

Christopher Richmann: Welcome to Professors Talk Pedagogy, a podcast from the Academy for Teaching and Learning. I'm your host, Christopher Richmann. PTP 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 open 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. Karina Malavanti, senior lecturer and neuroscience adviser in the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience at Baylor University. Dr. Malavanti's research focuses on applied cognition and human memory, looking at issues of legal psychology such as eyewitness memory and education, addressing issues such as study strategies. Recognized as a Baylor Teaching Fellow in 2018, Dr. Malavanti is active in the society for teaching psychology. We're delighted to have Dr. Malavanti on the show to chat about teaching as an introvert, increasing your awareness as a teacher, reflecting on our teaching and much more.

Karina Malavanti. Welcome to the show.

Karina Malavanti: I'm happy to be here.

CR: Let's begin with a little backstory here and tell our audience why we're having this particular conversation, time travel with me. It was the spring of 2020. And you had proposed through the ATL, doing a faculty interest group. And a faculty interest group is a relatively informal set of discussions where faculty will gather three or four times over a semester and look at a text together and discuss it over a meal or something like that a few times. But it's a stable group that will meet a few times throughout the semester. And you had suggested doing a faculty interest group on this text, *Geeky Pedagogy* by Jessamyn Newhouse, *Geeky Pedagogy, a guide for intellectuals, introverts and nerds who want to be effective teachers*. So can you give us a little bit of background about why you wanted, why you chose this text and why you wanted to do a discussion group specifically on this issue of introvert as teacher.

KM: Absolutely. I really love our ATL because of these opportunities. And this opportunity really spoke to me in that we could have a conversation about effective teaching, but really grounded in our identity. So much of our teaching is about just our content and then also the context of student. And that is important and we'll talk about some of that today. But I also think that there's a lot of conversation around what does it mean to be an excellent teacher? And that's really hard to really grasp. And so this text does an awesome job, just truly an awesome job of defining effective teaching and then giving tips on how to actually achieve effective teaching for our students. So I just, I really wanted to do a book on this. And I also thought it would speak more broadly to the campus. So our faculty here that might have identities as a geek, integrate or a nerd that she so lovingly called "GINs"

CR: Everyone will remember, of course, spring 2020, something happened and we had we had exactly one meeting, if I if I recall correctly. So we we we just had one meeting and then COVID changed everybody's lives and routines. So the faculty interest group didn't really happen as, as planned. So I'm hoping that maybe this conversation can help kind of bring some of those things that may have been discussed to a more public forum here. So one of the things that I would do remember talking about in that first discussion was, Let's just try to define what an introvert is. And going around the room like what does it mean to call yourself or to label yourself an introvert? What are your thoughts on that?

KM: From a psychology standpoint, we define a introversion as really getting your energy from being by yourself. So a lot of this reflection can be done on your own time. I know for me in particular, after

a day or even just a class period of teaching, I know I need five or ten minutes minimum to just recoup and think about what happened and the reasons why it happened. But I really can't do anything in five to ten minutes. I need that time. And extroversion is where your energy is just, it's going to be there when there are people around you and you get your energy from the social interactions. And so introversion is a great kind of personality trait to have when you are a professor and when you've gone through graduate school, it's something that actually helps us a lot because we have to be able to become masters of our content. And these scholars. And you know, this plays really well into that ability. Also mean that sometimes we're not really trained well for the social context of the classroom.

CR: I literally was speaking with a freshman today who expressed interest at the beginning of the semester in becoming a professor. And I have no idea for a freshman what that even means. Like what is what are they thinking? And so I was trying to give her some straight talk about what goes what goes into this career path, and all of that. And this was one of the things that I don't think she was fully aware of and why would she as a freshman, that it's not especially the preparation for it is not social, it's not, you're not interacting with people a whole lot. You out, you have to sit in a dark room and had and chug out, you know, your research and crunch your data. And you know, in the humanities you might be in some dusty archives somewhere for weeks on end. It's, it's, it's, it's a very isolated kind of an experience and introverts, like you say, might, might really thrive on that up to a point, everybody's a little bit different. But if you're, if you're thinking about being a college professor means oh, I get to have these wonderful lively discussions all day along with my students. And it's all a or do it's like no, no, no, no, no. There's let me tell you what a PhD is. Right?

KM: And it's important for us to have those conversations, not to scare students, but just to give them a more realistic, right?

CR: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Well, you had to have the same kind of definition of this that I do, at least when I think about my own experience because I would identify as an introvert too is right after class. Just sort of ask yourself, what do you want to do right after class? If you want, if you really want to like, Oh, this class is great. I wonder if any of the students will stick around and talk to me for another 10 or 15 minutes. That be great, or if you like, okay, this class was awesome. This is great. But now I need to go into my office and just shut the door. And I love my students. I if I don't have those 50 minutes, especially before my next meeting or whatever. Like I'm just going to I'm not going to be fully there I'm not going to be 100 percent.

KM: Yes. That's my definition as well. It helps us to a point. It helps us with class preparation and helps us with publishing. And it helps us with our research. So introversion and being an intellectual and being a geek and a nerd can help us and even helps us in the classroom, right? Who doesn't want a professor who loves the material so much that they geek out on it, that they nerd out. They want that. But students don't really understand also then how taxing it can be. And so that preparation component that Jessamyn speaks about in this book, I think is really helpful. It's got some really useful tips.

CR: Yeah, yeah. And it occurs to me, on one hand, she, she writes throughout here that not only is it going to be common for, for professors to be introverts, nerds, but maybe, maybe even the majority because of, of, of what goes into this, the person that's drawn to it. And yet, There's a problem. Because there is in our minds as you were talking about Excellence in Teaching, Excellence, there is in our minds and probably many of our students minds as well. An image of a very extroverted professor being like, that's the gold standard, That's the ideal. This, this very gregarious, like just giving of, of himself or herself in a social way that many of us in higher ed, that doesn't feel authentic, it doesn't feel natural, right?

KM: Or we have to spend a whole lot of time and effort to achieve some of that. And even right, it might not look the same way, all right? Same way to students, but yes, I absolutely agree with that. I think our students do think that that is what a rockstar professor looks like. But then i, i think about who have been master teachers here at Baylor. And from my point of view, they aren't necessarily, they might not be defined in that same when students do. And because right, I'm really concentrating on the effectiveness of the teaching and overall students when they experience effective teaching and very thoughtful and intentional teaching practices, that they are rewarded and they do. They do see it and they feel it.

CR: Yeah, yeah. Does this, do you think that students are aware of it enough that it shows up in student course evaluations or other kinds of survey. Because I know you do a lot of survey work with your students, checking in with them. Not just at the end of the semester, but throughout the semester as well.

KM: That is also, that is one of the reflective pedagogical practices that I engage in is then I'll do a survey at the beginning of class, towards the beginning of the semester, in the middle. And then towards the end of the semester. I think that having this, the, sets, the evaluations of teaching my students at one time point when we're all exhausted. And they are looking at final grades. And there a lot of them are sick at this time during finals because of the perfect storm. It's hard for them to assess and to give ratings of instruction at that time. And so I much prefer giving my own assessments, although I do see value in sets and I think that they are, there are pros and cons to assessing them, but they can be challenging in that way.

CR: Yeah. So really we're starting to talk about what is in Chapter 1 of this, of this book, *awareness*. And she speaks about awareness both in terms of awareness of ourselves as instructors, but also awareness of our students, our students behavior and experiences. Do you have any advice for how best to learn about our students in, in really useful ways.

JM: You know? And so I think this is a challenging assessment. As we look at SOTL, as we are, you attend seminars for excellence in teaching and it is easy for us to undergo imposter syndrome. And it's also easy for us to have maybe a biased look at, oh, well my students in this class did this, but my freshman students look like this. And so you have to make this kind of awareness and assessment for each class and probably every semester. Yeah. Right now I think that that is true more than ever during the pandemic is my students have been more exhausted this semester than even in the last year when I thought that they would have been more affected by the pandemic. But coming back to face-to-face teaching after a year of hybrid and online has been extremely exhausting hard for them to readjust to. And so I think that, you know, if Survey is something that is useful, of course we're talking about introverts and it takes energy and effort to create these surveys. And then to, you can't just give them out and then not not utilize them. So then it take to utilize them and engage in best practices there. But that has been helpful for me just to assess what are the pronunciations for their names. I asked in class, but I also asked for that in a survey. I ask for pronouns. I asked what they're excited to learn at the beginning of class, and I tried to address that during the semester. Like, oh, Derrick said that they were really excited to learn about false memory. So today we're going to talk about false memories, even those already syllabus. But now I can make that student really feel like, yeah, if they just, during that moment in class, were like, okay, I want to learn about false memories, but now they knew I was paying attention, so I take note of that. Yeah. During the semester I ask what's going well, what I can do better and what they can do better. And I try to give them resources if they point out things like, Oh, I wish I could come to office hours but nothing none of her office hours worked for me. Oh, well, let me e-mail the student and let them know that they could have also email me for an appointment. And even though I said that on the first day of

class, they might not have been in a state of mind. So I pointed e-mail that is very kind, but also addresses concerns in the middle of the semester when we're getting really just kind of were grinding it out. I think that could be helpful. And then an end of semester reflection just to see how the semester went. But absolutely, I think that we come to our subject matter in a very different way than our students do, even if this is in their major. But especially we're going to have some challenges in our introductory level courses, in our survey level courses. Because we have the knowledge bias, we have an expert blind spot. We know already so much and sometimes it can be hard to teach back to because we don't remember exactly what it was like to not know it yet. So hearing from students on what's working, what's not working throughout the semester has been really helpful for me.

CR: I was just sitting just attending a a a state mandated training on Title 9 related things this morning. At the end of it, there was this this quiz that the, that the facilitator was giving to us and we were in a group and we were all just supposed to like, give our give our answer. I'm like, oh gosh, I feel nervous when I'm getting this wrong. And it's like, oh yeah, that's how our students feel like a lot of the times when we put them on the spot and it's not wrong. It's just, we just need to remember what that feeling is like. Because it's really easy to forget.

KM: It's so easy to forget. In fact, my department chair and I talk a lot about this and he's like, Oh, they're not you, they're not you, Karina!

CR: Yeah. Yeah. You have to remember that a you, you like this topic way more than anybody else in the room and be, uh, you know, way more about it.

KM: Right? And sometimes I have a I have been doing this for several years and sometimes I find myself or I missed an important step and I have to go back. But I think also modeling the fact that I am watching their faces and I see that, oh, something didn't quite click. Let me go back. You know, muddiest points can be a good way of doing this as well to end the class. But I think also just in the moment also fixing whatever needs to be fixed. You know, if it's giving another example, if it's going over more applications so that they will do well in whatever assessments we've chosen to give them in that class. But it models also that we're trying really hard. And sometimes we know the endpoint and they don't know us, right?

CR: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So this is slightly off off on a tangent, but you mentioned that just sort of the tiredness, the fatigue of your students. Now we're recording this in December of 21. So where we're coming up on two years of sort of pandemic reality here. And it is a little bit surprising. And I think that, and I think it's a common experience that our students are more fatigued this, this semester than they were even in the midst of the pandemic. And I think that's true for faculty too--working in the faculty development world. It's been harder this semester than it was during the height of pandemic when when we were dealing with lockdowns and things like that. And my theory is just that the accumulative aspect of this, that, that there's been no real time to speak into what introverts need. Just rest and rejuvenate from, to recoup from sort of what we loss in terms of our energy supply during the pandemic. I'm just floating a theory how does that sound to you?

KM: Absolutely. And I also think that it is not, it's not just taxing for our students to have to reintroduce themselves to face-to-face exams that they had told me that that that has been really challenging, that they'd gotten used to taking online themes, and now we're back to face-to-face and then in-class presentations and they were used to recording. And so there's this yellow we adjustment. And then for also for us, we really care about our students. And so I have found, and I am not complaining all, but I have found that caring about our students is also emotionally taxing and something that requires a lot of effort as well. Yeah. So because I'm trying to notice who's in

class, who's not, you know, where is there this, you know, this whole where I can submit a care team report or just reach out to the student. And is there a pattern? What can I do to help? Am I, the only person that is noticing this or is this in every class. And so that also has been taxing. So I just find myself really unable to rejuvenate at all because I'm constantly trying to think through this and make sure I'm [inaudible] someone.

CR: Uh-huh. Yeah. Yeah. And and for the benefit of listeners, what size classes do you teach?

KM: So in those classes, those are about 30 students where I can really notice when students are absent. And yeah, 3 30 student and then 1 40 student class. And then I also am part of a team taught course, and that's 300. In that course. We only notice if they don't engage in our Canvas activity, right? Unfortunately, just because it is such a large class.

CR: Yep, yep. So the awareness is not just about how we're aware of our students, but also our awareness of ourselves. And Newhouse points out in this book that a lot of the scholarship of teaching and learning doesn't pay a whole lot of attention, or even downplays instructor identity markers. There's a quote on 24 that I just thought was really great. She says

“women, women teach in different contexts than men. Professors of color teach in a different context than white professors and anything they do and their pedagogical approaches and interactions with students will have a different impact on learning and teaching than it does for white cisgender male professors.”

So when, when, and I think this criticism is, is accurate to that the scholarship that research doesn't pay enough attention to this. It creates a suggestion that what works for some should work for all of us. And I think she meet, she may even at points in the book kind of try to dissuade us from even the language of best practices. Because it seems like that, that gives the impression that there's just like this universal way to teach that should, that should work if you're doing it, right. So is this something that you've thought about before? How does this ring with you?

KM: Yeah, I think as much as we think about what's working for a specific population of students, freshmen versus upper level students in everything that they're bringing into the classroom. We also need to think about our role as well and our identity markers like, Yeah, they're like ethnicity, like race. For a lot of our students, sometimes we might be the only one. I'm the only female intro neuroscience professor in their introductory class. And so I'm, I might be the only one and this might be the only science class they take at Baylor, you know, and so I might be the one scientist. That, that they are going to see here at Baylor. Just because it does count for an arts and sciences core in the distribution list of our sciences classes. So we do see that it can play a role. I, I try really hard in my courses to actually talk about it. This is not something that I would say, just as you've pointed out that everyone is going to be comfortable with or that would work for everyone. It is something that I have become more comfortable with as I have been in academia longer. So as a Hispanic woman, I talk about that and I sometimes will bring in Spanish language into my courses. And I will talk about the differences of growing up with parents that were from South America. But I do think it is, it can be different for students. Sometimes I do receive feedback that sometimes I talk too much about my family or my background. And so I think some students really appreciate it. But I also see that sometimes I get feedback of just like it didn't help me learn. And so it's hard to teach to that middle. And I think that we all need to do what's comfortable for us to the point of we also need to try to be effective. Sometimes, That means that we're going to be pushing up on what makes us comfortable or not comfortable. And I love her term of putting on her professor pants. Because I thought that that was helpful. It's like I'm not trying to embody every other

neuroscience professor that I had while I was in college, which was a white male. But instead, I want to be authentically me. And this is what it means to be authentically me.

CR: Yeah. Yeah. And just to take one example, just out of what you've already said, there is just the gender aspect of it. I think that I, I, I share about myself quite a bit with my students. And I'm a white man and never once have I read a student tell me that it was unhelpful or too much. So it's, it's very likely that there's a simple gender--Well, agender are probably gender and ethnicity element to it when you get those, those comments from students.

KM: And but then I, I do try to take it in. And just as the author stated, is that sometimes you kind of you taking that feedback and you put it away for a little bit. And then you come back to it and you're like, okay, what can I actually get from this feedback? And so I might also recognize that my students are probably stressed while they were stressed while engaging in their sets for all their classes that they're making a very quick judgment. It's not actually, you know, throughout the semester, it's a onetime period. They might have been really uncertain about their final grade was going to be like because in our department, final, final exams can play substantially on their grain it so I try not to take it personally. That is something again that has gotten easier as I've been.

CR: I think that's, right. Yes. Yeah. So do you have any any ways that you will go about because I know that you read in educational research and scholarship of teaching and learning at do you have any advice for how to translate what you read into your own practice?

KM: you know, especially given what you said just in this last question of it's hard to take in information when we don't know sometimes what students are talking about or the identities of the professors who were engaged in these types of technological innovations. Sometimes it's hard to generalize. I kind of just when I see something that I think might be useful for my students, I'll pilot it in a class. I might not put it in all of my classes because that might take too much time and effort for me and I want to be strategic. So I might islet in one classroom. I think it might work particularly well. And then I'll ask feedback on how it's going and then how it went throughout the semester. Really really engaging social work where I try to take enough, Okay, Well, how could this fit into my course? What course objective would it be beneficial for? Do I have a project that this would be even better for my students if I engaged in XYZ. And so I tried to mold it for the purpose of my particular class instead of just, Well, this is the excellent thing so Now I'm going to do all right.

CR: Yeah. Yeah. And that's the thing that is sometimes really intimidating and especially about, you know, like, like LG think, creates significant learning experiences, which is, modern classic. And so many people really swear by it. But it's, it's, it's so intense to, to go from like a traditional course to like no, I am completely thinking everything through this lens of the learning goals and, you know, and mapping everything I like. That is just, that takes so much time and effort. Most people, for most people, it's very rewarding and it would get if you have the support to do it, then by all means. But I think that for most of us, it's more about what's, what's, what's if we're reading something that is, that is, has some potential for our own classes. What's one small way that I can incorporate this and as you said, pilot it. Which implies you're doing something small. You're not committing big-time to it. And you're also assessing it along the way, right. And so you're right, your ready to toss it out or not use it for the next class if it just didn't work. So you have it over committed yourself to something that you're not quite comfortable with when when it's all said and done.

KM: Absolutely. I I love that. And I think that that's exactly the way to do it, is to think about how could this work for your particular class?

CR: Yes. So it's really more like a, like a James Lang small teaching approach. And also that, I mean, that, that reminds me that this, this book that we're talking about is in a series from West Virginia University Press that James Lang is the editor on. And there's just so many great titles in this, in this series, we could probably do separate podcasts on many of these different texts. But anybody who's, who's wanting a very readable sort of digests of the scholarship of teaching and learning. These are, these are very, very good. They're very well-written, so that's, that's very helpful. So one of the things that introvert teachers might overlook Newhouse suggests is the importance of the first day class, particularly all those social aspects. So what do you do on your first day of class that maybe doesn't come naturally to you as an introvert, but you have to learn and had to learn and really be intentional about.

KM: So I want to just go back for 1 second and think a little bit about how I was educated. So when I was educated and it's sometimes it's like this, the first day of class was syllabus day and you got out early. And so that was the model that I had throughout my entire time. And that's actually how I started because that was the model. And I think that Newhouse does a great job of saying we have to learn how to be effective teachers. Syllabus day is just usually not a very productive use of our time. Not only can students read the syllabus on their own, I'm not saying that they will, but they can. But because they they know they have this document, they're very likely not paying attention on that first day are filled with excitement. Yes. They usually that excitement might be just because their back at Baylor after break. So what I do on the first day of class is something that did take really deliberate practice for me. And it took some piloting and it took especially when it comes to timing and how large of groups I need to do. But I do a syllabus Scavenger Hunt where I ask them specific questions that they can find in groups about the syllabus to they can rely on each other. And then I asked specific groups as I go around the room. That has been helpful. But I don't spend the majority of the first day of class in that. Some of that, or most of that time is actually going to be on an icebreaker activity, usually called fast friends. It's a psychological icebreaker that actually comes out of our relationship literature. But basically, it's a series of these big questions that if you wanted to become a best friend with someone that you would ask them. So like, what is the meaning of life? What was a dream that you had last night? If you had to talk with someone dead or alive, who would it be? And so those are interesting questions that have nothing to do with our class, but that model a couple of things. So I use discussion in my class pretty regularly every class day. So it opens up that idea that we're going to be talking to each other and then I expect it and that I like it. And also it models the fact that sometimes the questions that I'll be posing don't have correct answers. That there are multiple ways of getting to an answer. And that we're going to have multiple perspectives to, to be learning from each other. I love that kind of activity for first day of class. And then of course, I asked what students are excited to learn and what they expect to learn. And sometimes they say, Well, I expect to learn about memory, but I'm excited to learn about autobiographical memory. And that can be the same thing and sometimes it can be different. But I, those are some of the really intentional practices that I've done now. For first it

CR: Yeah, I'll give I'll give a shout out to our Baylor colleague, Chris Rios in the graduate school. Because he has a really helpful way of thinking about first, the first day of class. The way, the way he explains it is you, it's a microcosm of your entire class and whether students, whether implicitly or explicitly students are going to take away from that, This is what this class is. That first day they will put it in a category in their brain based on what experience they had on that first day. So if you, if you want to set up your class in a certain way, then do those things on the first day so that it's not a big mental shift day two. if, if on day one you read the syllabus to them and let them out early. And on day two, you're asking them do all this interactive social stuff because this is what you really want to deal with. They're gonna be like, whoa, where did this come from, right? So in other words, the way Rios says it is after day one, That is a 100 percent of their experience of that

class. And you are trying to you're trying to move something where they have from that 100 percent experience of what they have into something into some new territory and that's a big lift.

KM: Yes. I also really light when Newhouse said that we want to have students respect our time, but we should also respect their time to, which mean, sometimes not letting them out early if we're going to be in class on time in there for the full time, for every other class period. So modeling first day, it's also pretty important as well. That's right. Yeah. So you use this language of reflective pedagogical practices. And Ne house definitely advocates this. What can you give us your own definition of what this, what this means? Reflective pedagogical practices.

KM: I think reflection can have a lot of different definitions, but I think overall, a reflective pedagogical practice is one in which we thoroughly engage in what we are doing in the classroom. So what worked, what didn't work? What can we do to make that, to make the day go well or sometimes go better. And so it's going to take some time, some time out of our day to engage in these reflective pedagogical practices. I've already said earlier on that I need five to ten minutes after each class. And so I jot down notes to myself on what went well and what didn't. Sometimes if students are lined up to come see me, I'll jot it down really quickly right before they start talking to because I don't want to forget as well. And so if I don't have that five to 10 minutes on myself and I just jot it down. But that's a practice that with given, handed down to me by Chuck Weaver in psychology and neuroscience. And it has been really helpful. But also, I think that it can look different for every person. So some individuals will not have as high a teaching load as I do. So I can get some of my classes mixed up. And so I want to do that immediately. Others will be able to do that at 8am the next morning because they can, and I would totally forget.

CR: Especially if you're teaching in the same room, right? Like you're the memory expert, but I'm sure that there's some research that says, Oh, you're in the same settings, it's hard to differentiate, right?

KM: Right.

CR: She talks about, I think even as simple as like keeping just the hard copy of your syllabus right? And writing like because you've already got the dates and the topics there. So you can just sort of jot in like, what, what went well, what didn't go well. Are there more formal ways that you've tried?

KM: Yes. And so, you know, one of the things I do is by those student surveys is then when I compile my responses, some of those, those, what I ask is for students to give tips for the next class periods, either for the next section or for the rest of the term. And so tips for students and for, or for themselves. And I take those in and I really weigh those pretty heavily. And so I use that as a main reflection component for myself.

CR: Yeah, Do you have any suggestions for understandin-- and we've already talked about student course evaluations. And sometimes it's, they say things that reflect biases and that sort of thing, but give any suggestions for interpreting, especially the open-ended answers that they give, responses that they give.

KM: I think we're, we all, this is a very subjective field of study and we've got a lot of it out there on what's effective and what's not so effective of these student evaluations of teaching, but especially in the open ended, I do think that some students will take that time to just complain about everything and you'll, you'll kind of see it. Some will actually give constructive criticism and that's what I'm going to pay close attention to. So when students are coming at me for one reason or another, when, I was fostering some kids, I had a couple of students that said I spent I spoke too long about my foster kids



in class, apparently even though the topic was development. And that was my experience of being a parent at that time. And so yeah, I think it's interesting and I think then you just take that, you just take that information of what is actually constructed, what is useful for me, and what seems a little bit more emotional. And they just had to get their words onto the paper to feel heard. And they felt heard. And it played that role for those students. But as far as what I need to take from it, I'm still going to talk about my foster experience.

CR: especially if it's relevant, right? So do you think that being an introvert is an asset or liability in the process of, of reflective practices.

KM: I think it can be both. I think remarkably though that is. It can be an asset and it is an asset for me. And so I spent a lot of time and energy on reflection because I want to reflect. I prefer to be myself; so for me to take time to reflect and to do that and to think about what I'm going to do for next class period and even next semester. Sometimes you have an activity that lands and then sometimes it doesn't. And so thinking about what changed. And sometimes it's me, sometimes it's my energy level because I had meetings all day long before a class. And now I'm like, Oh, I can't, can't schedule that many meetings and then expect Class 2 Go as well because of the way that my identity is for my student. Yeah. Or I need to move the activity to a different day if I have that many meetings. But I did eat that because we aren't, we are analytical. We love to think strategically and we love to solve problems. We love to see connections. I think that all is helpful in reflection. I think that sometimes it can be a liability in that if it takes too much energy, we're not going to want to engage in it.

CR: Yeah, I just read recently and I'll try to find it for the shout-outs to an article that was suggesting a really kind of a method of self reflective practices in teaching. At one of the main points I took out of that is it's a similar kind of thing where it's just like right after class, as soon as you can jot down your thoughts about what happened. But the author was making a point to be really intentional also about mentioning the contextual issues. So if it's, if it's a really, really nice day after like a long stretch of bad weather. Or if it they are just coming back from a break or if you just had a day full of really bad meetings or really good meetings, you know, like it's not, it's not always going to be enough just to say, well, this, this activity bombed and then go, well, I need to get rid of it or change it. Well, maybe not. Maybe you just need to have a better day around that, around the rest of it, you know. So if you don't write that down. You're definitely not going to remember that, you know, weeks or semesters later, that that might have been a contributing set of contributing factors.

KM: Yeah, I love that idea. I usually have been paying attention to what has gone on in my day without thinking about weather or who won a big 12 championship? just for instance, yeah. Just hypothetically. Just hypothetically, what might be driving student attention away from class?

CR: Well, what about speaking of liabilities? One of the things that Newhouse points out is that as geeks and nerds, we, we love our subjects so much. We, we're so passionate about our subjects. We express those, that passion in different ways. But I think what is kind of across the true across the board is that when we, when we are so passionate, we're so absorbed, we we're so expert in something that it leads to blind spots that really become troublesome in our, in our teaching practices. So there's the curse of knowledge, right? If you know something so well, not only do you, do You go faster than, than, than your students probably would need you to. But you also tend to bundle concepts together that students are really figuring out how they kind of work on their own. And they don't have that whole mental schema that you do. And so there's, it means as we said, that we forget what it's like to be a novice. And this is actually how much support beginners in our field need. But Newhouse also hints at how passion blind spots, meaning we have trouble for our understanding or appreciation that students just don't, don't yet care about are our field. Now, I know

that you've taught larger introductory courses. So how do you navigate this when students just don't care as much as you do?

KM: my goodness, that's the struggle. I think that, that, that might be the hardest part of teaching for me, is that not only is teaching and learning a social interaction as Jessamyn Newhouse says,, but also the fact that sometimes you have students that don't understand the value of the education that you're trying to give them. And we are so passionate about our subject. And in teaching the subject that we really just were completely at odds of, I'm on this shore and you're over there not caring, and it's like, yeah, what can I do to help you care? Because I really think this affects your life. And so this is where I think though that being a geek and a nerd, an introvert, and all of those things and intellectual in our field does play a huge role. I think that when we are so into, when we are So, we so embody the information that we're trying to get our students to understand, to learn, to grow into that. It's helpful for them to see how it affects their life. So if we are modeling, this is why it's so important for you to understand false memories because, You Watch Law and Order and, you know, I do research on eyewitness testimony and false memories are a thing. And, you know, there are ways that we can mitigate their ways that we can mitigate, false confessions and reduced conviction rates of people who are innocent, who were later freed. And that's a cost to taxpayers. And so I think that when you get me on that subject, you can't help but say, I really do understand now about false memories and I do want to learn about how this affects the legal setting and it's not just on TV, this affects the lives.

CR: Yes.

KM: So being a geek and be helpful in that way.

CR: Yeah. Yeah. Justice is at play here, right? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And are we all want our students to to, to care, but we need to show them where it's already, Our fields are already impacting their lives. And I think a big, a big struggle that we have, especially in our, in our American system, is that students have so often been socialized in a K-12 experience that separates like life and quality of life from education in kind of in that intellectual way like well, you learn stuff. And because society is telling us that we have to go to school and because we need it for for jobs or careers or whatever. But there's, there's very little inter- attempt to, to find cohesion between these things. And so we're, we get them into college and we think, Oh, well, this is the time when they're going to find a, find. The coherence between all these things and especially for freshmen were fighting kind of an uphill battle, trying to, trying to give them an educational experience in a way that's different than probably many of them. And I don't want to, There's great K through 12 people and they're doing fantastic work. But there is kind of this bigger machine, right? That we're, that we there are products out there that we inherit when we get them at 18 or 19.

KM: Yeah, you know, and when we think about who our students are and what they, what they think about learning, they don't, they usually come to us not thinking about desirable difficulties. Or yeah, this author says is productive struggle. So they kind of like this growth mindset. And so we can model that for them. And I tried to model that in class. And then we can help structure activities and assignments that will help engage in that process as well, even when it's hard for them, you know. And so then I I talk about my struggles as well. Like, school did not come easy for me. I was not the student that could go to class and understood exactly what my teacher said. I had to work for it, I had to study for it. But look at where I am now. Sometimes it takes that effort that, you know, I spent as much time in my o-chem class as I did in my neuroscience class. No. I got a great grade in that class because I wanted to understand it. But I did even better and paid way more effort in my neuroscience classes because I loved it. And so I think that, that sometimes students need to hear a little bit

more about what it took for us to get there. And then also if we can model some of this growth mindset as well.

CR: I have this theory that, that it just based on interactions with faculty and observing faculty teaching. That the faculty that, that, that work the hardest at being good teachers are ones who A: had K through 12 experience teaching. And then they kind of bring up much of that like that, that just tenacity to, to get students to learn with them into college or B: who were not the greatest students. So I'll do a study someday and see if I'm, my intuition is right on that. But I would love to just get a panel someday up of professors who are like, who, like, I'll admit I was a bad student. Because, you know, if if you're if you were, if you struggled in college, then you have a different way of seeing your students' struggles.

KM: My first semester GPA as a first-gen student was awful. And you would probably not think it looking at then my graduate transcript because if I had to learn how just and what worked for me because what worked for me didn't work for my roommate. But having that kind of experience also lets me tell students what works for you is not going to work for the person next to you. And then also just being able to say you only are privy to your own thoughts. You don't know what that other person is thinking. And what it took for them to get here as well. And so I think that that can be helpful too.

CR: Yeah. Well, to our Baylor colleagues. If you ever see Karina in the hallways are on campus and she cuts a conversation shore, or It's the other way. It's not being rude. She's just an introvert and she needs to recharge in her office. So send her an email; and same with me I'm right in that, in that same boat, Karina, thank you so much for joining the show. We really appreciate it.

KM: Had a great time. Thanks for the invite.

CR: Our thanks to Karina Malavanti for joining the show today. In our show notes, you'll see a link to Jessamyn Newhouse's book, *Geeky Pedagogy*, and links to several resources related to our conversation, including LD thinks, creating significant learning experiences, James Lang's Small Teaching, our ATL teaching guide for the first day of class. And David Purcell's article on teaching and reflective practice, daily writing. That's our show. Join us next time for professors talk pedagogy.