● Interview with Dr. Bethany Wong on Transitioning to Remote Learning and Teaching and the Zoom vs. Chat teaching format
    ● **DATE**
        ○ October 20th, 2020
    ● **DURATION**
        ○ 12m 13s
    ● **2 SPEAKERS**
        ○ Chris Payne
        ○ Dr. Bethany Wong

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[00.00.03] **CHRIS PAYNE**: So why when after you were required to transition to fully online, when most professors went to Zoom, why did you choose to do a chat only?

[00.00.20] **DR. BETHANY WONG**: So the priority in going into online learning was this idea of smooth transition, and especially for the class that we are talking about, English 330. I was trying to think about how to cause the least amount of disruption for the syllabus that already existed and immediately going into after spring break, we were reading a really long text. We're reading Samuel Richardson's Clarissa, which already is a challenge. And so because there was already an assignment in place, the Clarissa Journal, which all students had had access to the format of that written assignment, I was trying to think about how to transition that written assignment into a new medium with, well, giving students the least amount of additional work. And so in light of that I used the chat because it was the easiest way initially to think about how you would take those aspects of the assignment that I had given. It had an initial response as a tweet, which also kind of lends better to written versus verbal. And then there was a close reading which then got moved on to the discussion aspect, the asynchronous Moodle part. And then there were final discussion questions. So. So part one in part four ended up in the chat. The other consideration was this question about equity and voice and the problem of being able to hear everyone's voice. And so thinking about how we get all of those tweets and all of those questions at the end into the chat, but also. This idea of talking to a lot of friends who had been doing Zoom and the idea that it was very hard to get more than a quarter of the class to talk. And thinking about the questions about technology and accessibility, already, we were getting emails about, you know, problems with mics or video, and I thought that would be the least disruptive, the most accessible and kind of the smoothest transition.

[00.03.06] **CHRIS PAYNE:** thank you. And looking back, do you feel like the course accomplished its goal through that chat format?

[00.03.23] **DR. BETHANY WONG:** I think for the speed in which we had to make the transition because that because by the time we had made the transition, there were only a few weeks left. By the time we got through Clarissa, that was already two weeks and I believe

there were only a few weeks left. And so another question was a question about structure and about asking students building new habits that they could take through the end of the term. Also keeping in mind that to be understanding about people's schedules, about, you know, there were things happening in terms of people having space and having to do child care. And so it seemed to make the most sense to continue doing this because there were only a few weeks left. It was already a format that you were familiar with and things were changing daily in people's lives. Now that we know this is the norm. And we weren't sure at the time that it would be that it's fine to bring in all of these other things. And we also had a rapport with that class where we had already been together for many weeks. So we already knew each other. That was also a class where most of the students I had had before. But I totally understand that face to face, and that is going forward, that is going to be the way to get to know people, to use all of the different formats to be used, to hear people's voices, to see their faces, to use the chat. All hands on deck now, now that we know what we're going in for and that this is long term.

[00.05.21] **CHRIS PAYNE**: So as a professor who's now taught through that chat format, as well as the Zoom classes, from the professor's standpoint of presenting the information, did you have a preference? Do you feel like you were able to more easily present information and discuss the topic with which format?

[00.05.51] **DR. BETHANY WONG:I** think that if you were building this course from scratch. Then you need the face to face and you need to hear the voices. I think that so much, especially in an English class, has to do with rapport because every voice matters. This isn't the same thing. Every English class will be different. It's not necessarily like math or science class where there's
a kind of a more set curriculum. And so that's absolutely. So the idea that we have faces and voices is essential if you're building the class from the ground up. I think that what we needed for the time a few months ago, the check did work. It did. I did regret how much repetition happened, but I think that was a necessary evil of the format. But I also noticed going through that we were able to have a lot more participation across the class. So you can actually see the names and what they said. And at least we got a big number. We had a higher percentage of participation, so. So looking back, I understand why that happened going forward, I understand that we're changing and then just some questions, maybe just not directly related to the chat versus Zom.

[00.07.20] **CHRIS PAYNE:** Do you feel like your courses that you've taught online have maintained the same level of rigor that you want and that you've had in the past in in-person classes?
[00.07.36] **DR. BETHANY WONG: I** think when we ask that question, there are a lot of moving parts. It's not just a question of going from person to remote. It is also the question of the module system, which we have talked about and. So it's one of those things with, you know, when you do it in science experiments, you're only supposed to change one variable at a

time So it would be one thing if you're going from campus to remote and then everyone's lives had stayed exactly the same. That is really not the case. We have people in different time zones. We have people who are taking care of like three other younger siblings and they're all sharing a phone so that when you see them on Zoom, that might be someone else's name. So I think in terms of the question about rigor, I think there are so many moving parts that education and what we do in the classroom is just one more moving part for the way that students are experiencing their lives and the way that instructors are experiencing their lives.

Dr. Wong's interview above equally answers and raises questions about distance learning Dr. Wong's transition to Zoom was different from other professors, and because of this she offers very unique insights into the transition to distance learning.. Dr. Wong discusses why she utilized the chat format for the specific situation and why it was successful within those circumstances, but would not be as successful moving forward. Dr. Wong also discusses the importance of rapport building with students to be successful in the chat format of class. Dr. Wong then answers some general questions about the transition to online learning, discusses rigor, departmental differences, and adapting to students obstacles to create a successful learning environment. Dr. Wong's insight is significant, as she discusses not only the obstacles of teaching, but the obstacles in the way of student's learning. Understanding obstacles in the way of student learning is imperative in understanding how to teach those students, and in this way I believe Whittier College and its professors have handled the transition incredibly well. Whittier College professors teach smaller class sizes, and it is easy to tell how those personal relationships built with students have transitioned into online learning. Dr. Wong discusses the importance of rapport with students, especially when using the chat only format of class.