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"Ayers All Access" Podcast

*Ayers Institute for Learning & Innovation
Lipscomb University College of Education*

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SPEAKERS:

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FULL TRANSCRIPT:

Rachael Milligan: Hello. Welcome to the Ayers All Access podcast brought to you by the Ayers Institute for Learning & Innovation. This podcast is a chance for us to help you access compelling people, current topics, practical tips, and innovative solutions— all related to the field of education. To find out more about this podcast and all the work of the Ayers Institute, check out our website at AyersInstitute.org. You can also find us on Twitter and Facebook at [@AyersInstitute](https://twitter.com/AyersInstitute).

Welcome to this inaugural episode of the Ayers All Access podcast. Great things are coming in the days and weeks ahead. With this new program, we're going to share really practical information and we're going to have a lot of fun. Today, we want to take a few minutes to let you know what you can expect on "All Access" and to introduce you to the team and the Ayers Institute for Learning & Innovation. If you're involved or interested in education, this is the place and your podcast. I know you'll want to follow or subscribe to the Ayers All Access program in your favorite podcasting app so that you'll automatically receive each new episode.

I'm Rachel Milligan and I serve as the Assistant Dean for Program Innovation in Lipscomb College of Education and the director of the Ayers Institute. In my role, I get to lead the Ayers Institute team that you're going to hear from today. And as we launch the Ayers All Access podcast, I want to make sure you know: what it is, and how you can access and use it, and how you can participate.

So, let's start there. Karen Marklein serves as the producer and one of the hosts for the Ayers All Access podcast. Karen, what do we mean by "all access" and what can listeners expect?

Karen Marklein: So, every time that we interact with a group of educators, they invariably say "We want more from you guys, we want more of you and Rachel. We want more information." And so as we were thinking of how to, kind of, recast our ideas around the podcast, we thought— you know, "all

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access" really does communicate that this is an extension of what the Institute already is doing and what the Ayers Institute has to offer.

So, we mean more topics, we mean more conversations, we mean more Rachael stories. (Everybody loves the Rachel sports!) So really, it's just more. It's just more of what we're already doing.

Rachael Milligan: Yes, we're planning for a lot of variety, which is exciting. So, tell us about some of the different kinds of episodes and topics that we're planning so well.

Karen Marklein: This is our this is our welcome. And so it's just kind of, "hey, you know, this is what we're doing." And then, other topical episodes we're going to have— we're going to have professional learning topics and they'll be under the label of "always learning," okay, so Ayers All Access and we're "always learning." We're also going to have "spotlight" episodes where we might feature a recent author or publication or a book that's been extremely helpful for us. And we love the "My Why" podcasts where we just hear stories of just inspirational educators and what keeps them motivated to do the hard work of teaching. We also we're going to start the "school stories" and just kind of tell stories of things that we see happening with within schools or possibly with specific people and their careers. We're going to do an "ask me anything" episode where we're going to solicit questions and ask an expert to join us and answer those questions as we, you know— before we even show them to them. So, we're going to that'll be a fun one. And then we are going to do some "ed tech" episodes where we feature an educator who's been especially innovative in terms of technology for learning. And so that's what we'll do on that. And then we also are going to do what we call "on the road" episode. You know, as you know, in our work, we're on the road a lot together. And when we're leaving these sessions, we always have such great debrief conversations. And so we're going to try and capture those as much as we can.

Rachael Milligan: Well, thank you for going through that rundown. It's I'm just so excited about all the things coming and all the different ways we're going to be able to engage and tell more stories in different ways through this, this podcast. So, thank you for that.

Forrest Doddington is here, and he handles all the technical production aspects for the podcast. And he is the mastermind behind the podcast, for sure. So for us, how does Ayers All Access fit into our digital offerings at the Ayers Institute? Talk about that some.

Forrest Doddington: Yes. So in addition to our in-person offerings, we have a lot of digital offerings. A lot of educators from our home state of Tennessee and from all over the world, really, access those. Podcasting really isn't new to us. We've been podcasting for four years and we've had a couple of really successful programs with "lunch and learns" and "my whys." Those episodes are going to continue to be available. So if you use them, don't worry— they're going to be available.

But we've really noticed that podcasting has just exploded. We don't have to explain what a podcast is anymore. People are aware and there's been some best practices and some standards set between different podcasters. So as we started the New Year, we thought this is a great time for us to re-evaluate and relaunch as Ayers All Access to bring in some of those best practices and even open us up to more (as Karen said) more conversations and a little bit of fun, as well as the professional learning content.

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So this is just a great opportunity for us to continue with podcasting, and that really fits in with other digital offerings that we have. We have the online courses on e3Courses.org. Some of those are free and some of those are fee- or facilitated- based. And then we have online resources on eduToolbox®, which is very popular. And, in fact, some of the things we talk about here on Ayers All access will end up being resources that are available over on our resource library.

So, it really fits together. But podcasting brings us this personal connection, and some immediacy, and a chance to ask timely questions— to sort of go on our own 'quest' and invite you to come along as we seek out answers and information and, importantly, inspiration from people who are doing a great job in education.

Rachael Milligan: Yes. That that personal connection, that inspiration and then also the, you know, all of the resources that you just mentioned. This part, podcasting, fits so neatly into those. I'm glad you mentioned that our previous successful podcasts aren't going anywhere. We have lots of folks who use those in in their courses and other offerings that they do. And so don't worry, those will be there. But what are some of the ways that people can use this podcast and the easiest ways to connect?

Forrest Doddington: So, the podcast is really designed for both personal growth or for growth as a team or a group. You can just listen and gather ideas, or you can invite your professional learning community, your PLC, to listen and then discuss. And one of the one of the innovations we're bringing in as we've looked at best practices from podcasts is the use of extensive 'show notes.' And so when we talk about an education technology tool, or if we talk about a school that's doing well in a certain way— we can easily put links there in the show notes. And you can go research that as a as a team or as an individual and dig deeper into that. So, I'm really excited about the expanded show notes.

Also, we're going to make it possible for you to receive a professional learning certificate by just filling out a short 3-4 question online form on our podcasting website: podcast.AyersInstitute.org. And then you'll enter— you'll hear us say at the end of each episode a "secret CE code" that you can enter to confirm that you listened. Answer the questions and we'll be able to give you a certificate that you could show others of evidence of the time spent on professional growth through podcasts.

Rachael Milligan: Absolutely. And so all of those are great ways for our listeners to connect, great ways for professional learning as well as personal learning.

Forrest Doddington: Yes. And so the easy ways to access: I mean, first of all, you can always go to our podcasting website— podcast.AyersInstitute.org— and information about the episodes will be there. And the show notes. But we're also going to have Ayers All Access listed on all of the podcasting directories that we can. So, whether that's Apple Podcasts or Google Podcasts or iHeartRadio or Spotify. You'll see us popping up in a lot of places. So, pick your favorite podcasting app. And if you click the "follow" or "subscribe" button, what that will do is automatically download each new episode. You won't have to go search for it on our website. It will show up and you'll know that there's a new episode of Ayers All Access.

Rachael Milligan: Perfect. Thank you for outlining all of that for us, for us. So now I want to shift to another important person on our team, and that's Deidra Cummings. She serves as the program manager for the Ayers Institute, and this is actually her first time appearing on an Ayers podcast. Quite literally, we could not do our work without Deidra. She is the person who helps, who will help you with

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anything related to registering for an Ayers Institute event or seminar, or any time you reach out to the AyersInstitute@lipscomb.edu email account. And she has so many other responsibilities and helps us out in so many ways. It would be impossible to list all of them for you, but I'm so thankful for Deidra.

And Deidra, I just want our listeners to get to know you a little bit better. Talk about how you came to work in higher education and at the Ayers Institute, specifically.

Deidra Cummings: Yes. Well, I am so excited to be here and really so excited to be part of this podcast. I began working at Lipscomb in 2011 in the financial aid office. I had always had a desire to help people and that opportunity came up and for me to use my business experience and to help people. I helped students— multiple students. And also, my husband and I have 4 children. We needed to know how to navigate college finances, so it was a good training ground for me.

But then in 2020, our last child was close to graduating and I decided to move from the financial side of the education world to the academic side. And we talked a lot about connecting with people and serving people. And that's the heart of what the Ayers Institute is doing. And that's something that's important to me. So, moving over to the academic side helped me to really be able to connect with a smaller number of individuals and help them on a more personal level. And near and dear to my heart are teachers. My daughter is a teacher and I have other family members who are teachers, so I really help that profession in any way that I can.

Rachael Milligan: Well, that's fantastic, Deidre. Thank you for sharing that background. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about what's your experience working in the innovative space related to education?

Deidra Cummings: Well, you know, I've been a learner all my life. And most of us are— we hope so. That's how we grow and change. I had many wonderful teachers from elementary school through college. And you know, it was pretty evident to me those teachers who consistently learned new ways and improve their skills. But sometimes it was evident those who didn't. You know, consistency is great, but predictability can become so routine that the teachers become bored— as well as their students. So being a part of this education, innovation and learning new things myself just inspires me to do better in my life. That gives me an opportunity to help serve other people to improve their classrooms. And I think that's just so important for our world and our community today.

Teachers work so hard and so diligently that any help that I can provide to them is important to me.

Rachael Milligan: Thank you so much, Deidra, for sharing that. And we are so thankful that you're part of our team and truly the love you have for teachers shows through and everything that you do. And it makes you such a foundational part of the Ayers Institute team as well. So, thank you for sharing and thanks for joining us on this podcast today.

Deidra Cummings: Thank you. I'm glad to be here.

Rachael Milligan: Well, as Director of the Ayers Institute, I'm excited about the opportunity we have through the All Access podcast to deliver both information and inspiration to our fellow educators— locally and globally. I will be serving as host of some of the Ayers All Access episodes, which is great since I've always secretly wanted to be on the radio. My colleagues here at the Ayers Institute know that about me. Many of you likely do too, because I tell people that all the time!

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Karen Marklein: We're making dreams come true. That's what we do.

Rachael Milligan: Yeah, so thank you. "Thank you to all of my listeners." I just want to take the moment to say that.

But truly, offering professional learning—online and any time through podcasting—is an extension of our work at the Ayers Institute. You know, our mission is to support teachers and leaders in improving student outcomes through professional learning. And we do that in a lot of ways. In our face-to-face offerings, we have seminars, we have coaching academies, we are working with individual districts through partnerships across the state. All of our partnerships are very tailored and customized to the district needs. And so that has been a great opportunity for us to expand and really get to what teachers and leaders need, not in some kind of 'canned' seminar. But really, what do you need and how can we shoulder in the work with you to get there? What do you want to build? How can we build it alongside you? And so that that that is really at the heart of what the Institute does. And again, this podcasting is an extension of that work.

We want listeners to become participants in our podcasting endeavor. So, Karen, what are some ways that people can get involved?

Karen Marklein: Well, a way that we would really like to encourage is to submit a topic or submit specific questions, and that topic can be for an "ask me anything" episode. It could be for you could suggest an important person for a "my why" or a "spotlight." If you yourself are having great success with an education technology learning tool, we would love to hear about that. So, any way that you could suggest a topic would be great.

Also, you know, to consider how could the resource of the podcast really be integrated into work that you're doing: either with your teacher team or if you are an administrator in a school as a refinement offering for a teacher or some other, you know, skill building resource. And you can always use the professional learning certificate to build up your continuing education hours and you can submit that to your district. We've seen both PreK-12 districts and of folks at the higher education level be able to use our podcast and other digital offerings as kind of a 'flipped learning' approach. So, to listen to it on your own time and then come together to talk about it. And that's another great way to use it.

Rachael Milligan: OK, Ayers team, thank you so much for this preview of Ayers All Access as a professional learning podcast. And thank you so much for your work in education. And to all our listeners., Be sure to check out the show notes for this episode, where you'll find links to helpful resources and anything we've mentioned today. I hope you've been encouraged and inspired.

You can find more episodes of Ayers Institute Podcasts at <https://podcast.AyersInstitute.org>, on Apple Podcasts, and anywhere podcasts are found. Do you have an idea for a future topic or guest for the Ayers All Access podcast? We'd love to hear it. Send us a message using the suggestion box on the Ayers podcast website or send us an email at AyersInstitute@lipscomb.edu.

If you would like to receive a professional learning certificate for listening to this episode, fill out the online reflection form on the Ayers podcast website and enter this 'Secret CE Code': [Code excluded from the transcript. Listen to the podcast audio.] The Ayers All Access podcast is brought to you by the

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Until next time, remember: "Educators change the world!"