Liesel Reinhart: Welcome to the Magic Mountie podcast. This is a podcast that's dedication to helping faculty and other college employees as they try and navigate the challenging fabric of serving students, especially at Mount. San Antonio college, but everyone's welcome.

Welcome to the Magic Mountie podcast episode six. It's hard to believe we're [00:00:30] already at our sixth episode, Christina. We have decided to make this one a little more casual than the last few have been, and I know you're going to be really happy about that. We have really put you through the ringer as far as editing these last couple weeks, haven't we?

Christina Barsi: Yes, it's been ... a little more challenging than some other projects, but definitely a richer experience as a result.

Liesel Reinhart: Well, we're all learning here and that's sort of the idea, right? [00:01:00] We wanted to actually stop down and just go a little mellow this week and talk about, now that we're into it, why we're doing this professional development podcast. A little bit about what we're learning, and what we still need to learn. I also want to talk to Christina about the class she just had. She just did two workshops at Mount Sac last week on podcasting for educations. I wasn't able to attend, so I have some questions for her, [00:01:30] so we can find out a little bit more about those sessions.

Christina Barsi: So Liesel, I always wondered what the inspiration was to get started in the first place with podcasting. What brought you to the idea of needing to have this at Mount Sac?

Liesel Reinhart: Good question. I think the idea came about as I became more of a podcast listener myself, and just realized wow, there's not just a lot of great information out there that was captivating to me, [00:02:00] but that it was convenient. It was information that I could get when I was walking, or driving, which everybody here in Southern California does. Or doing my laundry, or wherever, I could just pop something on and learn. When I became the faculty professional development coordinator, and one of my challenge was gosh when do we schedule workshops? When do we try and find time that everyone can meet so we can do these cool workshops. I realized gosh, there is no [00:02:30] great time.

There is a time when everybody can do it, and that's at their own convenience. And so it struck me that perhaps there is a way we can share, not all, but some of our content in a new way through mobile learning. These unexplored little windows of time that people have in their life where they might be able to jump in for just a few minutes here and there and learn something. Or be [00:03:00] inspired to learn something.

Christina Barsi: Right. I think you nailed it there. I think that's what so interesting for ... especially for young people. I know at community college you have the range of-

Liesel Reinhart: Young at heart.

Christina Barsi: Yeah, ages at community college. You have this thing that's so accessible that we're used to having in our regular day to day lives, why not bring it into a space that is educational and connected to what you're doing while you're studying. I think it's a wonderful [00:03:30] tool that can leverage time like you said, it can leverage different ways of approaching education. Everyone learns a little bit differently also. It's a nice thing to bring it as just an extra tool for students, for other faculty members, things like that.

Liesel Reinhart: Yeah, and I feel like the people listening to the podcast, they might be our diehards, the people who come to all of our workshops. We definitely have regulars who are sort of addicted to professional development. But there's also people we never [00:04:00] see at our workshops who we just can't get to. A lot of our part-time faculty, I think we have something like 1400 adjunct faculty at Mount Sac. That's a huge number of our faculty. They are making a big difference in students lives and they're really busy. They're teaching at multiple campuses. They're not paid to be on campus any additional hours really. We could still invite them into our community. One of the things I'm hoping is that we can reach both our die hards and some new folks with being a part of a community [00:04:30] of learners.

Christina Barsi: On that note, do you feel that you're strongest goal is that? Is to try and bring the community in across faculty members, or are there other things that you're hoping to gain out of this process?

Liesel Reinhart: I'll be honest, part of the reason we wanted to talk today is I think we're not sure. Part of what we're doing is trying to figure out is this a podcast that is meant to replace [00:05:00] some professional development content? So instead of going to a workshop you would come here. Is it meant to give you a taste of it, to inspire you to be a part of it? To just be a part of a conversation. Is it something you listen to every week? Is it something that you look at the topics and you just choose the one that you need to know about? We're not sure. We're still just growing and trying to figure it out both on the design side but also on the ability [00:05:30] to deliver side. Which is a real challenge, boy.

Christina Barsi: It is, yeah. Yeah, I will say there's always an experimentation portion of podcasting with everyone I've worked with. You really ... even people that do know their audience really, really well still struggle with what's the style, what's the structure, what do I include or not include each time, and how long. How much do I want to build new audience and things like that.

Liesel Reinhart: Oh yeah. And good luck with teachers. [00:06:00] I love my faculty peers, but ... and I'm one of them when I'm in a student. We are the toughest students of all. You get a group of faculty, you put them in the Clark theater at mount sac, they all sit on the edges and in the back. You know? We can be some of the toughest students, and we all come in with such different experiences, approaches to teaching, and knowledge levels. It's very hard to try and even figure out at what level to approach [00:06:30] each topic. I read the evaluations for all of our professional development workshops and one person will say this changed my life, and the other person will say I already knew all this, it was far too basic. It's not like we offer enough levels of workshops that we can address that. It's hard to be all things to all people. Sometimes I wonder if that means we can be anything to any people.

Christina Barsi: Oh wow, that's a daunting way of looking at it.

Liesel Reinhart: [00:07:00] Well, you know, you try not to be so middle of the road that you miss out on the opportunity to potentially create transformative programming. And sometimes that means doing things that can be sort of shocking or offensive to people. Sometimes that means doing things that are really safe, and really conservative in what you're aiming for.

Christina Barsi: Right, not to digress but just on the topic of education, it [00:07:30] does seem like, I would think especially trying to create a class, a workshop for faculty, with the podcasting that we did recently, trying to create a structure for everybody in the class. There's always gonna be someone who's way ahead of you, or who's bored, or someone who just falls behind. It's trying to figure out how to build the class for. I feel this is a similar sort of dilemma, I guess you could say.

Liesel Reinhart: Yeah, same thing with [00:08:00] our forms so far. I felt a lot of pressure coming in like all right, I want to make sure that there are some really concrete deliverables in every episode, so someone who's turning in feels like all right, I learned something practical I can use in my classroom this week. Sometimes that's not always possible. That learning is a process, it's something we scaffold in our own students. It may not be that just one 10 or 20 minute section [00:08:30] of content is going to yield a major transformative outcome. But I do hope people at least feel or have a moment in each of our episodes where they're thinking, I might read something, I might try something, I might attend something. You know, that we're at least being provocative.

Christina Barsi: Right, right. Creating some sort of call to action enticement.

Liesel Reinhart: Now we have ... just to be practical about it, [00:09:00] sort of learned some things I think about trying to capture ... capture, see how I said that, capture, I'm very formal. Capture. How we-

Christina Barsi: Cap-ture.

Liesel Reinhart: Cap-ture. How we try and capture actual workshops and turn them into podcasts. This has been one of our ideas, right? We don't have a full time staff of faculty who do professional development so if we want to create a podcast we'll just stick some microphones on people [00:09:30] who are already doing workshops, and see if we can make that a podcast, isn't that creative of us?

Christina Barsi: Right. Its definitely utilitarian at the least.

Liesel Reinhart: Exactly. For the poor presenters who have agreed to do that so far this semester, they have ... it's a giant microphone. I have to be honest. It's like the size of ... I don't know, a Twix bar. You stick it on their lapel and it looks kind of corny. [00:10:00] It's not like one of these swelt microphones, it's like this beast. The cord is kind of short so if they move around ... Christina's literally like squatting and following them around on the floor, it's really dramatic. So we're really grateful to our presenters who have worn the silver Twix this semester so far to be recorded.

Christina Barsi: Yeah, and allowed me to dance around with them in front of the class.

Liesel Reinhart: And Christina [00:10:30] also has this handheld recorder, that's got what looks like a gray-haired ... remember the troll dolls?

Christina Barsi: Yeah.

Liesel Reinhart: So like a puff of fur, hair ... it's a big gray puff, and she points that at people and they have this initial reaction which is ahh.

Christina Barsi: Step back.

Liesel Reinhart: Then they relax and they talk into it. And so we're really grateful for all of our participants too who are definitely not used to being asked to be recorded as a part of their professional development. [00:11:00] I think they've really been good about it. I think everybody's been really a good team sport, and has sounded amazing when we actually listen back.

Christina Barsi: Yeah, I mean you've got luckily a very intelligent group that we're working with so people are going to say things that are worth listening to. But I will say yes, at the first sight of what I call the Einstein mic, or the troll mic, [00:11:30] whatever, they do get a little intimidated and some people say no. People say no I really don't want to, or they get nervous, but overall it's been a really compliant ... and they get used to it. If you spend the day with them they just get used to it and then they start being really comfortable with the questions and it becomes a part of the class, which is interesting.

Liesel Reinhart: What is strange though is that when you're in the room and you're being a part of it I [00:12:00] think the idea is that ... the gaps of time, the students reflecting, people writing things down, it can be really dry. I'm sure a lot of what you do is cutting out these quiet moments, these beats that are very non-verbal that happen in the classroom when we're actually all there.

Christina Barsi: For sure. That's why you hear my voice probably too often in most of the ... if anyone who's listening to this has listened to any of the other episodes you hear my voice a lot because there's activities [00:12:30] happening, there's things that we need to either explain or dead space between giant gaps of things between things. So yeah, there's definitely filling in the blanks there and cutting away.

Liesel Reinhart: I like Christina's ... she's sort of invented this whisper like okay, so right now it's sort of like golf voice, you know? Like they've gone up to the tee. You're very good at it though. You've got this natural kind of like I'm here in the wild [00:13:00] and the cougar has just decided to leave the den. You're very good at describing. [inaudible 00:13:09] of Omaha's wild kingdom voice.

Christina Barsi: I guess in my head it's my one moment to be a reporter. That's my field reporter play time, fantasy that I've never fulfilled until now.

Liesel Reinhart: I will say this, one thing that I have gotten out of this [00:13:30] process that has been a really cool learning for me about professional development, is that it's great to just stop in the middle of a program and ask people what they're getting out of it. Christina walks around with this Einstein mic and I don't even know it until I'm listening to the podcast and you stick it in the students faces and you're like what are you learning right now, what are you getting out of this, what are you going to do with this information. It's awesome because I think sometimes all we get are these little [00:14:00] evaluations at the end, and we don't have that metta discussion. You're actually ... because you're trying to make the podcast interesting and interactive, you're making the classes more interesting and interactive.

Christina Barsi: Oh, that's really ... and you know what, I didn't think of it that way, but you're right. When I do teach I'm obsessed with feedback. I want to know if everyone's doing okay, it's probably my very mommy version of teaching. [00:14:30] I think it comes from ... I'm also a coach, I'm a creativity coach, so a lot of that ... a lot of the way I teach, and the way I want people to learn is in a very comfortable safe way. So I really want to know the answers to those questions when I'm asking them. Yeah, it totally is for the podcast, but it's just my nature as well is to ... I really want to know the answers. Is this inspiring to you? Are you enjoying this? What is it that you find ... [00:15:00] where's the spark for you?

Liesel Reinhart: We're so fortunate to have you because you do have that natural inquisitive quality and also I just ... I feel like you're a great listener. You make everyone feel so comfortable so that when you do walk up to them and have a conversation with them it's very organic, there's nothing that feels intense or threatening to foreign about the conversation that you're having. It does seem like I genuinely want to know this, and I think that's really helped [00:15:30] us get natural reactions.

Christina Barsi: Thanks Liesel.

Liesel Reinhart: You're welcome.

Christina Barsi: It's been really nice having you kind of co host with me as well, because there's a lot of things within this terrain that I'm just simply unfamiliar with, so it's really great having you support that side of the podcast for us, for all of us, and make it sort of an interesting jumping off point at every turn. I feel like you really help with the structure so much [00:16:00] that it kind of makes it easier.

Liesel Reinhart: It's an interesting journey. We haven't really talked about it too much, but Christina was my student, actually. Many moons ago, a student on the speech and debate team at Mount Sac, and so it's been really great getting to talk with you more and work with you now as a peer, as a colleague, but also to be able to lean on the part of you that was our student at the college, and can bring reflections still using that experience [00:16:30] to the conversation and thank you for allowing me to continue to ask you, as a student how would you have felt about this. Because we're all very curious about that. All professional development is ... yes, it's about making us feel better and more trained as educators, but it's because we want to do better for our students and it's hard to not have students be part of that. We always want to know is this gonna actually make my students learn better? Is this gonna make them more motivated or more engaged? [00:17:00] It's hard to know that.

Christina Barsi: Right, yeah it is. I relate to that sort of ... that's why I'm so interesting what the teachers are learning, or the faculty in the classes. Coming from a similar place, it's like wow you're learning too. This is so great.

Liesel Reinhart: Well you're never done learning because they keep inventing things like, I don't know, podcasting.

Christina Barsi: Right.

Liesel Reinhart: To that end, we want to make sure that we not only are developing a podcast that we can share, but [00:17:30] we want to put podcasting in the hands of teachers so that they could bring it into their classrooms in a variety of ways. There's so many possible ways. Obviously putting lectures and extending what you can share yourself with your students, having your students create podcasts, even curating other podcasts for your students are ways in which you could use this tool in your classrooms. That's why we asked Christina to teach a class. So how did it go? You had two pretty full classes.

Christina Barsi: [00:18:00] Yeah, I think it went really well. We had some technical difficulties in each class, but that's to be expected. There's just things you don't know until you get in there. But overall I would say I probably threw them off their game a little bit because I had them do really unexpected things to start. Like play with markers and play-doh and things that they probably wouldn't naturally connect to because I really wanted them to connect with [00:18:30] the idea of having fun, the idea of things that you want to do that you're inspired by. So intuition inspiration was the sort of core element of ... or pivot point I should say of the class. Because I was like guess what, you're making a podcast right now so you've gotta be able to make decisions really quickly. So I gave them the breakdown of what to consider, we went through everything and gave them lots of opportunities for answering questions [00:19:00] that are kind of deep questions but we had to move through it quick, so I really wanted them to know what that gut reaction felt like right off the bat.

Liesel Reinhart: So you made a podcast in the class?

Christina Barsi: Yeah.

Liesel Reinhart: Wow, about what?

Christina Barsi: You know, we didn't because of the time limit. Normally I really want to share everything, but we didn't have time for that. Some people on the second class had a lot of question about their specific ideas so we did have a little more time for questions [00:19:30] at the end, but we didn't get a chance to really share them. I think everyone came to class, or at least the majority came to class or the workshop, with something in mind. So what I had them do was create an intro, an outro, and a small body of content, using their cellphones to record. So I ran them through the-

Liesel Reinhart: Sounds fun.

Christina Barsi: Yeah, it was fun. We did it quick, but they were very good at making it happen. I think [00:20:00] they were a little apprehensive but they liked the idea of doing, and walking away with something they can continue to work with at home.

Liesel Reinhart: It's easy and difficult, right?

Christina Barsi: Yes.

Liesel Reinhart: I mean the easiest thing in the world is to just hit record. The difficult thing seems to be obviously you have to get decent sound quality, but it's the content. It's having some content that will matter to someone. It's trying to keep the flow of it moving, [00:20:30] trying to do something you don't have to edit too much because gosh that can take forever. And then it's doing it every week, right? That's really the question as we move forward for us, is what is something we can deliver every week that will make people interested. I go back and forth between thinking well it's sort of hearing the same people talk about different topics which are how a lot of podcasts do it. But I get tired of the sound of my own voice. We have so many cool people [00:21:00] that maybe it's about bringing a lot of different people into the mix. But boy is that hard to do, isn't it?

Christina Barsi: It can be. It's a popular way of approaching podcasting, but from my perspective I feel like it's a little bit more difficult to execute. So yes, it is tough to get new people on each time. It's not impossible, but it does quite of ... maybe a month or two ahead planning ahead of time. But it's doable.

Liesel Reinhart: So this is [00:21:30] our call-out then, to anyone who's out there listening in our little community that we're building. You know, what would you like? We would love to hear your comments and get your feedback, and to know would you like things that are more concrete, that are the latest up to date information from the world of professional development, relevant research. Would you like to know about conferences coming up, or conferences that people have attended, is that an interesting world for you? [00:22:00] Would you like to get more [pedigochi 00:24:10] and just every week a fun new tip for the classroom? Or do you just want a variety of topics that you can bump and browse through and choose the ones that are interesting to you but to be sort of a fly on the wall for workshops which are some of the sessions that we've done this semester so far.

Christina Barsi: Yeah, I think it is more consistent to have one of those formats to kind of persist through. Getting [00:22:30] some feedback would be fantastic.

Liesel Reinhart: Absolutely, or just email me at LReinhart@mountsac.edu. And by all means, if you have some information, some ideas, or even a workshop that you would like to turn into a professional development podcast that you think could be a great episode of the Magic Mountie podcast, we would love to hear from you. We have a few more weeks still to go, this semester where we can put out podcast [00:23:00] content with the amazing Christina Barsi. We do not have her as a permanent employee, she's just here for a semester long project. So after this we are going to be on our own, y'all. So come and work with Ms. Barsi and find out what it's like to have her whisper about things that you and your students are doing while you still can.

Christina Barsi: I would love to do it.

Liesel Reinhart: Great, all right, we'll see you all next week.

Hey, thanks so much for joining us for the Magic Mountie podcast. [00:23:30] We love your likes, we love your shares, and we love your comments, so please engage with our community, download from wherever you love to get your podcasts, iTunes, Google, rate my professor, we're there. We want you to be back with us next week. Remember, any opinions that are expressed in this podcast do not necessarily represent Mount. San Antonio college, or any of it's agents. We'll see you next time.