Christopher Richmann: Welcome to Professors Talk Pedagogy, a podcast from the Academy for Teaching and Learning at Baylor University. I'm your host, Christopher Richmann. Professors Talk Pedagogy presents discussions with great professors about pedagogy, curriculum and learning in order to propel the virtuous cycle of teaching. As we frankly and critically investigate our teaching, we open new lines of inquiry. We engage in conversation with colleagues and we attune to students’ experiences. All of which not only improves our teaching, but enriches and motivates ongoing investigation. And so the cycle continues.

Today we have a special episode featuring a live recording of a recent seminar for excellence in teaching on the campus of Baylor University. The session, titled “Award winning faculty perspectives on teacher authority” was led by Nathan Alleman, associate professor of educational leadership, Byron Newberry, professor of mechanical engineering, and Sarah Madsen, doctoral candidate in educational leadership, all at Baylor University. These presenters shared fascinating original research on the relationships between faculty career stage and perceptions and uses of authority in teaching. We are delighted to have Dr. Ahmed, Dr. Newbury, and Ms. Madsen on the show. And for our listeners who want to work along with the chart that is mentioned at the beginning of the show checkout, our show notes at Baylor.edu/ATL/podcast. You'll find this episode in season number 2. And now onto the show.

Thank you everybody for being here. I'll just note one more person. Kara Allen, who when we started this was doctoral student in education and now is finishing her degree and is working on Assistant Research Director at Baylor for poverty and hunger. Yes, that's it. And she was also attributed early on to this this project. So we're going to do today is share a little bit about our research with you. And then share some of the insights that we got from it that hopefully, well, you might find useful to think about your own teaching. So before I jump into that though, they're little activity here, those of you on Zoom, I think Christopher is going to upload a document that you can use. Hopefully everybody got a handout. So this graphic here has 30 words around the perimeter that are descriptors that could officially be applied to describe a teacher with these words. And so we're going to ask you to do is something impossible, which is to—all of these words are something we would aspire to have someone describe us as a teacher, but want to have you narrow down to your top five words that must resonate with yourself, perception of yourself as a teacher or if you're inspiring teacher, what you would aspire to be. And in what, what, what five words best represent, Best represents what you want to be. And I'll give you a couple of minutes to work on that.

And I think most people have chosen their words and I hope the people on Zoom, have had luck with the document and being able to know themselves. So we're going to keep that suspects for a few minutes about what this was about. Nathan's going to come up in a little bit and and kind of talk about this detail. First, I'm going to give you a kind of introduction to what we had done, why. We started the research question, “What role do forms of power play in approaches for example our teachers across career stages?” And so the three important points that is looking at forms of power. Looking at exemplar, teachers and teachers that have been recognized by their peers and students as being outstanding teachers. And looking at over the range of career stages. Important question is, what do we mean by power? Power has a lot of meetings and is a loaded word. So let me explain what we mean by power. Social power is the ability to influence other people's goals and attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and so forth. And if you think about it, that's what teachers really do is they influence students, write, influence students, and so on. And so to have that ability to influence students as a form of power. And there's different ways, different forms that power that teachers have been able to use. Another word that we're kind of used interchangeably sometimes with power and authority are our definition for purposes of our research was legitimate and appropriate use of power as opposed to like an authoritarian power. The ability to kind of inspire someone to do something rather than compel them to do something, right?
Why are we interested in this? Well, the teachers credibility and effectiveness depends on the ability to influence students and teachers have to have some type of power to influence. And what we want to know is to do the kind of presumption was that exemplary teachers, outstanding teachers who were really effective, have a lot of influence over their students. I mean, we can all think about some teacher we had the best that have big impact our lives right, had a big influence on us. And that meant they had some power to reach us. And so exemplar teachers have a lot of power and use it in effective ways, right? So we want to find out how they do that.

Our study, just to give you a brief overview of what we did, we had 23 full-time faculty that we interviewed, that all had one, at least two institutional teaching awards. We got a range of participants, teaching role and ranks. We had people on tenure track and non-tenure track, tried to get a range of departments across the institution. We had to divide it equally between genders. We had also looked at trying to get people from all stages of their careers. And so we kind of grouped people by career stage in these three groups. So less than 10 years we called early, 20 years mid and then after 20 years late, career people. And then we conducted semi-structured or in-depth interviews.

Thanks. Well, that's great setup. So when we're talking about cowered in the context of the study, we are talking about three domains of power. So we're going to break this out a little bit further and explore it. So these domains a power come from research now, almost 70 years old French and Raven in the late fifties developed these related to teaching and they have a long empirical career since then. The three we're focused on are pro-social positive. There's also some negative forms of power that have been explored as well, but we're focused on three positive ones. So the first one is a formal domain or things having to do with the construction of the course, syllabus, pacing and the materials, the content, all the things that go into constructing a course are part of this formal power of, of, of a teacher. The second one is an expert domain. This has to do, clearly enough with what one knows--the content, knowledge that, that one has about the subject is being taught. And importantly relates to as well how it's perceived by others. You are an expert in this sense, if people recognize you're an expert and are drawn to or animated by the expertise that you display, convinced by your, your expertise. So, so not just having a bit of also being able to [inaudible] and convincing. The third element is our domain is reference power, which is really relational power, and the ability to establish trust, rapport, connections, common interests, all those things that make you feel and some pro-social way like you're connected or receipt of value in your students and they believe in your answer for them and have some connection to them that they, they see you as a person.

So the big reveal: here are the forms of power. Thank you for that appropriate gasp--on your sheet you can see, which I think we have mapped out. So blue is expert power, yellows formal power, referent power. So what I'd like you to do is look at your chart. Maybe if you made lines like What, what that formal power is. We're going to move on from this slide you might want to know, so jot down for yourself and look at, look at a couple of things. One, the relative distribution of the things you chose to, they tend to be in one of the three forms of power more than others, or are they distributed equally? And maybe then what does that suggest to you about the kinds of power you are maybe more comfortable with or less come up with a more familiar with or less. The presumption is that these are available and necessary for all, all faculty have to use all these forms of power. And yet, we often oriented maybe for various reasons to some over others. So what we want to know and what we're going to spend some time talking about. It's not just what are you comfortable with already radically toward that, but ultimately how do these relate to career stages and maybe how do they relate to each other as we go on for our data. So we'll, we'll explore this together.

So some, some things we found. Again with early career, one of the things that we found was that there's kind of this emphasis on selling the class. I need my students to believe that this is worthwhile to them. Well, how do I accomplish that? Misty here says, "I was very intentional, very intentionally Want students to understand that while we divvy up material, the chapters, we're still telling one big story. And that is, what is a cell and how does it operate? So I think that when I'm on my game, when am I my best, I'm showing them that these concepts are A) integrated and B) very pertinent to their
world.” So we see here there's expertise, there's formal authority coming together and I'm showing them the value of this structure in a way that's obvious to them. You're getting a sense of my expertise from the way that I've done these things. Here we have Tim doing something similar. Although in this case it's connecting to students and their interests and the content. Tim said it's from an earlier presentation. The student has done, “I knew that he was a shooting enthusiast, as am I. And so I just very matter of fact, we said, I think what might really work well here is a shotgun magazine. And then I just casually mentioned his team like, yeah, like sheep trap I was just taking probably shocked by the other night and I just thought of that.” So think, oh, this is a student has its interests outside of the academic realm. I can connect not just personally, but with the content. So this is leveraging both the interpersonal and expertise to sell the value of class together. A challenge for early career faculty that came up a lot was how to balance this idea of warmth and authority. How to be successful person but also still respected. And Marie talks about this year, she says, I think the thing I struggle with the most is figuring out how to get meaningful, honest feedback without wrecking hopes and dreams. Everyone who's ever taught as that's kinda, I kinda like, you know, take me seriously but also so you can see the converging of all three. I think the forms of power is concerned. Mid career shift a little bit same elements but often toward how do we, how do we take what we call the longer view of learning or sort of a deeper, more complex but slower developing way of thinking about, about the kind of learning that's happening. And we can see this in this quote from, from David here: “in bioethics for years I taught the class just like a standard for 1000. So at the end of each segment, there's an exam. The exams are like here's a bunch of [inaudible] and essay questions. But I realized as part of the problem was that it did not either assess or force the students to grow or force me and my teaching to develop. The main thing I want the class to do. And so the last couple times I taught the class, I radically change the assignments instead. What I did was tests. The tests really became one or two or three major scenarios." So he's beginning to think differently about its content and construction, how to use his expertise that he has. But in a way that the seeds learning throughout the semester that, that gets students thinking differently about learning. And this is the shift from, "I just gotta get content down here that, that students can understand" to “how do I really see long-term learning in my students.” A second element engages this, the referent power elements or, or how do I pull students into this longer view of learning? It says it's actually Susan. Sorry. Susan says, “I take a strong position relative to them, sort of developmental. So looking for what they, looking to learn about down and figuring out what they're interested in good at, and then help them to channel it toward the future. When they start to show an interest in some aspect of our field or an aptitude for some particular skill set or content. I'll try to point that out to know, so I see what's happening for them as an emerging professional scholar. I want to connect down to personally connect them to this emerging sense of expertise. Not just like having one of the clients I, but who are you becoming as an expert in the field uses different kinds of talent. So late career faculty, again using the same forms of power but in slightly different ways. Is there, they're established in their careers. Maybe a little less to prove in some ways, but it also puts them sometimes in a position of distance. In various ways that have to be bridged or it can be used in different ways. So Natasha here says, “The older I've gotten raising my own family, dealing their own circumstances. I've got more compassionate about things, obstacles that people may have to have to completing something on time so people can ask me for an extension. But I don't vary that much in the quality of what I'm expecting. So there's maybe a little bit of referent connection there. I'm connecting. I get that life is hard, being a student is hard and yet I'm still trying to hold the standards. Standards of excellence and formal structures I've created. In a similar way, the referent element comes in here with Frank who, who talks about the challenges of maybe seeming more distant from what an expert looks like. He says, “I'm asking the question, is this someone that I would go to to ask advice? That's an important rapport building question on z notice, why should I trust his knowledge? I mean, right now I'm 54. I'm an old man who is not as digital as they are. And it's
important for me to have global, local knowledge that's better than what they can google. And so I rebuild that from time to time in surprising ways for alumni connections with people I know, where I've been, where I've been quoted in the press if I need to, things like that." So he's got the sense that like little older, but part of what I can do is leverage my establish relationships with previous students, with scholarship done to demonstrate my expertise, that I have valuable knowledge that could be relevant even though maybe I'm a little bit further from the easy connections that people often can build when they're younger faculty. But have concerns about the power and the authority elements.

As you continue to think about power and as we have highlighted in the findings. We see that faculty across all career status, early, mid, and late, use all fours, power, formal, expert and referent domains. And maybe what you've begun to see it in your own kind of worksheet is that these forms of power do not exist as disparate distinct domains even simpler faculty in our study, use these forms of power and multifaceted intersectional ways. And that is they use the power domains together simultaneously. So here you'll see, again expert, formal and referent domains. And you can begin to see the overlap, which I will talk more about. And so what we kind of conceptualize these intersections as, as forms of authority. So again, authority is the legitimate use of power, the appropriate use of power. So first pedagogical authority we've named at the intersection of formal, and expert power. So here, teachers are using their expertise, their content knowledge, with their role. So being able to structure a class to create kind of legitimacy, legitimacy, a sense of interest in the classroom. We're calling about pedagogical authority. Annexed personal authority sits at the intersection of expert and referent power. So here we see faculty and again, drawing on their expertise, their training, their knowledge of the field, and also their connections to students to exert this kind of personal authority, personal influence our students. Then finally, there is relational authority at the intersection of formal and referent power. Again, using the kind of structural capacities available to a teacher to create connections with students.

Now another layer on top of this power intersections is that exemplary teachers and our study use these intersections patterned ways. So early career faculty, imagine your first 10 years of job if you're on the tenure track, your a lecturer, there are very concerned because they'd been shared with selling the class, with winning students over publishing their legitimacy classroom, but also in garnering student interests. And because of that early career faculty in our study most often relied on expert and formal power. So we'll go back to this quote from Misty. Again, you see Misty as organizer and expert. She's seeing the narrative arc of her course. She's able to break it down into manageable subsections. And in doing so, she's trying to show her students, but this information is pertinent, is relevant to the student's world. So again, she's drive on expert and formal power together to sell the class when students over. And we named that pedagogical authority. Okay, mid-career faculty, think again to faculty who are more seasoned, 11 to 20 years. In their time in a classroom. Here we saw mid-career faculty committed to the formation of students, students as lifelong learners, students as future professionals. So again, taking a longer view of student learning. So we'll go back to Susan's quote, and Susan uses language of mentor. Other mid-career faculty talks about being shepherds, shepherding students along. So here they're drawn on our expertise. They know that, they know the concept, but it's not a shovel. And a connecting students to that field, to that information through a mentorship, through the shepherding. And so here again, referent power, and expert together results in personal word. Finally, late career faculty, you most often relied on formal and referent power. So we currently ... So again, professors who have been in the classroom over 20 years say, I know life happens. I know I have advice for students, but maybe I can't connect with them in the same way, like I'm talking about the matrix. And students have never seen the matrix. Faculty then leveraged opportunities, use the formal power to create spaces to connect with students more deeply. They talk about students as learners, as engaged in neutral raised in the classroom. So again, the example afraid he's reminding students and I'm still relevant to you. I want to connect with you. I
want to share this knowledge with you. Because ultimately our faculty again, are concerned with being accessible to students. It's bearing on student's IEP learning. So, just in closing about our teacher power and authority framework. Again, we see these patterns, uses power across classrooms. And looking at those patterns, distinct context and aims of those particular concerts are revealed to us. The struggles, the tasks, the French and early for faculty is not the same as late career faculty. But through the lens of Power, we can start to see those tasks. See the differences are between those tasks. Because of that, then we can think about professional development in a different way. Our hope today is that you will leave this kind of study thinking about how am I being socialized and circles of power. How can I use power? And maybe a larger pedagogical tool kit to connect with students or to establish expertise. As I said, ultimately in our power and authority framework, again, we're taking the original reference and trying to offer a more complex feel that these power forms are not things that are intersecting and they show up in patterned ways across career stage.

Our first question from the audience asked how the differences in power strategies correlated with the levels of the course being taught and whether or not the courses they taught were for majors. Yeah, I'm happy to share. So really our unit of analysis was career stage. Little work has been done in this area in terms of trying to push power domain research forward. And so I think there are certainly opportunities and other spent questions about gender, about class or course level. Those are levels are units of analysis. Again, we're certainly interested in, but our focus was primarily career stage. I will say that for career faculty, I mean, by that point your career, maybe you're teaching classes that you're hand picking or they talked about okay, I've taught this class 15 or 20 times. So we saw again late career faculty of course use expert power. That was almost like, let's say my back pocket. I don't need to worry about teaching this class. There were some tensions for late career faculty in terms of like updating their work. So again, trying to stay relevant the students, okay, if it can't use the matrix as an example, movie, I'm getting used then to make the same point. If anything, feel free to jump in. I think we heard mid-career faculty kind of talk about the higher-order thinking that comes with those more advance course levels. So kind of student Formation, Deep Learning is not wanting students to just regurgitate information. So think of the David example. I'm going to introduce scenarios where students have to kind of navigate into trouble with course material and waste. That's nine. Here's the definition. Here's an essay that I thought about and turned in. A kind of real life application has again, mid-career faculty are concerned with developing life-long learners and learners ready to enter the field. thank you so much. I don't want to overplay how much data we have. The disability certainly had faculty talking about how referent power looks different. Like an introductory first-year class and my senior seminar, where you relate differently, relate more laterally with students. How much you share about yourself. At what point in the semester you begin sharing yourself or what they already know about. So your wish, preload some of those, maybe boss because they already know you've had you for three or four classes very different than a first-year student come again. It may be for some it was like week 1. I want them to know who I am. For others is like week 6. I tell them like I've got a dog, you know. I feel like that just so very different strategies about how some of that had to do with gender, career stage, some of those things about whether establishing that expertise first was really important. We're trying to build that referent connection to the different strategies around that.

Well, so has it been talking about over member's career are lots of things change. Your experience levels, your priorities, relationships, instructional tools you have available and your responsibilities both at work and at home and so forth. And so this idea that, you know, opportunities and challenges at each stage present themselves for trying to leverage various forms of power in order to influence your students in the ways you want to influence them to learn and grow and develop. And we've already mentioned some of those challenges. For instance, one of the things, you know, because we started with certain time we started this research, the pandemic struck and so. One of the things that
we learned out of that, particularly for early career faculty, was that pandemic switching to online learning and so forth presented thicker obstacles or was kind of disconcerting for early faculty because there's a mission, one of the key things that they want to do is be able to engage students in southern portions, right? And this is important, is interesting and should be engaged with it. And going in line kind of made that hard to write. And so that was a online learning. Turned out to be kind of a bigger concern for early, early career faculty. In mid-career faculty. The, one of the big things popped out was a kind of attention that mid-career faculty often expressed was the idea of balancing compassion and flexibility with maintaining standards. And saw that was mentioned in one of the quotes from an elite group that can do that. Very comfortable being flexible with the students, right? Whereas mid-career faculty, it's more retention. And it was also a point in people's lives for there. Now you have kids and you've got lots of responsibilities. And in that work and away from work. And so that tension, balancing between home life and work-life popped out a lot to that, as was mentioned that late for a faculty. The, the distance now from, you know, the sort of the cultural distance from your students who are much younger than you now is a challenge that a lot of late career talked about. There's also opportunities. And the early career. People are fresh off their dissertations and a lot of knowledge about something and they want to share is usually lot of fears. And now really wanted to explore how do I not just teach my students, but how do I try to think about them as whole people, right? Really, more than two developments, people rather than just teaching some content. So those are the opportunities that come out of Pittsburgh stages. So that the wrap things up by asking if there's any other session to questions that you might have or insights that you want to share.

Our next question asked how early career teachers in the steady navigated the divide between their experiences and the experiences of mentors or pedagogy scholars who are in the middle or late career stages, but are the main source for teaching advice. What our analysis points to is, there is this core task. And so your usage of Power was structured around that dressing the core tasks. Again, especially for early career working on that task, I mean, you got more complicated, big career faculty, nine chairs, administrative goals. And they felt some with less sure about what then they're task was. Okay as a teacher and students. But as we all this paperwork and so that kind of reconfiguration of self. And how did they get on stage? But trying to think about again, the four tasks, the tensions that are in there. What about gender? I'm just sending examples. It's kind of these modifiers to their, to their core tasks such as, I look young, as you are younger if you just happen to appear that way or I'm a woman or I know I speak with an accent or, you know, these things that bring other, other challenges that require different or maybe reduce that power. So how do I appear to people, do I appear like an expert? Physically, if you're lucky for you, I like to relate at all as someone looks. This were a lot of tasks that are really similar. We had people were mid-career. I had a career as a physician. I came in here. I gotta world of experience. I don't care the students. Because both of experience behind me and they recognize that let's do our gate--that comes with real-world experience, rest early for faculty straight off the tenure track like okay, I haven't really done anything yet. You know, I'm, I'm full knowledge and potential, so you just gotta, gotta write that out a little bit until you get your sea legs and that the power elements that make it as well. You had to do the worksheet there. That's something we haven't done before with anybody. And so we weren't sure exactly what's going to happen. That that was initially to me that most people here, referent was the most competent thread. And stereotyping by appearance. Most of you look by early career people. And so that's actually a little bit at odds with the finding, which was that early career people tend to focus mostly energies into the formal and that expert domains. But actually makes a little sense because really for people who probably don't have as much worry about being able to relate to the students, right? What you're worried about the early career as selling yourself as an expert and in control the classroom, right? And so that makes lot of sense to me why that would be the case.
Another participant observed that referent and expert power seemed more important in the transition to Zoom during the pandemic. In part because formal aspects of Zoom were so difficult. They asked what changes our researchers saw during the shift to online learning. Yeah, good question. Yeah, How do you, how do you develop our reference? Our setting is you haven't had fire. Did you have these before? Was the class interrupted or experiences? Those are the ones that are for very distant. Started online.
The final question asked whether teaching multiple sections of the same course had an effect. I remember one of my products, a mid career processor. And what I was really struggling with teaching back to back sections of the same course. I'm over in honors college and really trying to work on our students. And the first courses. My examples are key. I'm connecting students, students are buying it. I go to the second section. I see the same exact base, false flag. So really this moment of trying to work through, okay, Is even just the difference of the people in front of me enough to I have to kind of change or modify the ways of working at Refer power. I don't know at that point an interview with key solution, but certainly attention it felt why it's different. People are trying to connect with the students. I'm going to have a repertoire of examples or multiple references to see what it is or sticks. Students like other mid-career faculty is also true. Be creative with assignments. So a lot of times you would split the class into two to have them debate a topic or a social issue, as we'll say. Okay, and one floss actually want to like fire about air going in it. Second section, like this. This could be on either side. It also passionate. So even and that creates a bit of mid-career faculty that wasn't too big and it worked perfectly. But I'm trying my, I have the expertise. Another concept, how can I can teach like just here to pull students? And so again, it has that expert and power.

Just taking off of what Sarah is saying. I think for me one of the useful thing about thinking this mental construct, a forms of power, thinking about my teaching that way is that if I'm doing something in the classroom that doesn't seem to be working. Ask myself, how do I fix that? What do I need to do different? I think it's useful for me to think about it. You know, there's, these perspectives are three forms of power. Is it because they don't think I know what I'm talking about. It's because they don't think I have a good plan for how we do this because they just don't like me or, you know, what is it I need to fix, right? And so this gives you kind of some levers that you can pull, right? Trying figure out what's, what my worker or what might not work and why. It's so useful for me to think about things this way.

CR: Our thanks to Nathan Alleman, Byron Newberry, and Sarah Madsen for presenting at this seminar for excellence in teaching and for allowing us to include this presentation as a podcast episode as well. In the show notes again, you'll find the handout that was used in this as well as a Wikipedia link to French and Raven's theory of power, which was referenced several times. And our edited volume Called to Teach, which features an earlier essay by Byron Newberry about this topic. That's our show. Join us next time for Professors Talk Pedagogy.