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Sarah Dove

Welcome back to the latest podcast installment of the Office of Distance Education's Instructor Spotlight, a multimedia approach to highlighting instructors actively invested in cutting edge online learning, development, and delivery from around the College of Arts and Sciences at the Ohio State University. As a part of ODE's mission to support dynamic, research-driven, and forward thinking solutions proven to ensure understanding, engagement, access, and equity in online learning communities, we know that some of the most important work being done toward this purpose is happening in real time in the classroom.

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Sarah Dove

My name is Sarah Dove, and I'm an instructional designer for ASC ODE. Joining us for a conversation today is Dr. Claudia Buchmann from the Department of Sociology. Dr. Claudia Buchmann is a College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor in Sociology. She is internationally known for her research on gender inequalities in education with a focus on how women have come to attain more education than men in most regions of the world today.

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Sarah Dove

She is coauthor of *The Rise of Women: the Growing Gender Gap in Education and What It Means for American Schools*, published in 2013 by the Russell Sage Foundation. This publication was awarded the Otis Dudley Duncan Book Award by the American Sociological Association section on Sociology of Population and the Outstanding Book Award by the ASA section on Inequality, Poverty, and Mobility.

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Sarah Dove

Dr. Buchmann's influential scholarship has been published in many top journals and has received widespread attention from the academic community and the news media, including the New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, NPR, and the BBC. Dr. Buchmann is a recipient of the Joan N. Huber Faculty Fellowship, and her research has been funded by the Spencer Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the National Institutes of Health.

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Sarah Dove

Welcome, Claudia, and thank you so much for doing this. So the first question that I have for you today is in your estimation, what role does distance education play in the landscape of learning, particularly for higher education?

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Claudia Buchmann

Yeah, I think today distance learning is a crucial part of the educational landscape. I mean, just think of how higher education would have ground to a halt without distance learning in the past two years. But I'll say that before my experience of developing and teaching an online course, I confess I used to think of online learning as a reduced form of education or something less than compared to in-person learning.

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Claudia Buchmann

And I've really come to understand that there are many, many benefits to it, not the least of which it is an option when we experience things like we did in the past few years with the global pandemic.

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Sarah Dove

I mean, especially like, you know, I think we've all been forced into a place of being with distance learning because of the pandemic and the resulting things like that. But outside of that, do you have any impressions of or contact with the kind of distance ed landscape for higher education, especially where you might see the greatest potential for innovation?

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Claudia Buchmann

Yes, absolutely. One thing I really have come to appreciate is how democratizing online learning is. It's accommodating to the needs of our diverse student population. It's a wonderful way to reduce barriers to learning, which I did not appreciate at all before. And so when we think about innovation, how the population of students that we're teaching in higher education is changing.

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Claudia Buchmann

We have more first generation students than ever before. We have students of diverse age groups, diverse backgrounds. I feel like online learning actually really lends itself well to helping those students engage. And I would say I don't see online learning in terms of its innovativeness as primarily being in the realm of information provision. I've actually really come to see it as a crucial way to encourage collaboration and engagement among students that I actually did not experience to the same depth or level in my traditional in-person classes.

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Sarah Dove

It's interesting because when you have the kind of physical presence that you get from in-person learning, you see your students in the classroom. Of course, you're seeing them as people in front of you, as

learners that have come to participate in the kind of learning community you're building. But online, I think we're imagining students a little bit differently, but I'm hearing more and more that people are imagining their students beyond the landscape of their classrooms, which I think is really interesting.

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Claudia Buchmann

And when we just think about that word landscape, I mean, currently this semester I have students who are who are taking my class from China, who are in Texas, who are staff members at Ohio State or who are students with, you know, full time jobs. So that's really opened my eyes to, oh, this is an opportunity where people can check in and complete their weekly course modules during any time of the time period of, you know, their week that works for them in the same process.

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Claudia Buchmann

They're continuing to be able to connect with me through virtual office hours or through email. They can engage with their peers on their own time and then get responses. And that gives them the opportunity to engage in the material. I think at a deeper level, than they could necessarily if we were having, you know, a twice a week lecture based meeting in person.

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Claudia Buchmann

So so in that that's what I mean by democratizing it's really it's really it opens up opportunities for the great diversity of people who want to learn but have all these different kinds of parameters that are real life parameters. It allows them those kinds of opportunities.

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Sarah Dove

Yes. Wonderful. I mean, that's a perfect pivot to this next question. That's about pedagogical strategies that you found work. Well, so in creating and cultivating this democratized space. What things have you found that you're leaning on? I would be remiss if I wasn't also introducing this this idea of what might have presented trouble in that landscape as well.

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Sarah Dove

So. So taking the good with the bad, like what's what's the sum of the best potential or what's some of the best strategy? And where have you found bottlenecks or roadblocks.

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Claudia Buchmann

Let me talk a little bit about just in terms of creating online content, because that was something that seemed like a really hard for me to figure out. How would that work? I tend to be an informal person in the classroom. I tend to, you know, lots of give and take back and forth, asking questions, impromptu. Let's break into groups kinds of things.

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Claudia Buchmann

So then I had to really think through the pedagogical strategies of what I was wanting to convey. And then also the challenge of not seeing someone's face in terms of or having a hand raised in terms of, can you say that again? But then I came to realize the real benefits and the process of translating that pedagogical style of just kind of the chalk and talk, the formal lecture into that videotape structured 11 and done kind of or I mean, I could edit the lectures, but but they were there and they were done as a finished thing.

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Claudia Buchmann

That helped me think of how to create those lectures, how to keep them interesting. I actually ended up finding that the material I would convey in a videotaped lecture was much, much shorter than I you know, I could have spent 50 minutes lecturing in a in a classroom. But I realized as I was watching my own videotape lectures, I was like, this is not that I wanted to modify them to make them you know, be able to match the attention span of of our, our students.

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Claudia Buchmann

So I found that I could convey a lot of material in a shorter period of time. More distinctly, and that allowed me to bring in other really interesting connections, whether that was good Internet material or something to read or a chance to engage with other students into that same, you know, weekly amount of learning minutes. And so that was really that was really a pedagogical innovation for me in that I learned I don't need to just be talking to fill a 50 minute period or even a, you know, 40 minute period, but rather convey the material, suggest students ways for students to follow up with the material, make connections to other things that I provide

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Claudia Buchmann

for them to think about or invite them to come up with things that they find interesting in the Internet. Things that they may have seen and allow them to link. And that and that's the kind of, you know, engagement, a more collaborative environment. So I feel like a really the pedagogy in the online format allows students to contribute in ways that they couldn't contribute.

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Claudia Buchmann

And, you know, you couldn't imagine a student raising their hands who have this really great little YouTube thing that I want to share to the class. But here you can do that. So it's so democratizing engaging, collaborative. Those are all kinds of the pedagogical things that that I feel like I've learned in being quote unquote, forced into creating an online course.

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Claudia Buchmann

But I have been struck with the honesty and the intimacy that students have brought so frequently in the discussion board. I will see one student responding to another, say with the with the gist of the messages. Thank you for sharing your personal experience. It has completely opened my eyes to something I did not ever think or just as powerful I totally empathize with what you're experiencing.

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Claudia Buchmann

And coming from a situation of where I acknowledge my privilege and not ever having to experience something like that, I have a better understanding of of these issues that we've been reading about. I think those are and those kinds of connections and communications with one another. I mean, think about. Right. Our motto is Education for citizenship. Think about what?

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Claudia Buchmann

To me, that's so much more powerful than putting up a graph on a you know, on a lecture slide and saying, here's the percentage of people living in poverty and here's numbers or or just I feel like it's those kind of really true, authentic kind of conversations. And you can imagine that in a small group discussion in class, a student would be far less likely to talk about a traumatic childhood experience.

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Claudia Buchmann

They went when their parents lost their jobs and they were living homeless. It's actually really opened my eyes to how many of our students are living or have experienced violent, extreme racism, you know, lived in poverty, being treated as other because they came to this country as an immigrant. So. So in that regard, I've been educated for sure.

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Claudia Buchmann

And again, that's where that real, you know, collaborative learning experience comes about.

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Sarah Dove

We want to express our gratitude to Dr. Claudia Buchmann for participating in our Instructor Spotlight series. Dr. Buchmann was also featured as a panelist in our teaching forum event, Facilitating Student Collaboration and Peer Engagement. More information about this event as well as a recording can be found on our website [ascode.osu.edu](http://ascode.osu.edu). Thank you to all those listening for joining us for this installment of the Office of Distance Education's Instructor Spotlight. Visit [ascode.osu.edu/resources](http://ascode.osu.edu/resources) to find more Instructor Spotlight features as well as helpful instructional guides, tools, and strategies we hope you'll continue to follow along with this series as we feature more incredible Arts and

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Sarah Dove

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