

# Moving the Needle Ep 1 Transcript

[00:00:00.09] ERIN HAGAR: Welcome to Moving the Needle, casual conversations about ways, big and small, to impact student learning. Brought to you by the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. I'm Erin HAGAR, let's move the needle.

[00:00:19.47] Today's episode features Dr. Corey Shdaimah, the Daniel Thursz Distinguished Professor for Social Justice from the School of Social Work. Corey has degrees from Bryn Mawr College Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research, the University of Pennsylvania School of Law, and the Tel Aviv University School of Law. Corey was named the Maryland Educator of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers.

[00:00:41.91] Today we'll talk about how the pandemic provided Corey an opportunity to rethink her course from the inside out. We'll also talk about the importance of knowing your students and the support a faculty member can receive by participating in a community of practice. Corey, welcome.

[00:00:57.00] COREY SHDAIMAH: Thank you, I'm happy to be here.

[00:00:59.29] ERIN HAGAR: We're so thrilled that you're our inaugural guest on Moving the Needle, and I'm really excited to talk with you today.

[00:01:05.26] Let's just start by having you tell us a little bit about the courses you teach at the School of Social Work.

[00:01:09.96] COREY SHDAIMAH: Well, I teach courses at both the master's level and the doctoral level. I've been teaching the qualitative research doctoral-level class for about six years. And that is a required class that students take in their first semester when they're in the doctoral program. So they come in new and fresh, and a lot of ideas, and a lot of questions, and a little bit of trepidation sometimes as well.

[00:01:40.25] And in the master's program, I teach the required basic social policy class that all social work students must take. And then I teach a couple of different or have taught a couple of different classes, that often relate to the intersection of social justice and the practice of social work.

[00:02:02.33] And several of them are interprofessional. So I've done a joint course with students at the School of Law, and I've also done some international courses. We are currently resuming this class virtually for the spring with law, nursing, and social work students with partners at the University of Haifa in Israel.

[00:02:24.83] ERIN HAGAR: That's wonderful. So tell us a little bit about how your approach to teaching changes when you're working with your PhD students as opposed to your master's students.

[00:02:35.60] COREY SHDAIMAH: I mean, some things are very similar, in the sense that I always try to come into the classroom and get a sense of who the particular group of students are in front of me. And how they're coming to the class, what's their prior knowledge, what's their interest, do they have any concerns? Often, particularly when I'm

teaching qualitative research, although about social policy as well, do they have any assumptions or ideas? Possible misconceptions about the topic? So really just to take the pulse of the class. And I would say that is similar.

[00:03:19.62] MSW students are there to get a practice degree, most of them, although some of them do have plans to continue on and get a PhD. And so in that sense, making sure that I'm thinking about examples when I'm talking about things to really connect the conceptual ideas to their practice.

[00:03:41.71] I'm also very aware in social work, there often tends to be a split between people doing what might be considered more therapy or case management, what we call clinical, which is the majority of our students, and students who are more interested in policy, practice, or community organizing, or careers in administration. We group that all together as this common social work under macro practice.

[00:04:06.42] That's the minority of our students, but those are the courses that I teach. So I also try and really think, well, what would a connection between these areas look like on the ground? Whereas the social work students were in a very research-focused PhD program.

[00:04:23.52] And so I also am very conscious of trying to connect the conceptual ideas of the course to practical skills that they're going to be using, and how they would use it. But those are more research skills. So it's practice with practice of research, often about practice.

[00:04:40.86] ERIN HAGAR: Yeah, it sounds very much like having an awareness of where your students are as they come to you, and also where they see themselves going, really informs how you approach your classes.

[00:04:51.48] COREY SHDAIMAH: Yeah, I think that's a really good way to put it. I don't know that I would have thought about it, but yeah, that is really true. And in terms of both of those, where they are and where they see themselves going, I try to think in a holistic way. This has been really true, I think for many of us, during the pandemic as well. Because that's sometimes connected to what's happening in their personal lives that we often see.

[00:05:19.11] And so when I talk about the concerns that they have, it might be what do they think about their own assessment of their own skills as well, in that journey from-- I love the way you put it-- from where they are and where they want to go.

[00:05:32.71] ERIN HAGAR: Yes, COVID certainly has shone this light on so many aspects of teaching and learning. I want to reassure our listeners that this podcast is not specifically about teaching during the pandemic. But as we record this episode today, we're still very much in the throes of the COVID pandemic. So it's very topical to what we're doing and thinking about. It's actually how Corey and I met.

[00:05:55.23] And so Corey, I thought maybe you could talk a little bit about how the COVID shut down and the move to online prompted you to rethink your qualitative methods course and how that experience played out for you.

[00:06:06.63] COREY SHDAIMAH: So it became very clear-- well, I sit on the campuswide Didactic Learning Committee so, we had been talking a lot about what's it like to teach and learn, and what were some of the shifts we might have to be making pretty early on. And I think that might be where I first learned about the Center for Teaching and Learning.

[00:06:34.38] Christina Cestone came in and gave a presentation. And I remember listening to her talk about some of the wonderful resources that we have available to our faculty to help us, not just throw our courses online, but to really think deeply about the fit between pedagogy, and the learning goals, and the methods of delivery. And so we were still on the call, I think, when I sent an email saying, I want to do that. And that's how I got connected to you, Erin.

[00:07:11.76] And so I had taught hybrid, in the past, so I had some familiarity. And I knew from work I'd done with our-- at the School of Social Work, we had the idea team, a great idea team. I had done some work with them where, I remember my first thought is, well, how do I just transfer what I'm doing in the classroom and replicate it online?

[00:07:36.72] And the biggest lesson I learned from them was that it's better to take a step back and think, well, is there something about this medium that might actually help me do this better or differently that we can take advantage of? So I think the idea of seeing this as an opportunity to just improve my teaching.

[00:07:59.10] And many of the things that we did together were certainly connected to setting up a virtual class. So what happened is I had to take my class, that I always think of as very intimate, and necessarily, in-person and personal, and shifted to fully virtual.

[00:08:15.45] But the process, also, was really useful in going back to bare bones and thinking about the syllabus. I mean, things I should have been doing with my class regardless of whether it was going to be virtual, or in person, or hybrid.

[00:08:27.17] ERIN HAGAR: Yeah, sometimes I think these curve balls that get thrown into our lives give us such an opportunity, like you said, to rethink how we're doing things and what we might keep going forward. Could you tell us a little bit about the changes you needed to make with your qualitative research course, and which changes you might keep when we're back in a traditional environment?

[00:08:47.45] COREY SHDAIMAH: Well, working with you, Erin, and with Becky, I had long been feeling that the syllabus was OK. That it had all the elements. But as I change the syllabus, from year-to-year, I try to keep my readings fresh, somehow it had morphed and become more patchworky. And I didn't feel like it had the cohesion or the arc that it needed to have as a syllabus. Things felt like they were in the wrong place.

[00:09:20.54] I remember, at some point, maybe last year or the year before, teaching the class and thinking, while I was in the class, why did I put this here? This should go someplace else, or I don't like this article anymore, or-- and also, I learn a lot from the students. So I might read the same article several times, or the same reading, or have the same exercise, and a group of students will respond very differently. And that might make me--

[00:09:45.05] So I had some of those instances where I was thinking, I really need to do this, I really don't have the time. Many of us when we're in graduate programs, if we're not in a program about teaching, we don't actually learn how to teach. So I didn't really have a mechanism to systematically think. I mean, I knew how to look at the syllabus, but not really to look at it from a pedagogical construction of the class kind of way.

[00:10:11.75] I was very lucky in my graduate program. I was at Bryn Mawr. Like I said, we didn't have a teaching class, but we had a group of graduate students from the sciences,

like neurobiology and chemistry, there are very many graduate students there, and then a group for social work.

[00:10:28.25] And we sort of started meeting with a group of professors from the education department at the undergraduate level. Someone who is a neurobiologist and someone who's from gender and women's studies, who's still one of my mentors and good friends today. And they just started meeting with us.

[00:10:45.33] We created this space that was a cross between a self-help-- so we were all thrown into classrooms, I mean, I was teaching without knowing how to teach. We would come with like, this happened to me this week. And we were also reading about pedagogy and some of the classic readings about Peggy McIntosh and Eleanor Duckworth. And we were kind of doing it on our own as a group.

[00:11:13.14] So I'm very lucky that I had some of that input, but once we left graduate school there was very little of that. And so when I met with you, you sent me a storyboard. I didn't know what a storyboard was. And so those kinds of tools for really approaching your course and thinking about it are things that helped me find the coherence, figure out how the parts of it together and what the role of each part was, and then what the whole should look like.

[00:11:47.97] ERIN HAGAR: I just love how you use the words cohesion and arc to describe your syllabus creation because I think it reminds us that designing a course is really a creative act, in addition to being an analytical one. Your experience at Bryn Mawr, it sounds like you formed an impromptu community of practice, which is such an important part of any faculty member's professional development.

[00:12:09.03] COREY SHDAIMAH: We did, it's funny because it was a long time ago. I graduated in 2005, so this is 16 years ago. And like I said, I'm actually still very, very close to one of my fellow students and one of my mentors who's there. And we continued that group for years, even after I graduated, and then I was teaching at Maryland, it morphed in different ways.

[00:12:34.24] And one thing that's very interesting, I'm a qualitative researcher, obviously, because I teach qualitative research, but best practices in qualitative research is also working with what we call peer debriefing groups. And so we use those groups for every aspect of the study, when we're building a study, when we're trying to get a sense of what biases we might have, or how our coding scheme is.

[00:12:59.22] And so the idea of a community of practice, and a place for reflection, and growing, and learning is really inherent in that part of my work, as well. And I kind of feel that way about pretty much everything I do. So that is tremendously important.

[00:13:19.53] We have, in addition, to the resources that you provide and that we also have at the School of Social Work, I have wonderful colleagues. And we help each other out a lot. Often, it's on an ad hoc basis. I am newly course coordinator for our required Foundation of a Policy class.

[00:13:40.32] Before that, there were other people who were course coordinators. Haksoon Ahn was the course coordinator just prior to me, and I would go to her for assistance. And now I'm providing that, particularly with courses like that, where we have adjuncts and faculty members teaching. It's really important to provide support.

[00:13:59.19] And it could be just technical questions like what do I do with Blackboard, but it could also be this class isn't working, or maybe there's a particular concept that is difficult, or maybe do we use an example for vaccines now because it's really lively and people will be excited or will that be troubling for people; even sort of questions like that. And so communes of practice, I think are really, really crucial.

[00:14:28.11] The other thing-- and I like your idea of creativity, talking about the syllabus, that kind of thing as well. And one thing that I think that you are really helpful to me, Erin, is sort of thinking about also the class itself. What is the purpose of every exercise that I do? I think sometimes we set things up and we kind of forget. And so refining the way I describe an assignment, is an assignment necessary, is a component of a class necessary, should this small group, should this be large group, why am I even doing this in the first place? So I think thinking about the purpose of the things we are asking students to do, are they necessary, and how do they have to be done, as well.

[00:15:19.35] I don't know if this is getting ahead, but I remember there was a point in my semester where I, kind of, called an emergency meeting or sent an email up to you. And I said, you know I'm really worried. I have a student who is participating from another country, another time zone. And I was concerned. She had spoken to me about the difficulty of maintaining a huge time zone difference and could we think about making some parts asynchronous, or making a change.

[00:15:54.72] I have to be honest, my first reaction was like, no we can't possibly do this. The in-person component-- sort of, very stuck on the way that I had it. And then I took a few deep breaths. And I emailed you. And I said, OK I'm feeling like I'm not sure I could do this. Can you help me think through how to decide? Is it possible to shift something? And then what are some creative ideas that might accomplish the components that I feel are necessary for this class and these assignments, while also meeting the needs of the moment and the particular students in my class.

[00:16:34.92] ERIN HAGAR: Yeah, I think that is such an important point that you're making here. There are so many ways to accomplish a course goal. And sometimes, as faculty members, we just have to articulate not only the academic part of the experience that matters to you but also the social and emotional experience that the students will have. Sometimes that can be a bit of a hidden agenda.

[00:16:55.60] And so putting light on that and saying, no it's really important to me that students in this particular activity to see each other's faces, or have the comfort of real-time interaction for this activity. It's important to articulate that from the very beginning, and step back, and really say to yourself, what do I value from both an academic standpoint, and also what kind of learning experience do I want the students to have?

[00:17:20.25] I think when the pandemic hit and you had to revise your course, I think you did such a great job dismantling all the course elements and looking at them in a unique way. Instead of just saying, well, this is how it's always been done and this is how I've always done it, you really took each piece and evaluated it, and thought about how you wanted to make those changes meaningful for your students.

[00:17:45.18] COREY SHDAIMAH: And I think that's where your help comes in. I think some people might think, well, I teach x and it's a topic area. So how does somebody, whether it's instructional technology in social work, or whether it's in terms of teaching and learning, not

just instructional pedagogy-- I think that's the part where pedagogy is its own science and art.

[00:18:10.95] And so I could come to you and say, well, it doesn't necessarily matter what I teach. But part of what you help us with is figuring out a process. So I'm not sure I would know to ask those questions. That's what happened. You said to me, OK, well, think about this.

[00:18:25.26] And then the other thing that I feel like you were able to help me with, and Becky helped with this as well, is well, hmm, if this is what you need to do, then that allows you to be able to give me suggestions so that we can brainstorm together whether it's appropriate. And so that sort of combination of skills, that could be applied to any teaching area. So I would recommend to anybody, regardless of their teaching area, that these are things that we could apply.

[00:18:55.86] And it does kind of circle back to it. At Bryn Mawr I was sitting with students from biology, and we were asking the same kinds of questions. You know, you asked very early on what were some of the differences between my PhD class and my MSW teaching, and one thing actually, that as we're talking, I'm thinking about that happened in this particular case and I always tell my students, is that PhD students, many of them will be teaching.

[00:19:21.57] They might not ultimately go on to careers in teaching, although many of our adjuncts are wonderful MSW alumni, but with the PhD, many of them are thinking about jobs where teaching will be a significant part of their work.

[00:19:38.44] And so I actually always tell them I'm like the Wizard of Oz with the curtain drawn back. I want to share with you. I want to model for them. I think coming to them, making people feel like everything is always complete and we know how to do it is sometimes a disservice.

[00:19:55.24] So obviously, you want students to feel comfortable like they're in good hands, and that you are professional, but I think it's really OK, particularly with PhD students and particularly when there's a crisis, but even if there isn't, to say OK, these are the things I'm thinking and letting students know that there might be a change and this is what I'm thinking.

[00:20:16.35] And for them to see that I go to professionals for help in teaching, that it's OK. That it's OK to take a step back and think about things, and it's OK not always to have the right answer. And then it's OK for somebody to ask you a question and challenge you, and not take it as a personal affront but to think about it as, hmm, OK, let's think about this. So I feel like that modeling in the teaching is another parallel thing that happens when you're teaching PhD students.

[00:20:47.04] ERIN HAGAR: Yeah, that's such a great point. Like you said, you don't want the students to feel like you're coming into class without a plan or that you haven't thought this through. But at the same time, there are changes teachers make on the fly or circumstances that present themselves where you, as the educator, need to shift gears or maybe you're trying something new.

[00:21:07.50] My experience is teaching Spanish, and I used to teach lower-level students, freshmen and sophomores. Even with that demographic, if we were trying a new activity, I would just let them know. I'd say, OK, I'm trying something new. I don't know how it's going to go here's why I'm trying it, let me know what you think. And just inviting students to be a

part of that process shows a respect for them as learners, and that we're all learners in this space.

[00:21:32.01] I never had an experience where a class didn't come along with me and at least give it a try. I think as educators, it's easy to feel as though we always need to be projecting this aura of expertise, but I think you're absolutely right. That's a disservice. Because as our students go into their own teaching experiences, it's helpful for them to know that there's this whole back-chatter happening as you're teaching about what you're doing and how you're doing it. And I think shining a light on that for our students can only help them going forward as they become educators.

[00:22:04.14] COREY SHDAIMAH: I'm also listening to you and thinking about some of the early readings that we did. Like the "Feeling Like a Fraud" reading, which is sort of a famous one in terms of pedagogy, what happens when you stand up in a classroom and your level of confidence.

[00:22:18.94] And so I think, actually, in terms of achieving that balance, I know that I'm good at what I do. I know I'm a good qualitative researcher. I know that I have the skills. I might not know how to convey that. And so I think knowing what your expertise-- if you're teaching Spanish, you have expertise there. And so it's not that you're coming to them with nothing going on, you're coming with expertise, and sort of recognizing where we need to be humble or show that we can both have expertise and be learners is really important.

[00:22:47.73] And I can't not say, though, that I think there's definitely a gender component here. I think very often as women, our expertise is challenged in different ways. And so I think that that can sometimes feel particularly challenged to feel confident and comfortable enough, and to know that your class respects you enough, and your knowledge, for you to then be able to also say, I'm going to try something new, or you're right, this might not be working with this class.

[00:23:22.44] So I think I want to point that out. Because I think it's important.

[00:23:26.17] ERIN HAGAR: Absolutely. And it's so interesting you say that because so much of what we know about teaching and learning involves bringing the students into the experience and engaging them actively. But what's typically seen as, quote unquote, "expertise" is that sage on the stage. So let me just stand here and tell you all the things that I know. And that can create the illusion of expertise, but as far as the learner, goes it's actually one of the least effective methods of transferring knowledge and information.

[00:23:54.45] So it's kind of ironic that what we think of as projecting expertise can actually work against the student if it's done in such a rigid way. It's so interesting.

[00:24:05.19] In what other ways do you notice your research and teaching informing each other?

[00:24:10.32] COREY SHDAIMAH: Well, I think there's just so much of it. So in qualitative research, one of the things we often try to do is to understand what we call an emic or insider perspective. So generally, people, humans make decisions that, when viewed from inside their own head or through their own lenses, are rational and often ethical. And many of us when we're not thinking [INAUDIBLE] are like, why is someone doing that? Why would they possibly do this? That is not a smart decision, that is not a thoughtful decision.

[00:24:53.55] There's a premise that no, actually, if you understand where people are coming from, then, actually, it might make sense. And so if we understand why people do what we do, then we can be partners with them, we can understand how maybe something might be harmful, that we don't intend it to be harmful, we might recognize that people have expertise in their own lives. And so that's an important part of qualitative research.

[00:25:22.89] Thinking about where students are coming from, how does this classroom look to somebody when they walk into that room or they click on the Zoom link? I think that's important. And it's important not just because if we're good humans or ethical humans, or teaching in social work, we care about their learning as educators, but if we want to be efficacious in our teaching, then we also want to know. So there's both, I think, a moral component to that, and then there's an effectiveness component in that. So I think it's really helpful to think about my teaching that way, and I think that's a connection.

[00:26:06.84] And even doing it for myself. Recognizing my feeling of I can't possibly change this, is me trying to think in my head, well, what is going on, Corey? And then reaching out to you and helping me walk through it to help me have a little bit more awareness. So I think that that's a similarity or something that's maybe mutually fruitful.

[00:26:26.31] ERIN HAGAR: That's great. If you could go back in time, maybe during your Bryn Mawr days in that learning community of practice, and share with yourself something that you've learned as an educator, what would that be?

[00:26:39.91] COREY SHDAIMAH: Well, this isn't exactly the answer, but I think it might do what the question to do is. So when we were creating that community of learning, there was a PhD student in chemistry, Cheryl. And she and I took the lead on creating a certificate for teaching and learning.

[00:26:59.62] We thought, oh, this will be good on our resumes, and then also, it gives some coherence to some of the things we're doing. And we created it together. I think only two people, myself included ended up-- I don't know what happened to it when we left.

[00:27:12.09] But what it was is, we had this ongoing series of lectures. And so you had to attend x out of, however many lectures. And then there was, sort of, a menu, like choose two items from column A, and three items from column B that you could do. So it also allowed people to choose areas that they wanted to.

[00:27:30.76] And so one of the areas that I chose to do from my self-imposed required list of things, was I observed. I did two teaching observations, and then I reflected and I wrote about it. So one of them, I observed my very wonderful, dear friend, was a professor of education, at the time, and she's now still teaching, Jody Cohen. And she gave this terrific interactive teachers' education. Students we're moving around, and writing on boards, and all this really wonderful stuff. And I was like, this is really great.

[00:28:09.30] And then I watched my dissertation chair, who is also my mentor, Jim Baumohl, a fantastic, wonderful teacher. I loved his classes. And he gave a very different kind of lecture. So he is more sage on the stage, in a very small classroom, so it's really not bad. The classes were small.

[00:28:31.47] But he gave a wonderful lecture. And it was erudite, and gripping, and interesting. And there were some questions, but it was really much more of this lecture style. And the class that I was observing was actually a class that I was going to teach for the first time the following semester. And it was in social work.

[00:28:54.81] And I was like, that's the way I have to do this because this is his class. And I remember standing up and trying to emulate him. He was great at what he did. I learned so much. I was his student. And the students really, I think, learned a lot in the class.

[00:29:14.32] And it was a disaster. It wasn't me. I couldn't do it. I can't lecture that way. I mean, I've learned a little bit more since, in terms of how he prepares, which I didn't know it at the time, but it just wasn't me. And the class didn't go well.

[00:29:31.09] And so I think the biggest thing that I've learned that I really try to remember, from those days, and that was from those days, is yes, be prepared. Yes, think about your teaching, and put an effort into it. But you also have to be who you are. And if you try to be someone else, it's not going to work. You're not going to feel good. The class, probably, isn't going to go well. And for good and for bad. So if I'm a little bit more enthusiastic, or I go a little faster, if that's who I am, that's who I am.

[00:30:03.96] Which doesn't mean you shouldn't improve. But be who you are, and then think about crafting the best lesson and the best classes you can, that are true to who you are.

[00:30:20.47] ERIN HAGAR: Oh, that is such fantastic advice. I think I want to make t-shirts and hand them out to new faculty. It's almost like wearing clothes that don't fit. It's so true. You need to teach in a way that feels authentic to you. It's wonderful, wonderful advice.

[00:30:36.34] So we've gone back in time. And now, if we were to jump forward in time, are there any innovations or approaches that you're seeing, as an educator, that excite you?

[00:30:46.60] COREY SHDAIMAH: I think, to some extent, that's still in formulation. So I'm very excited about the virtual, interprofessional, internet global/local class that I'm developing. And I'm actually working as a GLOBALtime fellow with the Center for Global Initiatives, who are also terrific. And they're creating a community of learning and all that kind of stuff. So I've been really excited about making some changes there. I'm listening to what other people are doing with their classes and, sort of, rethinking the model.

[00:31:21.46] So I'm very excited about the opening up of accessibility. So for example, when we're doing this international exchange, I would bring students to Israel. And we didn't have funding for students. And I felt pretty uncomfortable about that. And that was one of the reasons that I stopped teaching it for a little while, to rethink that and try and raise some money. Because you don't want to teach a class on social justice where actually some people can afford to go and others can't.

[00:31:49.21] And so the opening of accessibility, providing opportunities to more students to engage in international programming, and to be sitting in a classroom with people from two countries. So I'm really excited about more accessibility. What does that mean, making educational opportunities accessible to all?

[00:32:08.38] Similarly, we were reading an article and I brought in a guest speaker. We were reading an article that I had assigned. I know the author. She wrote a piece that was self-reflective. So it was an autoethnography of herself as a doctoral student doing research. [? Dalit ?] [INAUDIBLE] and she teaches in Israel.

[00:32:31.57] And the students had a very strong reaction to what she was writing. Both in terms of her research process-- and she did interviews with men who had been abusive

toward their partners. I felt like the class was very fraught. Not in a bad way, but it was loaded.

[00:32:54.13] And I said, well, you know, I know the author. I said, why don't I see if she'll come to class next week? So I emailed, and I said, [? Dalit, ?] my class was really excited about your article. There's a seven-hour time difference. I mean, we're on two different continents. And we arranged for her to come. And then it was made even easier, the sort of pen palling thing.

[00:33:13.33] She wanted the students to write a really brief reflection. Well, I already had a discussion board going. And I said, you know I didn't want to create extra work. I said, instead of answering my discussion questions, this is what [? Dalit ?] wanted to know about you. You answer it. They posted it. I was able to send her their answers, so she had some sense of who the class was. Now, this was a small class. So it was easier to do. And then she Skyped in.

[00:33:40.03] My classes 2:00 to 5:00, it was 9 o'clock at night. She stayed with us till 10:30. And so I'm excited about those kinds of possibilities that allow not just for more accessibility, both to a larger group of professors, or to or for students to have opportunities, but impromptu.

[00:33:58.72] I mean it also meant that we didn't have to prepare so much. You didn't have to get on a plane. So not just as much money, but that sort of time and thinking about it. It just wasn't such a hard thing for me to send an email. So I think making things easier, I'm really excited about that.

[00:34:15.49] ERIN HAGAR: Oh, that is so thrilling. And it really connects with what you were saying earlier, about being a GLOBALtime fellow, and in fact, we're going to have Dr. Carlos Faerron Guzmán on our guest list, for this podcast. And we're hoping to talk with him more about global education, in a future episode. So stay tuned for that.

[00:34:32.92] And yes, that ability to respond on the fly to your students' energy around that article and make something happen, 20 years ago, it would have required so much effort. It wouldn't have even been possible. The planning alone would have made that so difficult. And here you can just take advantage of that immediate energy and enthusiasm, and expand that learning experience in such a deep way. It's really amazing.

[00:34:55.39] COREY SHDAIMAH: Yeah, and it's not just the global. So I'm also doing my PhD students, they have to do-- which you know about-- they also have to research, learning by doing. So, they're doing interviews. And the interviews they're doing is, we had set up a study-- and it's actually a real study, it's gotten IRB approval.

[00:35:12.70] So they've been interviewing people. And I've been reading through the interviews about their experiences as graduate students during COVID. So, I would say that some of those things about accessibility and affordability are coming through in those interviews. So it's not just the international, but it's what happens to our students when they need to be caring for somebody, or how much easier it is if, let's say, they don't have to commute.

[00:35:38.19] And on the flip side, we're also learning that there are certain experiences that people miss, or there are certain intangibles. And so what is important to students around education? The networking, the creating communities of practice that you're talking about, people missing hallway conversations. So I'm also excited about what I'm learning through

these interviews, about what are some of these intangibles for students that the pandemic is bringing to light, that will then carry forward. Yeah, we always try to do mixers and informal opportunities but hearing from students that these really matter and the ways in which they matter.

[00:36:23.94] So that's a stay tuned that I'm wondering how to address, but happy to have it flagged for me as something that matters.

[00:36:33.46] ERIN HAGAR: That's so great. One final question we're hoping to ask all of our guests. If you had to identify your teaching superpower, something that comes naturally to you; or through lots of hard work, you feel, now is a strength of yours, something you feel very confident about, with respect to your teaching; what would you say your superpower is?

[00:36:55.47] COREY SHDAIMAH: That's a hard one. I think maybe it's the personal connection and the curiosity. And that's maybe the connection between the research and the teaching. I really like people. I'm really curious about people. And I want to connect with them. And I hope it comes across in the teaching. And I think that brings just a lot of benefits.

[00:37:31.06] It signals to people, hopefully, if they're getting it the right way, if I'm able to convey it the right way, that I care about their learning, that I care about them, that I want to have a connection with them. And I think that that makes people more open to learning, and more open to taking risks, and more open to sharing where they want to learn.

[00:37:53.82] ERIN HAGAR: Absolutely, I can see that. That came through just in our conversation today. Every time you talked about your students, you could just feel your care, and compassion, and curiosity for them coming through.

[00:38:05.46] And Corey, we cannot thank you enough for joining us today. What a treat this has been to have you as our very first podcast guest. We are so grateful. And just thank you for the work that you do.

[00:38:17.78] COREY SHDAIMAH: Thank you. Thank you for having me. It's been really fun to talk to you, and it's been so wonderful to work with you.

[00:38:23.89] ERIN HAGAR: Thank you for joining us today on Moving the Needle. Visit us at [umaryland.edu/fctl](http://umaryland.edu/fctl) to hear additional episodes, leave us feedback, or suggest future topics. We'd love to hear from you.