

## Discussions on Writing and Rhetoric Podcast

### Episode 16: Dr. Shane Wood - Director of First-Year Composition and Host of *Pedagogue*

Transcript

[Intro Music]

(Voice-over by Meeghan Faulconer)

Greetings and welcome to DWR, Discussions on Writing and Rhetoric, a space for informal conversations around research and practice in the field at the university level. A place inclusive for curious novices, blossoming scholars and seasoned academics to consider and share their inquiries, experiences and passions surrounding writing and rhetoric. We are your hosts, professors Meeghan Faulconer and Nikolas Gardiakos with the University of Central Florida. Thank you for joining us. Now let's get this conversation started.

[End intro music]

**Meeghan Faulconer:** Today, we're joined by our guest, Shane Wood, our current WPA, or Writing Program Administrator here at UCF. He is the host of *Pedagogue*, a podcast about teachers talking, writing, featuring established and emerging scholars in rhetoric and composition. Dr. Wood's podcast, *Pedagogue*, won the 2021 Kairos John Lovas Award, along with the *Computers and Composition* Outstanding Digital Production Award in 2019. Dr. Wood is also the author of *Teachers Talking, Writing Perspectives on Place, Pedagogies and Programs*, published in 2023. He has authored and coauthored more than a dozen articles and book chapters. Thank you so much for joining us here today.

**Shane Wood:** Thank you for having me. I'm excited to be here.

**Meeghan Faulconer:** It is rare that we have, actually this might be the first time, you might be our first, another professor who has a podcast. What led you to reach into that medium in our field?

**Shane Wood:** Yeah, that's a great question. Really, I didn't really know anything about podcasting whenever I started. Here's a story. So, I was on my way to a wedding, my wife's brother was getting married in Texas, and we were driving, and we were listening to a podcast. I think it was *This American Life*, and I really like that podcast.

**Meeghan Faulconer:** Classic.

**Shane Wood:** And while we were driving, I kind of just looked over at Mel, my wife, and said, Do you think I can like, do a podcast where I just talk with teachers about their teaching? And I tend to be like overly ambitious in setting a goal. And so I said that knowing I didn't know anything about podcasting or editing or audio engineering or anything like that. And she said, you know, well you like talking to people and, you know, you're pretty relational. So, she was like, sure, I bet you could. So really, I took that conversation, that idea, and that's what started *Pedagogue*. It was 2019, and I remember sending out a tweet, when it was still Twitter, and just kind of posed this question of like,

would anyone be interested in a podcast that's connected to our field? Where I just talk with different teachers, with the main goal being across institutional contexts and across different positions. And the reason why I say for that to be the main goal is because I have felt that at times the field promotes and amplifies voices that often come from privileged positions like R1 universities that have the time and the energy to research and to publish in the field. So, these are the voices that we hear the most in the field, because of how our publishing, journal system and structure is set up. So I wanted then to kind of resist that model of amplification of voices that we kind of hear over and over, right? I love that being a medium of publication, but I think podcasting provided an opportunity for different voices to be heard in different institutional contexts and from different positions of teachers, right? From graduate students to non-tenure track adjuncts to tenure track faculty. So, I felt like that medium provided an opportunity to create a fuller picture and understanding of what we do in the writing classroom. So that's, I think, one of the genre affordances of podcasting, and that's kind of the origin story of *Pedagogue*.

**Meeghan Faulconer:** That's fantastic, and I love that similarly too, it's typically a privileged group of voices that are amplified the most. I think there's a very specific delivery method typically, or historically, in terms of those messages, and it's a static delivery. It's not necessarily an informal conversation, but, you know, if it's not a presentation at a conference, it's a written paper or, you know, if you're lucky enough to record a lecture or something of that nature, it's not not interactive, it's not, you know, it's...I'm looking for the opposite of like pre-planned, but it's spontaneous. I love that about podcasting, and my personal favorites are the ones that are the most conversational. You know, we strive to keep it from sounding like I had to hit these points, these are your questions, prepare your answers in advance, and allow it to be a little more organic of an experience. And I think that that component as a whole has been missing from academic conversations for a very long time.

**Shane Wood:** Yeah, and if you don't mind, I'll add to that too. I mean, podcasting, like you said, that conversational relational nature of we're sitting in a room, we're just engaging in discussion, right? There's not this time of thinking and brainstorming and writing and rewriting and revising and sending off and then getting feedback and revising. Like, to me, this captures everyday communication. We're in the hallways of our offices where a part of our everyday lives, wherever we're interacting, and this is what happens. Conversation happens. And like you said, it's spontaneous. And I think podcasting captures, at least for me, what I cannot do through the written text, and some people can do really well. And I'll tell you what that is. Through the written text, a lot of people can kind of create characters and voices, right? They see dialogue on the page and they see character kind of development and they like, produce a voice. I haven't ever really been able to do that, like as a reader or a scholar. I just see words and I read words. I know for some people, like they can't comprehend that's how I engage in and text, but it really is, right? But like visual modes or even oral orality, like it actually captures voices. It captures dialects and regional differences. It captures to me the whole person where the page just doesn't do that. Again, that's like my personal bias, but podcasting allows you to capture the whole person and who they are. So, I think it's really neat then to listen to a writer or a teacher or a scholar and hear their voice because it's way more nuanced than I think what traditional alphabetic text on a page does for, at least me, I can't speak for everyone, but I can't capture the voices of our field just through a scholarly article. I can if I'm sitting down and talking to an individual in our field, a teacher scholar, and it creates this different type of, as you say, interactivity and engagement that is more relational than my understanding of them on the page.

**Nikolas Gardiakos:** So, when did you start to kind of see what was happening when you were, you know, you started the podcast, you started having these conversations. How did all of that kind of start to inform your work, you know? You know, it started as an idea to sort of start these conversations across institutions and teachers and, you know, researchers and scholars and things like that. When did you start to see, Oh, I see something happening here. And I and I see it kind of affecting, you know, your own work and how you approach what it is that you that you want to do.

**Shane Wood:** Yeah, I shared this this story in a couple of spaces. I feel like I'm jumping into the role of storytelling, but I feel like for me, the things that informed my work as a teacher were always conversations, like in grad school with my fellow peers. They were with my colleagues. We all shared an office, right? And they were just discussions about teaching and what was working and what wasn't working. And then what were you doing? And like this type of problem solving that happens again through conversation and not through text. So I've shared that I learned more through those conversations about teaching and the teaching of writing than I did in my graduate seminar classes. And it's not to say that those graduate seminar classes weren't important. I think they were. Theoretically, they gave me great foundational understandings of what the teaching of writing is. But in terms of the praxis of teaching and writing, in terms of like the exchanging of ideas and materials, that happened in conversations with my graduate student colleagues and my peers. So I think for me that what podcasting, what *Pedagogue* allows me to do in terms of like that trajectory of career, it allows me to continue to have conversations that I had in grad school that at times I would say are absent and in the field because we graduate and then, okay, now we're teaching the three-three or four-four, and now we're just focusing on our teaching. And yeah, there might be some professional development spaces in a department that allows us to have conversations, but for me, this kind of like amplified that even more by saying like, hey, I can reach out to other teachers in different institutional contexts and learn about their teaching and learn about what they're doing? So I always tell people that I feel like I learn the most through the process, right? Like people engage in the podcast and hear the episode, but really they also only hear like 25 minutes, right? They don't hear any of the pre-recording conversation that happens. They don't hear the whole conversation because I kind of edit it to fit that that format of podcasting. So, I actually feel like the biggest student, like the biggest student in that interaction. And I also feel like I learned the most than even listeners do because I've had all these interactions asking questions that don't get like, heard, right? So I feel like I'm constantly in this role of student and teacher and kind of thinking through, okay, this teacher is in this institutional context. Like, I just did a series on tribal colleges and universities, and I've taught at a tribal college and university, but it was really nice to hear what those practices look like in the writing classroom and then think through how might that inform what I do at the University of Central Florida? Like, how does that change and shape the way that I see teaching and my understanding of teaching because we all have different pedagogies and practices. So I feel like I'm always in this position of learning and listening. I think that's the key thing is like I'm just always listening to what other people are doing and I would love to just be like a student forever in the classroom, and the podcast allows me to do that.

**Meeghan Faulconer:** I love that and I appreciate the breath of the fact that you're speaking across institutions, and I think that's been one of the fantastic things and one of the like guiding forces for us to create our podcast was we got in our little tunnel vision moments where, you know, maybe we have a couple of colleagues, we talk to about the work we're doing or what we're seeing, but even

departmentally, you know, you're not often in a room where you can talk to everybody and gauge what's happening in their classrooms or what are they finding that is working or not working. And just the fact that even the research that we're all doing is often, you know, only a specific few are aware of. So I love this idea that we can have these conversations and also see what is happening across different institutions in terms of our students. Are these phenomenon that are specific to us here at UCF? Are these things that are happening nationally? Are we seeing them only in certain demographics? So I love that ability to kind of like open up the floodgates. You know, as academics, we're not necessarily the most, I would say we're kind of like these maladjusted people, but, you know, we have like an area of expertise that we like and we kind of just like, dig in. So we're not necessarily the people that are out like shouting from the mountaintop what it is that we're doing. And I like the chance that we can share that in an audience that is receptive and open and wants to know more and learn from the experiences that we're having in the classroom, but yeah.

**Shane Wood:** I think too, it also makes public our work as teachers, which I think is really, really important. And I think that's where like we might think through what is our responsibility, in terms of our social responsibility, like what's our social and civic participation in and responsibility outside the classroom? So, I think this genre and format allows for our teaching and expertise and knowledge to extend well beyond the university. I think that's a huge benefit of, you know, uploading an MP3 to a RSS feed and it's circulating on Spotify or Apple or Google wherever you listen to your podcast. But that information then reaches, it could, it has the potential to reach a different audience. And I think through or I think about how kind of activist type work is always kind of thinking through in like academia and not just the academic space, but what's our relationship within our communities and beyond our communities, and how if we're not, if teachers are not the ones talking about our practices and talking about our students, who is talking about our students and practices? Well, if I'm being honest, it's people not in the classroom, right? It's politicians, it's opinion pieces and newspapers like letters to the editors, and they're so separated and so disconnected from students in the classrooms. So this is why I think this type of work is important, because it moves beyond institutional facing to public facing, and I think we need to do more of that work. We really need to do more of that work. And if we don't, I think we'll see how others are placing their views and perspectives of the classroom and what we should be doing or what students should be doing. So I think now maybe more than ever, it's important for our voices to be heard and to be louder in public spaces so that there is this idea and understanding of what happens in the writing classroom, but like what happens at the university and what how our students are feeling and experiencing the content and the practices that that we're engaged in and how meaningful it is not just to this space, but to the public, to again, our local communities, because that's where our lives are lived. Our lives are lived outside the walls of academia.

Meeghan Faulconer: Yeah, I think I was just saying this to a colleague the other day that as professors in the humanities, we've become the butt of a lot of social jokes.

00;16;34;06 - 00;16;51;19

Unknown

Like we've come a punch line because I think that there isn't a lot of transparent see as to what it is that we're bringing the value and the the experience of what we're doing to our students. And I love that we're like peeling back the veil a little bit and saying, No, yeah, this is not something to make fun of.

00;16;51;19 - 00;17;15;03

Unknown

Like, sure, we can all poke fun at ourselves, but if you have an actual understanding of what is it that we're doing, we're less likely to be the source of criticism. And I'll try to think of the word like renovation. You know, if we're looking at overhauling the university system and no longer valuing things like humanities courses, that's that's a dangerous position to be in.

00;17;15;05 - 00;17;42;20

Unknown

But shifting gears a little bit, I was wondering if you would tell us a little bit about your previous experience and how that has informed your approach to coming into UCF. Yeah, so as a kind of a writing program and, and yeah, your approach towards composition. Yeah. Yeah. So the through line in my approach, I would say elsewhere in here is always like the students, right?

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Unknown

That's the, that's the foundation of everything I think that we do as teachers that, that we should do as teachers. So my commitment to students and supporting and helping students is the same, right? The ways in which the first year writing classroom and program operates is very different based on their experiences. Right? So I came from a an English department, and this is a standalone department of writing and rhetoric.

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Unknown

Mm hmm. I came from a university where the first year writing classes were mainly taught by graduate students here at UCF. It's mainly taught by full time faculty. So just, I would say, really big differences in the structure as a WPA of what that looks like from an independent writing program to connected to an English department from who's teaching the classes.

00;18;33;13 - 00;19;02;10

Unknown

So from a curriculum standpoint, at my previous institution and things needed to be a lot more cohesive and centralized, right? So I say that not in the sense of things aren't cohesive and centralized. I'm saying the ways in which curriculum was taught was like, Here's your sequence of assignments, right? Here's a common text, and this is what we're doing because we have we have to do this.

00;19;02;10 - 00;19;28;18

Unknown

You're incoming. Im a Ph.D. student. You're teaching for the very first time this semester, and there's nothing to really grab onto. Right. And your your piece here is in literature and creative writing and not rhetoric and composition. So there's not even, like, a disciplinary history unless you come from a program like an email that, that has that, that experience here.

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Unknown

These are really smart, intelligent teachers who have been teaching for a really long time, who have disciplinary history in rhetoric and composition, who understand pedagogies and practices in our

field, and then also within our department. This rich history of writing about writing curriculum. You know, so I think there's just a lot of differences in what the program looks like, right?

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Unknown

So I think for me this year, as my first year, I guess I'm eight months, nine months in was like just sitting back and understanding these these really big institutional differences. And I think just listening and learning more about what our what our really smart faculty are doing and in the classes. Right. And how, you know, I would say in our in our program, there's student learning outcomes and portfolios and that informs and guides everything.

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Unknown

So we might be assigning different text, though most of it's all of it's connected to writing studies in writing, say scholarship, the kind of foundation and through line of our first year composition classes are the student learning outcomes in NC 11 and one soon learning outcomes in Nancy 1102 which I'll say is really cool because it was kind of grassroots and communal of how those student learning outcomes came to me, how to me, you know, it wasn't top down, it was like collaborative and faculty collaborating and working on that.

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Unknown

Yeah, I think were we both on that, the outcome Revision Committee. Yeah, Yeah. So we were involved and it was intense. So I love I love the, the collaboration and participation that happens within composition here at UCF. There's this investment in first year writing and helping support our students that is just really phenomenal as a WPA that it's almost like it's it yeah, it's a part of the culture that investment is a part of the culture too, to do like really cool grassroots thing, like developing student learning outcomes for our two classes, working on this semester and last semester, working on program assessment rubric together collaboratively to then assess this, you know, learning outcomes, to

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Unknown

see how how they're working or how students are demonstrating that. So yeah this this commitment and investment that's that's just built in in the culture here is really amazing and yeah just I said this a lot but just the incredibly talented faculty that's teaching for sure. I hear you can keep saying that's what I'll say like seven more times.

00;22;17;15 - 00;22;41;17

Unknown

Make a note, maybe make a plaque. We can hang on a long time. I was going to ask you know, what sort of first drew you to writing program administration as a as a focus for you? You know, what was that sort of what were those experiences like where you were like, oh, this is this is where I want to go, or This is what I want to sort of invest in.

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Unknown

This is, you know, this is what I want to be about and go for. And do you remember like, you know, what those were or how that sort of path, how you found that path? Yeah, I think I fell into it. There wasn't it wasn't like pre-planned. I wasn't like a graduate student. I was like, here's my research.

00;22;58;19 - 00;23;31;17

Unknown

Emphasis is going to be in writing program illustration. As a graduate student, like my main focus was on on writing assessment and teacher response and multi modality. Like those were the things that was my interest, that was like my, my work and even whenever I got hired at my previous university, it was in like this WPA capacity or this role I was able to to see modeled to me a phenomenal WPA at my previous university.

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Unknown

Dr. Joyce Inman, just a phenomenal like leader. And she was in in a kind of a point of transitioning outside of that role. So that provided an opportunity to step into writing program administration. And I don't know if I, I don't know if I would have been drawn to that without seeing like her leadership and seeing that model to me so well and so gracefully.

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Unknown

So so really, I would say it wasn't in grad school, even though I did serve as like the assistant to the director, like assistant to the regional manager, I was like an assistant to the the writing program director. So I had an experience there, but it wasn't like the type of like mentorship role that a WPA takes or the type of professional development role or curriculum development role or program assessment role.

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Unknown

All of that wasn't really my experience in grad school. I think I was mainly just interacting with the textbook publishers who would come in. So then my previous university, when that opportunity opened up and whenever and Joyce transition away from that role, then there was a lot of these experiences with okay program, program assessment and curriculum development and professional development and mentoring graduate students.

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Unknown

And that was a big a big part of my previous institution was that that mentorship of graduate students, because those were the students teaching our first year composition classes and then also teaching like our graduate practicum and composition theory, that kind of tied pedagogy to praxis. So yeah, that that kind of came through a leadership shift and change, but it wasn't on my radar.

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Unknown

It wasn't necessarily something I was seeking out. And I think I think for some developers now that might just be like the normal story, right? Like we just find ourselves in this position. If there there's a gap in that is a, a central role in composition like you have to have a WPA, you know, like that. It's

essential in order for it to run well and for there to be like a culture of like collaboration and curriculum development and, and professional development and assessment like that is such a vital role.

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Unknown

And I think I just kind of stumbled upon it. And then I saw just a great model in Joyce and in how she how she did that work. And I think there's also a really kind of natural connection between your focus also on assessment. So I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about and I know that you've mentioned in department meetings your enthusiasm and passion, very, very enthusiastic about assessment.

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Unknown

Yeah, Everyone is everyone loves assessment. I'm just getting. All right. So I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about kind of, you know, how those two kind of go together, you know, the WPA and, you know, the assessment part and and just where where does the enthusiasm for assessment come from? Well, I you know, I think I'm going to share her story again, I hear here for stories.

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Unknown

Yeah. So, honestly, that enthusiasm comes from my my in my thesis chair as well as now is in writing assessment. And, you know, that was like back in 2012, 2012, 2014. But he was my thesis chair and mentor and he's done incredible work on on writing assessment him in my APO wrote like in 2012 race and writing assessment so really sorry connecting kind of justice oriented frameworks to to writing assessment and how do we assess students his language what are our what are we valuing right.

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Unknown

Like how do we resist this notion of a standardized English and how is that hurting or harming students? So I think that enthusiasm was probably again modeled to me because he was and is very passionate about writing assessment and very passionate about his work in writing assessment. So it started then probably right like thinking through, okay, I'm working alongside and being mentored by someone that is incredibly passionate about writing assessment.

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Unknown

And I remember taking a class from him as a grad student. It was really interesting is that this class was focused on teacher response and I think that's what that's what captivated me more than writing assessment. So like in terms of writing assessment, I'm thinking particularly like this focus on on like grading and classroom ecologies of grading and how that takes different shapes from like traditional grading to grading contracts and now popularized like on grading, like just different alternative methods for grading.

00;28;42;11 - 00;29;06;28

Unknown

But I was more interested in in response to the student writing. So I remember reading in that class, like Summers and Straub enhanced and Sen and all these scholars and O'Neill and Fife, all these scholars doing work like in the eighties, in the nineties on teacher response. And I'm still to this day like where is current scholarship on teacher response to writing It exists.

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Unknown

There's a journal of response and they do incredible work. But like in the eighties and nineties, it felt very, very like captivating. Like the way that we interact with students come through how we respond to them like that, more like more of a sense of a relationality. Yeah, there's a, there's that is the relationality and that's how we teach writing.

00;29;29;05 - 00;29;55;10

Unknown

At least that's how it was framed as like you can talk about writing within that teaching of writing actually happens when students are writing and you're responding and interacting with them. That's the teaching of writing. So I was captivated by the power of response and how it can encourage or it can really hurt. Write that very affective component like we can all probably share stories of or memories of when we receive feedback.

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Unknown

And we felt kind of devastated. Like our we felt like not good enough. And my thesis actually kind of started with that narrative of like feeling like not good enough because of response. So the story I'll, I'll come back to what you said the story was that enthusiasm, I think was a model for me for writing assessment. I went in the direction of teacher response as an M.A. in my thesis.

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Unknown

I continue that direction in my dissertation, focusing on genres of response and how students felt and interacted with particular comments, cited, you know, survey data and interview data analyzes of of that asking questions of like that affective component of response from a WPA perspective. And I think this goes back to your question is what does assessment do? Well, to me, it has everything right, like how we understand our students, how we understand our curriculum, how we understand our program vision or outcomes, how we understand professional development, and what opportunities to provide instructors, how we understand mentoring and one on one relationships with students like that.

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Unknown

To me, it all starts with assessment, and I know some people might think, well, it could probably start elsewhere and I think it can, right? But I think again, this year is like thinking through. We have these amazing like student learning outcomes that were grassroots faculty led, developed as a WPA. Then my perspective is how do we know how those learning outcomes are, are being met or demonstrated or how are they being centered in our writing classrooms?

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Unknown

And I think you you can't answer that question without talking about assessment, right? Like and kind of data driven assessment, not just anecdotally, like I think stories about that's great, but I think that there has to be some like direct measurement of outcomes and vision, and that is the work of assessment. And that's why I'm so enthusiastic about assessment, because I think it really that's the beginning of anything else.

00;32;24;08 - 00;32;41;26

Unknown

Like we don't just make changes to make changes, right? Like that makes no sense to me, right? Like we don't just like change things. And especially if you're a new person, like you don't just come in and like, just change everything, right? Like, that would not be a good idea. Well, you could. Yeah, I don't know that that would work.

00;32;41;29 - 00;33;12;29

Unknown

Bad idea. Like you use assessment to kind of inform decision making. And ultimately, decision making is connected to students. But that is assessment work. I can almost see that anecdotal assessment or anecdotal feedback could be a a step towards data driven like it might be the the aha like eyebrow raising moment where you start to go, is this a one off or an outlier phenomenon or is this something that we're seeing across a broader student demographic?

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Unknown

But the challenge that I face is that when I hear the word assessment, I immediately assume deficit oriented. And I don't think I'm alone. I mean, I could be I could be entirely alone. That's not the first time I've had a thought all to myself. But I think that that is a challenge rhetorically, with that word assessment, you think, okay, it's punitive, it's deficit oriented.

00;33;34;11 - 00;33;54;11

Unknown

We're going to figure out what we need to fix, Right? Let's assess. The situation is what we usually say after a moment of catastrophe. Let's assess. We can figure out we need to fix and move on. So I appreciate that your approach is founded in this idea of how can we lead towards more opportunities for impactful professional development and how can we better serve our students.

00;33;54;11 - 00;34;36;20

Unknown

But in general, is there something that you try to incorporate into your philosophy or to your approach that offsets that, that predisposition to think of it in a negative frame? Yeah. I think you have to be really intentional in how you're is this standard constructions of assessment, right? I think that story of assessment being negative by far the most popular understanding of assessment, right like that, that is because assessment has been and always has been connected to penalizing students.

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Unknown

Right. Like or faculty. Yeah. Or faculty. Right. It has been so you know as allies are in about this and in some way but considered a yardstick model. Right. So here's the yardstick. Let's measure

someone's successes or failures, basically. And then with the way we that we do that is we standardize things, right? So you have to resist that standardization, that top down assessment being used to penalize assessment, being used as a consequence assessment being used to move you from here to here and to think through to challenge that standardization.

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Unknown

Right. And in the writing classroom, you have to think about this, how assessment is tied to writing and language and identity. Those are interconnected. Writing and identity are interconnected, who are assessing students writing. We're assessing their language and their identity. That, of course, is going to have even more weight than here's a Scantron like fill in the bubbles and I'll just put it through a machine, you know, I mean, like the work that we do as writing teachers and writing assessment is kind of inherently connected to students language and identity.

00;36;00;05 - 00;36;27;21

Unknown

So I think we have to be mindful of the systems and structures of how assessment has been used through this deficit oriented framework to tell students or to instruct students about a standard, a standardized language, which is not true. That's not true at all. And then how assessment is being used as really a powerful tool to reinforce standardization and to penalize students.

00;36;27;21 - 00;36;52;23

Unknown

Right. So I think as a teacher, then we have to be really mindful of that history. In my classroom, I remind we I talk with students, I engage in conversations about my understanding of assessment and how assessment has traditionally been used as a as gatekeeping. Right. As exclude as an exclusionary practice. Right. We look at the history of the university.

00;36;52;23 - 00;37;21;10

Unknown

It's not hard to find what identities were privileged. So that's connected to assessment, right? That was assessment entrance exams were assessment, who's allowed in, who's allowed out, whose voices are welcomed, whose voices are suppressed. So I talk with students about assessment through that lens and then I talk about assessment how how I feel that it's important for me as a teacher to take a more justice oriented approach to assessment.

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Unknown

And by that I really mean I want assessment to be focused on on equity, right? I want students to have power and authority and control over assessment and not me. I want, you know, ideally there not to be grades at all. But that's not an institutional reality like you do. You have to grade. So I want students to to collaborate in all the assessment kind of processes, whether we're building rubrics where I don't bring in a rubric, we're building that together, right?

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Unknown

And even even then, I'm not just giving feedback. I want them to reflect on their learning based on that rubric that we constructed. And then I'll reflect on their writing process and their reflection of

that writing process as it's related to to the dimensions that we come up together. But I don't grain I don't grade student writing, actually, I use a grading contract, and that's not for everybody.

00;38;21;17 - 00;38;50;09

Unknown

I'm not saying that's for everybody, but I use a labor based grading contractor for construction of a labor based green contract that really emphasizes more quantity and focusing on like the writing process and the production of writing, and not just like the final product of that writing and then assigning a letter grade. So it's been a while since I've put a grade on a other piece of writing.

00;38;50;12 - 00;39;16;11

Unknown

The key to me is like that doesn't necessarily mean that students know where they stand in the class. And I think it's really important that there's that transparency, that students know where they stand. So there's a lot of conversation like, let's reflect on where you are in this course based on the labor that you've produced. Right? Because I don't want students to get up to the end of the semester being like, I have no idea.

00;39;16;11 - 00;39;57;01

Unknown

I don't know if I'm going to today, I don't know if I'm going to see. And I think sometimes like that can happen in a grading contract and it can cause anxiety. And I do not want to cause stress and anxiety. I just want to kind of always engage in transparent communication around assessment and grading. It's an enormous paradigm shift for students if you consider that their formative experiences as writers has been to produce something that will be assessed in a standardized way from very early on, one of my I assign a literacy narrative in my 1101 courses, and it's, you know, what have your experiences with writing been up to this point?

00;39;57;01 - 00;40;17;11

Unknown

What has caused you to become the writer you are today? You know, what has shaped you. And at least half of them share stories about I love to write until I had that one teacher. It's somewhere between six and eighth grade typically, right? And I got all this feedback and criticism and it just took the fun out of writing for me.

00;40;17;11 - 00;40;47;12

Unknown

And I've never enjoyed writing since. And so it is. You're dealing with students also in freshman composition on the precipice of just understanding the world in a very different way. You know, Performatively that it's it's a whole it's a whole new chapter for them as individuals. So it is a tremendous not only are they learning about writing as writing, you know, writing about writing that pedagogical approach where, you know, writing is the the activity as well as the foundation of what we're studying.

00;40;47;15 - 00;41;16;12

Unknown

The idea that writing takes place in multitudes of ways every single day and that they are all already strong writers. So they wouldn't be here to then add to that mix, like the idea that we're assessing

and it's not punitive, it is a tremendous shift for students. So yeah, I think to I what's really important is I think having those conversations and that's what I do, like what you just modeled is what I do with students, right?

00;41;16;12 - 00;41;41;17

Unknown

Like I think through, hey, I've have three little girls, six year old, five year old and one year old. I don't have to convince them to love reading and writing and growing. They love reading and writing. I mean, they don't you know, they're working on it, but they don't it's not like a penalty. I love that curiosity, imagination, all the things that we had as kids that are just like intrinsic.

00;41;41;17 - 00;42;14;24

Unknown

We just love that. So what the conversations that I have with students is when does that shift happen? What is that like creativity in that curiosity and like persistence, When when does that change? And my conversations are always, well, it changes because of our educational system of assessment, right? To to rank and sort students and changes when starting in kindergarten, you get a star or a sticker or your stick pulled.

00;42;14;24 - 00;42;37;06

Unknown

That was my experience. Like your stick pulled, right? Like behavioral, like, you know, like you're going to check me out. Oh, yeah. Expand on that. Yeah. So this is something I might want to bring in in my classroom. Yeah, that's why I'm asking. So in in Kentucky, growing up, like kindergarten, I think first grade there is like a little pocket on your, on your lockers and it had like little sticks.

00;42;37;08 - 00;43;17;15

Unknown

Like, little like just like stick like popsicle sticks. And it would be poured like, if there was like a behavioral issue or like, like So you would leave. Yeah. You and you would lose. So I share that story to basically say, maybe we should go back to that. No, I'm just kidding. I say like, so we have these conversations about our educational system, our grading and assessments baked into it and how it's baked into it and really detrimental ways to learning that don't foster creativity or curiosity or imagination or responsibility, like it just doesn't foster those things.

00;43;17;17 - 00;43;38;04

Unknown

So there's this great book by a psychologist named Alfie Cohn. I remember reading, I think it was in 1999. It's a book called Punish by Rewards, and it's the critique of the educational system. So how even rewards are this extrinsic motivators? And that's what grades are. And they're they're seen either as a penalty or as a reward, right?

00;43;38;04 - 00;44;13;01

Unknown

Like you get an A that's a reward. If you get a C or D, F, that's a penalty. I need to get away from an F, Right. Like, that's failure. Failure is not good. It's negative. It's negative. Like and that's the stories that we get told from six years old to forever, right? Until there's a paradigm shift where you're faced

with a different model, and particularly in relation to educational psychology, that research shows that we should care about extra or intrinsic motivation, right?

00;44;13;03 - 00;44;37;15

Unknown

Not extrinsic matter and extrinsic motivators actually do the opposite of what we want to do in our classrooms. We don't want like, here's a carrot, like follow the carrot. We want students to have like this sense of agency and ownership and creativity, and we want to foster that and not punish and reward students by these extrinsic things that really don't really matter.

00;44;37;18 - 00;44;56;03

Unknown

And then they don't tell us much about learning, right? So I share stories all the time, like first week of class on my K show, show of hands. If you've got an A on a test and like haven't learned anything or you got an A in the class and you haven't learned anything, they're like, Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

00;44;56;03 - 00;45;20;04

Unknown

I like all the hands go up and I'm like, Okay, in show of hands, if you've like, studied really hard for weeks and weeks on the test and then got like a C or D, like in everyone's hands go up and I'm like, What does that say about learning? What does that say about how we value learning? If we can get an A on a test, not learn anything, or in any class, not learn anything.

00;45;20;07 - 00;45;51;07

Unknown

And we are more satisfied about that a than the learning. To me that's problematic. To me, that's the opposite of education. And I just tell them kind of straight up, I don't know why we're here, if that's the model that we're after, like this, this system doesn't make sense. If we care more about you getting an A in a class and you feeling more satisfied about the A than the C, and there's a total separation from learning like that.

00;45;51;07 - 00;46;15;07

Unknown

If learning isn't what's valued, I don't know what we're doing. I don't why education exists. And I know that might be extreme, but it's real. You raise a really interesting point that I'm thinking about in that when you go into academia, it as professionals. It's because you typically really love something. You love teaching other people about it. You believe in the value of it.

00;46;15;09 - 00;46;43;11

Unknown

But we were also the students who got the A's. You know, I tell this to my two grads now, well, nothing eventually. So I struggled sometimes, too. But eventually I think you reach that point where you're like, I want to be at the top of the class. And I talk to students about this a lot, like the shift from being an undergrad to a grad student is a lot of the time you're used to being the smartest person in the room, or at least one of the three smartest person people in the room.

00;46;43;14 - 00;47;01;22

Unknown

And then you go into grad school and it's everyone's the smartest person in the room and you suddenly don't know where you are. I think that's where that kind of like imposter syndrome starts to creep in. But if we're as faculty, you know, we're used to that carrot and stick. We we've built a lot of our lives on living through semesters, you know?

00;47;01;22 - 00;47;29;00

Unknown

Okay, I live my life in weeks. We're in week ten. I know exactly what week of the semester it is at any given point. And it's a very different way to view the world and life. But I wonder, too, like, if that is where that negative foundational feeling about assessment as a faculty member comes in that you you can't help but feel that it's punitive because you want the A you've always wanted the A, and it's a little terrifying to think you're going to get anything.

00;47;29;00 - 00;48;01;19

Unknown

But. So I'm curious then I know that your approach towards student perspectives on assessment is well founded and thought through and executed. What do you then bring to faculty who, when they hear for example, here at UCF, we collect our composition one and two students portfolios for programmatic assessment because we want to see how students are responding to the, as you phrased, grassroots, formative or structural approach to teaching composition.

00;48;01;22 - 00;48;35;07

Unknown

How are students internalizing and processing and then producing things to that effect? It's a little unnerving when you hear a request for randomized student portfolios. So how do you couch those kinds of conversations with faculty you talk to prevent it from having that punitive connotation for assessment? Yeah. I mean, I go back to my values of like just collaboration and transparency and open conversation and communication.

00;48;35;13 - 00;49;04;16

Unknown

I think it fills that way when it's not talked about. Right. Like, I think assessment really fills that way when it's not shared, what's going on, when there's no transparency, when there's no understanding of like the random sampling method that we use or the collection process that we use and why we use it. So I think you all know, maybe even more than a lot of people is like I talk about program assessment a time I just try to make open and honest and transparent.

00;49;04;16 - 00;49;28;14

Unknown

And this is what we're doing and this is why we're doing it. And I think a part of that process is that communication of this program assessment is not connected to your teaching at all. Like it really it really is. It's measured. The direct measurement is of our student learning outcomes. So it has nothing to do with the students that were graded like that were scoring right.

00;49;28;21 - 00;49;54;29

Unknown

Student's grades aren't connected to program assessment and a teacher's performance or evaluation isn't connected to program assessment. Program assessment is legitimately just tied to

what are our goals as a program and how are we meeting those goals? What how are we? What are we doing right? So I think for me it's that communication of like you're not being assessed as a teacher.

00;49;55;01 - 00;50;32;22

Unknown

Students are like your students not being graded or assessed, and I think there has to be that linking of understanding of like, Oh yeah, this isn't about me or my student, it's about our program and our goals and our outcomes and our vision. Right? So what we're looking at then is how are outcomes being embodied in classrooms through a portfolio use and then what can we as a program do from a curriculum standpoint or professional development standpoint to help us do the things that we value?

00;50;32;24 - 00;50;58;12

Unknown

So I think what's really nice is in a more collaborative culture that we have is that that collaboration place not just in assessment, right, of like forming the rubric together of norming, together of having conversations, and so many conversations about each outcome and what language we want to use for the rubric. Like it's so collaborative, like it's a long process.

00;50;58;15 - 00;51;26;17

Unknown

So I think that's really important, but I think it's also really important for for faculty for that collaboration to happen, even in the student learning outcomes as it happened here. So there's a sense of investment of the outcomes. Those outcomes aren't top down. Some I'm more familiar with. Like it's GC, but yep, here, here's the outcomes. Make sure you're meeting these institutional requirements.

00;51;26;19 - 00;52;01;22

Unknown

Mm hmm. That's very different than grassroot roots collaborative program developed assessment outcomes that faculty wrote that we're like now collaborating on through assessment. Then here is the institutional outcomes and that feels like, Are you doing your job? You know, yeah, but there's a shared investment. I would say in our outcomes and in our portfolio. So it just continues the collaboration and conversation around that, that work that's already happened historically here.

00;52;01;25 - 00;52;25;28

Unknown

I want to ask, I know we're closing in on our time from this episode, but I do want to shift gears a little bit and ask you a couple questions about your book and how your book came together. Um, you know, this book about conversations about teaching, you know, drawn from the pedagogue podcast. I'm just curious because I think that's such an interesting kind of project to take on.

00;52;25;28 - 00;52;48;17

Unknown

And I'm wondering, you know, in the course of doing all these things and having all these conversations, when did you start to see like a shape of a thing, like a book or something like that,

where you know, where you could sort of talk about and share like collectively, you know, again, because it there's I'm not sure how many episodes in the two hundreds.

00;52;48;18 - 00;53;11;29

Unknown

Yeah, yeah. Lots of episodes, lots of conversations. Like how does that even happen? How is the process of that like come to be like, Oh, I think there's something here that I can look at all these things in some kind of collective way, not because we're trying to steal your idea and, you know, just clear. We'll put the Yeah, well I'll put the link in the bios so people can go and get a copy.

00;53;11;29 - 00;53;41;09

Unknown

No. Yeah. Feel free to do so I think like, like any other, like all my story. So far, like it just, it's brought to my attention. Like I think back to, you know, how pedagogues started. Well, now just brought it to my attention. You know, it's a mill. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And then how the book got started was Steve, Steve Parks and Paulo Matthew, who are teacher scholars in our field, brought it to my attention.

00;53;41;12 - 00;54;07;07

Unknown

Um, and they were really good mentors for me. They were on the podcast, but they said, Hey, where, where does this cow in your department like your evaluation? And I'm like, I don't even know what that means. Like, you know, I'm first in like, academia. All that is like all these things are like, new to me. I'm like, I need to be paying attention to, like, program evaluations and, like, tenure promotions.

00;54;07;07 - 00;54;31;17

Unknown

They like promotion stuff. And they were like, Yeah, you need to like, really pay attention. This. Like, you're spent a lot of time and energy, like a writing interview, questions, interviewing, recording, reading, scholarship. So you're prepared to ask questions. Tons of editing, producing. You have a website, you have social media like surrogate circulating, like that's a lot of time and energy.

00;54;31;19 - 00;55;03;15

Unknown

And they were like, Hey, I'm going to be honest. They were real honest. They were like, in most places, multimodal and digital work is not seen under the umbrella of research. And I was like, kind of like I was like, what? Like that doesn't make sense. Like, how is it not? And they're like, you need a you need to ask questions like you need to think through and ask questions and it was seen as service.

00;55;03;18 - 00;55;36;27

Unknown

I'm like, Well, I would rather write an article because it takes a lot less time than they do. And what I'm doing with podcasting, I mean, like an article, I think it takes a lot less time than a weekly podcast, you know? So I went back to them and they were like, You really need to think through like, how can you take what you're already doing and make it something else so that you're not having to, like, reinvent the wheel, write a whole book, you know, like work smarter, not harder.

00;55;36;27 - 00;56;02;27

Unknown

Yeah, Yeah. Um, and Steve was like, You should just make this a book. Like, it was like, you should make this, like, a composition anthology of the teaching of writing. Like we all were kind of assigning graduate practicum classes and composition. So here's a traditional anthology, but it's not like that, like interview ends in a lot of ways where you're you're not hearing just one voice.

00;56;02;29 - 00;56;35;28

Unknown

Each chapter, there's four or five teacher scholars talking about either a place, a pedagogy or a program. It's digital. So instead of just reading text, you can listen to scholars. So again, going back to our earlier conversation, there's a full understanding of the human behind the words, and they're again, regional differences in their dialects and the way that they're thinking in real time and through like a revision and this like lengthy process of editing and revising.

00;56;36;01 - 00;57;14;14

Unknown

And that's kind of how it, how it came to be is they brought that to my attention. And then that opened up like the opportunity for a like a book proposal. And then I think there was a just a perfect moment where so teachers liking writing is published through NCT and CC cc. There are studies and writing in rhetoric series and there is a perfect opportunity where that series was starting to collaborate with what clearinghouse and what clearinghouse is open access?

00;57;14;16 - 00;57;51;29

Unknown

This book doesn't exist unless it's open access. Everyone can listen to these episodes any time they want, and I have transcripts like like the material is already available. So I think it provided an opportunity where they're like, Oh, we actually have this new initiative. And I think this was the first book published in that initiative. I think this came alongside one other book that was Open Access, and it only makes sense if it's open access, because in the book you can click the hyperlink that's timestamped so you can hear the conversation as opposed to just reading like the text.

00;57;52;02 - 00;58;21;23

Unknown

So I think, yeah, just a really good mentorship that they provide in of saying like think smarter, not harder. Yeah. And then like, what does this look like as a book form and not just as a podcast. So all credit, all credit to them. And yeah, just I've been lucky with a lot of like great mentorship and I think I just like listen to people's advice and go with it usually.

00;58;21;26 - 00;58;44;06

Unknown

Well, you touched on something that I think is of significance twice. It's the value of hearing the delivery of ideas through the voice that is creating them. And I think if anything, it's an argument as to why I won't replace us. Because if you've ever listened to a text read by I, it's not particularly engaging or fun to listen to.

00;58;44;06 - 00;59;10;29

Unknown

Yeah. And I think to ignore the not maybe idiosyncrasies, but the characteristics that shape a voice, the the formative and foundational experiences that create a particular voice. And then considering what that brings to the text is something really a value. And I can see, you know, you were talking about how when you read maybe even fiction or something along those lines, you don't hear the voices.

00;59;11;01 - 00;59;43;20

Unknown

And you know, there's an argument for why audiobooks are as a value to people and legitimate in terms of, you know, did you read it versus did you listen to it? It's really the same thing. Yeah. How in academia to get away from that idea of the ivory tower and the fact that we're so far removed where only reading written text kind of puts that distance between the reader and the writer, this idea of then listening to the organic voice that created the text and is expressing the ideas is really something of value.

00;59;43;20 - 01;00;14;14

Unknown

And I love that inclusion of in our field. Yeah, I think that, you know, a lot of my work tries to think through the privileges of like my own identity and position ality, but also how systems and structures empower and privilege and continue to these separations of power and privilege. And I think the same thing can be said about traditional definitions of literacy.

01;00;14;17 - 01;00;45;02

Unknown

Traditional definitely definitions of literacy have been operationalized to privileged people who can read and write education like is focused on that traditional that definition of literacy, because it, again, from an assessment perspective, allows you to rank and sort people and rank and sort people by gender, race, socioeconomic status, right? Like that's really what it is. Can you read and write?

01;00;45;05 - 01;01;27;07

Unknown

Well, what kind of writing are we talking about? Like an all benefited a particular identity from a racial gender and and socioeconomic perspective allows you to control the narrative as well as a race. Others Right. Yeah. So it's also very westernized writing, right? So I think one thing that that, you know, podcasting and and listening does is it is more inclusive and it maybe resists some traditional understandings or definitions of literacy, for example, to say, actually, no, there's lots of literacies, and literacy cannot just be defined by reading and writing.

01;01;27;10 - 01;02;01;28

Unknown

And if it's so, that's very exclusionary. It has not inclusive and if so, we're really disconnected from our students in the 21st century. If we're only connecting literacy, their literacy to reading and writing, we are very disconnected from 21st century everyday life of our students, right, who constantly engage in much more creative content visually through through audio, through videos, through images.

01;02;02;00 - 01;02;41;12

Unknown

And that's why, again, I'm like so drawn to multimodal ality because it's like traditional writing instruction is so, to me exclusionary, right? Like just focusing on the alphabetic texts. When you have the affordances of all these modalities, when our students is experience and histories are so much more expansive than reading alphabetic text on a page, it's like, I don't know how you go to the classroom without thinking about multi modalities, multiple reality, and in various literacies of our students.

01;02;41;14 - 01;03;12;28

Unknown

And yeah, again that that kind of storytelling that morality and O reality kind of resists some some dominant Western structures and systems that are ultimately connected to literacy. So we are closing in on our time for this episode. But I'm just wondering, Shane, you know, is there anything that you want to add or talk about or something that you're excited about that's on the horizon for you, a project or something that that you might be working on, that you want to that you want to mention or talk about?

01;03;13;04 - 01;03;45;02

Unknown

Yeah, I think right now I'm just most excited about just the collaboration and assessment again and then just the collaboration that's happening in the department about around assessment and really thinking through the ways in which how we can help support students. Right. And again, to not

punitive, not penalize students, not assessing teachers or grading students, but really the collaborative kind of equity focused, justice oriented perspectives around assessment.

01;03;45;03 - 01;04;05;28

Unknown

So like, for example, I think looking at and this is just like preliminary, but what's really interesting about assessment is I think most writing teachers here and elsewhere, I'm like thinking about the data in NC 11 and one most writing teachers here and elsewhere would be would think like we value revision and like our students do it well.

01;04;06;04 - 01;04;38;21

Unknown

We talk about revision all the time. They engage in drafting in peer review and like revision is essential to our work in the writing classroom. But if we have data that says, Hey, maybe it's not being demonstrated through at least our direct measurement of portfolios, what do we do? Right? It kind of like meets there's tension between, here's an assumption that I have as a teacher that I have that most people have, I would say, with reality of data.

01;04;38;23 - 01;05;04;21

Unknown

And then we're like, What do we do? And that's exciting work to me because then like you get teachers in a in a conversation, like in a group talking about like, what do we do in this? So I think that works. Exciting assessment work is exciting and I know it's not for most, but I do. I love the the excitement and like the brainstorming and the problem solving that happens.

01;05;04;24 - 01;05;23;29

Unknown

That, again, is not punitive but really is like grassroots and collaborative. Well, thank you for participating in our contagious enthusiasm for the work we do here. I do love the work that you all do here. It's amazing. I think it's fantastic and it's always fun to to get to delve into those topics with people that are equally as passionate about them.

01;05;23;29 - 01;05;29;15

Unknown

So thank you for taking the time and thanks for joining us. Thank you for having me. Yeah, thanks for everybody.