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VICKI DAVIS:

Happy Thought Leader Thursday. Today is Digital Learning Day <http://www.digitallearningday.org/> , February 23rd. I encourage you to go to the official website, [digitallearningday.org](http://www.digitallearningday.org). Today for Thought Leader Thursday we're going to be talking about the research and best practices for digital learning.

LAURA PASQUINI:

"27,000 members on a Facebook group of [student affair] professionals that help support higher Ed maybe aren't functioning the same way they did back in 2006 when they started."

VICKI

DAVIS:

The Ten-minute Teacher podcast with Vicki Davis. Every week day you'll learn powerful practical ways to be a more remarkable teacher today.

VICKI: It's Thought Leader Thursday and today we're thinking about professional development with researcher, Laura Pasquini [@laurapasquini](https://twitter.com/laurapasquini). So how is professional development changing? And when we talk about PD, we're really talking about good PD, right? We're not talking about what are people doing, we're actually talking about what works?

LAURA: Absolutely. I'm very much interested in learning more about how others are connecting what they do in practice and what they learn from their fields and their associations and one another in the real world applied experiences. So I think I'm looking at more of those network communities that practice this these days and how whether you're K12 or higher ED or in the workforce learning development, how you're doing it and how you're doing it well to make meaning for what you do in work. (Research: <https://techknowtools.wordpress.com/networked-community/>)

VICKI: Okay. So what are effective professional development activities looking like? And this doesn't have to be just in education, it could be across all PD.

LAURA: Absolutely, yes. So lots of my colleagues, whether they're journalists or they're in human resource management or they're doing something with construction, they have little networks and nodes they often go to. I call them the watercooler style talks and some of them might be informal group messaging and some of them are using GroupMe <https://groupme.com/en-US/> and Whatsapp <https://www.whatsapp.com/> and having conversations that way because they're on the go or they might be participating in a Twitter chat (see <http://www.coolcatteacher.com/videos/participate-twitter-chat-txeduchat/>) or they could be hiring a discussion board post like using Snapchat <https://www.snapchat.com/> or even posting thoughts and streams and resources of different things.

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So it's becoming more social and it has been. But now we're working out loud and we're sharing out loud and these archives, just like your podcast are there for people to learn from and learn with.

VICKI: So you're saying watercoolers aren't really the same for every organization because, you know, there are some educators who are crazy about Voxer <http://voxer.com/> and there's just all these different ways and sometimes teachers are like, "Well, which one do I go to?" So there's no one size fits all?

LAURA: That's right. It's not the tool to go to, it's the 'what's happening where?' So where your colleagues? So I think about strategy or pedagogy first. And that should be applied not only in a classroom environment but also to your learning. So what do you want to know more about and where's the chitchat and where's that watercooler located? So I'd be more curious as to what's your purpose and what do you want to learn first and then maybe see what's out there and start exploring and playing in the sandbox and social technologies.

I think you'll find your communities based on your interest and your passions and your goals for learning first.

VICKI: Cool. So, our first principle is, really, do you have a watercooler and where is that? Okay, what's next?

LAURA: So once you figure out where your watercooler is, I think, getting to know those in the community, what they're doing, what their projects are, if they have research, if they have lesson plans, if they have resources that they share. So one community I can think of that's specific – I worked with – and helped to kind of [found and get-together] is a group of academic advisors.

<https://acadvchat.wordpress.com/about/> & Follow: #acadv or @AcAdvChat on Twitter)

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So those in higher education and academic counselling or career counselling who are really interested in having a conversation more than that once a year meeting or annual conference they go to. So they formed a hashtag where they could center some of their conversations around. And they have a regular weekly chat like many of you have participated, probably, in a Twitter chat for your subject or a learning area and it connects and the threaded conversations actually have an archive. <https://acadvchat.wordpress.com/acadv-chat-archive/>

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So I know many advisors that don't really tweet, but go and read the archives that they're sharing and there's a wealth of knowledge, resources, sharing and obviously, humor within that community that keeps the motivated and keeps them energize for the work they do in their day-to-day life on a college or university campus.

VICKI: So when you say archives, are you talking about archives on Twitter, just looking back at the old hashtag? Are this organization or this group actually archiving at some place?

LAURA: They're actually archiving it in some place. So they have on the website – and I'll link and share that with your group as well. <https://acadvchat.wordpress.com/acadv-chat-archive/> They have archives they've started to and sometimes there's a gap because there's a technical need or know-how. So that group has tried to curate their knowledge by having the weekly chat with a post and a name of the chat in the topic and a link to the questions and responses that the community has shared. I think more, it is savvy and knowledgeable about how to do that and have good curated talks, normally at the moment, but how do you use them later and share that knowledge later when you want to learn or you want to express other people that aren't in the community yet and let them know why would they want to come to that watercooler.

VICKI: Awesome. So, really, curating and archiving those watercooler conversations is kind of a way for that professional development to mature from just a chat to really broaden to even people who – I guess we call them lurkers, but some people say they're worker-bees, they actually share offline, they're just not jumping in the chat.

LAURA: Absolutely. I think our virtual online spaces and places – we're becoming more fluid. So you don't have to be online all the time to have some of your learning that has been past stay with you. You can go back in and take a look at it or you might just leave a digital trace of something you've done, whether it's been a presentation on SlideShare <https://www.slideshare.net/> or a blog post reflection on a meeting. I don't know what you might have. Like, this podcast even is one of the many archives that I think many of you are learning from right now at this moment.

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VICKI: Okay. So first, do you we have a watercooler? Second, is your watercooler actually curating and archiving and being welcoming to others. Where do we go from there?

LAURA: Well, I think it's really important for these communities and yourself if you've found one or you want to establish one that you are bringing others in to sustain and steward this knowledge and this learning that's being shared online because I think it's one thing to have a chat and a few ideas. But what are we doing with that knowledge? Some great different initiatives are going on and this is what I'm researching now is we're going to take this knowledge to the professional associations, their affiliated memberships, maybe it's a regulating body within their fields. So I think about my pharmacist or occupational therapist but you see some of their chats or their conversations and what that means broadens practice and into a graduate program that they're studying in.

So I think that we need to see more of this and understanding, is there a knowledge gap in your discipline or your own functional area of learning? And maybe this offshoot or informal learning community can be connected. So an example, this advisory group is not connected to the Global Community for Academic Advising called NACADA <https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/> and they're supported and sustained by the professional org[anization] that saw value in the knowledge that was coming out of that community.

VICKI: So you want to constantly infuse and bring others in. I do have a question for you, though. Sometimes I've noticed that people who, I guess, found or start a chat don't want to encourage people to come in and become kind of protective. Do you see that? Are there groups that welcome beginners and groups that kind are like, "We were the originals?"

LAURA: Yeah, I get that sense from some communities and that's one that's still exploring in my network community research project. So I'm studying what digital and network music practices are doing. Some of them are huge. So an example of 27,000 members on a Facebook group of [student affairs] professionals that help and support higher Ed maybe aren't functioning like they did back in 2006 when they started. So I'm looking at what does that mean and what does the membership of that community mean? And those that have been around for a few years, like the [Academic Advising Chat], they've been on since 2010. What does it mean as new members have come and gone and how do you sustain ends?

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I guess market, promote and encourage others to participate and play in the sandbox and not feel like it's an insider club.

VICKI: Yeah. So we're really getting past this "oh, this new hashtag thing," we're going to live with this in our lives. How do we keep it going?

LAURA: Yeah. And I think great ways to do that are having regular schedules. So I've seen some communities put out invites to calendars to join the chat, friendly reminders and memos from association emails to even individual blogs and talking about what they talked about in the chat and not just having it as a one-off conversation or a one-aside blog post, but digging into it into a presentation, sharing it on a campus or talking about other peers in break rooms at school, what you've learned from and the resource you got from that specific watercooler you were visiting.

VICKI: So Laura, as we finish up, could you just give us a 30 second elevator pitch for why social media belongs as part of our professional development?

LAURA: I think social media is that, it's social. And to be in a profession and to be part of a network, I think it's really important and vital for our practices to advance. And you don't do that without learning from one another. And I think some of the best ideas I've gotten have been from those who are around me. So I thank my communities and my networks for all the learning they give.

VICKI: We have so much to think about for digital learning day. So I'm going to issue a digital learning day challenge. Let's all get out there and share two or three resources in a hashtag or community of our choice. Let's bless our watercoolers today to celebrate digital learning day.

Thank you for listening to the Ten-minute Teacher Podcast. You can download the show notes and see the archive at coolcatteacher.com/podcast. Never stop learning.

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