

Ep. 060: Instructional Design for Future Faculty

Podcast: <https://ProDev.illinoisstate.edu/podcast/2020/ep060.shtml>

Dr. Julie-Ann McFann returns to our podcast, this time to discuss a special summer-long professional development opportunity for Illinois State graduate students. Learn how Instructional Design for Future Faculty helps to prepare the next generation of university level instructors by exploring course design, teaching portfolios, and more...

Transcript

JIM: I'm Jim,

JULIE-ANN: and I'm Julie-Ann.

JIM: Let's Talk Teaching.

[Music playing]

JIM: Welcome to Let's Talk Teaching a podcast from the Center for Teaching Learning and Technology here at Illinois State University. I am Jim Gee, and making her triumphant return to our pokey little podcast, our good friend and colleague, Dr. Julie-Ann McFadden. Hi, Julie-Ann.

JULIE-ANN: Hi Jim. How are you doing?

JIM: I'm doing great. How are you doing?

JULIE-ANN: I'm hanging in there. Forgive me if I start coughing. I know you'll edit it out, but you know, I'm recovering from what I thought was seasonal allergies, but turned out to be the flu.

JIM: Right. Yeah, well, and tis the season in so many ways. So, for our listeners we apologize ahead of time; our audio quality is not quite to the immaculate levels that we normally have, but we are recording this in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. So, Julie-Ann you are at home. I am at home.

JULIE-ANN: Yes.

JIM: We are using Zoom which is a tool we've all learned to embrace, and we'll talk a lot, a little bit, about in this episode because it's actually something you've been using for a while now...

JULIE-ANN: Yes.

JIM: ...to address our topic today, which is a program that we've had for about five years called Instructional Design for Future Faculty. So, tell us a little bit about, what this is about, and then we can kind of get into the nitty-gritty about how it's evolved over the years.

JULIE-ANN: So, Instructional Design for Future Faculty is designed to help graduate students learn how to design a course from scratch, so to speak. So often, graduate students finish their programming and then they go out to get a job teaching in higher ed, and nobody has taught them how to teach. I have a background in helping graduate students learn how to become faculty members. And so, we thought, “let's create Instructional Design for Future Faculty”, and our programming graduate students and I teach this, facilitate it, every summer and I love it, and our students love it too.

JIM: Yeah, we will always get good feedback about this, and, like I said, we've been doing it in this format, we'll talk about the format a little bit, for about five years. I think a lot of people, taking a step back, I don't think a lot of people, even on campus, realize just how much we do, and how important it is to CTLT's mission to work with graduate students. We talk a lot about instructors, and of course, when we're talking about faculty or instructors, we're often times including those graduate students who have teaching responsibilities, but this is something that's geared, as you said, just for graduate students. So, how is it kind of designed? What is the introductory process like for them? And, I guess, I'd ask, what have you had to do over the years to tailor it uniquely for that population?

JULIE-ANN: So, before I came to ISU, I was the director of a preparing future faculty program and this summer workshop, this summer long workshop, is based upon a course I used to teach. What they learn from this is, what do they want their students to learn, how will they know that they've learned it, and how will they help their students learn that information? And, their final product of, at the end of the summer is... They not only have the framework for a course, either they, that they will teach at ISU, and a lot of people don't realize how many of our graduate students are the instructor of record for a course at ISU.

JIM: I think we have about 1,500 total instructors and of them at least 400 of them are...

JULIE-ANN: I think so.

JIM: ... graduate students for this semester, I'm just talking about.

JULIE-ANN: Yes, there's actually more graduate students who have instructor responsibilities and entities which, the first time I heard that it was like, Wow! Now I'm throwing out statistics, and hopefully it hasn't changed, but I just remember going, “Wow,” when I heard that. So, in addition to having a course that they can either use while they're here at ISU or when they go out into the big bold world, they also have a teaching portfolio that they can use to get a job, to get teaching awards, to use as a framework for their career, all sorts of things like that.

JIM: That's great that you mentioned teaching portfolios. I'm glad you did because that's something that we've talked about in past episodes. In fact, one of our first episodes of our little podcast here, and we'll link to that in the show notes for today's page. The importance of that, also being a tool for reflection; so, in addition, to showcasing yourself, it's also a great way to check where you're at and to really kind of remind yourself of your teaching prowess. So, the program has been, fortunately, this year, the program has been largely online...

JULIE-ANN: Yes.

JIM: ...for several years now. So, talk about the transition to that, and how that's worked out for grad students?

JULIE-ANN: One of the issues we faced, in the past, was that, one, we used to offer this as a one-week brutal boot camp, and that didn't really give anybody a chance to really think about what they wanted to do, and so, our two graduate students at the time, the three of us said, "hey let's offer this online, summer long," and so, in the past we met all-day face-to-face at the beginning of the summer, and all day face-to-face at the end of the summer, and then, in the in-between time, it was all conducted online by ReggieNet, through ReggieNet, and there's a new module that opens just about every week. A couple of catch-up weeks built in there, but it is equivalent to call a graduate level course. You learn a lot in there, but people have felt like it gives them the confidence. My goal is, that by the time they finish, that they have developed the confidence to be the kind of professor they want to be.

JIM: And even though, it is online, and it's done largely asynchronously with those modules and whatnot. They still have an opportunity to interact with each other.

JULIE-ANN: Oh, absolutely, in fact, the first day, I said we talked about the importance of interacting and we, you know, try to create that positive collaborative learning environment. It's valuable to think about what you're learning goals for a course are, and get feedback from somebody who has no idea what your content is; and so, if it makes sense to that other person then you know, you're golden.

JIM: Yeah, and I think, I think this is an example of just one of the ways that you're able to achieve that through the other programming that we also do at CTLT because you have discussion circles in the fall, and in the spring, for graduate students, as well. While we have a lot of graduate instructors; a lot of them are kind of programmatically aligned...

JULIE-ANN: Yeah.

JIM: ...within their divisions or silos or whatever, you know, they're part of our, they're the basic speech course or biology 101 or English 101. And so, just getting them in a situation where they can talk to each other and share ideas. Really exciting, and for those that participate, a little bit of financial compensation to help them out.

JULIE-ANN: It's not a lot. The value is the non-tangibles, so to speak, participants get two hundred dollars credited to their student accounts in the fall. It's not a lot, but like I said, it's the non-tangibles, and I love getting the emails from former participants who have said, "I got a job, and it's thanked, but thanks to participating in IDFF". It's like, "YAY! Thank you, for telling me".

JIM: That certainly is the real goal. So, it's, it is... We're recording this on April 2nd, 2020. The deadline for students to apply is a week from tomorrow. So, on April 10th.

JULIE-ANN: April 10th. Yeah.

JIM: And, we encourage people who are interested to go ahead, go in ahead of time, and look at the application form because there is a little summary that they have to give of what their goals are, and the course that they would design, or, by the way, this is not just for students who have a teaching assignment for the fall. Correct?

JULIE-ANN: That's correct. That is absolutely correct. It is even for students who want to become professors and they don't have a teaching assignment, but they want to develop a course that they can then say to a search committee, "hey, I've already got this course designed". And, actually, there was one participant, several years ago, who was admitted to a Ph.D. program because she was able to show that to the admission committee. "Hey, I can teach, I have this course already designed," and they were like, "that's excellent". So, there's two things to keep in mind; it's open to any graduate student at ISU, so, a master student, doctoral student, but they do have to be registered for the fall, because that's when you get paid.

JIM: Right, and the other thing is that they do need to have a faculty member... How do we how do we want to phrase that? They, it's not necessary sponsoring them...

JULIE-ANN: Endorse. It's endorse them.

JIM: Yeah.

JULIE-ANN: So, the application, you mentioned the application. It is actually kind of complex, and we do that for a reason we're asking for a lot of reflection and a lot of thinking about... Are you able to do it this summer, or are you taking two other classes? Because, like I said, this is equivalent to taking a class, and students in the past have struggled, and this is said with love and affection. If you can't even go through that application process, you're gonna struggle to finish this. So, it's to your benefit to actually, go through that application process. This is something we've learned over the years by asking these questions and having people think about them. They have a better idea of what they're getting into.

JIM: Okay. Well, and you had mentioned some of the graduate students who have worked on this in the past. We need to give a shout out to David and Dan who are gonna be working on it with you this semester or this summer. I should say...

JULIE-ANN: Well, so, it's David and Courtney this summer.

JIM: Okay.

JULIE-ANN: Who have both participated in the past, and one of the reasons they wanted to work with us, is that they wanted to co-facilitate it with me.

JIM: So, kind of, kind of pay it forward as well.

JULIE-ANN: That's right.

JIM: That's awesome.

JULIE-ANN: One thing, if we are talking about, we are recording this during the pandemic, where we're all being forced to work from home, I want to point out that by participating in this summer long workshop, you'll get the foundation, that if something happens, where you know, chaos happens. Since you have the basic framework, and you've thought about your course; you're better positioned to make changes, then um, if you haven't gone through this kind of work.

JIM: Yes, and we probably all wish, at this point, that we had done something like this at some point. There's an awful lot of us who are teaching online unexpectedly for the first...

JULIE-ANN: Yes. Yes.

JIM: So, very timely. Julie-Ann, thank you so much.

JULIE-ANN: You're quite welcome. Thank you for inviting me.

[Music playing]

JIM: And that's it for this episode of Let's Talk Teaching. Find out more about Instructional Design for Future Faculty; go to CTLT.IllinoisState.edu/future. For Dr. Julie-Ann McFann, for all of my colleagues at the Center for Teaching Learning and Technology, until we talk again, stay safe and happy teaching.