

## Ep. 090: From Good to Scholarly Teaching

<https://prodev.illinoisstate.edu/podcast/2024/ep090.shtml>

Are you a scholarly teacher? Chances are you may be... at least a little. In this episode, Dr. Jennifer Friberg joins Jim to help define the differences between good teaching and scholarly teaching. They explore the link between evidence-based practice, as found in health care and clinical disciplines, and evidence-based education. Not only can a scholarly approach to teaching provide solutions to specific your teaching challenges-- but they are solutions we, as teachers, can be confident in. Jen and Jim talk practical examples of how to get started and where to find additional resources.

### Transcript

JIM: Hi there. I'm Jim.

JEN: I'm Jen.

JIM: Let's Talk Teaching. Welcome to Let's Talk Teaching, a podcast from the Center for Integrated Professional Development here at Illinois State University. I'm Jim Gee. joining me today our director of scholarly teaching and that's important.

JEN: For today.

JIM: For today, our director of scholarly teaching Dr. Jennifer Friberg. Hi, Jen.

JEN: Hey, how are you?

JIM: I'm great, I'm great. And I'm excited, because we're going to do just a little quick episode. Now, whenever I've said that in the past, it's 30 minutes in, and I'm still editing and I'm not happy. But I really do genuinely think this is going to be a quick little episode. A year ago, we reorganized our unit, we changed our name to the Center for Integrated professional development, or as some people insist on calling it CIPD. I've stopped flinching when everyone does that, because we're not the teaching police. But what we are interested in is evidence informed practice, and ways of making the students learning better by working with faculty who deliver the teaching.

JEN: Absolutely.

JIM: And your title changed. One of your many titles, should I - should I say changed,

JEN: One of the - the one that's germane for this conversation.

JIM: Sure. Sure. Well, and one of the other ones is kind of is related to it as well. So in addition to being holding the cross endowed chair in the scholarship of teaching and learning, and you've been in that position, since what 2016?

JEN: 2016.

JIM: All right, hey, see, I read the bio. But in addition, you are interim director of the unit. And then when we reorganized and did this, you became our director of scholarly

teaching. So there we are scholarly teaching, we want to talk about that today. We've touched on it.

JEN: We have, we've used the term a lot.

JIM: Yeah, in other - in other things, but in other podcasts and in other venues. But I want to talk a little bit about how does one get started in scholarly teaching. Before we do that, and I know we've defined it in previous episodes, what is it?

JEN: Well, it's - it is taking an evidence informed approach to designing learning opportunities for your students. And I want to push pause there for a minute and come back to it. Okay, because I want to tell you how I got into scholarly teaching and my aha moment and understanding what it was great. So by discipline, I am a speech language pathologist and I practiced in a K 12 building for 10 years before coming to ISU in my career in higher ed. And the one of the core tenants in my profession is what we call evidence based practice. It's it goes across medical clinical fields, because the idea is that when you interact with a patient, and you're diagnosing and treating, you want to have the trifecta of goodness, that is evidence based practice, it's what is best for your client or patient. What does your intuition tell you? But the big part of what's left in that trifecta is what does the evidence tell you? Because if you're prescribing medicine or treatment, you want to do something that's effective, right, that we know works to help the patient get better, right. And so it was a really natural transition when I came to higher ed to start thinking about how I teach in the same manner, that it's not evidence based practice, but it is evidence based education, what is best for my students, what does my intuition tell me about the content and how to interact with my students? But what does the evidence say? And what is the best way to orient my teaching to best support my students learning, and that's the trifecta of goodness, that is evidence informed practice. And that's what scholarly teaching is, is this idea that you look towards published research, and you think about outcomes that other people have, have realized through their own scholarship of teaching and learning. And those outcomes can be put together to say, gosh, you know, if I, if I want to achieve X, Y might be the best way to do it. And so it's scholarly teaching is, is taking that that scholarly approach to thinking about how you design your course, how you interact with your students, how you set up assessments and interactions across the board.

JIM: And how you measure the results at the end of the day.

JEN: Correct.

JIM: Yeah. So which gets into your other - one of your other titles.

JEN: That's right.

JIM: So what we wanted to focus on very briefly today is - it's the middle of the summer. Actually, we're getting we're past the middle of the summer, it feels like a semester starts in a few weeks. Whether you're new to campus or you're new to teaching or you've been doing it for ages and ages and ages. What advice do you have in terms of just getting a little bit of the scholarly bent as we prepare our courses for delivery or redelivery or whatever it is -

JEN: Absolutely.

JIM: - In a couple of weeks.

JEN: Yeah. You know, Kathleen McKinney, who was the first cross chair, right? I, when she retired, I became the second one. But she talked about this continuum from good teaching to scholarly teaching to being a scholar of teaching and learning. And so, you know, good teachers are people who are well intentioned, they design their classes, they interact with their students with the best of intentions. Not necessarily, have they gone to the scholarship that's out there to say, is this the best way to do it? You know, I've got three choices that the, you know, scholarship says could work, which one should I choose? And, you know, good teaching is instinctual, right? Scholarly teaching is taking good teaching a step farther, looking at the research making an informed choice about how to put an activity and assessment project together for your students, scholars of teaching and learning, do the research that informs scholarly teaching. At no point are any of us all of - just one of those things. Right? Because -

JIM: That makes sense. Yeah, right.

JEN: Sometimes we are acting out of instinct, sometimes we are using an evidence informed approach. And sometimes we want to study what we're doing to add to the literature and support our discipline, or the broader field of higher education. And so your point about what's a small thing that you can do to get started to move from good teaching to scholarly teaching, there are tons of resources out in the world, you know, that can help give ideas. You know, if you think about one thing, as an instructor, that has been a roadblock for you in the past, one thing that I get a lot is my students don't like to participate in class. Okay. Almost everybody I know who teaches has said that at one point or another. If we think about that, how can you use a scholarly approach to solving that? That question, how can I get my students to be more engaged? One of my very favorite scholarly resources, and this has everything to do with it being from K. Patricia Cross, who endowed the chair that I hold, but also because it's really good stuff. The K. Patricia Cross Academy has wonderful content, videos, things that can be used right away, to integrate evidence informed techniques, into course, discussion course assessment. But really, they all - they're all focused on student engagement. And there's all kinds of techniques and things that easily could be integrated into a course discussion on any given day. So it would be one way to kind of put your toe in the scholarly teaching, like, you know, by accessing some of that and using it.

JIM: Right. I'm glad you said that for a couple of reasons. First of all, we don't - we didn't talk about this before we started recording, we do need to acknowledge that K. Patricia Cross passed away recently.

JEN: She did, yes.

JIM: Which was kind of a big thing. She had endowed the chair, which you hold in honor of her father, who was a longtime professor here at Illinois State University. Yes, but also the cross Academy, which I believe we link to on our website, [Prodev.illinoisstate.edu](http://Prodev.illinoisstate.edu). We have a whole section on scholarly teaching. But also, you can just do a Google

search for cross Academy, and I'm sure it will be the first thing that comes up. There are other scholars and folks who are associated with it. I know Dr. Elizabeth Barkley is one of them, who was - came and spoke at one of our symposiums and has a couple of great books that we use in our offices, when we do consultations, student engagement techniques is one of them. And all that.

JEN: Classroom assessment techniques.

JIM: Classroom assessment techniques. So I'm glad you mentioned that because I felt you know, it's been a while since we've actually recorded a podcast, and that had happened in the intervening time. The other thing, though, is, I feel like you just kind of gave me permission to consider myself doing scholarly teaching, because I'm using these, what I would call tips or tricks, these techniques, because they have gone through the rigor of testing and what not. So in other words, in order to be a scholarly teacher of at least the first order, or at least the initial order, I don't have to go do all of the research myself.

JEN: No, you look for the resources that have been generated by evidence, you know, that it's not just, oh, do this shiny, sparkly thing. Yeah. And there's nothing that would back that up to say that's a good practice. Right? So yeah. And you know, sometimes I think people get intimidated by the scholarly teacher and yeah, you don't have to be a scholar, you have to be a teacher.

JIM: Yes, I would hope so.

JEN: But but, you know, I say this all the time in podcasts. I feel like I'm repeating myself as we talk, but that's why we're here. You know, you can go out as an instructor and find resources on your own, but our website, you know, we try and share on social media, we, we work with faculty and course instructors all the time to say, hey!

JIM: And it's why we do this podcast.

JEN: Here's this thing, right. And so, you know, there's - there's plenty of times where I'll get an email from a faculty member who will say, I'm really struggling with this in my class, what kind of resources do you have? And I'll be like, okay, here, boom, boom, boom. And, you know, I always cite where it comes from, because that's important, right? That's part of scholarship to do that. And anyway, yeah, I just I feel like, yes, you're a scholarly teacher, Jim, because you're doing some of these things.

JIM: And if you are an instructor on campus, and you have a question, and you come to us and we don't have the answer right away. We'll research it for you. We will, we will find someone or try to connect you with someone who may be able to help you out.

JEN: One of the things that we haven't shared broadly outside of the center, because it's really something that we've primarily used for us as staff is we have a robust list of - of resources and research articles and other resources that we have archived in Zotero. Yeah, I mean, we have probably 10,000 that we have keyword, you know, searchable capabilities. And so I'll use Diane Zosky as an example. She was really curious, about course attendance, issues with course attendance. And so we were able to put a

bibliography together for her. Annotate it, and have that back out to her, you know, 48 hours after she asked the question, and that really helped her think about how she wanted to help the university think about. You know, the impact, of course attendance or non attendance.

JIM: And it comes full circle to because that - that work from that committee that I know Diane had shared is on our website now. It's one of the resources we have to, you know, which was born out of the pandemic and everything. It was it was particular to that, but - and I also would dare say, so one of the - one of the questions I want to try to put my toe into to try to solve scholarly teaching wise, is student attendance. Because I'm, you know, as we've talked before, in some recent episodes, I'm teaching that 8am, Monday, Wednesday, Friday class again. And, you know, I want to find some things that will get them excited to come to class, and excited and not afraid to communicate when they can.

JEN: Absolutely. And, you know, there's all kinds of things I think that you could search for, right? If you if you went to Google Scholar, which we never want to admit, we go to first, but sometimes we do, right? To find literature. If we went to Google Scholar and put in terms like intrinsic motivation, student engagement, you know, there are keywords that you could put in and a reading list would be generated for you, that might help you dip that toe in on that issue, right? Because you have to figure out first, okay, why aren't my students attending? And why aren't they excited? And you know, some of that literature can maybe help you answer those questions. But yeah, yeah, it's, there's so much out there and, and I find it wonderfully fantastic in all kinds of ways that we have a literature base that supports what we do as instructors, because, you know, that whole adage of those who can't teach. Well no, that's not true at all. We're actually pretty scholarly in what we do, and have the potential to be even more so.

JIM: Yeah, yeah, we do. We do and can.

JEN: That's right.

JIM: So one final question, and it's a bit of a complicated one for my usual final questions, So let me know if this is kind of too far out there. I'm interested, though, in kind of that transition point of where we start to put things in practice, we use them in our course. But there's always the question, did it work? And I'm, you know, they seemed happy, you know, you know, that sort of thing, not necessarily the best criteria, right. So I appreciate that noise. And a lot of the stuff from Elizabeth Barkley's book, or the Cross Academy and stuff like that, usually has an indication to it. After you do this, you should see this happen, which is helpful. But what do I do if there's one or two things that I'm going to try to tweak this semester coming up? Techniques I'm going to try to apply to my course. How do I know if it worked or not? Or what can I do now, to ensure that at the end of the semester, and this goes to another episode, we have about data informed reflection, that I have the data to reflect upon to make some decisions? Do I want to do it again? Did that scratch that itch, or what not?

JEN: Well, and I think there's, there's different litmus tests that could be applied, depending on what you want your outcome to be. So if you - if you do this Jim, and you want to talk about student engagement in your class in the fall, or you want to focus on that in the fall, and you take one of the techniques from the K. Patricia Cross Academy website, and I'm just gonna say think, pair, share, right? The idea that you give students a minute to think about something, they turn and talk about it with a partner, and then everybody talks about it together. The idea behind that is the preparatory set, right? Having the time and space to think and an edit before you share. We know that that works. And so we call it think, pair, share. Well, because K. Patricia Cross does. We didn't come up with that. But okay, so you put that out there and you use that as a technique through, you know, your semester, you could just see what you see, you know, your own reflection as a teacher, that's data, right? Are your students doing what you want them to do? Are more of the students talking? Are the - are the - are the discussions getting deeper? Are you having moments with your students that you didn't have with the former technique? Right? So you know, you have that internal sort of reflective litmus test to say, Yeah, I like this better. I want to keep doing this. You also can ask your students what they think, you know. Another technique that's in the... Goodness, What's - not classroom assessment techniques, the other one? Student...

JIM: Student engagement techniques.

JEN: Yes, student engagement techniques. The Minute Paper is this idea that if you want to know something from your students, you can have them ask them a question, and they have to jot down an answer, give them a minute to do it. And they turn those in no names, no identifying information, but you get formative feedback, right from your students. And you can ask them things like, hey, we tried a thing today, did it help you answer the questions better and be more engaged in the discussion? And I want I want at least two sentences in response, right? And so you know, they write it down. And you can read that. And that's data from your students. You also, if you wanted to take a step past being a scholarly teacher and dip your toes in the SoTL pool, then you could set up with my help, or others in the center, you could set up a study where, you know, you would collect data throughout the semester and systematically study that and then share the outcomes of that as well. So you've got you know, different levels of -

JIM: But you don't have to do that.

JEN: No, no.

JIM: That's, and that may be something you want to progress towards, as well. No, that's those are great ideas. The one thing I would add on that, from my own experiences, are that if you're going to do any of these things, the minute paper or the think, pair, share, or - or you know, anything like that, try to do it with a fair degree of frequency through the course of the semester, make that part of the expectations that you set out early on, for example, in some of my classes, it's not a true minute paper, but I will I will give them I will just have blank note cards, and some golf pencils up there. And I will say, ask me anything, and I'll just go over, you know, and I get - I get everything

from - and it's anonymous, it's just, it's just ways, you know, sometimes they have questions about the course and they don't want to look stupid. Sometimes they just want to be silly, you know, I get asked: What's your favorite food? What's your blood type? The blood type one was kind of weird. Still you get the idea. But I find that is that even just as an icebreaker, or whatever you want to call it, as a way to communicate with them, it works better when we when the expectation is that we're going to do it fairly often.

JEN: Absolutely. And you know, one thing we haven't talked about here with - with the scholarly teaching idea, or the techniques I specifically mentioned, or anything like that, I would never do those things without telling my students why we were doing them.

JIM: Oh, that's such a good point.

JEN: That mediation piece.

JIM: That's such a good point.

JEN: You know, I have a college age - two college age kids, you know, and - and they'll complain about something that they perceive as, I'm jumping through a hoop. And I will say to them, okay, let's unpack that a little bit. Why do you think you did that? Let me explain some of the stuff that goes behind that. And a perfect example, my daughter was registering yesterday for her fall semester of her freshman year, and she was texting me while she was looking through her options. And she said, how many days a week should I do math? Should I pick the two day option? Or the five day option? And I said absolutely the five day option because I knew it was an advanced math class. And she said, why? Five days, Mom five days. I said, Oh, it's distributed practice. And I started talking to her about the fact that the more often you engage with this, and she's like, Oh, my gosh, that's why they offer it five times. And I said, Well, it's probably scheduling too. But if you think about what's really smart, once, once I took the minute to mediate that with her, she's like, Oh, I totally get it. And with your students, you can do the same thing. You know, if I'm doing the minute paper, I'm gonna say, I'm asking for your feedback, because it matters to me, I'm gonna change how I behave based on what you tell me. If you're honest with me, and you don't - you know, and you, you know, you help me, you're partners with me in this. And with the think, pair, share, I want to give you time to do this right, and being able to come up with an idea, change it, restate it, you're going to learn it better. And if I can just say that to them, they go, Okay, you kind of get a little nod and you know, okay, I'm gonna give this a shot. It's not just a thing.

JIM: It's not just a thing. I think, wow, you know, the idea of explaining why we do stuff, I think is even valuable for the stuff that we - that they have been doing all through their schooling. You know, why are you asking these questions on - you know, why are you giving me a quiz like this? And stuff like that, you know, hey, we're just doing this now, So I can find out, you know. I do occasionally in class talk about the difference between formative and summative assessment, and these are communication students. So they're, they're not, they're not - we don't go too deeply in depth. But, but you know,

why am I why am I asking you these questions now? Well, so we, you know, here's what you should get out of it. You should you should be able to identify what we don't know yet.

JEN: Right. Right. Well, that's the tenant, the central tenant of a midterm chat, which we talked about in different podcasts, but telling the students if you give your feedback -

JIM: Several different podcasts!

JEN: Right. If you give your feedback now we have a chance to fix it while you're still our student. If you wait till the end...

JIM: You're not just out for revenge.

JEN: Right. And then it's like, oh, okay, they get that too. You know, all you gotta do is mediate.

JIM: Yeah, there you go. Jen, that's great. Thank you so much.

JEN: Thank you.

JIM: And that's all the time we have for this episode of Let's Talk Teaching. Go to our website ProDev, that's PRODEV, dot illinoisstate.edu. Find out more about our show and of course find out all about the scholarly teaching support that we give here at the Center for Integrated Professional Development for Dr. Jennifer Friberg, for all my colleagues here at the center, until we talk again. Happy teaching!