

Florida Tech FIT to Teach Podcast

CHELSEA STRIPLING IS A SUPER POWERED TEACHING LIBRARIAN

Jared Campbell: Welcome everybody to the FIT to Teach podcast here at the Florida Institute of Technology. I'm Jared Campbell, your host, and I'm sitting here with the glorious Chelsea Stripling, who is an amazing instructor, has a lot of really great pedagogical knowledge and really knows how to motivate her students.

Jared Campbell: So how are you doing today, Chelsea?

Chelsea Stripling: Thank you for that. That's so generous and sweet. I'm doing well.

Jared Campbell: I've actually experienced you in the classroom before, and I was very impressed. I would like you to tell me about your teaching experience.

Chelsea Stripling: Ok, so I had a somewhat unique path to teaching. So I am a librarian. I have a master's in library and information science. And I knew I was always interested in education, really interested in English, you know, kind of liked the idea of teaching. Certainly didn't really like the idea of being a K-12 teacher. So I didn't really know where that left me.

Jared Campbell: I did that.

Chelsea Stripling: Yes, exactly.

Jared Campbell: I know how you feel that way.

Chelsea Stripling: Exactly.

Jared Campbell: Actually, I love teaching. That was that was an experience. Go ahead.

Chelsea Stripling: Yes. Yes. No, no, of course. So yeah. So I started out in public libraries and I got a lot of experience with what we call in library's reference service. So that's kind of the one on one helping of patron. You know, they might have a question or an issue and, you know, you can talk them through that, find them resources to help them. So a natural extension of reference service is instruction. So I found as I was going through my master's program that I was more and more interested in the idea of being in front of a classroom and using pedagogical principles to teach information. And again, because I really have a passion for making sure people have learned something after they have an interaction with me, you know, especially as a librarian. So so, yeah. So I had wonderful teachers in my master's program. I actually hooked up with a couple of bigger figures in the library world. And, you know, they really kind of mentored me, encouraged my kind of interest and instruction and said, you know, you can really do this. You know, you'll be great at it. And at the time, instruction was kind of an up and coming movement in libraries. Not as many librarians taught classes or did instruction. So it something kind of new, though, I did in a really interesting and kind of open internship for instruction. So I actually had the opportunity to teach classes in the library. I had the opportunity to develop lesson plans and talk about assessments. That was really great. So I you know, that's where the bulk of my experience comes from, you know, was through my master's program. So, you know, kind of a unique, unique path perhaps than other academics.

Jared Campbell: When I went to school, I was I was going to school to become a like a science teacher. So that was like, you know, that was the path.

Chelsea Stripling: Yeah

Jared Campbell: You know, it sounds like yours. The path was revealed to you once you got going with the library sciences stuff. That's that's fascinating. I remember watching you teach and you were using a lot of active learning principles.

Chelsea Stripling: Yes.

Jared Campbell: And I thought that was a really welcome, you know, because so often, so often students just sit especially at a college. You know, they sit there and they watch the professor and the professor talks and talks and maybe shows a PowerPoint. And then you just kind of sit there and drool on the desk for a minute.

Chelsea Stripling: Yeah

Jared Campbell: But it was really nice to see that. I have noticed that from from multiple teachers here at Florida Institute of Technology, that they seem to be a little bit more on their game as far as teaching goes, at least some of the people that I've seen. But you in particular, I thought I had a very you had a spark to you know, I thought.

Chelsea Stripling: Thank you, yeah. Oh, yes, yeah, I do try. And that's one of the things that, again, because I kind of got interested in instruction and thought, you know, what are some of the ways that I can make this more interesting? And as a librarian, my expertise area, of course, is information literacy, which is an interesting kind of blanket term for, you know, research skills. I mean, you know, the idea of finding and using quality information. So that's not always the most exciting topic to teach. It can be a little boring sometimes. So I have, you know, again, really tried to find strategies and techniques that will help me make it a little bit more interesting for the students and a little bit more relevant for them as well. Because really what I teach them, of course, they can use here at Florida Tech and in and, you know, continuing while they're a college student. But that will apply to their professional and personal lives outside of, you know, outside of college.

Jared Campbell: That's true. It's I feel that that sort of a crusade in a way, in some ways, because you see so many things on social media where people are putting information out there that just isn't true, you know.

Chelsea Stripling: Yeah, yeah.

Jared Campbell: And and they're putting it out and there's people don't know how to discern that. So I think what you're doing is like, I think a national security kind of issue. I really do.

Chelsea Stripling: Thank you, yeah, yeah, a lot of librarians agree with you. There's there's definitely a big push for that. And, um, and of course, I feel that way. I think information literacy is you know, it's certainly not, again, something that you just learn in the confines of college. So it's, it's an important concept.

Jared Campbell: Information is everywhere, right, especially these days.

Chelsea Stripling: Is an overload of information, in fact.

Jared Campbell: I know, there's so much that they say that knowledge is irrelevant now. Actually, I've read this in several places where knowledge is irrelevant because you can just access it at your fingertips.

Chelsea Stripling: Interesting

Jared Campbell: You know, we're kind of walking around these little we're like these cybernetic creatures now, you know, because we all have these smartphones in our pockets and we walk around and we don't have to remember what time it is at a particular location. We can look it up in our phone or maybe if we visit that place, it'll automatically change.

Chelsea Stripling: Right, right.

Jared Campbell: Or, you know, like if I want to learn how to make beef Wellington, like, you know, at 2:00 a.m. in the morning, I don't have to worry about how I don't have to wait to go see the chef.

Chelsea Stripling: Exactly.

Jared Campbell: I can I can pop up on YouTube and just go to go crazy. So being able to navigate through all that information because it's like knee deep in nonsense.

Chelsea Stripling: It is a lot of it. And I think that's one of the biggest challenges that our students face when they get here is, you know, kind of maybe breaking bad habits that they might have developed. And you mentioned to like kind of how Google is a natural extension of our knowledge. And I think that especially folks of the younger generation, I think they take that for granted. You know, I mean, it's always just easy enough to find the answer to a question. So I think that in a way they may value the process of research a little less so, you know, it's kind of up to me again to tell them why this is important and and also why, you know, it matters to pay attention to the information that you're using and the stuff that you know you're taking in and forming knowledge from.

Jared Campbell: I do notice that it seems like millennials tend to be a little bit more like I don't believe you. You know.

Chelsea Stripling: Yeah.

Jared Campbell: You know, like they don't necessarily say they want to have some verification. So I bet you're like I bet your students are really loving your class, because that skepticism, I think, when it comes comes to evaluating information seems to be part of how they are going through things there. I've noticed talking to millennials, they don't they're like, no, I don't believe you. And they'll look it up on Snopes and they'll look it up here and they'll look it up in all these different places.

Chelsea Stripling: Yeah.

Jared Campbell: So you're like giving them kung fu powers or something?

Chelsea Stripling: Definitely. I hope so.

Jared Campbell: Which is good.

Chelsea Stripling: I hope they leave my classroom. Definitely, you know, more informed and at least if anything, empowered to use resources to find higher quality information. Because, again, that's, you know, one of the biggest things that I think is, you know, a big challenge that they're facing.

Jared Campbell: So that's definitely a noble cause. I have. Bravo to you Chelsea Stripling.

Chelsea Stripling: Thank you, Yes. Yes.

Jared Campbell: So tell me something that you do that's unique in your class.

Chelsea Stripling: OK, yeah.

Chelsea Stripling: So. Well, I can tell you, I can talk about two things, actually. So you mentioned earlier that I use active learning techniques, so I'll talk about that for a second. Um, since I do again try to find ways to make my material then content that I'm covering a little bit more entertaining and creative. So I do try to engage them and I really believe in this idea of application. So, you know, if you're going to talk about a concept, you should apply it in the classroom or apply it as soon as possible, because otherwise, you know, when you're left to kind of sit on some information, it might not really be, you know, as poignant. So if the students can use the concepts that we're talking about in the classroom and apply them to eventually some sort of research

project perhaps that they're doing on campus, I think that's really important. So I try to engage them. I try to also keep an open sort of discussion format for my class. I always tell them, you know, you don't have to wait to the end to ask questions, you know, always interrupt or whatever. If you have ideas. I use poll everywhere quite a bit in my class. So, you know, I might start the class off just with a couple of questions and, you know, have them poll in their responses, which they really seem to enjoy. And that kind of gets the discussion going a little bit.

Jared Campbell: So poll everywhere. That's the Web based student response system where you can ask a question and then they can respond with like their phone. Is that am I think, of the right thing.

Chelsea Stripling: That is the right thing. Yes, it's awesome. And it is it's kind of like the more contemporary version of the classroom clicker idea, you know, so students can use a mobile device, they can use a laptop, anything with a web connection to reply to the poll.

Jared Campbell: It's such a powerful tool. The student response systems are transformative. I think.

Chelsea Stripling: I agree and like I said, it really seems to kick start the discussion. You know, like if I come into class cold and just ask them a bunch of questions, I don't really get any responses.

Jared Campbell: That's right, that's right. You tell them to push a button. They're all over it.

Chelsea Stripling: Oh, totally.

Chelsea Stripling: So, yeah. So I try to do things like that as well as in class activities when I can, um, you know, with library resources, of course there's a lot of options, so, you know, unlimited topics and unlimited, you know, resources and all kinds of information. So it gives me a lot of freedom to design things that might be fun and entertaining, which is great.

Jared Campbell: That must be exciting for your students, too.

Chelsea Stripling: I think so. I hope so. But as far as one thing I do uniquely with my class and I didn't mention this, but I teach a class here on campus, it's for credit class Com 2012, research sources and systems. So it's a one credit class that we meet once a week. And again, I kind of walk them through the ideas that they need to understand to be information literate. So, you know, we talk about what sort of formats information comes in, the different ways that they might interact with it, the ways that they might use search tools to find it, all that kind of stuff. But one of the things that I stress is evaluation of information. So the students need to learn how to properly evaluate a source for credibility, reliability, just to make sure that that sources not only appropriate for their topic, but is going to, you know, fulfill their kind of information need, what question are they trying to answer, you know, and can at source help them. So I've developed a in class activity for that week. So we talk about it. And I have actually there's a lot of different ways that you can evaluate information. And if you do a Google search on it, there's tons of different little acronyms and things that will help you along. So in my class, we tend to make it simple and we stick with who, why, when. So the students have to think about the who, the why and the when behind each information source that they have. So this group activity I developed, they use the Who Why When method as a small group to evaluate an information or an Internet source that I provide them. So the sources that they can choose from are a mix of reliable and unreliable websites. So I throw in a couple in there to, you know, try to fool them. It works about half the time, you know, usually pretty good at evaluating and identifying when something is a little suspicious.

Jared Campbell: Ah, Millennials.

Chelsea Stripling: Exactly.

Jared Campbell: They're clever.

Chelsea Stripling: They are. But but yeah. So I think that exercise always goes over really well. And it's interesting, you know, for the students to kind of get some hands on because, again, most of the interaction that they have with information is in the digital form. So they're either, you know, using databases or using the web search and finding websites and things like that. So they need to be comfortable with finding a Web site and determining whether or not that website is.

Jared Campbell: Such a valuable lesson, it really is. Like your crazy uncle is posting all that, you know, political garbage on there. It's like, come on, it doesn't pass the smell test.

Chelsea Stripling: I know, we actually talk about that in class on purpose because of that.

Jared Campbell: Bravo, bravo.

Chelsea Stripling: Thank you.

Jared Campbell: Because there's nothing worse than somebody who's making bad arguments with because of the bad information. But it's also if you are going to engage in a debate with somebody, it's always nice to have those types of folks as your opponents because you can bring them down.

Chelsea Stripling: Yeah, exactly right. They're very one, you know, centered around one argument.

Jared Campbell: But like you said, not an emotional way, like, you know, in a in a very, you know, calm way.

Chelsea Stripling: Yes.

Jared Campbell: Although some people do receive they do receive being wrong sometimes in an emotional way.

Chelsea Stripling: That is true.

Jared Campbell: And I think that's their problem. A lot of times, you know, as long as you're sweet about it, because I believe kindness is everything, you know.

Chelsea Stripling: I agree

Jared Campbell: I really do. So it's like my religion if I have one. And I think that telling somebody that to break it down to them and to the brass tacks, like, here's why it's wrong.

Chelsea Stripling: Yeah

Jared Campbell: I think it's really a big sign of respect because that means you're willing to be in a comfortable space for somebody who's, uh, you know, who should really be more thoughtful or something like this that encourages good behavior, I think.

Chelsea Stripling: Yeah, I really agree. You know, it's easy to have an emotional response to, you know, especially some of these current event topics and the things that are coming around that are kind of heavy and bigger issues. And, you know, again, I try to make sure my students are of the mindset that, you know, reserve emotional judgment until you can find the facts

Jared Campbell: Yeah

Chelsea Stripling: To back yourself up with real information.

Jared Campbell: And that's right. And then laugh while you give it.

Chelsea Stripling: Exactly.

Jared Campbell: That emotion instead of like, you know, people are wonky about that stuff.

Jared Campbell: Well, that sounds really cool. Would you be willing to share, like, something on our Web page that?

Chelsea Stripling: Definitely.

Jared Campbell: Yeah.

Chelsea Stripling: Yeah, yeah. So I have and so it's you know, it's a small group exercise. So there's a kind of group worksheet as well as a list of websites. So I can share that, you know, for all the instructors out there listening, whether you're at FIT or not, don't forget about how important information literacy is for your students. And also, don't forget how easy it is to integrate these information literacy concepts into another kind of curriculum. Sometimes I hear, you know, from faculty, instructors and things like that that they say, oh, well, you know, you're teaching information, literacy concepts. That's great for the library, you know, but I'm an engineer, right? So what do I need that for? And like I mentioned, these skills are transferable and they are something that people will use throughout their life. So it's not just something related to college and it's something that everybody, I think needs to have a grasp on. So whether you're an engineer or, you know, a communications major, it's still really important. And there are, again, easy ways that you can talk about this idea of, you know, credible information

and, you know, using information effectively. And, of course, the big thing citations and avoiding plagiarism. You know, I mean, it's important to focus on all of that stuff.

Jared Campbell: So here's a question for you. So there's like programmers out there, right? Sometimes there's only one way to program something to do something.

Chelsea Stripling: Right, Right.

Jared Campbell: How would you how would you approach that in terms of plagiarism if there's only like one way to do it?

That is actually an interesting question, because we had a student that had a similar question. And I want to say it might have been last spring if my memory serves. And unfortunately, I never learned what he ultimately decided to do, but he was using a piece of code that one of his classmates had edited. And apparently there is, like you said, a certain element of the code that has to stay the same. You know, I mean, it has to perform a certain function. So it's there. But I guess the edits that were made by his classmate, you know, changed some things and then he made it unique. So when this student that I was speaking with went to use that bit of code and then submit it for his own class, he left that bit in there that was edited by his classmate, so there was an issue there with like a potential plagiarism between these two students. And again, I just remember feeling for the student because he was even like I didn't know that that was even possible, you know?

Jared Campbell: So I guess in that case, would they just add the add a comment in their code that says, hey, I got I looked at this from Steve or whatever. You know?

Chelsea Stripling: I wonder about that. I know. I actually I'm not sure what the best practice would be on that, but I would think it would be something that way.

Jared Campbell: Yeah, it seems like that would I think that would be the most appropriate way of doing it.

Chelsea Stripling: I know most you know, I mean, if for not just academics, but for other people too. But if you want to share, you know, information, you can put a Creative Commons license on it.

Jared Campbell: Ah

Chelsea Stripling: And so I don't know. Yeah. So there's there are there are things such as open software, you know, and there are people that publish code and things like that under Creative Commons. So I would assume based on that, that. Yeah, a little bit of attribution, you know.

Jared Campbell: Yeah, some attribution. Right, it's the same way, I guess it's just strange. Like, you know, citing something from within that code is different than like on a research paper.

Chelsea Stripling: Oh definitely

Jared Campbell: Or something like this, you know.

Chelsea Stripling: So yeah, I know. And it is it's kind of it's kind of a unique challenge.

Jared Campbell: Yeah.

Chelsea Stripling: And, you know, that's also plug myself and my colleagues in my profession. That's where librarians can help you.

Jared Campbell: Haha, nice.

Chelsea Stripling: Because we do get a lot of these like really kind of unique questions. And, you know, we not just librarians here at Florida Tech, but librarians all around the country. We share information a lot. So we tend to, you know, participate in discussion groups and we talk about these kinds of difficult questions that we get.

Jared Campbell: Chelsea Stripling, it's been very lovely speaking to you today. You are a wonderful teacher and I'm really happy to work with you.

Chelsea Stripling: Thank you very much. And thank you for having me on the podcast today. I've had fun.