TOPcast Episode 113:
The Three Students You Might Meet in Your Online Class

Narrator: When you realize what your future can be, you want to do it right. UCF Online offers more than 100 fully online programs, plus personalized support from success coaches. So, you can get to the future that's right for you.

(Musical transition)

Tom Cavanagh: From the University of Central Florida's Center for Distributed Learning, I am Tom Cavanagh.

Kelvin Thompson: And I am Kelvin Thompson.

Tom: And you are listening to TOPcast, the Teaching Online Podcast.

Kelvin: I've heard of that before.

Tom: I have too. Speaking of hearing.

Kelvin: Yes.

Tom: Do we sound any different?

Kelvin: I sound the same, but you sound different.

Tom: Well, I haven't done anything, Kelvin.

Kelvin: Yeah. Well, you have though.

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: You have.

Tom: Yeah, yeah. So, I mean, should we start there?

Kelvin: Sure. Start there.

Tom: So, listening audience, those who are maybe watching this online may have already noticed, but for the listening audience, we are back in the studio after two years of not being in the studio.

Tom: So TOPcast, like the rest of the world, rolled with the pandemic upheaval. Kept producing. Not only did we keep producing, but right before…

Kelvin: That's true.

Tom: …the start of the pandemic we had made a decision to go to twice a month.

Kelvin: Yes.

Tom: And we kept up that commitment through the last two years. Now, we are finally back in the room together, Kelvin. So, it's lovely to see you.

Kelvin: Likewise, likewise. Yeah, I looked it up yesterday. If the records are right, it was February 22nd, 2020, we were last in this room, and we did a wraparound recording for the distance learning course V episode…

Tom: Wow.

Kelvin: …which then aired at the beginning of March, I want to say. But by the time we were due to record the next one, it had all fallen apart.

Tom: The whole world changed. Yeah.

Kelvin: And so, then we were doing the remote thing and then we picked up those field reports. We did eight of those, right?

Tom: Right.

Kelvin: And we kind of focused on the kind of pandemic response and the top of the month episode for eight months. But, yeah, we've been monitoring kind of the circumstances, COVID data, all of that. And like, okay, we think it's maybe time. And we've talked about, well, we could keep doing it remote. I mean, it's working all right, but…

Tom: Certainly convenient.

Kelvin: Yes. I had to walk all the way across the street, Tom.

Tom: Oh, my goodness.

Kelvin: I know. And it's hot. Well, it's kind of lovely today.

Tom: It's actually a great day.

Kelvin: But I still sweat it a little bit, but we've talked about this many times during the last couple of years that we can notice an audio quality difference, and we can notice it's more... you're more prone to step on each other, and there's just a minute amount of lag.

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: It's just a different dance when you're doing the Zoom thing.

Tom: It is true. It is true. And although credit to Tim and the whole team that we came up with ways to ensure a certain level of quality that did not rely on Zoom.

Kelvin: A certain level. A certain level of quality.

Tom: No, seriously.

Kelvin: No, I got you.

Tom: It was not Zoom-dependent. Nothing against Zoom, but sometimes the internet connections weren't always great or...

Kelvin: That's right. Yeah, that's right.

Tom: You know, audio issues or microphones weren't quite what they ought to be. And I don't think there was any sort of noticeable…

Kelvin: No, no, no, no.

Tom: ...drop off in production value.

Kelvin: No, but I mean, I think you and I having experienced this said, "Well, we could..." But yeah, it'd be kind of nice to go back into the other. So, we'll keep an eye. If we need to go remote, we'll go to remote. But we should note, though, as so much of the things that you're not necessarily going back to what you did, but you go into some approximation, we've kept some stuff, right, from the pandemic era. So, if you're watching this, you wouldn't have used to be watching this.

Tom: That's right. Yeah. That's new because we weren't recording video prior to the pandemic, and it just became ubiquitous and no harder to record video as audio during the remote sessions. A little extra work on Tim's part.

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: Sorry, Tim.

Kelvin: But Tim said, "Okay, I can make that happen."

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: And so, God bless him. Here we are. We're doing video and audio.

Tom: So, Kelvin, that's not the only special thing about today's episode.

Kelvin: Yes.

Tom: What else is special?

Kelvin: It's a very special topic.

Tom: Very special. That's our joke.

Kelvin: Oh, well it's true, Tom. It's very true. So, this right now we're doing it. This is it right here.

Tom: We're doing it.

Kelvin: Season eight kickoff, Tom.

Tom: Season eight.

Kelvin: Seven years behind us.

Tom: We've done this nonsense for seven years?

Kelvin: Seven years.

Tom: Holy cow.

Kelvin: I kid you not. And it gets more interesting. I don't know how I didn't know this, but with this episode we also cross a bit of a threshold. With this episode we've done slightly more twice a month episodes than we have done monthly episodes.

Tom: Really?

Kelvin: With this episode, it will be 57 twice a month episodes. Most of those during the pandemic response.

Tom: Yes.

Kelvin: And 56 monthly episodes.

Kelvin: 4.6 seasons of monthly stuff, 2.3 seasons of the duo episodes.

Tom: Wow. I don't know what to say.

Kelvin: Yes. Isn't that interesting?

Tom: That is an interesting stat. I like to watch the Orlando Magic games and one of the announcers does this bit where he says, "Is this a thing?" and he comes up with some odd stat, and then the guys in the truck vote either with a buzzer or a ding if it's a thing.

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: And sometimes it's not.

Kelvin: But it is weird, right? I mean I'm just still struck by most of... well, not now most, but up until now a lot of our catalog, four years basically, four plus years of our catalog were a long time ago. And as much of that has

happened just in the two years. That's weird.

Tom: That is weird. Yeah, yeah.

Kelvin: Out of seven.

Tom: Interesting.

Kelvin: Yes, but that's not why we're here.

Tom: That is not why we're here.

Kelvin: But, hey, thanks. If you've been with us from the beginning, thank you. We appreciate it.

Tom: We do. Yeah, and we know there are people out there who have been listening since the beginning, and we are grateful.

Kelvin: We wish that your standards were higher, but nevertheless we appreciate you.

Tom: Yeah, yeah. So, for those who might not have been listening from the beginning who are new…

Kelvin: Yes.

Tom: ...and were wondering what those sounds were as we were talking earlier; those were the dulcet gurgles from the famous Kelvin thermos.

Kelvin: Yeah, that's right.

Tom: So, part of our thing is it's a collegial conversation with a couple of colleagues over a cup of coffee.

Kelvin: That's right.

Tom: It's a lot of alliteration…

Kelvin: That's right.

Tom: ...for anxious anchors from broadcast news. So, you've poured a cup…

Kelvin: Yes.

Tom: ...for each of us from your trustee thermos.

Kelvin: Yes.

Tom: What is in the thermos?

Kelvin: So, Tom, today's coffee is a single-origin Tanzania from that Coffee of the Month Club that I've had this past year. And I haven't had that many Tanzanian coffees. There's a local coffee place that had a, believe it or not, Tanzanian theme, and so they featured a Tanzanian peaberry.

Kelvin: But other than that, I don't know that I've had any. And it turns out that the history of Tanzanian coffees is a bit multifaceted. Coffee hasn't been just one thing there. Through the centuries at different points coffee has been a caffeine “chewy”, we might say. They took these fruits and did some stuff to... chew it. By the indigenous Haya people, probably using the native Robusta species of coffee.

Kelvin: Later it was a colonized, Arabica-based product distributed back to the colonizer's home country. Still later, it was a globally sold product from the indigenous Chagga people. I had to look this up.

Tom: Chagga?

Kelvin: Yeah. So, there's a Haya people and a Chagga people. They're indigenous peoples. Different ethnic groups that are in the same kind of country…

Tom: In Tanzania?

Kelvin: Yeah. Mm-hmm. One group lives kind of on the west shore of Lake Victoria. One on the south slope of Mount Kilimanjaro. Interesting, right?

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: So, then they adapted the colonial practices and made like a global market out of it. And then, more recently, it's been a specialty coffee valued by craft coffee field featuring those peaberry-high-based lots. The Tanzanian peaberry, you can find that. So anyway, Tanzanian single origin coffee. How is the coffee and how do you find the connection?

Tom: The coffee is good as always. You've never steered me wrong. I like the coffee. Can't say the same about the connection. I'm trying to think, do we have any Chagga students?

Kelvin: Maybe we do.

Tom: Maybe we do.

Kelvin: Maybe we do.

Tom: It is possible. I'm not sure we have anybody from Tanzania. It's possible.

Kelvin: It's possible.

Tom: I have seen Ethiopia on our list of…

Kelvin: Well, that's cool.

Tom: ...foreign countries. I think I might need a little handholding through the connection.

Kelvin: Yeah. Well, here's what I was, I guess, going for as I refill my cup. I was kind of leaning into the multifaceted aspect of Tanzanian coffee history. The fact that coffee is one thing, but it's not just one thing.

Tom: Okay.

Kelvin: Through the lens of Tanzania. I figure today we're talking about one thing that is not just one thing.

Tom: I see. Okay.

Kelvin: What are we talking about today, Tom?

Tom: Today we are talking about the variety of different kinds of students that you might encounter in an online class. And this was an idea you kind of brought to the table inspired by a faculty colleague of ours here. And I think you've named it, "The three students you might meet in your online class."

Kelvin: That's right.

Tom: I love that title. Sort of, I think is it a Mitch Albom book or something?

Kelvin: That sounds right.

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: "Five People You Meet in Heaven," or something like that. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tom: So, it's sort of inspired by that there are a variety of different types of students that you will potentially encounter in an online class. And they're all touching a different part of the elephant, but it's still an elephant.

Kelvin: No, that's right. And so at one level, it's just kind of thinking about diversity of student experience and all that. But at another level I'd like to frame it up as a bit of a call for better data on the needs of students enrolling on online classes, right? If we could assemble this.
So maybe there's some caveats that will issue here. Like one, you might be think of this episode as it follows here as a bit of a thought experiment, right? We're going to talk about these students, but these are ultimately hypothetical. They're fed by, they're influenced by, institutional data and instructor anecdote, but it's not like we have such robust data that they have given rise to what we're going to describe.

Tom: Right, right.

Kelvin: We wish we did.

Tom: These are archetypes.

Kelvin: That's right, of sorts. Of sorts.

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: You want to mention any of these other caveats here?

Tom: That our lower division undergraduate courses, the ones we call part of our Gen Ed Program tend to have more variation in different kinds of students that might show up in there than those that are maybe in the majors or especially at graduate level.

Tom: I find that my graduate students, because that's all I teach here, tend to all be kind of non-traditional older students for the most part.

Kelvin: Right, right.

Tom: So, they're a little more homogenous even if they're not like the traditional kind of on campus experience, but, yeah, these undergraduate courses, they tend to involve a lot of different types. I'll throw one that's probably I don't even think is in your list. The 80-year-old retiree who's come back and is just auditing a course.

Kelvin: Oh, yes. Right. Good.

Tom: I've seen that before. And even when I was an undergraduate, I remember there were some older folks that were sitting in class with me because they were just interested. That's a very different kind of student profile than the 19-year-old sophomore that's working on their Gen Ed.

Kelvin: Yeah. No, that's good. Although I think we'll find a place for that student on one of the shelves that we'll talk about. We don't get into that particular scenario. It's probably worth saying that sometimes we think we understand who our students are, and we make assumptions, or maybe even incorrectly generalize based upon a subset of experiences or data or whatever outmoded data. And that potentially can lead us to make bad decisions. If you decide, you make decisions based on who you think your students are…

Tom: Right.

Kelvin: ...and if that's wrong, then ooh, you're like the Apollo moon missions and your trajectory's one degree off and you're headed to...

Tom: Mars.

Kelvin: Somewhere. That's right. Not the moon. That's right.

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: Yes. And I don't know, you might think of this... You and I talked about this. We might think of this episode, 113, as a companion episode to Episode 111. Online necessity, not convenience.

Tom: A recent episode.

Kelvin: That's right. The B side as it were.

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: And we should give shout outs to our colleague, Dr. Amanda Groff, who was helpful in consulting on this episode.

Tom: Yeah. She's always a great partner in all of the online work that we do.

Kelvin: Award-winning online...

Tom: Award winning. Yeah.

Kelvin: That's right.

Tom: And a member of our advisory group.

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: All kinds of great stuff from Amanda.

Kelvin: So, you going to tell us about the big picture? What are we doing in here, Tom?

Tom: Yeah, and I'm going to give you credit because you've sort of structured this, but the idea is that we have three different circumstances, sort of life circumstances, for student profiles. And then we have five different “for examples” within those three. And that equals five plus three... eight.

Kelvin: Eight.

Tom: If my new math is correct.

Kelvin: Like season eight.

Tom: Just like season eight.

Kelvin: Wow.

Tom: And I can only imagine, Kelvin, that was just pure coincidence.

Kelvin: That's amazing how things work out serendipitously.

Tom: Yeah, yeah.

Kelvin: Amazing.

Tom: Let's start with the first one, and the first one is sort of the most obvious, which is the traditional college age student, that high school student, who matriculates into a college or university. That 18-to-24-year-old undergraduate experience.

Tom: And maybe the first one is somebody that we have named Joshua.

Kelvin: Yes.

Tom: Good old Joshua. Joshua is a pure freshman. He turns 19 very soon, next month even. God, Happy birthday, Joshua!

Kelvin: Happy Birthday!

Tom: Yeah, and again, to repeat, these are all made up people. Joshua...

Kelvin: You see the quotes in your brain as we say names.

Tom: Criminal justice major, but he's not part of our online campus. So, he's a campus-based student who's taking an online course.

Kelvin: That's right.

Tom: He's mostly online this semester while completing his General Ed. Two asynchronous online courses, one synchronous video course, which happens to be a math class, and one blended course where part of the course is online, and part is face-to-face.

Tom: And he says he's looking forward to taking more online classes because he likes that he can be involved in his on-campus activities and to complete his coursework flexibly. And just as a note, we've talked about this in the past but counterintuitively we've found here that some of these traditional age college students can engage more with the on-campus experience because of the flexibility of online classes, whether they're intercollegiate athletes, or they're in Greek life, or they're in student government, or something. They can really get involved in campus and have complete schedule flexibility because of online options. So, that's Joshua.

Kelvin: That's Joshua. So, a second case study scenario, hypothetical student still in that first life circumstance category of high school to college, traditional age 18 to 24, is who we'll call Cody. Cody's 22, and Cody is hoping to graduate next semester.

Kelvin: But Cody is going through chemotherapy and contemplating a medical withdrawal. Much to his advisor's chagrin, he's taking two in-person classes and two fully online... oh, excuse me, three fully online

asynchronous online courses. But this is his final GEP course. We should say that all the hypotheticals are like in this… they might be in the same general education course, which will remain nameless. So he's in that traditional age bracket. He came in that high school to college circumstance, but then life took a bit of a sharp left turn.

Tom: Yeah, and you know what? While all of these are fictional, they're not, you know? These are real circumstances that happen to people.

Kelvin: That's right.

Tom: So yeah, this particular student is dealing with a serious life-threatening health thing, and he's still taking a 15-credit load. How do we help a student like that? They're going to be sitting right next to a student who's just partying last night.

Kelvin: That's right. That's right.

Tom: Or virtually sitting.

Kelvin: Virtually sitting. Right. So second big life circumstance category is what we might call the working student maybe in that age bracket of 25-to-40-years-old. Both of these next two life circumstances we might think of as adult life responsibility cohort A, and adult life responsibility cohort B, right?

Kelvin: Just differentiated by their years on the planet. So this is working student in 25 to 40. We've got two of these scenarios. Why don't you tell us about the first one?

Tom: Actually, you can tell about the first one. I'll talk about the second one.

Kelvin: Oh yeah. You like the second one.

Tom: I do.

Kelvin: Okay. All right. That's fine. So, the first one...

Tom: I don't like the first one.

Kelvin: That's okay. She's going to be offended. The first one is Raquel. Raquel's 27, and she's giving birth to her first child before the end of this semester. She's a hospitality management major, but not part of our exclusively online, you get reduced campus-based service fees. She's just choosing to take online classes. She planned a 100% online semester so that she could still complete the term without interruption so she can continue on her academic path. So, she's taking four asynchronous courses. She's not opposed to online courses personally. She just prefers being in a physical classroom. But she often will take one or two online courses to provide some additional flexibility in her schedule. She works full-time.

Tom: Yeah, and you know what? I've taught Raquel.

Kelvin: Yes, right? Me, too.

Tom: At the graduate level where somebody has actually had a baby in the middle of class. Well, during the term, I should say.

Kelvin: Presumably, yeah.

Tom: Let me qualify that, clarify. Yeah.

Kelvin: That's right.

Tom: Yeah, so...

Kelvin: Not that kind of doctor.

Tom: Not that kind of doctor. Absolutely not, and not much I could do online asynchronously for her either.

Kelvin: Cheer. Good job.

Tom: So, that's Raquel and, yeah, that's a real kind of circumstance too. The next one is Marie. Marie's 33-years-old and is active military. I've also taught Marie's in the past, especially at another institution that I taught at that did a lot of military partnering. She's a Political Science major, and she is in UCF Online. She's taking two asynchronous courses this term, fully online, and she has another three terms to go. But she is interested in pursuing grad school after graduating, presumably maybe using her G.I. Bill after. She's probably using tuition assistance now. So, I've had a Marie contact me in the middle of the semester and she was in Kandahar on a base and could not turn her stuff in on time because the base had been attacked, and they all had to respond. I think, okay, that's a real thing that students are dealing with. I mentioned in a recent episode that... so as we're recording this the military conflict in Ukraine is still going on. We have a student, she's not an active combatant, she's just a civilian, but she is hunkering down in an apartment in Kiev right now trying to complete two classes online from Ukraine in the midst of a war. So, it happens. There are students out there.

Kelvin: Yeah. So, life circumstance number one was high school straight into college. Life circumstance number two is you're a working student. You're in that 25-to-40 age bracket. Life circumstance number three is what we might call generously "an older student." 40 plus.

Tom: Hey!

Kelvin: 40 plus.

Tom: I resemble that remark.

Kelvin: You do, indeed. Yes, 40 plus. Older student, and so you're kind of a mutation. The hypothetical you threw out earlier, right? The auditing 80 retiree I suppose broadly fits into that, but that's a specialized mutation.

Tom: It is, and you don't see it that often.

Kelvin: No, not too often. Boy, you have to be really motivated to... Let me go audit a biology class.

Tom: I was on campus today though, just as an aside. In fact, I drove straight here from campus and we have something called LIFE, which is an acronym for older...

Kelvin: Learning Institute for Elders.

Tom: Thank you.

Kelvin: It must have been happening today.

Kelvin: Ah, yes.

Tom: You can always tell.

Kelvin: The per capita over 40 crowd goes up highly.

Tom: Over 60 crowd.

Kelvin: Over 70 crowd.

Tom: Yeah, and so it's great always to see them on campus, and they're always really engaged. Just as an aside.

Kelvin: We just have one hypothetical here that we'll flesh out a little bit in this third life circumstance category, and then we'll make some broad comments before we're out of here.

Kelvin: So, our case study scenario in this age bracket is Germaine. Germaine is 56. She's returning to school to get an undergraduate degree. She's an anthropology major through our exclusively online program that we call UCF Online. She's taking three asynchronous online courses this term.

And as her instructor likes to say, "She's very enthusiastic." She emails a lot.

Tom: First to post in these discussions.

Kelvin: That's right.

Tom: Yeah, first to respond.

Kelvin: That's right.

Tom: Yeah, I love Germaine.

Kelvin: That's right, that's right.

Tom: Yeah, all right. So, that's three life circumstances and five examples. As we were saying this, I imagine you probably were thinking of your own personal examples...

Kelvin: Yeah, of course.

Tom: But our hope is that these kind of archetypes of sorts will resonate with you and you'll say, "Oh yeah, I recognize that person. That person has been in my class."

Kelvin: Yeah, that's right. We might just… can maybe start off with saying there's hypothetical students we think we're serving. Like whatever's in your head. Sometimes I know when I'm teaching online, if I'm building a course or I'm actively teaching, I'm thinking of a mental picture sometimes, and it's based on something. Maybe it's based on if students introduced themselves earlier in the term or students from a prior semester or whatever, you got that hypothetical. So that's a thing, but that's somewhat different than those students who actually are enrolling in our online classes, right? Now either way, like back in that Episode 111, online courses should always be online. They need to have onlineness, but

the way that we carry out that onlineness might be a little different if the kind of the student demographic, student profile, student life circumstance tilts. That happened to me years ago. You were talking about graduate students. I had graduate students who, when I first was teaching this one class, they were like you said, very much that non-traditional student working, blah, blah, blah. Over the years, I started to see... I don't know if it was like the economic downturn a few years ago. I started seeing this larger proportion of they just got their undergraduate degree, and they're straight in and it was a qualitatively different dynamic.

Tom: I bet, yeah. That's interesting, yeah.

Kelvin: It’s like, whoa, wait a second. They're not bringing all this life experience, or like how many pages do I have to write? You're like... what?

Tom: But you know, having those data, that kind of data, can help inform your course design, right?

Kelvin: Yes.

Tom: Can help inform the practices that you implement.

Kelvin: That's right.

Tom: I don't know. For example, say you have an online program at a residentially focused liberal arts college, and the students that you're serving are mostly the students who are also on campus. And it's a way to expand offerings without building buildings or something.
But you're not really doing outreach to grow your student population or into the community, but it's really just ... You might be able to schedule more kind of synchronous things and expect students to show up because they're kind of already there on your campus. But if you're a community college that is urban and you're serving the community of a lot of say non-traditional adult learners who are working different shifts and stuff, you can't require 10 o'clock on Tuesday morning kind of expectation. So, knowing who your students are will allow you to create the best possible experience for them.

Kelvin: Yeah, absolutely. And just building on that, pulling that thread a little bit. Conversely, you could make some assumptions about that residential student experience, right? You could go, "Oh, we'll do more synchronous online, real time." Because they're not that busy. They don't have adult life sort of responsibilities. But remember our scenario with Joshua here, right? He enjoys the flexibility. He's got that one synchronous class, but he's got several other asynchronous classes, and it's allowing him to do things at other times rather than right when the class says to be in the room.

Tom: Well, and even take Joshua's friend who was partying last night, who shall remain nameless.

Kelvin: That's right.

Tom: Yeah. His name may or may not be Kelvin. No, I'm just kidding. That student… so, how much did we see during the pandemic where we offered like a high flex or what we call blend flex course here where the students had the option of whether or not to attend in person or to watch the recording later? And over the course of the term, students just stopped coming, right? They just started watching. Especially if that class happened to be at 8:00 in the morning on Monday.

Kelvin: Hmm. Surprise.

Tom: Yeah. So, even a traditional age student might choose to interact with a course in a different way just based on preference. And whether or not you want to accommodate that can be up to you in your particular style as a faculty member in designing that course.

Kelvin: Mm-hmm. It just helps to know who we are teaching, who we're designing for, who we're serving. And existing institutional data can tell us certain things about the student body as a whole, and maybe about specific courses, like maybe the percentage of first time in college, straight out of high school versus transfer students.

Tom: Right.

Kelvin: You know, big, broad thing. That gets you to a point, but maybe new data requests if we can work closely with institutional research offices, we can identify proportions of students who exhibit certain kinds of course taking behaviors. Like maybe we ask for, "Well, show me what proportion of students have taken like a three-semester sprint of online courses." Like they're not committed forever.

Tom: Right.

Kelvin: You know? They didn't sign up for UCF online, but they are clearly committed. So, if that ends up being like a bigger percentage than you thought you might step back and go, ooh...

Tom: Right.

Kelvin: How are we reaching out? How are we serving? What are their needs? Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. But that's still this big data grouping. There's other lines of inquiry that will help us to flesh out something approximating the scenarios like we depicted here. Probably never to this degree of specificity, right?

Tom: No.

Kelvin: But it'll take talking to people, focus groups, surveys.

Tom: Yeah. Like you did with Amanda Groff.

Kelvin: Yup.

Tom: Who's a really engaged faculty member.

Kelvin: Yes.

Tom: But just talking to faculty and getting their sense. I mean, just even the story you just told about how you noticed this thing, this changing…

Kelvin: That's right.

Tom: ...kind of demographics of your students.

Kelvin: That's right.

Tom: That's notable.

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: Right?

Kelvin: Right, that's right. And if you choose to, you could... That's what you do.

Tom: Right, right.

Kelvin: Let's not do things the same way, you know?

Tom: Well, I mean at the end of the day, it's all about student success, right?

Kelvin: Yes, that's right.

Tom: We want to create courses... Not that we're pandering or that we're letting students shape the curriculum or anything like that, but it's really just how do we create the most effective courses to accomplish our learning objectives?

Kelvin: That's right. I mean, course design, as you said, faculty development. Success coaching. Even our diversity, equity, inclusivity goals, right? I mean are we being… are we representing the student who we have at this

institution in scenarios, in the course, whatever?

Tom: Right, right, right.

Kelvin: You know, all that.

Tom: So, I think my coffee has run down, and I think the landing gear on the plane is down.

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: So, do you want to bring us in for a landing?

(Fade in musical transition)

Kelvin: I will try to. Yes, our time elapses. So why don't we try this for a wrap up summary: students have varied life circumstances that may cause them to want to take online courses. Better collecting and sharing of data can ensure that those of us in online higher education have a clearer vision of how to best serve all of our students. How's that?

Tom: That sounds good. And it's a good summary of what we just talked about.

Kelvin: Yes.

Tom: Thank you for the Tanzanian coffee.

Kelvin: Yes.

Tom: I appreciate it.

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: And until next time for TOPcast, I'm Tom.

Kelvin: I'm Kelvin.

Tom: See ya.