

[intro music begins (instrumental, laid back rhythmic strings, drums, and piano)]

STEPHANIE: Hello, and welcome to Library Table Talk. I'm Stephanie Sparrow, one of your hosts.

HANNAH: And I'm Hannah Cabullo, your other host. In Library Table Talk, we're two librarians exploring what academic librarianship looks like in the day-to-day – across different types of institutions and roles.

STEPHANIE: Nothing is off the table. We're happy to have you here.

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HANNAH: In today's episode, we'll talk with our guests about when things don't go according to plan in the classroom and about the times we might feel like we failed as an instructor. It's one of at least a couple episodes when we talk with someone who would be our early-to-mid-career listeners' peer, as well as someone who is an experienced mentor. So I am so happy to share that our guests for this episode are Ben Chiewphasa and Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe.

STEPHANIE: Like we mentioned in our last episode, we'd love to get your feedback on episode format and length. While our first two episodes are similar in having two back-to-back interviews, for our third we'll be just doing one interview. So we'd love it if you send us a note at our website, z.umn.edu/librarytabletalk.

HANNAH: We also want to create an opportunity for listener participation. If you want to share a story, anonymously or not, of a time you felt like you failed in the classroom, head over to our Participate page on our website, and we'll share some of these stories in a future episode. I think that's all of our preliminaries? Yes?

STEPHANIE: Yes, I think so.

HANNAH: Can you start by introducing yourself?

BEN: Yeah. So thank you for having me. And yeah, my name is Ben Chiewphasa. My pronouns are he/him/his. And yeah, I currently work with Columbia University Libraries. I'm the Social Sciences and Policy Librarian, and I've been with Columbia for not that long. I want to say a little under 2 years, but I started in libraries back in 2015. I was a cataloger for a few years. Then I became a government information librarian at the University of Montana. And after that was an economics and data librarian with Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. And now I'm in New York City. So I have moved across very different spaces and kinds of communities, right, from like rural Midwest, and like mountain state, and now the city of cities. So, but I originally am from the Los Angeles region. So, so all 4 very different places. [laughs]

STEPHANIE: Yeah. And you also have a range of roles that you've been in as well, it sounds like, different subject areas... So you really are just kind of going on a tour of librarianship, and also the country, it seems. So, could you please give us an overview of how in those roles, and maybe other roles you've been in, what your instruction experience has been like, and the different types of contexts you've taught in?

BEN: Yeah, yeah. So, I think I've had a lot of opportunities to teach in different kinds of setups and modalities and settings and audiences even. So, right now, and really, since I started becoming a librarian, information literacy instruction has been pretty core to what I do, right? The, what we think about the traditional like one shot kind of setting where we come into the classroom and see students for like an hour, and then we're done. But, trying to be intentional and strategic with that too, obviously. But we know the challenges of working in that space. So I've navigated that, but have also taught credit-bearing courses, too, as an instructor of record. That started back in University of Montana, where I was a co-instructor with an adjunct faculty in the Environmental Studies department there, where I taught a course called Environmental Information Resources. So kind of applying that info lit perspective and associated learning objectives, but being very targeted towards those in environmental science, environmental studies.

BEN: At Notre Dame, I got this course development grant to design and essentially deliver this 3-credit bearing course called Open Government Data, which was trying to be ambitious in that it was, it was part seminar, part like lecture, part roundtable. But also there were some elements of computer programming as well, navigating space of, you know, now we're become more aware of the open government data landscape, what agencies produce information and certain kinds of data? Why, it's political. Why is it the way it is? Now that we're aware of that, how do we, as you know, actors or stakeholders in that field kind of extract that data, use that data in ways that are actionable, like policy making, in a business context, what have you? But yeah, so that, so yeah, one-shots, the info lit, working with instructors to develop kind of info litty sorts of assignments as well. So like on the flip side of one-shots where it could feel like you're, you're in a silo, and it kind of feels like you're dropped in. I've also been fortunate enough to have worked one-on-one with instructors to come up with something meaningful, so that it's scaffolded, right? And there's a rhyme and reason why when when I come in, when the assignment is administered, how it's graded, coming up with a rubric and all that. And those are incredibly rewarding, but, as you can imagine, take more time and effort.

BEN: And I guess I'll also add one other thing I do. And I still continue to be involved with is an organization called the Carpentries, where I teach computer programming. And if you're unfamiliar with the Carpentries, it's this decentralized community of folks from libraries, but also from all kinds of disciplines, faculty members, graduate students who are, who love teaching, who love teaching data science and coding. And really the curriculum, and how the approach of teaching is administered is very intentional in the pedagogy. So it's very hands-on. It's very learner-focused. This idea of like, the best way to code is to code along with your learners. So that kind of fitting in what we're talking about today, but you know, so that when we do, as the instructor do enter instances of failure or accidents, we kind of humanize it and make it realistic

for our learners, versus kind of setting up this, like, [laughs] like everything, is perfect. And if you run into mistakes like, boo on you. Like, so. But yeah, that's, wow. So yeah, so those were the kinds of different instructional settings I've been involved with.

STEPHANIE: Thank you. That for one, all of that, it sounds so fascinating. I feel you with the sense that, like as a learner, I like it when the instructors also maybe stumble or fail, makes it more relatable. And also, I like to remind myself that, like research is iterative, so like, what... teaching, you make mistakes as you go, but also you can work through it. So, have you intentionally pursued instruction through grad school and in your decisions as you navigate your roles in these different institutions? Or was it something that kind of ended up in your lap, and you were kind of surprised by it, and went with it?

BEN: Yeah, thanks for that question, cuz it... As you were saying, that I had to think for a bit, and in a way, I've sort of enjoyed this idea of being an instructor ever since I started graduate school in anthropology back in 2014. Maybe like, by enrolling in graduate school in that particular discipline that I could eventually, you know, reach a tenure track position. Then teaching would be involved. But as I pivoted into the library world from there, and went into cataloging, it was more in the back of my head and wasn't like, oh, this is gonna end up being what I do as a core responsibility in whatever job I end up taking. Because I did cataloging for about like 3 to 4-ish years, I believe. And then, as I was working, so I was a cataloger with the University of Montana, where it was then like, followed up by my 1st librarian gig. When I was there, I also enrolled in the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign's iSchool. So I was working as a cataloger while also finishing up my library degree, and around like, what is it? 2018? Something like that, lost track of time. But like around that time. And I had been shadowing some folks, some colleagues at the library there, at the Mansfield Library. Been kind of doing one-off workshops, too, and it kind of opened my eyes, especially in terms of like talking with colleagues and shadowing them, and getting a sense of their workflow and what they're thinking about in teaching. Because it made me also reflect upon how I was taught to teach, or rather the lack thereof, of those kinds of experience back in graduate school where it was very content-focused, right? It wasn't about being in a learner mindset. It wasn't about scaffolding, and those terms weren't like thrown around at all. It was about like, okay, these are the core competencies or the core things that an anthropology student needs to get by the time they graduate. Whether that's, you know, undergraduate or graduate context. So it was kind of, in a way, mind blowing to like, oh, yeah, this all it kind of like makes sense. But the fact that wasn't even talked about during my graduate studies. But also, I think it's, it reflects too around like, you know, maybe some folks get into teaching because of who their role models are, who they, their core group is, and they work around. Because I do like, as I'm talking out loud, too, I was reflecting on a friend of mine while in graduate studies who was a really good teacher, and we did talk about some of the ways in that she handled being a teaching assistant. And if I remember correctly, she had a very great advisor who thought holistically, right, like, if you're going to be a tenure track faculty member, like these are things you think about, not the research, but the teaching and what it takes to be a good teacher. So in a similar vein, like right, to have such a cool core of librarians that I got to talk with during my time at the University of

Montana at the Mansfield Library, kind of led me down the path of like, oh, yeah, I've you know, re-sparked that interest in teaching again, but to also think about it intentionally now as well.

BEN: So I remember in graduate school I then, the iSchool curriculum was very heavy on, I think it still is right now, where it focuses on choosing certain electives, and kind of letting you build your pathway of what you want to get out of the library school experience. And I remember like, oh, now I want to, I'm more interested in like the reference classes, the instruction classes. Shout out to Melissa Wong, who taught those 2 classes, who's an amazing instructor herself. So yeah. And then went from there. So. And I think too, once I, after graduate school, and being more embedded in instructional tasks, right, like the one-shots and whatnot, it did open my mind, too, of how complicated the responsibility can be, because it's all very contextual. It's all very... not black and white, right?

STEPHANIE: So how does how effective you feel as a teacher vary by the context in which you're teaching in? Like a one-shot or credit-bearing, or to be collaborating with another faculty member.

BEN: Yes. The context, I feel as though, like reflecting back, I don't wanna like generalize too much. But sometimes, right like, I think about audience, how that particular context, in a way like affects how I plan, but also affects how vulnerable or not I get. If so, I guess, let me explain. So, I think, reflecting, and I feel like I'm more like early- to mid-ish career. So like maybe not... But what is mid-career? I don't know. But but I remember, at least in my early career, right, especially when working with like younger undergrads like their 1st years or whatnot, back of my head was like, oh, I want to be that, you know, I want to at least come across as that cool librarian. I want to like, you know, be so relatable, and [laughs] and all that. And in a way, that did, thinking back, affect what I prioritized in the back of my head, whether or not it was intentional or not. And because of that, maybe when it seems like I'm not connecting, it affected me more right? Because I already came into that space with that mindset or that goal to be relatable, to be that cool librarian. But the context, too, of, right, what is that class they're in, right? Is this like, what is their relationship with their professor? Is this, are they having a bad day? Right? Or is it, is it... Because we do have to recognize, too, right, that that context does influence how we react or kind of gauge or read the room, rather. Some context we can control, and a lot we can't control. Right? If we're teaching, and there's a few folks who kind of give you a deadpan, or, like look disinterested. It might not be you, and might just be again, they might be having, or going through something right now. Maybe they woke up an hour ago, and they're not a morning person. There's so many things I guess, going back to your thing of context, that kind of influences kind of what I expect. And now I guess, to circle back to your question too, now in my like, early-to-mid-career kind of library stage, I don't let some of those things get to me as much anymore, because I'm aware of the context that is out of my control. But we're human, right? So like, I'm not gonna lie and say, like that doesn't affect me at all. It does, too, right? Especially if we're going to an instructional space, and we've done a lot of planning and being very intentional about the ACRL Framework, and doing all that work, and then if it doesn't, you don't stick the landing as you want it to in the beginning. Then obviously, you're, you'll be like, Oh, darn! I mean, I can do better. But you know. [laughs] So, yeah.

STEPHANIE: Thank you for sharing, and also for describing a feeling I'm sure many other people feel, because I know I'm like, yes, I know that feeling, too. And I can think of the classes that I do one-shots in, where I'm like, uh-huh, yeah, 8 a.m. No one's interested in being there.

HANNAH: All right. So that kind of plays into our next question of, we've asked you here to talk about failure in the context of library instruction. My guess is that most anyone who teaches is going to feel like a failure at some point. Or, I don't know, have negative feelings about how their teaching went. So could you share one or two anecdotes about something that didn't go according to plan in the classroom, maybe how you addressed it in the moment, or afterwards you're like, here's how I wish I would have addressed it in the moment, or another time that you felt like you failed at something teaching-related?

BEN: Yeah, I remember one of my early-career classes. So this is a one-shot class, and I came up with this worksheet, right, kinda tied to this one-shot. It's very, pretty standard, I would say, right, like the instructor asked me to come introduce students to core databases, core library resources and whatnot. And me being, you know, kind of like, oh, I want to be grounded by the Framework, I want to be grounded by best practices, I'm just thinking about like, ooh, what ways can I like really integrate that frame of, you know, authority is constructed and contextual like, how do I get that going in an hour? But, like, also fulfill that core ask, right, of the instructor to get students introduced to that database here and there. So I came up with this worksheet, and one of the questions, I don't know the exact wording of it, but it was essentially a worksheet where they are asked to find a particular article, explore a particular database, navigate that information space, get what they need that's relevant to their project. But then I also posed their question to them, of, okay, you have this piece of information, right? What does this information tell about us in terms of, like, whose voices are being presented? But whose voices are missing? Right? Whose voices are amplified. And all this like, quite frankly, like library speak, or instructional libraries speak. Very that, very that sphere and arena. And then right, getting, so students did that. And we, you know, reconvened, right, and I wanted to initiate more discussion with the whole group of what they found, how they navigated that database and that information space. But also touching upon that, too, right, about okay, your piece of information - what does it say about whose voices are there? Whose are missing? It just didn't, it was just confusing, I guess, is the one way to put it. Just they, they didn't really know what it was referring to. They were just thinking about, voices...? Like, yeah, I don't remember exactly where the initial point of confusion was. But basically, it was kind of crickets, right? Cuz it was asking them a lot. They're they're coming into the space where, okay, like, I just need like, the reason we're here is so that I become more familiar with library resources with this database. This database is good for this, and I got my requirement done, like boom, like, my, got what I needed. We're good, kind of thing. So yeah, I I think from that moment it just dawned on me, like right, like going back to the idea of intended audience. That context, right? Where they're at. Why, they're here, but also some of the context that I'm unaware of, or can never be fully aware of. I think how I have addressed that to this day, not in a perfect way, by any means, but to maybe tie in more tangible tasks or things that they're familiar with, and get them to connect the dots with more. And how I, if I were to pursue that frame again, right like, think about authority is constructed and

contextual, is maybe for like an author for them, or a journalist for them to, hey, like, look up their LinkedIn profile or see if you can Google them. What else have they written about? What are they interested in? And that kind of opens up that rabbit hole that is more genuine, I guess, and more relatable in the sense that we do do that more, right. It's like a task that's more common. You do it. I do it on the reg. And outside of research and scholarship as well.

BEN: So yeah, I think as I'm saying this out loud, right, thinking about failure... It's sometimes, we as instructional librarians put ourselves in that position in a way, because maybe we're too hard on ourselves and wanting to be, you know, so embedded in best practices, so embedded in what you know the literature is saying, so embedded in what others are saying. But reality is messier, right? So and especially like, I'll be honest also, like, because I've mentioned earlier that I teach or have taught credit-bearing courses, one-shots, programming, and whatnot. I feel like out of all that, the one-shot is definitely the hardest, because, the like, you only have an hour right? And even like some derailment, no matter how minor it is like, feels so major, because the stakes are high. You only have an hour. Like versus credit-bearing course, like you can, if something goes awry, I guess you have next class. You have ways to do formative assessment more organically. And I think at the end of the day, too, you just have more time to build community, which like, you know, between you and the students. And you just don't really have that. So with that, all contextualized, right? Like trying to like, not [laughs] be too hard on myself.

HANNAH: Thanks, yeah. And that reminds me, too, of times I've, you know, the conceptual things that we all get excited about as librarians, and how do we tie that into students? And the context is so important, of like, are they even types of conversations students are having in their normal classroom with their faculty member. Like, if if you don't know as much about the context you're dropping into, that can be hard to... So I like what you said about kind of making sure you're like scaffolding the, I guess larger conceptual things that we're trying to teach. Is there something that you would tell your past self? Like, let's say you go back to your office right after you realized your worksheet didn't go as according to plan, like, what would you have wanted to tell your past self after that?

BEN: I would tell my past self to, well, I've already said this, but, like you know, obviously not be too hard on yourself. There's [laughs], there's things outside of your control. But most importantly too, instead of just like, oh, well, that didn't work. Also taking a step where like, well, this is an opportunity area, right? Like taking time to reflect of why it didn't work. But also using that information to not like, use it to your advantage, I guess. Instead of just using that information as a way to be negative about yourself. Right? Yeah. So, and I, I will also tell my, you were mentioning like sociology, right? And like, you know, I also work with sociologists. But I also work with folks in international studies. I also work with folks in anthropology. So I'm a social sciences librarian, so I cover so many fields, I guess, so many layers.

BEN: And I think, it got me thinking, too, about how for some of us, especially like as librarians, whatever role you're in, there might be different stratifications, right? So again, going back to that context of, if you cover a lot of areas, there's no way that you can be an expert in all of the

areas. Right? That's just not possible. So yeah, so I would tell my past self to just like, you just can't be an expert in all that areas. But on the flip side, too, just to give my past self a reminder that you are an expert in the information landscape. Right? You are an expert in, or you can provide insight related to information science, libraries, navigating that space. So that kind of lens makes it so that, that's why people came to you in the first place. [laughs] So not to be bogged down by the nuances of the topic. Right? But how do we help folks like find, navigate, access, all that. That's where you come in and help guide your learners and students and faculty members. So, not being too bogged down by that, in quotes, lack of expertise. But to also recognize that you have expertise, too.

STEPHANIE: Thank you. And I am one of the librarians also with a range of disciplines, many of which I'm not that familiar with, like agriculture, and also kinesiology and family social science and environment. Okay, so I like really resonate, especially with starting the job right before the beginning of the semester being like, how am I expected to go in and instruct when I don't know these disciplines. And the librarian whose departments I inherited, as she moved to a different role, I remember she was like, you, even though you are new to this role, to being a librarian, you have expertise. You just need to know 10% more than them. And that was really helpful, at least for getting started. And like, get over the fear of not, or I guess, what is it? The oh, my God, why am I blanking on it? Deficit mindset. Instead, looking at, okay, no, I'm not even going to think about how I am not a trained instructor. I have never spoken in front of a class this large, but also, like I have used Ebsco products a lot. I can do that. Break it down to like what you can do in a moment. So we were talking a little earlier about some times of failure. Maybe a one-shot, maybe a worksheet didn't really go as planned. And when we talk about feelings of failure, it often goes hand-in-hand with imposter syndrome. And while that is its own thing, and could definitely be a whole other episode, could you share about how you personally work through some of those, the feelings of feeling like a failure or an imposter in the context of teaching?

BEN: Yeah, I will say again, because we're all human, right, this is one thing that I can fully admit still affects me pretty hard to be honest, like, and pretty, it's very much still there. Yeah, as I think about it, it has always like followed me, right? So, starting off, as you know, even being a cataloger, like learning, learning the ropes of that. But then, I guess, as you're assigned more, you know, complex tasks, right, you still have to continue learning, right? So, like, that's one thing that I try to instill upon me, as like, especially in our field, right, where we're constantly learning with, you know, not just changes of technology, but changes in how information gets manifested. What are the priorities of your given institution? So, kind of going back with the idea of, you know, if you're a subject librarian that covers many fields like you just realistically have to tell yourself you can't be the expert for all of those.

BEN: But I think one way I also handle it, too, is having a support network of other fellow librarians that, whether or not in your direct workplace, or folks that you meet in conferences, to just talk those experiences with and about with. Because you'd be surprised, right, like, oh, those kind of similar insecurities, fears, whatnot, are across the board, is similar. It might not be exact, but they're all there. And it was very, I feel as though my imposter syndrome was pretty

prevalent during my time as a data librarian in particular. But also just being opening open up to being upfront with your patrons, your learners of like, hey, I'm maybe, I'm not the best one to go to for this. But here's another individual too. There, there's that way to navigate that as well. And relying on, again, not going back to this idea of your network of librarians, not just in your immediate workplace, but also the friends I've made along the way in conferences, or even quite frankly, listserves as well. On a more kind of interpersonal level, the imposter syndrome, too, how I deal with that is just at the end of the day, like, this might like be super like, why, why are you asking question of why I'm feeling that way, right? Because there is a lot of nuance to that as well, right. Like, for example, is it because you set yourself up where like, oh, you haven't worked with, let's say, like with a one-shot for example. You haven't worked with this professor before, and you want to give the best impression. So you're, you know, [laughs] becoming an even more critical than you usually are, because of that. Those kinds of questions, right, like it's worth kind of revisiting why, why, imposter syndrome is hurt- like really affecting you in that one moment in time. And to deal, to kind of build space for those questions, I, one thing that I do try to do, not always, because sometimes just the workplace just gets chaotic, but like, after teaching, right, to kind of just take a few minutes to reflect like, what went well, what didn't, what can I change? I usually have a notebook where I jot that down. And yeah. So it's funny that that notebook I'm mentioning, it's very inconsistent, I'll fully admit, where, like I've had, like, you know, a stream of just like, oh, I want to jot it down, and then I do periods of not. But then I think I'm back in the groove of it, and it's really helpful. It really is, and it does, like it does surface that kind of question related to why you're feeling the way you feel, and why imposter syndrome is really hitting you hard that particular session or instance.

STEPHANIE: Thank you. That was a thrill of an answer. Really.

HANNAH: Yeah, I like what you said, of just like taking a moment and asking yourself why you're feeling that instead of just being like, oh, I feel this way, and I don't want to. But yeah, bringing in that logical part of your brain to really, like, unpick the situation. You've written some about communities of practice around teaching, specifically critical information literacy. How do you see these supporting librarian instructors in terms of skills, self-efficacy, etc.?

BEN: Yeah, I think community practices have a slew of benefits. And one thing that I think it, especially in the context of instruction, I think what it can help to do is demystify the fact that, or this notion that instruction only happens in certain setups or settings, right? Because, like, I would argue, instruction happens at the reference desk, teaching other librarians, or you know, the staff you work with. The task you're doing, right, like even the onboarding process, right? Like, if you're ahead of a unit or something like, you're instructing. [laughs] Just working with, like when we do conference presentations, right? It all, like we all teach in some way, shape, or form, and it's... So I think learning circles, coming together as a community, can kind of break down those assumptions and get us all on board, and, like, you know, these practical, I guess, tips and tricks of what works in a classroom can be applied to different kinds of contexts, right?

BEN: So I mentioned earlier about my experience in that Carpentries community. Right, like where the carpentry is really emphasize embracing failure, or, like, you know, coding errors on

screen while your learners see that, and like oh, you can talk through like, you know, how to fix it and troubleshoot together. Like, that's a pretty, like, that could be applied to navigating search queries in a database. That could be applied to teaching other things that are not necessarily coding or information literacy like centric and whatnot. So learning circles can kind of open up that informal space to do so. Right now at Columbia, I've been involved with this idea of learning circles, which is, if you're gonna get technical, is not a community practice, but it's something that community of practices can leverage as a tool. But they're kind of these, a learning circle's like a way to kind of express knowledge through deep reflection. And, you know, talking through things out... similar to learning circle. But I think it, it has this added focus of like a shared outcome, or even like a deliverable. So like, you know working on a project together, that hopefully is like very low stakes, is not adding, like, you know, so much additional labor, and then going through that process to, right, deliver something, but also learn as you go.

BEN: I think again, when I think about community of practice, it's a very big umbrella, right? Like, so like thinking about how I was talking about this learning circles idea on that side. I guess a bit, I would argue like a lot more formalized, and if I were to do it again, it's not, I'm not entirely sure yet, because there is labor involved, right? Like I just want, I'm thinking about a way, is there a happy medium where, like, you know there's a cool like shared outcome, but it could still be informal where we can just talk about instruction or talk about things, whatever the community practice wants to focus on. But again, going back with the idea of community practice and instruction, I think they go very much hand in hand, because I think kind of core idea that we've been talking about is, you know, failure and mistakes. They, they happen in different kinds of contexts, different kinds of situations. Let's come together to reflect why that is, and even have a moment to not just like get into, going even like, building a space to have that personal reflection, too, where you don't necessarily have to share out with the group if you don't feel comfortable, but to kind of normalize that process. I feel like communities of practice can help with that as well. Right. The idea that if that even exists, right, and like coming together, and you hear folks talk about like, oh, yeah, that that didn't work. Oh, well, but this is why. I think as you're kind of exposed to that sort of narrative, you begin to realize like, oh, it's not just me. [laughs] So I think there's that added bonus, for sure.

STEPHANIE: Do you have any other advice or other words that you'd give new librarians, current grad students, or even your slightly younger self, about making your way through failure or feelings of failure?

BEN: Yeah, I think, I think I've already said this, but I want to hit home the idea of like, there's just so many things out there that are out of our control, right? [laughs] We could be having a bad day. Your students may be having a bad day. You don't know the, again, especially in the context of a one-shot, right? Like, you don't know the kind of community that they formed. And if these students are super comfortable with that community, or they're they're *super* comfortable. You just don't know. So because of that, right like, do the best that you can. Focus on things that are in your control, right? Just come out with like, think about some of the very core best practices of like coming up with learning objectives, designing the thing based upon that. And then, seeing how it kind of unfolds. And then too, one thing that I've taken out of the Carpentries

world, that I think applies to instructional librarians, or any instance of instruction that we librarians do, is that, to meet learners where they're at, and by that you know, we come up with a lesson plan. We do what we're doing. If you need to slow down to answer questions, slow down to make sure that everyone's on the same page. Right? That's gonna be a lot better than rushing to the end so that it aligns with the speed of which maybe some of your classes like in tune with, but then others are completely lost, and then we've lost them. Like, I think that's one thing to be mindful of, right. So even if it means that you don't finish what like you planned from the get go right. I think how I do lesson plans is like, I am now in the mindset of like, this is ideal, but I'm like 90% sure I'm not gonna finish this. And that's okay. And I think that that actually mindset has really helped me become so much calmer in my teaching, of just like, okay, I came up with this lesson plan. I'm just gonna go in as if, like, I know, I'm not going to finish it. And that, like already, takes out like a really big added layer of stress. [laughs] And again at the end of the day, right? When you're in that mindset, and you're at a pace and at kind of meeting learners where they're at, can then kind of disseminate what you want them to take out of the session. Right? You're gonna prioritize things that are more useful, prioritize things that would benefit them. And I think, as librarians, we are also in a position where we're... at least I'm not, I'm not gonna speak with every librarian, because maybe it varies by workplace, but the one-on-one kind of consultation, especially in the context of a subject librarians, right, there's always that angle, that way to continue the conversation, to address any kind of hurdles or gaps. Albeit I recognize that there's that added hurdle where the student might have to reach out to you and whatnot, but just remembering that that's, I guess, one maybe not perfect, but one safety net that does exist as well.

BEN: I'll add one more thing in that, we were talking about imposter syndrome. I think embracing it as a way to learn about yourself, I guess. Because I will say it doesn't go away. [laughs] So how can we embrace it in a way that can be helpful, which can be hard, too, I understand. I mean, it's I mean, you don't wanna [laughs] let it sink in, right, and make it negative and be harmful. But I think, recognizing that it's, it affects us all as we move jobs, if we go up, if we, you know, in our profession there's always gonna be a new challenge, and the new challenge is something that we might never have tackled before. So it's just naturally, imposter syndrome's kind of there [laughs] always. So. But yeah, how do we embrace it in a way that's helpful?

[musical transition]

LISA: I'm Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe, and I am the coordinator of research professional development and a faculty member at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

STEPHANIE: Can you give us an overview of your instruction experience, and the different types of contexts you've taught in?

LISA: Oh, wow! Almost 30 years worth of instruction experience. So let's see. I've taught in a lot of different settings. I began my career in that entry level public services position where you do a lot of single sessions, either as kind of your one-shot library orientations or the

course-integrated sessions, where you're customizing for a particular class. I've also had the chance to teach a number of credit courses. So lots of different venues, certainly have taught online, in person, walking in the hallway. We've done it all, right, over that time. So I've also been fortunate that I did get a master's degree in educational psychology with a focus on instructional design, which really helped inform my own thinking on my teaching. And I've also had the great honor of teaching in programs such as the ACRL Information Literacy Immersion Program, and some other kinds of intensive programs with colleagues around the country, which, even though I've been in an instructional mode there, it's been hugely beneficial to my own teaching to be in that kind of community of practice and really learning as a community with people who are new teachers, returning teachers trying to skill up, reskill, all those sorts of things. So, I've done a lot of teaching in 30 years.

STEPHANIE: I was wondering, have you always been interested in instruction and education, or did it kind of just happen upon you, and then you explored that and it seemed interesting?

LISA: When I was in library school, I had a chance to take the class in user education from two people, Beth Woodard and Mary Jane Petrowski, who were both librarians at the University of Illinois, where I was getting my degree. And it was their class that really introduced me to the idea that this could be an area of specialty. It was also an area that I clearly had facility for some, natural talent that I could build on, and thought, I want to know more about this.

HANNAH: Lisa went on to describe how in her LIS program she was able to earn credits outside the library school. And, taking a couple classes in educational psychology interested her so much that she went straight on to get her master's in that field to bring that experience to her librarianship.

LISA: The timing turned out really well, because I happened to hit the sweet spot when academic librarianship was really making a turn to the instructional role for librarians. And so I was one of the few people who had not just interest and not just need to do teaching, but I had actually gotten training in how to do that. So it really, the beginning of my career, I was still really building that educational knowledge. And I will say at the community college, it's even more teaching, because of that, you know the institution's very focused on teaching and learning. There's not those additional missions of research and scholarship. And so I was in the classroom a lot. And I was also really fortunate to have some seasoned librarians that I was working with, who were also available to mentor me, to celebrate with me when things went well, to help me recover when maybe I had a challenging session.

HANNAH: Alright, that sounds like a good segue into our next question. Can you share one or two anecdotes about failure, so overcoming something in the classroom that didn't go according to plan, or like a session that you came out of feeling like you had failed?

LISA: Sure, I think we've probably maybe all had this experience. So maybe I'll speak first to what I think is sometimes common, which is, you have a conversation with the faculty member and your understanding of where the students will be at in the process. You design your lesson.

You're all ready to go, and you walk in, and you start talking to the students, and you get this inkling that they actually don't know what their assignment is. And that's always a really awkward moment, because you know their assignment. The faculty member knows their assignment. But the whole idea that you're helping students develop skills for that assignment is very difficult for them to understand when they don't know what they're supposed to be doing. And so, you know, that's happened to me more than once in my career. But what I have learned over time is the only sort of potential recovery is to enlist the faculty member at that moment, and sort of do it as conversationally as possible, because you're not trying to show up the faculty member, but sort of invite them and say, you know, Professor, as I'm getting ready to talk about X, it might be helpful if the students understand a little bit more about what you're going to be asking of them. So not necessarily asking them to, like, do the whole assignment details, but at least use their role as the professor to create a context for the students' learning. I also think in those moments you have to sort of take some heart, if you will, that we do have the reference desk. And one of the learning outcomes from all of my instruction sessions was always that the students understand where they go for help. Which is not to say that they can forget everything I told them, but instead, that one of the important things that they learned in the session is that this is not, you know, it's not like you get your information literacy vaccine, and you're good for life.

LISA: So I was thinking as well about another example, if you want me to continue. Which is a little bit, not where it was so out of my control in the sense of the faculty member who doesn't give the assignment. But in thinking about a case that's very specific, where there was a really complicated assignment that students had. And they knew the assignment. And I had taken it, and I was like, okay, there's a lot of steps here. So I had designed a very detailed, supportive workflow for students to work through in order to successfully execute. And I honestly misjudged. I assumed more knowledge of *library*, that students understood certain things than they did. And in retrospect I shouldn't have made that mistake. But I was earlier in my career, and now experience tells me, including experience with this assignment. And so it became just very clear over the course of those 50 min together that the students had really no idea what I was telling them or what they were going to do. And so again, I took heart in the sense that there was the reference desk. You know, we could get through this. I also, with that particular class, offered that they could come and see me personally, because it was a very unusual assignment. But in retrospect, what I should have done facing such a complicated assignment is to say that just because the students have a complicated assignment doesn't mean that I can teach them all the things they need to know in 50 minutes. And I should have said, okay, what's the first part of this assignment? Let's really get good, and be sure everyone understands what to do in the first part, so that they would gain some skills, have a firm foundation, and then at least have a sense of success with the first part of this complicated project, and then sort of direct them to, how do you get the training to do the second, third, fourth parts? I have to say this was a point in my career in which doing online videos or zoom demos, these were not possible at that point. And so in today's era, I think I might look at that kind of assignment differently, and think about how I might record some supplemental videos or things that would extend the classroom beyond the 50 minutes. Ultimately I probably should have tried a little harder to convince that faculty member to work through the assignment themselves, because

they were coming at it, as often they do, as an expert, and if we had maybe worked through what this looks like when you're not an expert, I think they may have ultimately decided to divide the assignment up into some additional pieces as well.

HANNAH: Let's say your younger self, or maybe a mentee like you came back from a session feeling like, oh, I did not do a good job, or like that, did not go... What would you say to your younger self, or a mentee like in the moment, who is feeling, I don't know, like they failed, or that it did not go how they wanted to?

LISA: I think it's an interesting question when we're in that moment of failure, and especially when people are disclosing that to someone else, and sort of what your role is at that moment. Some people are looking for just some sort of like cheering, validation. Other people really want to dissect it and say, like, okay, like, I want to postmortem on this. So I think the first thing you have to do is not go with what I might want, and how I might want to deal with that kind of case for myself, but to really understand what the person is looking for at that moment. And I'm kind of a big believer in you ask them, "What would be helpful to you right now? Do you want to go for a walk and get coffee? Do you want me to just take your reference shift for an hour so that you can just go away and, like, sit with yourself? Do you want to review the details of what happened? Do you want to make a plan? Like, which of these is going to respond to where you are?" But I think what's really important, as somebody who's sort of a coach or a mentor for newer librarians, or, you know, just somebody who had a bad experience, I guess they don't have to be newer, is to respond to what *they* need, not what you would need if you were in their role.

HANNAH: Did any feelings of failure, or possibly nervousness about teaching ever fully dissipate as your career progressed? Or do you think it's, you know, as a teacher those are just feelings you're always going to have, no matter what? Maybe they don't happen as often, but they're still, you know, it's just part of being a teacher?

LISA: You know, it's an interesting thing, because we could ask ourselves like, well, what is that feeling? Right? And I think if we take it as responsive to context, part of the context for newer librarians is that they don't have a huge repertoire, and so the tools in their toolkit that they can bring to bear on any given moment are more limited. It's just a fact. So I don't think it's the case that sort of necessarily, this kind of anxiousness dissipates, so much as the contextual factors change, including yourself. And so am I gonna be anxious if I know that I'm going into a session to teach managing your research identity with like the campus department chairs, deans, and President's office? Oh, yeah, the stakes are high. But at this point, if I'm gonna teach you know English 101 students the basics of understanding how to search Ebsco, not particularly anxiety-producing for me. So I think this is always contextual.

LISA: Now, for some people they also have things like fear of public speaking. They have a lot of anxiety around some of the performance pieces of this. You know, let's also just admit that, like, if teaching goes well for your first year, it's gonna set you up for feeling a lot more confident than if in your first year of teaching, every time you go into a session, the computer and the

technology melt down. It's not going to build your confidence. It's not going to build your sense that this is an environment in which you have efficacy and ability to move things forward. So some of this, again also just comes down to what is happening around you, not what are the things that you can control. You can control like, did you prepare well? Do you really know your stuff? Did you get enough sleep the night before? You know, some of those sorts of things are more in your control. Other things on the slider of control are completely outside of your control. So you know, the day I'm supposed to teach an instruction session and the entire campus network goes offline. I really can't teach you database searching when the entire campus network is offline. And again, if this kind of challenge happens to you repeatedly, it's going to be harder to build that confidence, I think.

STEPHANIE: Yeah, thank you for that. It's really interesting to hear the way that you phrase that as like being highly contextual, because, looking back in my almost one year of being in this role, and really my first time having an instruction component to my responsibilities, I can also sense like the times when I go into a class and I feel prepared, but like the vibe in the room is off. Like, it's 8 a.m., 200 students. They're asleep. And I'm like, okay, I have 20 minutes here, there's only so much I can do. But I also really appreciate the sense of being able to try again and having an instruction not only just be like the one time you go to the class, but the next semester you go in, maybe the next year you go in. And so I was wondering how you kind of, throughout your growth as an instructor, like, how you were able to almost set goals for how you want to improve, or things you want to try? Do you have like a timeline for that? This is like not even something we prepared. It just like came to mind, and I was like, oh, I'm just so curious about, like, how the sense of like the timeline in which you have to prepare for a session, being both like immediately go in next week. But also, like, okay, I have a career ahead of me to be able to work on this.

LISA: So this is a very interesting question, and I don't think I've been particularly deliberate about the way I've developed as a teacher in the sense of setting annual goals or that sort of thing. I do think the fact that I got this master's degree just really changed the dynamic for me compared to somebody who has come out of library school, maybe they took a class in instruction, maybe they didn't. Maybe their reference class had a week on instruction, maybe it didn't. That's a really different sort of background to bring to this work. But I think I've also worked with a lot of people over the years that have been developing as a teacher, and the thing that I can say is, you can't work on all things at once. So if there are different parts of teaching that are challenging for you, I think you have to choose the ones that you're going to start with. But again, I'm going to come back to, it wouldn't be based on what I think you should start with. It should be based on understanding what you need to start with. So maybe you need to start with something that's very sort of tactical, because it's part of building your confidence and setting the background, and then you'll be prepared to work on this sort of more challenging part of some other aspect. Or maybe there's some aspect that you're like, I have got to address this. Like, my fear of public speaking is just incapacitating. So how do I address this? That's really different than, I really got to get better at making LibGuides, because I'm embarrassed for my instructional materials. Like, those have a different solution. And so I think again, it comes down

to what is facing *you*. Who are *you*? What are your experiences? And then what resources are available to you?

LISA: I do think librarians could do a lot more to take advantage of some of the services from our centers for teaching and learning on campus. I know it's a little challenging because they typically sort of assume that teaching is happening in a for-credit environment. But you still can take that knowledge, and then you can shape it. It's also an amazing opportunity to make other people realize that librarians teach.

LISA: I think there's one other thing I'd like to add to this conversation, which is, there's a uniqueness in the context in which librarians teach, which, absent the credit course, a large majority of our teaching happens in other people's classrooms. And it's a negotiated space. So, you're not setting up a relationship with you. You're entering a space in which the students and the instructor already have a relationship. They already have a classroom culture. You're there as a guest. So, thinking of ourselves as a guest is also, I think, very helpful, because there are certain things you're not responsible for as a guest. You know, I think a lot of times we can be frustrated with our experiences in our setting of the one-shot. But I think there's also some real opportunities in it, because we also come in as a guest, and people expect different things of guest instructors. But a lot of, like, the way the students sort of react to us has to do with the way the instructor has told them this is going to go and how they're going to react to us. So one very specific strategy, I think that I've sort of learned over the years and have suggested to other people is, don't assume the faculty member knows how to prepare the students for the session. Right? So it's great. They have this idea that they'll have a librarian. They're really excited about you coming, but they're used to thinking about a guest person as a guest lecturer, as somebody bringing content. Like, you're an expert in this particular type of battle during the Civil War. Come, tell us what you know. Our sessions are different. They're typically skill building sessions. So we shouldn't assume that the faculty member sort of knows how to prepare the students for that. So I will often ask a faculty member, "Could you please tell the students about this session? Could you explain to them my role, would you..." Maybe even: "Here's a handout I'd like you to have them read before you come to the class." We can make these asks of campus faculty. We can say, "I would like your students to take this quiz. I'd like them to fill out this worksheet. I'd like you to set them up for success." And so, we don't have to just sort of see ourselves as sort of... they're not like walking up to a takeout counter and saying, I'll take two information literacies and a side of fries. Right? So we're co-designing this session, and we can also help the faculty member prepare their students for success, because ultimately they have some reason they want us to be there. So that's in their interest as well for the students to be successful. By the way, the more that you do this and ask of them, the less likely it is you're gonna arrive where the students don't know they have an assignment.

HANNAH: Yeah, I really like that thought of like, even if you're not like doing flipped classroom thing where they're doing something beforehand, of just, the verbal preparation the professor is giving of like, here's what this is going to look like, instead of like, oh, we're going to the library, and we're meeting with our librarian and like, bring your laptop. Because I feel like that's mostly what I've done, of like, just make sure students have their laptops, which kind of implies that

they'll be doing something. But you know, I think being, being more explicit about it. And I think that's a great idea, so that students know what they're doing, because oftentimes faculty don't really know what you're going to be doing, either, unless they've worked with you a lot.

LISA: And I think what this says also is that, you know, the faculty are not interested in micromanaging our instruction. So I think when a faculty member invites us in, they're seeing us as an expert, and we should try really hard to kind of embody that expert role and bring what we know, and feel confident in what we know. When a faculty member is turning over class time to a librarian, they're turning over one of the most valuable assets you have as an instructor: time with the students. It's time on task. And so everything that they're looking for in that session is, it's a big investment on their part. If you think about how many course hours there are in a given semester, to even give you one of them is quite a bit. Even if they give you a half an hour, it's quite a bit of, sort of, a very precious and extremely limited resource for a classroom instructor, which is class time.

STEPHANIE: How can individual librarians move through the failure in an instruction context, learn from it, and perhaps set reasonable expectations for the future? And a little sub-question could be, you've spoken about things going wrong outside our control versus within our control. Could you elaborate on that?

LISA: So I think, you know, if something has gone wrong when you are at the place where you can sort of think about it more sort of abstractly and not sort of emotionally. So it's useful to do a little bit of a check. Whose responsibility was this? Is this something that I didn't prepare for, and I should have? Is this something that should not have happened? But because somebody else didn't do what they were supposed to do, I found myself having to deal with it. So we're probably always going to have some responsibility. It might be a responsibility of reaction. Sometimes it's a responsibility for proaction. If we failed at proaction, you know, that's something we certainly need to think about. Why did that happen? Did I not expect it? Did I just not get it done? Did I forget the session was happening? Things happen. But if it's something that was outside our control that we were reacting to in the moment, I think we can think about that a little bit differently, and think about eventually over time building your repertoire, of how do I respond to these things? One of the things that I think in our sort of very sort of service oriented mindset is we often feel inclined to try and react quickly and to solve the problem, what we, as librarians do. How can I help you? What can we do to help you move along?

LISA: I think there's two things that, you know, sometimes it's useful. You know, if things are really going bad, you can call a pause. Calling a pause is a very powerful tool in your repertoire. "I'd like to take one minute to figure out what is going on. Could I get that from all of you? Okay." And then literally, don't pay attention to anything but troubleshooting or doing whatever you need to do for that one minute. You can use the sort of intensive nod. Listen, and then say, "Let me ponder that for a second." It is a completely good strategy to gather your thoughts. You don't have to react immediately. You also don't have to do what other people want you to do necessarily, right? And so sometimes you might have to say, "I can't do that." Like, whatever somebody's brainstorm idea is, "It's not, not possible. I don't have time to do it right now." And

then, I think the other thing is, we just sometimes have to admit that we can't solve the problem, at least not in the moment. And you know a lot of teaching is in the moment. And so the repertoire we have in the moment is what we have. And then sometimes we need to say, I think we're going to need another strategy. Again, we live in this time of digital objects, etc. The strategies can be: I'll make a video. Let me follow up with you with an email that you can send out to the whole class. Not everything has to happen in that 50 minutes. Everything can't happen in that 50 minutes. And so, admitting that and sort of accepting that, I think, is a huge step forward when, especially when it's things outside of your control.

LISA: There's a lot of mindset, I guess, is what I'm suggesting here, right? Like the way we go into these really impacts sort of the way we act in the moment. So there's certainly skills, right? Can you make up an active learning activity on the spur of the moment? Well, that's going to probably be reflective of how many active learning activities you've designed in your life. Once you've designed a couple thousand of them, making the thousandth-and-one is not particularly challenging. You kind of have a go to set. If you've never made an active learning activity, I would not recommend doing it on the fly in the classroom, in front of students. You know.

STEPHANIE: Yeah, set yourself up for success. Don't do it on the spot.

LISA: That's exactly, you know, so like you might have to do some things on the spot, but you don't do everything on the spot. I don't know if I totally answered that question, but... [laughs]

STEPHANIE: I found it very helpful and insightful to hear you say that, and it makes me think of, I've been doing some of the university's teaching and learning center, I've been doing a lot of their workshops and webinars, and because I don't know much about instruction. So I'm like, let me get all I can. And one of the most helpful and uncomfortable things I've learned is the importance and the power of a very long, awkward pause in the classroom. And I just think now of how so often a pause is a thing you can do, and to just rest with it, just let it sit. [pause] Have a moment. [pause] Wait. Instead of just reacting right off the bat.

LISA: And if I can tell you what's going on in my head sometimes when I'm orchestrating that awkward pause in my head. It's less awkward if you're counting.

STEPHANIE: [laughs] Yes.

LISA: Now, if you need to be thinking about something else, you can't really count. But if what you're really saying is like, I have asked a question, and I am waiting for the students to respond, the amount of time that will feel like if you are just kind of blank, and then in your head going, oh my goodness, they're not responding, I'm starting to panic, blah blah blah. The time doesn't feel so long, and it gives you something to do that isn't panicking, if you're saying, "One, two, three," etc. Because it gives you a much better sense of how much time you've actually given them to think. And for a learner who is developing their knowledge and skills in a brand new area or somewhere that they don't have a lot of expertise, it's not surprising they can't respond quite as quickly. Now, we could work on our question asking ability, for example, in that

case. Are we asking the most powerful, inviting kind of questions? But we do need to give students time to think, too. And if we're talking, we're asking them to both listen and think at the same time. So maybe it's not an awkward pause. We're just making it awkward for ourselves by the way we're conceptualizing it, as opposed to thinking... And I mean, I've even said this to students, you know. "I think it's important that we take a minute for you to reflect on this before we move on. When you, you know, after this minute I'm going to ask you, X. Which of these articles you would choose, or which one, you know, how would you assess the credibility of them? But let me give you a minute of silence to gather your own thoughts and to think about this." And then, count to 60. [laughs]

HANNAH: We've talked some about, of like, our individual responsibilities as librarians, as teachers, so kind of our follow up to that is, how can the profession or graduate programs, individual libraries, supervisors, at any of those levels, how can we better support academic librarians as teachers? And I know that's a big question. So you don't feel like you have to address each one of those levels. But how can the larger system support us as teachers?

LISA: So I think supporting teachers, and then teacher development, starts most fundamentally with recognizing that teaching is an area of expertise. Teaching is not just talking in public. Teaching is a whole intentional set of design principles, delivery principles, reaction principles, understanding student learning. This is not unique to librarianship, where teaching is treated as if it's just sort of like, well, we all teach. It's just a natural thing we can do, and if you can't do it, like, why would you need help with that? It is an area of expertise. Instinctually we all know this. We've had better teachers and worse teachers. So I think part of the question is, do we commit to excellence in teaching. And I think, as academic librarians, we should commit to excellence in teaching, because we should commit to excellence in learning, and these two things are tied. It's not to say students can't learn from a poor teacher. But they are more likely to learn from an excellent teacher. And so the first thing is committing to this notion that this is an area of expertise. We don't let people start, you know, preserving a rare book without knowing about how preservation works and chemistry, and which glues and that sort of thing. Probably shouldn't let people teach, you know, impact human beings, without them having some understanding of how what they do and the design is going to impact on those students, how they learn, their future attitudes, etc. So it's an area of expertise.

LISA: And then, secondly, what do you do to help people build expertise is both a matter of skill development, knowledge development, but also community of practice. Now at large institutions like you and I work at, you know, we can develop those communities of practices locally. Many, many academic librarians work in very small institutions. Maybe even just one librarian. A community of practice is not possible with one librarian. You can meet other teachers, but not that librarian education community of practice. So that's where I think our professional associations are so important. Our social networks are so important, because of the ability to not just get training that maybe can't be offered locally, but also to create this sort of network of we are librarian educators. We see ourselves in a community of practice. And these might be formal programs, such as the ACRL Instruction Section and the Immersion Program. It could also be things like the Critical Literacy Pedagogy Chat that happens through kind of an informal

community of practice that's been developed by Laura Saunders and Melissa Wong. So we can look to these different things because ultimately we need to sort of see ourselves as a member of a community of practice, and that means not just becoming knowledgeable and skilled, but also it means being connected to other people who do this work, and that we learn to do it better by being in community with each other.

STEPHANIE: Well, we are so thankful to have you share your expertise and the things that work, the things that don't work, and just any kind of insight, because, as newer librarians, it can be a little daunting in the world of instruction. And one reason why Hannah and I were particularly interested in this topic was because we were talking, isn't it kind of funny the times when you do the same thing that succeeded in a different class, and it just does not go as you expected in another session. And we were like, yeah, let's talk about failures. So this has been just so insightful and interesting. And I'm just like impassioned and like invigorated. I'm like, yeah, let's go! [laughs]

LISA: [laughs] Can I say one other thing?

STEPHANIE: Yeah.

LISA: Because I think it's interesting that we tend to talk about these moments in this sort of like summative, definitive way: that was a failure. As opposed to, in like, we're sorting the world, like those were good sessions. Those were bad sessions. And one additional way we might think about this is, what does it look like to think about our teaching practice as a locus of continuous improvement, where we don't say, that was a failure, so it goes in the bad box. But we say, okay, I did my best, and based on everything I know and all the good decisions I made that should have worked. It didn't work. Why didn't it work? Right? The only failure I could see is if you don't take that time to say, what can I learn from this? It didn't go the way I was expecting. And I'm a professional. I brought my skills, my knowledge, my community of practice. I brought it all, and it didn't work. So why, what didn't I understand? Have the students changed? Did the professor set them up differently? Because then you're building your knowledge. And so if we can sort of move our thinking and sort of saying, how do we just get better? As opposed to sort of like locking part of it into the failure box. I mean, I guess that's the learn from your mistakes, but I think "mistakes" makes it sound like they're, like you didn't bring your all. You brought your all. Like, it should have worked. Like everything I know, I mean it, especially if it worked yesterday, like it should have worked. So if it should have worked, it doesn't mean that you failed. It means that somehow everything you knew wasn't enough. So what do you need to know now? And that's where you get to like talking to somebody else, doing that post-op, all that sort of thing.

HANNAH: Yeah, I think that's important to think about in the long term of, and giving ourselves grace of like, we did what we can, and we're able to move on, and yeah.

LISA: I mean in some ways I will also say, this is also why, if you will, like, the expectations are reasonably higher for me. Like I should know a lot better after 30 years. Right? So this also comes down to expectations, right? What should we expect of a first year librarian with, you

know, no prior career in teaching. We should expect that they don't have a huge repertoire. We should expect that they'll have these moments where they didn't have what they needed to draw upon. And so we can ask ourselves, how do we support them through that? But we should also sort of think about what's reasonable to expect of people at different points. And I mean, it doesn't matter 30 years later, if the network goes down, I just can't do it.

STEPHANIE: [laughs] Yeah, don't blink, don't sweat it. I just can't.

HANNAH: Alright, that is all our questions. And thank you so much, this has been so wonderful, and a great conversation, and now it will be our challenge to edit it!

LISA AND STEPHANIE: [laugh]

HANNAH: Because there are so many great things.

STEPHANIE: I know.

LISA: Well, it's really fun to think about this. You know, I don't actually do, I mean, I've moved away from coordinating information literacy in the last two years with this new job of research professional development support for the librarians. So it was actually kind of fun to be like, oh, like, I actually do know some stuff.

STEPHANIE AND HANNAH: [laugh]

STEPHANIE: So flexing your muscles that maybe you haven't used recently.

LISA: Yeah, yeah.

STEPHANIE: You're like, oh, yeah, I still got it.

LISA: Yeah. Well also, I was in Helsinki last week at a media literacy conference where I was asked, I was presenting information literacy in the context of like mis- and disinformation. And I texted someone, I was like, wow, I really miss this. [laughs] I did like that part of it. I mean, I really love what I'm doing now, and you can only do, like at any given moment. But I was like, oh, yeah, I miss this.

STEPHANIE: But what a nice feeling to have after putting so much energy, time, and focus on it to then still be 30 years later, like, oh, yeah, no. I still like it. I'm still into it.

LISA: Yeah, exactly.

STEPHANIE: I feel like that's, that's the dream right there.

[musical transition]

HANNAH: Let's move on to our current awareness segment. I feel like we eventually should name this.

STEPHANIE: Yeah, probably. Well, in absence of a clever name. Let's just get into it. Hannah, what's something interesting you saw or read this past month?

HANNAH: Yeah, I want to share two things. They're both related to information literacy, as we conceptualize it in a Western academic context, and how we can start expanding that to be more inclusive. The ACRL Framework for Information Literacy came out when I was in grad school, which was, wow, 10 years ago now. And I remember feeling so inspired by it at the time, even feeling some vocational awe around it. But now I'm at the point in my career where I've lost my vocational awe, for the better, and I really liked how these two things helped me kind of expand my field of vision as an information professional.

HANNAH: The first is a fantastic webinar presented by librarian Heather Campbell and lecturer in nursing Ashley McKeown from Western University in Ontario, Canada, and hosted by The Ohio State University on November 7. It's called "Reconstructing the Academy: Transforming Our Teaching and Research Practices through Epistemic Justice." Now, if you're unfamiliar with that term of epistemic justice like I was, this gist of it is valuing and respecting all knowledge systems, and especially in our context, de-centering Western academic ways of thought. Campbell and McKeown particularly talked about it in terms of decolonizing the academy, and they shared how they've been integrating an epistemic justice lens into their work—Heather's work as a librarian teaching information literacy, and Ashley's work revising an introductory nursing course, and integrating epistemic justice further into the nursing curriculum. It really helped me think about what the work might actually look like, and how you start small, and then gradually grow to start making systemic change. So if you're interested in watching the webinar, we have the link to the recording on our website, under the show notes for this episode.

HANNAH: The second thing I want to highlight is the article "Only One Information Ecosystem, or Many?," by Emily Reed, in the November 2024 issue of *College & Research Libraries News*. She discusses how the Framework mostly assumes that students are all coming from, or are in, the same information ecosystem—a Western one—and that we need to be more fully aware of how our international and indigenous students may be familiar with entirely different information ecosystems, with different values, norms, and levels of information privilege—and that these students may very well be going back to those different information ecosystems after they graduate. Reed gives some helpful recommendations to distill her discussion, for example: "The Research as Inquiry frame should reflect that students from countries where information is highly controlled may have acquired different strategies and dispositions for approaching the research process that conflict with the open-ended and inquiry-based nature of the frame." I interact with a lot more international students than I did at my previous institution, and while I've been aware of things like how our citation practices are definitely not the norm everywhere, this was a very helpful read for me. So, Stephanie, how about you, what did you find interesting this month?

STEPHANIE: An article that I want to highlight is from the *Journal of Information Literacy*. So, it's pertinent to this episode and also the work you just shared, Hannah. And this article was, "Fostering self-reflection on library instruction: Testing a peer observation instrument focused on questioning strategies" by Eric Silberberg. If you are new to librarianships and instruction like me, or perhaps have experience under your belt but are still looking for areas of growth and development in your teaching, you might find this article interesting. In my own instruction practice, I spend a good amount of time reflecting, or trying to reflect? Like I said, I'm still developing these skills. I try to reflect on what worked or didn't work during a class session, how engaged the students were, what kind of questions were asked, and what I can do to tailor my lesson plan and delivery the next time. However, when I'm in front of a class, I'm multitasking, and trying to take mental screenshots to reflect on later. And, it's kinda easier said than done.

STEPHANIE: I really appreciated this article. Dare I say I want to reflect further on it. Through the process of developing this observation tool, or, more like a form for a peer-observer to use while observing an instruction session, Eric, the author, attempted to create a tool to identify datapoints that can be used as helpful starting-off points for reflection. And to clarify, the observation was focused specifically on observing questioning strategies. In particular, this instrument utilized low-inference observations, which I learned. Which means, in other words, only documenting what is seen and heard in the class session, as opposed to any other preexisting relationship, observations, or contexts to document how many unique students participated in the lesson, the kinds of questions asked, like the type of them, like whether it was an information question or analytical, as well as the wait time, so the duration of time between posing a question and the students answering it. Beside sharing the data collected with the observed instructors, the author also collected the instructor/participants reflections on the datapoints that the instrument was measuring. How helpful is this information for the instructors? Does the data need further clarifications to be helpful in reflection?

STEPHANIE: So, in thinking about this article, I like how the peer-observation element of the process was collaborative, and looking at the data, none of the five participants reported feeling uncomfortable about being observed. Which, honestly, is one of the things that makes me nervous because I'm new. I don't really like being perceived. Honestly I felt that reading this article was already a step in the direction of a more focused reflective practice. It also made me want to be observed in the classroom, which I didn't think I would say, and at the very least I'd love to have somebody else to take notes and document things for me that I wish I could mentally take a screenshot of in an instruction session. Like, for instance, how many questions I asked, how many were informational versus analytical, and also how long after posing a question is it answered? Because just from my experience, it's a lot longer than the instructors in this article.

STEPHANIE: If you enjoyed this episode on instruction or are interested in reflective practice, Easter egg for a future episode, I recommend checking out this article. Maybe it can offer you some directions into your own reflections. Hannah and I have put the citations to the resources we discussed today on our website, underneath the page for this episode. So you can check

them out, too, if you're interested. I know I will definitely be checking out the resources that Hannah just talked about. Those sounds so cool.

HANNAH: Alright, thank you, Stephanie. We are nearing the end of our episode here. Just a couple reminders that we would love your feedback about episode length, and your contribution of a story of failure. You can do either or both on our contact/participate page on our website, z.umn.edu/librarytabletalk.

[outro music begins (instrumental, upbeat xylophone, clapping, and bass)]

STEPHANIE: And that brings us to a close here, folks! Thank you for listening. We hope you'll consider subscribing. You can also find us on our website at z.umn.edu/librarytabletalk.

HANNAH: Library Table Talk is produced by me, Hannah Cabullo,

STEPHANIE: and me, Stephanie Sparrow.

HANNAH: This episode was edited by Hannah.

HANNAH: Thanks to our employer, the University of Minnesota Twin Cities and University Libraries for making this work possible.

STEPHANIE: Music is by Blue Dot Sessions, Town Market, and Dirt Bike Lovers.

HANNAH: Take care,

STEPHANIE: Stephanie,

HANNAH: and Hannah.

[music fades out]