Speaker 1:

Dr. Masland was excellent. I really liked how she shared ways that we could bridge the gap between what students expect in the classroom and what teachers expect and how we can scaffold everything so that they can reach the expectations that we have.

Christina:

Hi, I'm Christina Barsi.

Sun Ezzell:

I'm Sun Ezzell, and you're listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast.

Christina:

Our mission is to find ways to keep your ear to the ground so to speak, by bringing to you the activities and events you may not have time to attend, the resources on campus you might want to know more about, the interesting things your colleagues are creating and the many ways we can continue to better help and guide our students.

Sun Ezzell:

We bring to you the voices of Mt. SAC from the classroom to completion.

Speaker 4:

I know I'm going to achieve my goals and I know people here are going to help me to do it.

Speaker 5:

She is a sociology major and she's transferring to Cal Poly Pomona. Psychology major, English major.

Sun Ezzell:

From transforming part-time into full-time.

Speaker 6:

I really like the time that we spend with Julie about how to write a CV and a cover letter.

Christina:

Or just finding time to soak in the campus.

Speaker 7:

Think of the natural environment around us as a library.

Christina:

We want to keep you informed and connected to all things Mt. SAC, but most importantly, we want to keep you connected with each other. I'm Christina Barsi, Mt. SAC alumni and producer of this podcast.

Sun Ezzell:

I'm Sun Ezzell, learning assistance faculty and professional learning academy coordinator.

Christina:

This is the Magic Mountie Podcast.

New Speaker:

Hi, it's Christina, and today we have a super informative episode. We captured the keynote speaker from our very own Spring Flex Day, Dr. Lindsay Masland. She's an associate professor of psychology at Appalachian State University, and she does a deep dive with us on the topics of how to motivate students, what motivates students' achievement and engagement, and what can we do about it. Questions she addresses are what is learning, what teaching strategies lead to effective learning and what is the role of the student in the teaching and learning relationship. We hope you enjoy.

Chisa:

Good morning everyone. Welcome to Spring 2020. Can you believe we're in 2020? It sounds like a sci-fi book to me, but the year 2020 is here and I want to introduce myself. I'm Chisa Uyeki. I'm president of the academic Senate. I'm faculty in the library. We have so much going on around campus right now, from guided pathways, for success mini-grants to launching our new rise, which is re-imagining the student experience programs. We have strong workforce projects and efforts to systematize our academic support centers to ensure that our students are getting the help they need when they need it. We're ramping up to start an incredible title five grant initiative that will make professional development opportunities available for all faculty to build our equity mindset, to improve our use and application of data in our decision making and in our work, and to look at alternatives for our students that are less costly for textbooks.

Chisa:

I wanted to say in a mode of gratitude that I'm so thankful to all of you for the hard work that you do in the classroom to serve our students and for those of you who commit extra time and energy to the campus committees and councils. Our college is mandated to work through a system of shared governance, ensuring the faculty role in decision making and operating through collegial consultations democracy depends on participation of the electorate. By the way, please vote on March 3rd. Shared governance is only as good as the commitment of the participants. We're fortunate that shared governance is vibrant and strong at Mt. SAC, but we can do better and be better with increased involvement of the faculty from across the campus. I am so thankful to come to work with you all every day and I appreciate and honor the effort you bring to the campus and to your classrooms.

Chisa:

So, what you've all been waiting for, I'm here to introduce our keynote speaker. How many of you have stood in front of a classroom that you found a class full of students that you were having a challenging time reaching? No one, right? Never happens. Maybe thought, how can I motivate these students? Or maybe just more generally wondered what motivates student achievement and engagement and what can I do about it? Our keynote speaker, Dr. Lindsay Masland, has taken on these very questions. Through her research, she strives to answer some essential questions of education such as what is learning, what teaching strategies lead to effective learning and what is the role of the student in the teaching and learning relationship?

Chisa:

Dr. Masland is an associate professor of psychology at Appalachian State University. She is the early career faculty programming coordinator for Appalachian State's Center of Academic Excellence. She holds a PhD in school and educational psychology from the University of Georgia. Her passion brings together student engagement, effective teaching practices and inclusive excellence to inform instructional choices. Please join me in giving Dr. Masland a warm Mt. SAC welcome.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Good morning. So great to be here with you guys in California, and as you just heard, I am from not California. I am from a university called Appalachian State University, which is over in the mountains of Western North Carolina.

Christina:

I'm going to interrupt Dr. Masland for just a sec to let you know the next five minutes of the presentation were spent having the audience take a poll based on the question why they like to teach and then we jump back in with her conclusion based on the results. Here we go.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

It sounds like you guys are excellent teachers, right? So, you don't even need this day. Should we just go home and say ... yeah? I know, right? That you feel that there is something really valuable about what it is that we do, and as awesome teachers, there's several things that we know that we do. We are enthusiastic, we have high academic standards though. We're not just fun. We're serious. Maybe not that serious, but we're serious. We're also very supportive. We make sure we solve that empowering, transforming students' lives, those kinds of things. We stay current in the field. All of it's because in some level, we care deeply about the world, the people who are in it. As a result, we work really hard to make these amazing classes. Almost like a delightful presence that we're presenting to our students and we put so much time and effort into and we hand it to them and we're so very excited.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Then sometimes we get this reaction. When you put so much into it and they're not getting it or not doing what we had hoped. So, what do we do? Or put another way, we put all this effort into teaching and maybe it's because it's based on our past experience, like if I teach this way, I know it's going to work, or maybe we've read up, we've some books, some popular books or some academic articles even. I'm like, this is a good way to teach. So, we plan this thing, and the idea is that well, if I teach, then it's going to result in this amazing learning. And then these people show up and ruin the whole thing. I have a colleague who says, "I would be an amazing teacher if it weren't for the students." I'm hearing some flaws there. I'm hitting home maybe.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

But it's true. We set up things and then all this stuff happens where students bring stuff to the table that we have no control over. Just a whole big box and not my fault. It's like I don't know how to make my teaching produce learning if there's all this extra stuff going on. What we're going to think about today for the remainder of the time is what this extra stuff is that's going on and what role we might play in supporting students with it. What I sometimes do, here at this point, is to now ask you to be a little more pessimistic and say, what are times when students have disappointed you, frustrated you, irritated you? What is something that students do that you find difficult? I've also asked this question on social media before, so it's just in a group of other college psychology teachers like me.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

I was writing a chapter and so I wanted to know if people had ideas of times that students are disappointed, when there's things they should be doing and they're not doing them. Plenty of people had plenty of ideas, and if you go through all the 80 responses, there's tons of sub-threads. So, it was hard to find examples of times in which teachers have been disappointed by their students. What I did is I took all of these responses and I had my undergraduate and graduate students do an analysis of all the responses to see is there a theme in terms of the types of behaviors that professors see is problematic. Basically, we could connect them into three different things. First of all, students do things that seem to be rude. Either they use language that we don't find appropriate, they refer to us not the way we asked them to. If we ask them to call us doctor so-and-so and they're not, or they send us an email that reads more like a text than an email.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Or those kinds of things that just seems straight up rude. That was one category. The next category was things that appear lazy, so they're being late or they're not coming to class, they're turning in things late or not at all, they don't seem to be working very hard. The work they do turn in is insufficient or they don't take opportunities that we give them like opportunities for extra tutoring time or office hours, that kind of stuff. Nobody's showing up. It's real irritating. Then the last general category was that students seem to be misfocused. They're focused on the wrong things. They're either really focused on grades and each little point and how each little point connects to something and you're standing there as a professor, like that's not the point. The point is for you to get this understanding of the world or to get this new skill or whatever, and they're like, "Yeah, but how many words do I need to write?"

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Those kinds of things where you're like, okay, fine. That kind of thing that's just irritating and we feel like you're focusing on the trees, not the forest here. Those are the three categories. Essentially, what I noticed and what the complaints were expressing was this mismatch between where students are performing, their behaviors that we're seeing from them and then our expectations. They're on completely different wavelengths, and the student behaviors are marching along one way and our expectations are marching along another way and never the twain shall meet, right? They are not connecting.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

As a result, we have people on both sides that are not understanding each other and not learning as much as we could. What I'm going to try to help us do is think about what this is about. Why is there this mismatch and maybe can we bring them closer in line? Now, the reason for this mismatch, I think actually connects to something from psychology. My psychologist in the house will be familiar with this idea, that anytime we see somebody else's behavior and it's perplexing to us, we sit there and we try to figure out why they did what they did. All right, so if somebody is late, if a student is late and we go, huh, why was Stevie late again? We think through, we try to appraise, give an appraisal of why. We might think, well, maybe he's just unmotivated. They're just an unmotivated student.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

They don't care about being here and that's why they're always late, so that is one appraisal we could give to the behavior. Another one though is that you know what, maybe there was unusual traffic on the commute. There was a car accident that's not usually there, and as a result, Stevie was late. These are two types of assessments we can make of somebody's perplexing behavior. The one on the left is like a personality assessment, a trait assessment like this student is this way and that's their problem. But the one on the right is like a situational or a context assessment. There's something going on in this student's context that made them be this way, but it's not about who they are at the core. One thing that we know, and this is teachers or just in regular decision making, that we have a tendency that when we are looking at somebody else's perplexing behaviors, to make assessments that it's about who they are.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

It's about their personality. It's something that's wrong with them. This has a term in psychology, it's called the fundamental attribution error. Meaning, we make this error, and everybody does it. We do it, students do it in all different kinds of contexts. So, when we have some outcome that is positive and it happens to me, so something good happens to me, I am more likely to attribute it to my personality. Right? So, I won this award because I am amazing. It is not because nobody else applied for the award. It's because I am great. If something bad happens, I was late to a faculty meeting. It's not because I'm always late to faculty meetings because I'm a late person, it's because my chair stopped and talked to me in the hall. That was her fault. But then when we're looking at other people, we flip flop it weirdly. So, if something bad happens to somebody else, I'm sitting there in the faculty meeting and my colleague walks in late again, then I'm thinking, "Oh that person is always late and disrespectful and doesn't care about this department."

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Or if something good happens to them, then somebody else wins an award, and I'll say, "Well, I don't think anybody else applied." That's the kind of thing. We do this all the time and that was just an example like with my peers, but we do it with our students too where we see a behavior in them, and if the behavior is good, we're likely to say, "Well, maybe the test was easy. That's why they scored so well." If the behavior is not so good, it's something like, "Well they didn't score well because they probably didn't study very hard." Maybe that's true, I don't know. But it is interesting to recognize that humans have this tendency to do this and it can become problematic when we're trying to be supportive of students if our brains are automatically going the negative route.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

What would it look like though if we as their teachers were to try to intentionally counteract that thing that our brain does? If we were to intentionally think about what might be going on in that student's context and that student's situation that is making it hard for them to be successful as students. Let's just take their personality and who they are out of it for a moment. When we do this, we're using a particular theory called systems theory, which lots of people use. Child development uses this and psychology uses this, sociology uses this to understand people's behaviors. The idea is this. We've got a student, an individual at the middle, and when they show up in our class, we really only know a little bit about them. We can look at them and we can make a guess about their age.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

We can make a guess possibly about their race, possibly about their ethnic background, but probably we're going to guess wrong. We can make a guess about their gender identity based on their gender expression, but that's about it. That's not a lot of data to go on. What we cannot tell when we look at a student, it is things like how does this student fit into their family and how is that family affecting who they are when they show up in my classroom? How is their neighborhood affecting things? How is their belief system within their family affecting who they show up to be? Then we step further out and we start to think about things like politics. There are lots of choices that are made at a political level that affect who our students can be that they have no control over.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

There's prevailing kind of belief systems within states and within countries that kind of make them be more a certain way that has nothing to do with necessarily who they truly are. It's a contextual factor. So, we're going to think through a couple of these things here together, so we can think about what would things be, what would it look like if we changed our classroom to explicitly confirm this or be aware of these kinds of things. Here's a couple of like hypotheses of why students are the way they are, why they do things that appear to be rude, lazy, and misfocused. One thing pertains to the generations that our students are coming from. Now, if students are coming to Mt. SAC straight out of high school, which I know is not the case for a lot of students, but if they are, then those, that group of students would be in generation Z. I know that Mt. SAC serves a wide range of people, so a lot of millennials are also probably coming to school here as well.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Millennials for the longest time were totally getting dumped on in the media, that oh, it's the me, me, me generation are super entitled and those kinds of things. But when we were talking about the millennials, I think we were talking about them as if it was like a personality deficit, like it was their fault that they were that way. But if you think about it, millennials grew up during an economic boom where concern about money was not at the forefront for a lot of those people because the country as a whole was being successful financially. When you're in that situation, you could see how that might turn into some entitled behaviors because you're used to just having things available to you.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

The millennials also were mobile pioneers. When they were babies, they weren't on their phones, but then as they grew up, phones and other kinds of technology became available, they had constant access to the internet and things like that. So, it's no wonder that them and the gen Z who came after them who were actually were born with phones in their hands basically, it's no that they are now always having the phone in their hand or they're expecting that kind of stuff in class. They're expecting technology and multimedia, and it seems like they have short attention spans and that they really need to be entertained. Is that a personality deficit or is it the fact that this society has built this for them and they just happen to participate in it?

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

As a result, of course they have short attention spans, and of course, it's really hard for them to not check their phones. Not a personality deficit, but something that the context the environment has provided for them. Also, gen Z is different from millennials in that they were growing up during a huge recession and so their financial stability was not there. These students are very concerned about things like how fast can I get my college education done with, how fast can I get through classes? What are the easiest classes I can take to make sure I can do this as quick as possible and as financially and cost as little as possible? That can sound real grade focused and things like that, but when you tie it to this kind of financial need, it makes sense, that they should be focusing on those kinds of concerns because the money is not necessarily there.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

So, they might ask questions about points because they need to make sure they're going to get the points they need in order to not have to take this class again, that kind of thing. Another thing to think about is that for gen Z, the United States at least has always been at war and they know no life other than we're always fighting wars on somebody else's shores, and that might seem abstract, but it also is unsettling, just like being in a recession is, just this constant undercurrent of stress and not being sure of what the next steps are might affect who they are when they show up in your classroom. Full disclosure, depending on whose labeling system you look at, I'm on the line between gen X and millennial, so anything I said about millennials, I feel it. I'm there. It's fine.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Here's another thing that students have no control over, but that affects them a lot. Now, when you hear the phrase no child left behind, what's the first thing that comes into your head? Shout it out.

Audience:

[crosstalk 00:19:49].

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Okay. I heard a lot, but also, I think I heard testing. Testing, right? Okay. For the millennials and gen Z, for all of their schooling, their K-12 schooling years, they were experiencing this policy, no child left behind. They certainly had no control of it. They did not vote for it. There's a lot of misunderstandings about what was supposed to be going on there. Basically, the United States was underperforming when compared to other countries around the world. You know that our American ethic is like we're the best at everything. So, when you look at the scores, it's like, ooh, we're way not the best in that.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

In fact, we are way below the countries that a lot of people would be shocked about, like we're below them, what? So, it became this, honestly, I think an economic imperative for our legislators to say, well, if our citizens are not performing very well, then when they become adult, they are not going to be economically viable to compete on the global scale. We got to get our future generations up there so they can compete with China and India and countries that were above us on the list. That's where it came out of basically. But the thing we all know is that's associated with tests, and the reason for that is, is because we had to figure out a way to see whether or not schools were getting better over time, and if they weren't getting better, we needed to give them resources or punish them for that, is basically where we got.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

The reason I bring this up is because most of our students, K-12, they received 13 years of education in this system, and then they come over here to us. In this system, there are certain behaviors that are very effective. Studying to the test is a very effective behavior. Asking, is this on the test, right? Is important because whether or not you get it right on the test tells you whether or not you get held back a year or whether or not your teacher gets a bonus in some states. Things like that. That behavior makes a lot of sense, so does the behavior of cramming. Just memorizing stuff that can be easily tested on a multiple choice, high stakes test.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

That behavior is really excellent. Think about being that student. If you're reasonably successful in K-12, teachers are usually patting you on the head and saying, "Good job," because you're doing those behaviors. Then we put you in a college and we're like, "No, we want you to think outside the box. We want you to think critically. Don't ask me, is it on the test?" You're like, why are they doing that? They don't get it. Well, the reason they're doing that, it's because they've been reinforced for that for 13 years. If you had been rewarded for that behavior, you would do it too. It's probably really confusing for them to switch to a new school where all of a sudden, they're getting fingers shaking at them for these kinds of behaviors. They're just doing what's worked for a long time. That's how we function as humans.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Another thing. We know that in terms of the racial and cultural backgrounds that are represented in higher education, we've seen a wonderful, huge change in terms of diverse identities of people who show up to be educated by us. That's wonderful. But we still see huge achievement gaps. Now, this is just black women and men and white women and men. So, not a surprise that at the beginning, the people who came to college were mostly white men, and so this whole higher education system was built to support them and they seem to be up until the '90s or so, the primary people who came to college. Then there was a little switch over where now we know that white women are outpacing white men in terms of college matriculation.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

We also see a similar pattern in terms of black women and black men in terms of them being close, but then eventually, black women outpacing black men. But the thing is, although it's excellent that more people from varied backgrounds are coming to college, the achievement gap is growing. We are having more of everybody come, but it's not like the gap is closing, and that's probably because we are bringing people with very diverse sets of identities into a space that was not built for them, and that a lot of the people who are standing up here doing the teaching may not share the identity of the students who have come to do the learning. That has important implications.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

It has nothing to do with the students. It has to do with the mismatch between who's there and who's here. Another thing that certainly is very important for students here at Mt. SAC, we have a lot of first-generation college students, which could explain a lot of things like the lack of college knowledge, the lack of knowing how to interact with your instructors, how to write emails properly, possibly ways to address them, things like that. It also makes sense why some of these students would be very focused on financial solvency and taking what may appear to you to be the path of least resistance when in reality it's a very pragmatic choice. The choices that they're making, particularly given the context that they are coming from. So, it's important to keep these things in mind that those behaviors that look lazy, rude, or misfocused are just a product of this context, that they didn't choose, but that they are coming through them

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

This is a big one that we see a lot of mention, mental health. Those of you who have been teaching in higher ED for a long time have probably noticed this. This is my 10th year, and I've even seen a shift in terms of the rates of mental illnesses for my students. We can see that with these different internalizing disorders, for almost all of them, have basically doubled. So, anxiety in 2007 was just under 20% and now we're up to over 30% of college students endorsing anxiety symptoms. We do see some [inaudible 00:25:32] things toward the end a little bit there, that the feelings of personal stigma and the perceived public stigma of having any of these diagnoses or being in therapy has decreased. That's good. But what does this mean for us as teachers?

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Because we see these students show up in our room. That's probably the most common thing I hear when I have my faculty development hat on, is everybody is so stressed out, everybody's so anxious. How can we even teach these people? There's lots of hypotheses about why it is and some of them are like, "Well, there's lots of people who used to be depressed but they just dealt with it." Okay. Even if that's true, let's just not use that one because that is not a very supportive way to view our students. Also, I think it's false be the DSM, the big Bible of psychology disorders, the symptoms haven't changed for these ones. If the symptoms had changed and now it was like less stuff gets you that diagnosis, I'd agree with that idea that we just used to deal with it, but that hasn't changed.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

I don't think it's that, but lots of other things have changed, like the things that relate to the generations, like the war and the recession and all of those things. Also, the good side of this is that we're doing a better job of the word out of what these things are and how to support people with them. So, people who used to suffer in silence now recognize themselves in this and actually step up and self-advocate, that's a great thing. It's not a personality disorder thing or something like that. It is people experiencing stress. So, what do we do about that? Now, that's just a couple of possible hypotheses for why students might do these things that seem to be rude, that seem to be lazy, that seemed to be misfocused. It's really just them acting in a very sensible, pragmatic way in respond to the environments they find themselves in.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

One thing we need to think about is, okay, well, what do we do about it? Because they're still doing those things and they're still frustrating. It's one thing for me to understand, but I need to actually help support as well. Now, one thing that people sometimes like to think about is, well, okay, I know what I will do. I'm going to make sure that I'm very fair with all my students and I'm going to treat them all equally, and that way, I will feel within myself that I'm making an ethical choice because everybody's getting the same thing from me and that's fair, but we know that that's actually not fair at all because students come to us with different sorts of background experiences that may have nothing to do with how hard they tried.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

If you take one student who is coming from the best public school in their district and so they had amazing resources, highly skilled teachers who have been in that school for 20 years and really understand the population, you take that kid and you compare them to somebody else who's at the worst school in their district who has the opposite of all those things and you put both of them side by side in one of your classes and say, "I'm going to treat them equally." That's actually not fair because the person who is high is going to stay high and the person who is low is going to stay low and we're going to keep doing that. The better thing is for us to think from an equity perspective, actually understanding the fact that students bring different levels of needs to us and we should teach them in a way that respects that. That's really the only way to move forward.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

So, we have to shift the way we think about our teaching as not being just one thing that we present to everyone, but something that requires a give and take of diagnosing what each person needs. Not their mental health needs, but diagnosing what is needed and then us giving different things to different people to try to close gaps, but move everybody forward at the same time or everybody up. All right, and teachers are a part of the system, right? We can only do so much in controlling student behavior, but we can do a ton in terms of controlling our own behavior. This is the way I like to think about it. Even if you could, let's say that there was a way to give some test to your students that would diagnose whether or not they're truly lazy.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

There was like a blood test. So everybody shows up, and on the first day of class, they're going to do the pinprick and you're going to see, oh, okay. I've got 10 lazy and then 20 are here to work. Even if you could do that and so that you could in your head be like, "Well, I can write off those 10 that are lazy because that's not my problem." Even if you could do that, why would you do that? You guys just did on the survey up here, the things that you love the most about teaching, why you're doing this, why you've committed to this amazing career. Even if you could find out that that one student over there is never going to learn, why would you want to write them off? Because you know what else that means? They're never going to experience that one thing you most love about this job.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Even though it might mean I have to work harder for the people who have the blood type lazy, I'd rather do that to ensure that everybody has the chance to experience the empowerment, the support, the life change, the light bulbs, all the things we saw there. I would rather assume it's all my fault, because I can control me and I cannot control them. With that idea, what are some things that you guys could do Monday morning in order to be more equitable, more inclusive and less likely to make the fundamental attribution error. Now, some of these, if you have your syllabus totally done and it's beautiful and it's already been printed, I can understand that you might not want to make some of these, but some of them you can. You still could make the changes between now and Monday.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

The idea with what I'm going to show you here is that instead of us continuing to allow us to exist on two separate planes, we need to figure out a way to put a bridge in between what the students are doing and what we want them to do. In educational theory, we call this scaffolding, but the idea is that you build a structure so that the students can actually move from where they are to where they could be, because some students come to you and their little student behavior box is pretty close to your teacher expectation's box, and all you would need to say is, "Hey, jump," and they could do it. Instead, what we need to do is recognize that people are standing on different stairsteps on day one in class and everybody's going to need different things.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

But if you do it right, everybody can end up in the teacher expectation's box. The ideas with the scaffolding, I'm going to give you three general categories of things you could do. The first thing that I'm going to help you think through is diagnosing where the students are when they come to you. The only way you can figure out what scaffolding, what support system a student needs is to know where they are right now. When I say where they are, that means both in terms of how much they know about the thing you're getting ready to teach them, but also who they are affects where they are. You need to know too, those things before we start anything or otherwise you're going to build the wrong stairs for them.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

The next thing I'm going to spend a little bit about is some of the supports you have here at Mt. SAC that could help you with some of the different things that these young adults and adults come to class with. But I'm willing to spend a little bit of time on that because what I don't want us to do is getting in the habit of thinking this is somebody else's problem, I'm going to outsource this. What I want to spend most of the time on are things that you can actually do in your class that can help to build the stairs, help to build the scaffolding. Let's start off with the identifying where they are now because you can't do anything until you figured that out.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

All right, so where they are now. One thing that I think is very helpful, and a lot of people do this, but I'm going to maybe tweak the way you usually do it is to give a pre-class survey. This could literally be over the weekend before you ever meet them or it could be something that you do maybe after you've met them once. That's when I usually do it. It's like homework after the first day. I use our learning management system to do this. You could do it on paper, you could do it in Google forms or in your learning management system. There are three types of questions I ask them within our learning management system. The first is demographic questions, but only things that are going to be helpful to me.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

So, it is helpful to me to know about the age ranges of the students I'm going to be teaching. I don't actually ask people questions about gender or race or culture because that's something that's going to come out in the course of our class together and I don't want to prime any of those identities for them yet. But if that would somehow be helpful for you to know, you could ask that. The main demographics I want to know are what major they're in, how many years they've been with us on campus, because that helps me think about the level, right? Because if I'm teaching mostly first year students, that support structure needs to be different than if I'm teaching mostly fourth year students, so I need to be aware of who's in the room.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Another type of question I ask, this is an open ended one, is questions about their future selves. So, like what is your dream job? Something like that. Or if I'm teaching a class like of mostly future K-12 teachers, which I do teach those people a lot, what is your dream classroom going to look like? These are open ended questions, but this tells me a couple things. It tells me what they're thinking of right now so that I can pick the right stories to tell when I teach them. I can pick the right examples to use either just in my stories or in test questions and things like that and I can make sure that I am tailoring my class to these future possible selves.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Because you better believe people get motivated when all the sudden you say so, for example, "For those of you that want to be 10th grade history teachers," and if I know I've got seven of those in the classroom, this is an example I would use. You better believe those seven people perk up all of a sudden. If you can do that every single day with a different future self, it becomes very motivating to people. The last type of question I ask, which is probably the most important one, is some variation on this. Is there anything that I should know about you in order for me to teach you better? I leave this one open ended and I say, you can literally put anything there you want. You can leave it blank if you want. I give them examples when I'm telling them about this little survey assignment in class.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

I'll say, so for example, I've had people put things here like the best way they like to learn or I've had people tell me their gender pronouns here to make sure that I'm using the right ones. I've had people tell me about certain psychological or a physical health problem that you're struggling with just so I know. I've had people tell me their kitty cat just died and they're struggling, right? All of that's fine, but it helps me to understand them better and to be less likely to make the fundamental attribution error, because you know that if I just found out that somebody kitty died and they're struggling with it and it's very sweet and they are late a couple times, I might think maybe it's the kitty. Maybe it's not, but I'd rather think maybe it's the kitty and then I change the way I view them.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Now, I do this every single semester. I did this and it was this time last year. I had a 45-person class and I'm talking about here. Out of that 45-person class, they only knew me one day. This is what they put in that open ended box at the bottom. I had students experiencing the following, divorce, anxiety, active duty military, gender transition, ADHD, depression, full-time job and full-time school simultaneously, chronic unmanaged illness, family deportation, night-shift and cancer. That was out of 45 people. That sounds like a lot. I'm going to hazard a guess based on what I've seen about my college population and your college population, your students are having even more stress than mine. That's just what people felt like they could tell me after meeting me one time and being given a little box.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

So, clearly you can't write it off and just be like, oh, well, she built this amazing relationship with them and so they told her this. It is that close to the surface for them. But as soon as I knew that, it was impossible for me to view those 45 people with anything other than complete compassion. They always say, you never know what people are carrying, you never know what people are going through. So true. It makes it much harder to attribute bad behaviors to their personality when you know this is the context they're living in. That's probably one of the most powerful things that I do. Also, the way I use that, by the way, is then I know who needs what different supports on campus, who needs an immediate email right now because they are stressed out.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

The whole survey helps me to put students into groups. When we do group work, I can group people up, not based on their stressors, but I can group people ... That'd be weird, or I guess helpful depending on what you're teaching, I don't know. But I group them up based on their future self. If you were sitting with a bunch of other people that have the same future goals as you do and then I asked your group to do a group activity together, it feels more meaningful because we're all working together towards a goal that we might actually really use this thing in the future someday, and we'd be colleagues at some point. It's way more fun than just putting everybody into groups by all the ones over here, all the fours over here. We can do intentional groups which is very motivating and also feels, to the students, like you are appreciating their identities. You are appreciating what they're bringing to the table.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Another thing that I do in my classes is I do pretest, and I either do them for the whole course or I do them for every mini unit of the course, because I need to know what they already know about what I was planning to teach them. I need to know if they have some of the background knowledges I'm assuming they have, because if they don't and I just charge forward, it's going to be over everybody's head. This is just at a strict like academic knowledge level, and I do this usually in Google form, so that's totally free, but there are typically options and learning management systems that will do this. I do that and then I show them the results immediately after they take it in class. It's great data for you, because if I gave this question and it was a hundred percent correct, that means I don't need to teach this.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

They got it. Let's move on to something harder. Let's do something next. Another thing I recommend that helps you to take the temperature of your students, to feel where they're at, is to do frequent student evaluations. Now, I am not talking about the student evaluations that happen at the end of the semester. Those are great. Well, they're not great, but they're fine. They're fine, but the thing is if somebody says that you were doing something that was really problematic and they're right, they're not lying or being biased, they say that you were doing something that was really problematic but you don't learn about it until the class is over, that's an entire semester that has gone by where you were not meeting somebody needs and now there's nothing you can do about it because they're done with you.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

We need to change the way we view student evaluations. That student evaluation can be, at a bureaucratic administrative, I have to do this for my job thing, fine. But what I'm talking about here are student evaluations that you have complete control over. You decide what the questions are, you decide when they happen and how many of them you use. When I am teaching my graduate teaching assistants who are going to become professors, I have a course, a three-course sequence for them, and they start teaching in classes themselves being the instructors of record as TAs. I actually require them to give a student evaluation in the first month of class. These are just examples of questions that could be asked. It could be as short as a single question, what do you think, how can I help you? Something like that. Then they do it again at the midterm and then again at the end.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Or a real popular one, a really easy one is called the keep, stop and start thing, where you just ask students to write down three things. One thing you want me to keep doing because it's working for you, one thing you would like me to stop doing because it's not working for you and one thing you'd like me to start doing that I haven't been doing at all because that would be helpful. All right, keep, stop, start is really a great thing. Now, here's the thing about these. Just because somebody told you to stop grading so hard doesn't mean you have to do it. I get that every time at the midterm or at the very first one. Stop grading so hard, but it doesn't show up at all by the end of the semester because I scaffold them to be able to do high level work so they don't find it hard anymore.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Just because somebody tells you have to do a thing, doesn't mean you have to do it. But what if somebody said something like you're talking too fast, you have too much material and I can't get it down. That would be informative. You would want to know that before a student went through a whole course of not getting the information. We need to stop being afraid of student evaluations. Couple of recommendations of things that you could use out of class supports. Now that we know where students are at and we know what kinds of identity students are bringing to our classroom, we have some ideas of ways to support them. That might be academic, that might be extra-curricular and we're going to do it quickly because again, we don't want to be pawning our students off to other units on campus.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

We can only control ourselves. But just to make sure you know a couple of units on campus. If students have specific needs that relate to mental health or disability, it was very easy for me to find these things on the internet in your disability resources page. But I want to show you this because if you click into the faculty menu, it comes down and there's procedures for how you deal with accommodations and stuff like that. A lot of times people think about that's all I really need the disability resource people for, is making sure I'm giving the legal accommodations. Let's think about it for more than that, because here's the thing about accommodations, is people need them who don't have them. There's huge disparities in terms of who actually shows up to college with an accommodation plan. Because sometimes people graduate from high school without getting a current psychoeducational evaluation, that has nothing to do with the student. That has to do with honestly, the school psychologist not planning ahead for that student to be able to take a plan onto college.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

It costs $500, $600 $700 to get an evaluation in order to get you access to this. It's actually not fair because some of the people who most need the support sometimes cannot get the documentation, the paperwork they need for it to be official. The reason I'm showing you this, this is what I would recommend you do. Go to that faculty tab and look at what it says the procedures are for people who have certain accommodations. So, if it says, student accommodation have access to instructor notes and then read exactly what that is, or extra time, read exactly what that is. Then I challenge you to do this. See if you can design your class to have universal accommodations.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Meaning, everybody gets everything even if they don't have the paperwork. That might sound a little weird, but this is an idea called universal design for learning. Now, it's impossible to do literally everything. You can't give everybody support animals or something like that. You can't do that. But you can do, that'd be kind of a fun class, but what you can do things like the way you give access to instructor notes. How much time you're allotting for certain things. Maybe you should be allotting much more. I do that. I went through and tried to make my class be like as if you had all the accommodations, and now almost nobody turns in the paperwork in my classes because they say, "Oh I realize I'm not going to need this here." That's pretty empowering and it makes students feel like I can be successful here because the teacher gets it.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

That's something you can do using the guides here on your webpage. Another thing I want to make sure you know where to go if students are experiencing significant mental health stressors. Then the last thing pertains to, I call this identity resources because that's the most inclusive term I can think of. A lot of times or always, you're going to be teaching students who are different from you in some identity. They have a different racial identity, a different gender identity, a different sexuality, a different family history of college experience, all those kinds of things. So when students are different from you in some way, you might not be able to support them as well as somebody who could, who shares that identity with them. I want to make sure that you know where to go to find all those different identity groupings.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

I had to search a little bit for this one, but I did find that in the student support services page, if you click on specialized support, you would see all of the different kinds of identity groups there that students might want to participate in, groups that align with cultural heritage, racial identities, LGBTQ group, those kinds of things, that's where this is. That's all I want to say about sending our students to other people. I want to spend the remainder of our time here talking about what we would do in our classes. I started with that. It's like an art class sandwich, because I started saying this stuff about the surveys and the pretest, then we thought about where we might send them away to, but now we're going to come back in our class. What are the things we can do?

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

The first thing we want to do is stop making the fundamental attribution error. See if you can catch yourself doing it. If you see a student do something that is frustrating or otherwise perplexing to you, stop and ask yourself, okay, is there anything about the context here that might've produced this behavior? Is there anything situational that might better explain this, then the student's kind of personality? And more importantly ask, can I take any ownership here? Am I creating this? Am I making this harder than it needs to be? Because here's the thing about learning. Learning only works if there are productive barriers in it. If students already know everything when they come to you, that's not learning because they already know everything.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

But if they come to you and there are barriers that don't actually help them be successful, they don't learn anything. We want the barriers to be there as a way to learn things, but sometimes the barriers are there just because of somebody's identity is different than what you thought was going to show up in your class. We want to get rid of those barriers. That's the overarching thing. Now we need to think about our syllabus, and whether or not our syllabus is unintentionally exclusive to certain people, I know people love to say it's in the syllabus, and there's all these kinds of things where they're asking things about what's the homework policy or late policy? What are office hours? How does the grades work out, that kind of thing.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

All those areas are at places you need to think about, am I actually being supportive here or exclusive? If you don't know, just quick plug. I'll be doing a workshop right after this, much more interactive than what we're doing here. We're going to sit in circle tables and actually work on syllabi. But I did create what I'm calling the world's worst syllabus, and I created that crowdsourced from around the world, actually I've given the examples of the worst syllabi you've ever seen. I created a composite one, and we're going to go through though and think about what are the clearly problematic things in the syllabus and also what are the things we didn't even realize were problems, but could actually be problems based on different identities. So, I won't do too much on the syllabus now since we're going to do that in the workshop.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

But there's a couple other things that I want to bring up where exclusivity can happen. Some people really prefer a lecture style of teaching and there is nothing wrong with lecture. If it's used properly. Very few people do the straight up lecture where you just stand and talk like I'm doing for an hour. But that's the nature of this kind of address, right. But there are plenty of people who are focused mostly on direct instruction. Interesting thing about that is different groups of students struggle with that type of direct instruction. This graph right here is a group of, I think they were biology and chemistry professors who used to have a primarily passive teaching style, mostly direct instruction, mostly lecture.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

They would take questions and stuff like that, but they weren't intentionally having students be active cognitively with the material. Those same exact professors made a commitment for the next semester to try to have more active learning. When I say active learning, I don't mean doing jumping jacks while you're doing it, right? I mean, that they are actually asking the students to do work with the material. When they did that, they saw an interesting thing. First of all, the average score across all the courses went up. So, students were getting higher scores in the active learning classroom than in the lecture only classroom, but the moving up was most pronounced for the groups of students who typically failed. Then with the active learning, so same as that professor, is they're just switching in their own classes and trying something new.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

You see that the average is much closer to 20% of students are failing the class. That's something to think about, to challenge yourself. If you don't already have your students being very active with the material, taking what you're telling them and then thinking through it deeply, thinking of examples, doing concept maps, those kinds of things, that you're actually probably being excluding to people from, historically, underrepresented groups because that, at least in this study, is who was usually failing, were people who were first generation students, students of color, those groupings. So, you become more active of a teacher, you actually help the students who need it the most.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

What about your assessments, and I'm using the word assessment to mean anything from an assignment to a test, anything like that where a student produces work and then you use that work in some way to make a determination about student knowledge. Assessment is a broad term. I see a lot of people with syllabi where they have lots of different assignments in their class, but they're just like little islands and it's like, hey, we work for a couple of weeks on this one and then we're done with it, and now we're going to start working on the documentary thing and then we're done with that, and then now we're going to start working on the essay project and then we're done with that. Contrast that though with the bottom where we have some small assessment and then we give the students very careful feedback and that feedback sets them up to do a better job on a subsequent assessment.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

We give them more feedback, either ours or peer feedback or whatever, and then that feedback sets them up to do something on the big assignment. When we do the islands approach where they are completely unrelated to each other, you can think of a situation in which somebody does the first assessment and they don't do well at all. You give them beautiful feedback though, beautiful feedback that tells them exactly how to get better and it's great, but then they don't ever do anything like that again in your class. So, they can't actually apply the feedback because now we're shifting from making movies of ourselves to writing essays.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

That's very different from if you set up a situation in which the feedback you give, either on the skills or on the content, then they'd get to try again. This reminds me of classes that only have a midterm and a final and that's very uncommon these days. But if you have something like that, put yourselves in the shoes of a student. Let's say you've got a student who comes in, they're real hard worker, they work really hard, but they bummed the first test. It's going to be really hard for them to get motivated to work well on the second exam because even if they do a great job on that second exam, their grade is already tanked for the whole semester halfway through, whereas if you have this bunch of little assignments that feed into one another, then they have a greater chance of being successful.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

But what I'm advocating for is, I guess you could call them graduated assessments where they all connect to each other and move forward so that the feedback actually feeds forward and so that your class is about mastering some skills or some content that gets tested at the very end, but throughout you are giving them feedback that supports them in getting better at doing those kinds of things. This could be, so for example, in my class I will do a thing like I have a big assessment where they get a case study these are people are going to be teachers in the future. They get a case study that's an example of really bad teaching like the teacher's just horrible. What they're supposed to do is look at the case study and then they need to write a three-paragraph essay essentially, but there's no rules about number of paragraphs critiquing the teacher and saying what the teacher's doing wrong and then solutions for the teacher.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

It all has to be evidence based and connected to theory. Some students on day one are ready to bang that out and they're great. I could just say go do this and they're going to do it. A lot of them know they have never been asked to think critically in this way before. They're more ready to discuss the pros and cons of blah to blah theory. They can do that, but they're not used to looking at a real-world thing and applying. I found this out through trial and error because I thought they'd be ready and then I gave it the very first semester I taught this and everybody failed. So, I was like, ooh, clearly, I need to build some scaffolding in here.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Over time, I've backed it up. Now, the very first little assessment is them working in groups where they are doing a practice case study together and then they go and give each other feedback on each other's groups work, and then I come in and give feedback on the feedback. Then they do a practice solo activity by themselves that they get feedback on and then they do the big one and now I have way more people being successful because I recognize that more scaffolding was needed than I was providing. I also want you to think about the types of assessments you use. So, I used to give a test in this class, it was pretty typical in its format. I had like some multiple choice, some short essay. So people would sit down, they had 50 minutes to complete it. So, I would sit up there at the front and watch them.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

They would bring them in, and there's always a couple people who wait up to the last second or five minutes over if you let them. I started noticing an interesting thing about those stragglers. There was an interesting trend about the papers that ended up on the top, meaning they were turned in latest. Anybody want to guess one of the quality levels of the papers that get turned in last minute?

Audience:

[crosstalk 00:53:29].

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Oh, I heard it, best and worst. The ones at the top are the papers that are the best in the class and the worst. The ones that are the best are students who have figured this out. They look up at the clock, they go, "All right, I got 50 minutes. That means five minutes to brainstorm, five minutes prepare ..." They plan the whole thing out and they go through and they keep themselves on top and they turn in a beautiful paper. The other papers are the ones where they look up when the bell rings and they still got another question left. But I had this moment, this aha moment where I went, "Wait a minute."

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

So, being successful in my exam, sure it requires mastery of the content that I'm teaching, but you also got to think real fast and write real fast and do all these other things that I don't care about. I wasn't trying to teach them to be fast thinkers and fast essay writers. I was trying to teach them to be strategic decision makers as teachers. So, I realized that I had all this error in my assessment. I was teaching or I was assessing things I didn't care about, speed of processing. So I had to totally go in and change the way I did this test because I didn't want to assess how fast people think anymore. What I would encourage you as you guys are putting your syllabi together and you're looking at the assignments you're going to have them turn in, just go through and list what are all the skills or content knowledge somebody would need to be good at each of the things you're going to grade them on and then make sure you feel confident that that's what you're assessing them on.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Or see if there's any unintentional barriers you're throwing up. Now, some of the things you teach, you do need fluency, you do need people to do the thing fast. I'm not saying take that out, but get really clear on, do I actually want to test them on this skill, and if they need to do something like fluency, make sure your teaching prepares them for that. Make sure you are letting them practice and rehearse the skills you're assessing them on, which is usually a lot more than just content. The last couple of things I'll say here pertain to how you grade stuff. A great way to make sure you're not being exclusive is to use rubrics.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Now, people have big feelings about rubrics. I don't know if anybody in here has big feelings about rubrics. Well, let me see what a rubric is not. A rubric is not telling them exactly what to do in order to get all the points, so if that's your current understanding of it, let's refine that a little bit. A rubric is a roadmap to success, not to get all the points, but a rubric shows them what different levels of quality of work would be scored at. That's what a rubric is. So it's not things like has title page, wrote 500 words. Those are directions. That's a checklist, whereas a rubric is actually helping to start thinking about what level is my work at if I look at this rubric.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Sometimes another thing people complain about rubrics, well it's not possible to come up with a rubric for the things I care about, like creativity. I want assess how creative somebody was. Well, just so you know, there is this whole free project called value rubrics, V-A-L-U-E, it's from the Association of American Colleges and Universities. If you just Google value rubrics, you go to their website. You do have to give them your email address, don't know why, but you do. But then you get access to all of these evidence-based peer reviewed rubrics, or those of you who teach very specific physical skills like constructing things, building things, you can use rubrics for that as well.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

This is really beneficial because some of your students don't need rubrics because of whatever background experiences they've had. They'll come in and they will just knock it out of the park immediately. Well, guess what? Those were the students who didn't need you. I sometimes catch myself doing this. A student will rock it on my first test and I'll feel so proud for them and I'm like claiming their success as like my success, but if they did that on exam one, I didn't accomplish that. They are what I call teacher proof. Even if I was horrible, they'd probably be fine. There are certain students that are that way, that they're just going to make it work, but I feel like we shouldn't be here for them. We can't claim their successes as our successes.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Our successes are the students who need us, and if we didn't construct a very careful scaffolding, they would fall. Those are the successes you can maybe claim, the student who was struggling so much at the beginning of the semester, by the end of the semester they are meeting your expectations, that's the student we need to be working for. That's the student who needs to see examples of strong and weak work. The last example of things I will talk about before we close here is sometimes you give really great feedback to a student. You tell them that they have run on sentences or you tell them that they miscalculated something like that and you feel really good about the feedback you've given them, and you give it to students and they don't get any better.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Maybe it's because they're lazy. Maybe they have the blood test issue, they tested lazy, but maybe it's because they don't know how to use your feedback. Maybe they have not had an experience in the past where having something circled as run on sentence means anything to them. Maybe they need to be scaffolded and how to respond to your feedback. Two ideas, both of which are called like an exam wrapper. I don't know if you've heard of this before, where when you give somebody's assignment or exam back, you ask them to do some metacognitive reflection about it. If you're somebody who gives primarily multiple-choice tests, this is a good way to do it where you have them go through either all the questions or a selection of the questions. They write the question up there or maybe you have it preset ahead of time.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

If they got it right when they took it, they explain why they think they got it right. Did they use a certain memory trick? Can they give an example of this in the real world to just cement it? If they got it wrong, they pick one of these things to do in order to help move their learning forward. This helps students think through why they got things wrong so that they're developing strategies to be successful in the future. This is a great way to get students to start knowing how to respond to feedback. This is one I do. I have them think about, whether or not they're satisfied with the score that they got, I have them, say whether or not they put enough effort into it, which is instructive to make them be accountable for their level of effort.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

And then, I asked them to look at my feedback and list their strengths and weaknesses. So they actually have to do some processing of the feedback. Then they come up with a goal for the next time we're going to do this case study essay and three action steps that they're going to take to get them there. This is actually having students become accountable, but it's actually you teaching them how to do it, you teaching them how to respond to feedback, and think about after they leave you and go on to another professor, if they take these set of skills with them, you've helped them out so very much for all the other classes. The whole point I've been trying to make here is that we shouldn't just keep living in this space where the students' behavior doesn't meet up with their expectations. We need to take some ownership in terms of building the scaffolding ourselves.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

We need to make sure we know who the students are so that we're pitching our course at the right level and for the right identities in the room. We need to be aware of any of the resources that are outside of us so that we can point students in the right direction when it's something we can't handle. But most importantly, and closest to success, we got to think about the way that we are erecting barriers or ripping down barriers so that our students can be successful with us and beyond. We have to keep this idea in mind. I think many of us, not all of us, but many of us were probably good students ourselves. Because we were good students, we decided to pick a career where we could keep playing school for the rest of our lives.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

That's me. That's why I did it. But if we're teaching the little mes, we're teaching just for us, we're going to miss out on so many people. We can't teach the people that we wish we had. We have to teach who shows up. You might be a little overwhelming at this moment, I don't know, because maybe you already do all this and you're like, good, Monday is going to be great. Or maybe you're like, oh, shoot. Okay. If you're in that space right now, it's okay. It's okay. This is how our students feel in our classes all the time. But to remember a couple of things, in closing. A lot of you are going to teach for many, many years, and although we all wish that each time we go into a classroom, we give the most amazing version of our teaching selves as we can, we know that's not true.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

Instead of viewing it like a sprint, and I know that running is a big part of Mt. SAC. My husband runs for living. He was very excited I was coming here. Because I have to be honest, I had not heard of Mt. SAC before, and he was like, "What?" Anyways, that was just a little thing. So, teaching is a marathon, not a sprint. Also, this though, and I always like to conclude my faculty development with this. I wish I could tell you that there's a day in your career that you wake up and you have achieved teaching excellence, where you've got it all figured out and now everything's going to be perfect from here on out. Unfortunately, teaching's an asymptotic function. The idea with an asymptote is we've got this line and the function will get closer and closer to it for infinity, but it will never touch the line.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

I think that's a good way to think about our teaching. Also, for those of you who are new to teaching, you've only taught a few years, the cool thing is about this is that small tweaks early on your career have huge payback, If you're doing literally none of the stuff I talked about up here before, you have done none of it, then maybe just pick one or two to try this semester and you will experience those bumps. Those of you who have been doing it for a while, you're past the main hump. Well, if you've been doing it for a while, it's because you love it and you are willing to keep making these tiny little tweaks over and over again in order to get closer and closer to excellence, even though we know we will never reach it.

Dr. Lindsay Masland:

The last thing I'll say is I think why we do all of this at all is because of the immense power in the learning process and that if we do it right, students are completely empowered. One day I had a student write this in an essay, an anonymous essay so I can't even attribute it, but I thought it was amazing and I thought it was exactly why I do it and why you probably do it too. She said, "That's why I want to teach, for the big eyes, the ability to conquer challenges that seem so out of reach, building teamwork and unlikely friendships, encouraging better citizens of the world." That's it. That's the reason, and it all starts with one teacher. Been nice speaking with you guys and I'd be happy to continue the conversation. Thank you.

Christina:

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