Audio file

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Transcript

00:00:14 Speaker 1

Welcome to conversations and made it the people behind the research.

00:00:26 Speaker 1

Hi everyone, today I'm joined by one of my South African colleagues and friends, Simone, Hi Simone.

00:00:33 Speaker 1

Hi everyone. Great. So maybe you could just introduce yourself to our listener. So who are you? What do you do and where do you work?

00:00:41 Speaker 2

And so I'm Simon Titus. I work at the Center for Health Proficiency Education at Stellenbosch Universities, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences.

00:00:50 Speaker 2

And although my work is in teaching and learning in, in health professions, education, I take care of a focus lead in digital education and innovation, or which was formerly known as learning technologies. So my my passion and what I do really is teaching and learning how proficient education with a special interest.

00:01:10 Speaker 2

In the use of emerging technologies in not only health efficiency education, but higher education as a whole.

00:01:16 Speaker 1

Yeah, very relevant.

00:01:19 Speaker 1

How did you get into health professions education? So what is your background? I know you were a physiotherapist or a biochemist.

00:01:26 Speaker 2

No, no, no, no, sorry. That's the interesting thing. I actually had a conversation with a colleague earlier this morning. You know, speaking about how everybody's path is actually just so different. So I started out in sports.

00:01:39 Speaker 1

Yes.

00:01:40 Speaker 2

And I I I started out doing a degree looking at sporting exercise science and then I realized I don't like the exercise, do something.

00:01:50 Speaker 2

But I really enjoyed the idea that I I I'm working in, in Health Sciences and my other major was in psychology and then I.

00:01:57 Speaker 2

Sort of did.

00:01:58 Speaker 2

The sports science with psychology as another major with a another specialization in sport management.

00:02:06 Speaker 2

And then I segued into gender studies of all things. And I looked at, and I did work around females and female leadership and how women are viewed and and they say looking at the gender biases of female leaders in traditionally male dominated spaces. And I I owe that probably to the to the.

00:02:27 Speaker 2

Boots are inside.

00:02:28 Speaker 2

Well, my, my, my work and so that degree also when I did my masters was one that was standing. So I did a lot of sports science, a lot of Kenneth apology. So that is anatomy such a functional location, autocontrol, sociology, psychology. You know, so, so, so I they're building in not only the sciences.

00:02:48 Speaker 2

You say the hard sciences, but also the social sciences, and then in the the the sociology which looked at the gender studies and I was teaching in, in, in Health Sciences or in sports sciences for probably about 10 years and.

00:03:02 Speaker 2

As I was teaching, I was using lots of technologies to facilitate students learning the experiences of in the classroom and outside of the classroom and.

00:03:13 Speaker 2

In that space I ended up.

00:03:16 Speaker 2

A new conversation was at the time her name is Vivian Bose. Like, and I always say that she's a point of light and and what she did at the time when she came down because teaching and learning wasn't really put on the map at institutions at the time when she got me down and she was speaking about this IOP and the teaching and Learning Charter.

00:03:36 Speaker 2

It was gibberish to to ask. You know what, 17 years ago?

00:03:41 Speaker 2

And so the language wasn't accessible, you know, because we're so used to using language in our discipline. Now we're using educational language, language, using educational spaces to sort of understand the practices that we are actually implementing in our classrooms but not actually being conscious about that. And so she, she had this project.

00:04:03 Speaker 2

Called emerging technologies in higher education, and it brought together 8 universities from 8 differently placed universities in South Africa. And they did a project on I cities in in higher education.

00:04:16 Speaker 2

And that was when I sort of pivoted into the teaching and learning space. And that's not what we're getting into to health professions, education, but but venture the fact that I've perverted into teaching and learning and I was working in Health Sciences at the time, it sort of organically emerged that.

00:04:36 Speaker 2

I I ended up in that environment and it.

00:04:38 Speaker 2

Was in that.

00:04:40 Speaker 2

Working group that I met my my PhD supervisor, Dickin Gambi at the time.

00:04:46 Speaker 2

And I did a PhD in using game based learning to facilitate cross cultural learning and Health Sciences or sports science. At the time it was teaching sports psychology and I think that I almost want to say in the the racist history because then I started networking. I got engaged with Sahi.

00:05:06 Speaker 2

Which is the Southern African Association for Health Efficiency of for high.

00:05:10 Speaker 2

Health educationalists and actually that committee in the Western Cape. So I ended up engaging in spaces that would be dominantly Health Sciences and medical education. And up until today I'm still in that space.

00:05:26 Speaker 1

Yeah, I find health professions. No, no, that's fantastic. I mean, I find health professions education, as I said, it brings together so many different worlds and disciplines from, you know, the health side or Health Sciences side to education, sociology, the digital, the higher education. So it's a really exciting space to be in.

00:05:27 Speaker 2

It was long winded.

00:05:44 Speaker 1

Where has your research gone since doing your PhD in sort of the gamification or game based learning? What sort of is your research focus or area at the moment?

00:05:54 Speaker 2

So, so, you know, digital education sort of evolves and shifts quite rapidly, not only in the world, but in in, in higher education. And so in South Africa, it is, it's not a slippery slope, but it's something we really have to be conscious of because of.

00:06:09 Speaker 2

Access and the digital divide, and even though we give students access, I want to say to either Wi-Fi or devices. It doesn't simply mean that they know how to use these things. So so my research shifted from using game based learning. So my work actually developed digital games.

00:06:29 Speaker 2

Using prescribed textbooks.

00:06:31 Speaker 2

To facilitate learning in the classroom now, I'm still busy with some working in game based learning with our colleagues in this particular faculty currently doing one on focus, which is point of key ultrasound and so they've developed a a game underwater C game that is developed actually in the Netherlands that we will be implementing here.

00:06:54 Speaker 2

In the next semester.

00:06:56 Speaker 2

There's some other flash card game development type of work that's being done. I also got a a grant to to look at the user using virtual reality and augmented reality in higher education. So that project is completed. Yet while I was at UWC in my role as a teacher in learning specialist.

00:07:15 Speaker 2

So that that was a project that that spent over 2 years and really looked at how we can use virtual reality and augmented reality to teach anatomy and Physiology to to students in, in Health Sciences.

00:07:30 Speaker 2

And currently my project is now projects have shifted so busy with work in AI. So looking at how we we use artificial intelligence to develop culturally sensitive stories for, for people who are diagnosed with things like type 2 diabetes or HIV so.

00:07:49 Speaker 2

We know that large language models are predominantly developed in the globe.

00:07:54 Speaker 2

North. And so it is inherently biased and it is it. It creates stereotypes of of people. And so we're trying to create, we trying to teach the large language models about our context so that when we do request it to to generate text or visuals or videos.

00:08:14 Speaker 2

Or any type of artifact for the African continent.

00:08:19 Speaker 2

That these, you know the the outputs are are contextually, flexibly, slightly relevant in our space, yeah, so so that's my latest. So the project, I mean, the other work that I'm doing is the development of, you know, putting together a not so much.

00:08:26 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

00:08:29 Speaker 1

That's super.

00:08:38 Speaker 2

Research by putting an immersive Learning Center for clinical anatomy together, so that would include using virtual reality as an immersive space for students to to learn anatomy in in Health Sciences.

00:08:54 Speaker 1

You're very busy. You're doing such a very exciting work. So obviously you're you're describing how technology is sort of really integrated within educational spaces and it's sort of something we need to lean into and embrace. So do you have any practical recommendations for people who are maybe wanting to implement or use any sort of technology or you know?

00:09:16 Speaker 1

May I have raised some sort of great points on being sort of critical on thinking, where was this tool or product developed? You know what biases might be inherent? Is it applicable to our context or to our culture? So any sort of other takeaways or practical advice for practice?

00:09:32 Speaker 1

Winners.

00:09:33 Speaker 2

Yeah, look, technology is not solvable. It I don't advocate for.

00:09:36 Speaker 2

It all the time I.

00:09:38 Speaker 2

Think you need to 1st? Consider what?

00:09:39 Speaker 2

Is the purpose.

00:09:41 Speaker 2

What is the learning outcome that you want to achieve and can that be achieved using technologies and so I always say students always have this in their hand. Yeah. And when you look at a student, my first question is how do I get into that?

00:09:53 Speaker 2

Space. How do I become one of the first things besides the WhatsApp and the Instagram chats and whatever it is, the DM's? And how do I get them to touch onto my work first? How do I make?

00:09:53 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:10:07 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:10:08 Speaker 2

Lucrative. And So what we've been doing here was developing and it's all the old ideas is developing SCORM packages. So SCORM packages using different types of multimedia media products and putting it into one package. So student can then look at the school. It's usually developed from the lecturers.

00:10:29 Speaker 2

And PowerPoint presentations, but then being big quizzes and being with the, you know, the YouTube clip or video or images that the that the lecturer may have taken in their own space cause many, many times here they're already clinicians. But that is based on a learning outcome.

00:10:47 Speaker 2

And so it's not all learning outcomes require technology. Yeah. So my recommendation is always start to start small. You know. So if there's a video that you want to link to a presentation or a an article that you did that linking, linking those types of things into spaces or simple ways in which students can can you can use technology.

00:11:07 Speaker 2

To engage in a space, use your discussion forums if you have and in essence use your discussion forums in a in a way that allows for interaction. So for example, don't leave a question then just, you know, ask students to like, ask them to engage with it and I hate doing this but.

00:11:28 Speaker 2

So, so, so, so find innovative ways deals are also popular with students at the moment because they you, they get content in very short bites. So you you don't want to use a tool that is really going to have to be immersed in this space for long periods of time. So you don't want to put a YouTube video.

00:11:46 Speaker 2

And that is an hour long.

00:11:48 Speaker 2

If you do cutting short snippets, but it's about creating bite sized information for students to to use. I think that's just my my my I suppose my tip is continue learning outcomes. I think that will drive your decision in terms of which technology to use. So if can I add.

00:11:56 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:12:08 Speaker 1

Yes, of course.

00:12:08 Speaker 2

Jumping mickey's.

So I often say that within a classroom, we often want to, even though there is a learning outcome, we often want to stimulate a particular type of outcome in the class. So either we want students to communicate we want.

Thing.

To engage, we want to test the the the knowledge of the different applications. To do that, if you want engagement, find technology.

That that allows for interaction and engagement. So if it's a quiz or you know, pull, if you wear will clap it engages. Then if you want to test the knowledge using mentimeter or if you have bigger classes, you may want to use something else like a metal board or who clap again.

So it's about trying to also see what it is that you want to be able to do to in your classroom that is going to facilitate the learning. And even if you're flipping a classroom and saying, you know what, read this, read this paper, and we'll be coming to the class, we're going to.

Have.

A discussion you don't really just need to have discussion. You could have a I just want to say.

A Q&A like a competition, quiz and maintain. Meet it.

Yeah.

As this really well.

00:13:11 Speaker 1

Yes.

00:13:12 Speaker 2

When you can ask them questions and it becomes like you have a leaderboard and it becomes a game, you gamify the space and the class erupts. In hive of activity. So.

00:13:17 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:13:24 Speaker 2

See what it is that you want out of your learning out coming out of your umm, classroom engagement?

00:13:30 Speaker 1

Yeah, I I think that's fantastic advice because it comes back to the basics of something like constructive alignment, makes sure that whatever activity you're doing is aligned to the learning outcome and things like chunking or scaffolding where you're prevent, you know, supporting students in those bite size.

00:13:44 Speaker 1

Just sort of digestible learning moments where they're not sort of overwhelmed or cognitively overloaded, and I think, like the gamification bringing fun into the classroom, you know, if we want to encourage lifelong learning, that should be a joy and not a hardship or a burden. And so bringing in those fun tools to engage different students in different ways and to bring excitement, I think, is great.

00:14:05 Speaker 1

Device.

00:14:08 Speaker 1

Yeah, exactly. Yeah. I mean, we all have our devices and we're sort of doom scroll or chronically online to make the content worthwhile. Yeah, and useful for students.

00:14:15 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah.

00:14:19 Speaker 2

And also if we doing that, students are likely doing that too. So I think we also need to adopt A sort of compassionate learning.

00:14:27 Speaker 2

And said that you know what? If Stevens were also overloaded, you mentioned cognitive load. They are also overloaded. There are also over stimulated. You do not also want to create more content that is going to, you know compound that situation you know.

00:14:41 Speaker 1

Yeah. So I think just maybe pressing pause and thinking is this fit for purpose?

00:14:44 Speaker 1

This, as opposed to just doing it because it's available and sort of adding more stress and more content to often overloaded curricula too.

00:14:53 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:14:54

Yeah.

00:14:54 Speaker 1

Maybe just sort of switching tracks a bit to thinking about your journey into the field of health professions education. Were there any sort of big learning moments that you found very helpful or advice you would give to someone perhaps thinking of doing a Masters or PhD in health professions education?

00:15:16 Speaker 2

Alright, so that's an interesting question and thank you for the question, Nikki. I think that it depends on where in the career the person is. So very often when we find people who are emerging scholars.

00:15:29 Speaker 2

Very often, if you also find that people at that age are either young, will have, may be thinking of of having a family, or have young families, and so there's lots of dynamics that are at play. So I often have mentoring and coaching conversations with with those people to ask what is it? What is your two year?

00:15:49 Speaker 2

Goal what is your five year goal? What's your thing, you.

00:15:52 Speaker 2

Because I think if you don't know what that is and what your purpose is, it's going to be very difficult for you to say ohh I want to go into health proficiency education. What is your? Why so? So my question to people always is what is your why? What is? What is your passion? What is your purpose? And if you don't know what that is going to find it.

00:16:03

Hmm.

00:16:11

Yeah.

00:16:12 Speaker 2

Go sit with yourself. What's on my mind? Maybe a coach to unpack. Or I mean to. To unpack what that is.

00:16:19 Speaker 2

And so it really is a is a journey and so find my my advice is to find a mentor to guide you on the path. So if you are looking at our proficiency, you should find somebody who you can not just one, maybe multiple main tools. We can talk you through some of the highs and the lows of working in this environment.

00:16:39 Speaker 2

I personally find it extremely rewarding because I can. I can love out my passion, which is to serve.

00:16:48 Speaker 2

You know, in a way that is rewarding for me, but I also see the fruits of my labor in terms of people who adopt some of the strategies that I that ioffer. The other thing is I think be strategic in terms of your partnerships.

00:17:04 Speaker 2

And and and.

00:17:07 Speaker 2

You know, in in their partnerships make sure that that the mentors and the people that you partner with have your best interest at heart as well and that they are guiding you sort of at the in the right part make sure that they are are are open to sharing opportunities within with funding or.

00:17:26 Speaker 2

Professional development. Make sure that there are people in in the environment that are that are that are able to offer that to you.

00:17:33 Speaker 2

The other thing is, if you've moved beyond being an emerging scholar.

00:17:39 Speaker 2

And you, somebody that's a little bit more established and you're looking to prove it again, it's going to be important for you to.

00:17:47 Speaker 2

To answer your what is your why? Why is it that you that you want to move across? I'm finding many clinicians. You are also teachers, didn't realize how much passion they have actually for teaching. And so now the pivot and the movers starting and the the development of the.

00:18:07 Speaker 2

I don't use the word capacity development. You know the professional skills in terms of how proficiency education, the the teaching and learning knowledge, the understanding of assessment. So as they're growing, all of these things, they are also perverting and moving.

00:18:21 Speaker 2

Into into different spaces. So for yes, what is your? Why?

00:18:26 Speaker 1

I think that was one of the first things my PhD supervisor asked me, he said. Just know you're why it doesn't matter what it is, but it needs to be clear because that's often the light at the end of the tunnel when things get dark, where it gets hard, you have that reason or that motivation sort of guiding you and keeping you going because it's not always.

00:18:46 Speaker 1

An easy or straightforward?

00:18:48 Speaker 1

Journey.

00:18:49 Speaker 2

It's not rainbows and butterflies, but it's rewarding at the end of the day. So yeah.

00:18:56 Speaker 1

Definitely. Maybe just to to end of, I don't know anything else you'd like to add, but also just thinking from a South African perspective, you've raised really interesting things such as like the digital divide and you know, access doesn't just mean physical access, but.

00:19:11 Speaker 1

Epistemological access or things like cultural sensitivity or bias.

00:19:16 Speaker 1

In tools developed in the Global N, any other sort of comments around that because I often find South Africans, I mean I'm South African and so this is my advice, but we're often meeting the way in health professions, education and yeah, just because we are somewhat marginalized or not as well represented in the fields such.

00:19:36 Speaker 1

These great things that we're doing is often lost, so any sort of if you want to stand on your soapbox or any takeaways or anything you really want to sort of share that you think South African researchers are doing really.

00:19:45

Yeah.

00:19:47 Speaker 1

Well.

00:19:48 Speaker 2

I think that that the African researchers have been doing wonderful, remarkable work for for many, many years in and the resource spaces. Yeah. And that is what has made them extremely creative in terms of the type of education delivery that they offer to their students. And so very often we don't get.

00:20:08 Speaker 2

Published in in papers that in papers where publishing houses are housed in the Global N, Why is that? You know, I mean 5-10 years down the line I read a paper and I'm like, but I was doing this ten years ago and, you know, read this paper cited many times and so.

00:20:22

Yeah.

00:20:26 Speaker 2

It's around partnerships we need to also build our partnerships with our colleagues in the global mood so that there is a knowledge exchange and that it is not the top down approach where you know global N we are the bastions of knowledge, but also there needs to be an acknowledgement, a real acknowledgement and appreciation for the type of work and research that is being done in the global South.

00:20:48 Speaker 2

I'm at the point now where I do podcasts and we we pursue the podcast series and it's not, you know, about how did you get into the how proficient education, but it's about taking the the research that has been done in the global South, in health professions, education and we speak about your research so that we can start something.

00:21:07 Speaker 2

You must cite themselves. You know I'm not going to be citing and. And no disrespect, Nikki. And it's not because I'm not going to cite.

00:21:08 Speaker 1

Yes.

00:21:16 Speaker 2

Who is at Oxford University, where we can be citing somebody down the corridor? Yeah, saying some of the things. And so it's about acknowledging the type of work that we are doing in the global S but also, you know, pushing energy to say, you know.

00:21:30 Speaker 2

What?

00:21:31 Speaker 2

We actually do know what we're doing. Yeah. I was at a very big.

00:21:36 Speaker 2

Medical education conference.

00:21:37 Speaker 2

And.

00:21:38 Speaker 2

Last year and it just reaffirmed that what we are doing, you know on our continent is really brave and it's really creative and it really has impact with much, much, much less resources. And so it makes me really proud to.

00:21:58 Speaker 2

Being South African to be African and to look at and to see and to witness the type of work that we do and the type of research that that is that is happening in our space and even if we are not being published in in nature or legal teacher or you know.

00:22:10 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:22:14

Yeah.

00:22:14 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:22:15 Speaker 2

I'm so proud of the type of work that we are producing and it's really, I'm I'm not criticizing the the, the publishing houses. I'm. I'm just saying that yeah, we are doing exceptional work down South so.

00:22:29 Speaker 1

I was going to say.

00:22:31 Speaker 1

Yeah, partner with. So those who are in the global N partner with those in the global South and it should be again equitable, not sort of that tokenistic.

00:22:38 Speaker 1

You know, included some from South Africa. It needs to be meaningful. It needs to be about really listening because as you say, we have things to say. We don't need anyone to amplify our voice. We have our own voice. Just give us the mic.

00:22:51 Speaker 2

It needs to look. It needs to be an equal partnership and I think that is what we should be advocating for and I know that there are disparities, especially economically. So you know, when we apply for funding, for example, we will leave 100,000 rands, but you will get 5000 lbs. Double the amount.

00:22:53

Hmm.

00:23:07 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

00:23:10 Speaker 2

Essentially, and it's all we're saying, is these these meeting modeling at the partnership needs to be equitable for everyone. It is being an equal partnership that everybody gains in the exact same way.

00:23:24 Speaker 1

Yeah, I agree. Well, when your podcast is up and running or you're releasing episodes, please do let me know and I can include those details in the show notes because I will be listening and I'm sure many people will would love to listen to that.

00:23:30 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:23:34

That's it.

00:23:37 Speaker 2

That would be much appreciated. Thank you, Nikki.

00:23:40 Speaker 1

Well, thank you for your time, Simone.

00:23:42 Speaker 2

You're welcome. It was lovely seeing you again.

00:23:44 Speaker 1

Definitely chat soon.

00:23:50 Speaker 1

I am Danika Simms, your host and producer. Thank you for joining conversations in Madrid.

00:23:57 Speaker 1

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00:23:59 Speaker 1

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00:24:06 Speaker 1

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00:24:08 Speaker 1

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00:24:21 Speaker 1

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00:24:39 Speaker 1

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00:24:44 Speaker 1

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