. So basically, all the content I'm trying to deliver to my students is done outside the classroom. And then inside the classroom I'm using methods of learning that aren't lecture-based to integrate that knowledge. You know, there's a learning pyramid that came out about 60 years ago that basically indicated that only 5% of what we hear in a lecture is retained long-term. Obviously, you can do some things to tweak that. 10 percent of what we read is retained long-term, but you flip to the other end of the, of the pyramid. And 90 percent of what we teach others is retained or 50 percent of what we discuss is retained or 70 percent of what we practice is retained. So I try and keep things like that in mind.

CR: Yeah. So what I hear you discussing here and I think that I've seen in your blogs you using this term is, is flipped learning in the flipped classroom. And so if there's listeners who are interested in getting a little bit more of the theory and some of the literature on that, it, it abounds, the literature on this is, is, is growing. And you know, there's, there's really nothing new about that other than that the breadth of

disciplines now that have embraced that--Really it's the, it's the seminar model of I, I assigned you some something to do outside of class. You've done it, I've given you the right incentives to do it or the motivation to do it. And then when we come together in class, we're all working on something together, right? In some, in some capacity.

JD: Yeah.

CR: I'm wondering if you could maybe help us think to a little bit more through the tension of individualism and community you were, you were mentioning a minute ago. I agree that students do crave this community and your, that your students' comments really bear this out how much they just appreciate getting to know each other and they comment about how "I made friends in this class. I don't make friends in classes" and it's just like, it's just, It's just fascinating to see how students really glob onto this. But there's also more than a decade of their own experience where in most public school settings, they've been taught to think about education in a very individualistic way, about their grades, about their test scores, about their, their rankings in the class. Everything seems so focused on individual achievement. And in a lot of ways they can't shake that unless we do something pretty drastic to help them shake that. So do you sense any of that tension in your students? How do you, how would you advise faculty to kind of gently navigate that and help students kinda come on to that more communal side of things?

JD: Well, this, this goes back to philosophy that I describe two, and that is, when you look at the people who are most successful in life, it was people whose behavior continued and persevered over time. You know, we talk about resilience. We talk about grit. If you take a paragon of society, someone famous that's achieved a lot. It's, it's never, it's rarely that they are the most intelligent person in the room. It's that they kept getting up when they got knocked down. Obviously, privilege plays a role in society's biggest leaders, but the people that are most successful in life, as my read of it from the literature, is they don't give up when things get tough. And so that's the way I frame my class, is I don't really care about your grade. I want to give you all A's. Okay. And so let's do that. You know? And the way we're going to do that is the focus is on learning. So any assignment you do, you can redo. And the goal is just to capture the knowledge that comes from that assignment. Any assignment that is late, you can turn in. You might get a little bit off of that, but you can still turn it in. So I am not about trying to teach them the importance of deadlines and achieving a certain score. It's more about their learning because I want them to enjoy the class too. I'm like, I don't want you to worry about your grade. All I ask for you is your attention in class and out of class. And if I can't maintain your attention, you need to let me know.

CR: My own little confessional here about persistence as it probably took me way too long in life to, to get to this point. But when I was applying to PhD programs, sent out all that, all the applications and just didn't get into any of the programs that I had applied to. And I remember talking with a professor who was my mentor in this situation. And she said to me, a lot of times, it's the people who keep applying, who end up getting into these programs. That's, that's the key to this. And that was just like a light bulb to me. Like I said, it probably shouldn't have taken me that long in life to realize that persistence was, was that important. But that's the kind of thing that students, often times they come into, into our classrooms they're 18, 19, 20 years old. They haven't had much experience with any kind of big let downs really. And I'm kind of ashamed to say that's that's kind of where I was at 25 when I was applying to grad schools. So do you, do you have convert those hard conversations with students when

sometimes they're just they're faced with that first kind of failure? Maybe it's not in your class because I think you've set things up differently, but you're getting, maybe they're bringing in some other things.

JD: I mean, it's a part of life like so integrating the faith aspect is, you know, and we pray before every class, the class is structured around the greatest commandment, which aligns with, I think most leadership literature. And that is we're going to learn to love with our heart, soul, mind and strength, we're going to love others and we're going to know ourself. And so within that, there's even a section this semester on how do you deal with hurt in your life. You know, the book of James talks about "consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds because they make you mature and complete." So every human in life will be let down multiple times or hurt multiple times. And if we're not teaching students how to deal with that, we're not doing our jobs. But God does that by loving us unconditionally and using those opportunities for learning and growth. So when these tough times come for me and I will share, self-disclose about myself sometimes, and they might do the same themselves. And we talk about, well, what could we learn from this in the midst of it?

CR: There were a lot of entities here at Baylor and I'm sure other institutions can echo this, that helped the institution fulfill its mission during the, the most difficult times of the COVID pandemic. One of the things that Baylor really had to learn how to do quickly is online teaching. And not just the emergency remote that caught us in March of 2020, but classes that were then planned from the beginning the semester to be online in the next fall and spring. So a lot of offices helped us kind of get our heads around this and help faculty plan their courses and think about their teaching in these settings. And your office of institutional effectiveness helped with getting data on what students are experiencing, Online students are experiencing, and this was just such a new thing for us here at Baylor. I don't think-- maybe you can correct me if I'm wrong--I don't think before the pandemic, there was such a thing as an online only student at Baylor. But then all of a sudden we had, what was it about 10 percent in the fall of 2020. So that was just, that was a new thing for instructors. And boy, was it a new thing for, for students who think of a place like Baylor as a residential experience. So say a little bit about what you learned about online students and their experience during the pandemic.

JD: Yeah, Obviously, when you think about a college and you ask someone, they talk about, you take these classes. But going back to the beginning, I talked about you're only in class for 15 hours a week-- when you strip away the college experience and have someone in their home or apartment, and they log on for 15 hours a week, there's a huge vacuum left there of what the heck am I paying a certain amount of money for? parents in particular ask that, you know. And so I felt like we needed to think about these students lives outside those 15 hours. And I discovered in serving kind of as an advisor to this group of online only students that they, no surprise, wanted connection, they wanted meaning, they wanted friendship. The problem is, we as a Culture or world, maybe we haven't totally learned how to build online community. I was Reading this book about e-mail recently and the like, when it first came out, a number of writers said this is a joke, it'll never go big, it'll never be famous. This is too clunky, but I think many new things are that way and we have to decide if we're willing to learn it. And I think online learning is here to stay. Is it going to replace? Maybe not, but it's going to democratize learning. So people now that work 40 hours a week and have certain responsibilities, can log on at certain times and take their classes. If a student has a health disease and health issue and they can't do it, They can be educated in that way. So I don't want to run the other way from the online experience. I want us to really ask ourselves, how do you build connection in the online environment and, and recognize that one of the things that makes a place like Baylor so great is, is the experience outside the classroom. I've worked at

nine different universities. I've never been anywhere where the out of classroom experience is as rich and as, as in depth at a place like Baylor. But when we have students who are online, well, how do we translate that into an online experience? It's not easy, but it's not something we, I don't think we should ignore.

CR: What did the students say, because I know you collected students' feedback. What did those online students say made for a successful class, an effective teacher in those online settings?

JD: Yeah, I mean, there's a lot of different things obviously, but if you go back to the big three we were talking about, when you ask them what was most helpful, it was that even though I'm in India or Bangladesh, "this teacher took time to talk to me. I felt like they got to know me. They thought about this experience from my perspective." And so anything that keeps us doing it from feeling like they're a number or a type name on a screen. That's why I think synchronous learning is, is much, much better than asynchronous. I'm not saying we shouldn't do asynchronous, but we should always err on the side of relationship versus kind of a transactional experience.

CR: Jeff Doyle, Thank you so much for joining the show today. We really appreciate it.

JD: Thank you, Christopher.

CR: Our thanks again to Dr. Jeff Doyle for speaking with us today. In our show notes, you'll find links to Jeff's blog, as well as a few of the resources that came up in our conversation, including the Purdue Gallup study. That's our show. Thanks for listening, and we'll catch you next time on Professors Talk Pedagogy.