Nancy Remler: Hello. Welcome to Teach Strong. This is the podcast on teaching and learning for Armstrong's campus. I'm Nancy Remler, the Director for the Center for Teaching and Learning. Today's episode is about Armstrong's Campus Read and with me today are three faculty who are instrumental in bringing the Campus Read to Armstrong.

We have with us Greg Anderson, who is the Director of First Year Experience.

Greg Anderson: Hello.

Nancy Remler: We have Suzy Carpenter, who is from the Department of Chemistry and Physics, and you're a co-director of First Year Experience. Is that correct?

Suzy Carpenter: That's correct.

Nancy Remler: Okay, and then Judith Garrison, Reference Librarian in Lane Library. Another co-director for First Year Experience. Welcome all of you to the podcast.

Judith Garrison: Thank you.

Suzy Carpenter: Thanks.

Nancy Remler: For those of you who are new to Armstrong, we're talking about an annual event on campus that involves everyone, or as many people as possible, reading the same text. Could one of you please explain a little bit of the history of and the purpose of the Campus Read?

Greg Anderson: Sure. Beginning back in the mid 2000s, 2004 or 5, the Department of Languages, Literature, and Philosophy, really Beth Howell, spearheaded what she called a Campus Read. The idea is that the entire campus community, students, faculty, and staff have a common academic experience, that they read the same book, to generate discussion and thoughtful conversation about this topic. We've always tried to choose something that is interdisciplinary so it can be used in a variety of classrooms and it would be interesting for lots of folks.

The first Campus Read was Flannery O'Connor's A Good Man is Hard to Find. We've used Ernest Gaines, A Lesson Before Dying. We've had, this past year, we took a year off this past year trying to figure out what we wanted to do, but the year before we had I Am Malala. We've had William [crosstalk 00:02:04].

Suzy Carpenter: We had Richard Seltzer come one year. You remember Dr. Richard Seltzer who came one year?

Judith Garrison: Yes, and Henrietta Lacks.

Greg Anderson: [crosstalk 00:02:10] Henrietta Lacks. In recent years I think the faculty haven't been using the book as much in class, and so we took a year off last year to kind
of reboot and redesign and see what we could do this year to get more widespread campus involvement.

Nancy Remler: This year's Campus Read is?


Suzy Carpenter: Well part of the reason is the recent national interest or emphasis on fake news. We felt like it was a great moment in history to explore what news is, how you can tell whether it's true or not. What kind of vetting goes into the journalism associated with newspapers, and so we just thought this was an opportune time in our nation's history to use a newspaper.

Nancy Remler: It's interesting because one of my other questions I wanted to ask you is why now? I think that's, yes, certainly, now is a good time. Do you think also part of the conversation might be the fact that newspapers are suffering? Could that be?

Suzy Carpenter: Sure, as we started investigating this, we became aware that the accessing the New York Times online is quite a different experience than picking it up at the supermarket. It's amazing all the features that are available through the Internet with the New York Times.

Judith Garrison: When we started researching this we found out that the Pew Research Center has studies showing that college age people do not watch television news. They get their news from devices, from computers. The NewYorkTimes.com, we're not subscribing to the print newspaper. We're getting the mobile newspaper, which includes not only the daily newspaper, but lots and lots of different kinds of features, lots of multimedia. Students are going to come into the classroom, most of them who have a smart phone, are going to come into the classroom with the whole New York Times right in the palm of their hand.

Nancy Remler: Now I want to follow up on what you just said about most students not getting their news from broadcast news, but from devices instead, because, and maybe this is just an assumption on my part, or maybe I just generalize based on my experiences with students, but lately I have thought that students often got their news from social media, if at all. That many students don't really follow the news. Am I incorrect in making that assumption?

Greg Anderson: I don't have evidence to back that up, but that's been my anecdotal experience, that yes, they do have conversations about things they've read on social media, and just kind of helping them filter that is very important. I think its part of our responsibility.
Nancy Remler: What about you Judith and Suzy? Do you have the same anecdotal evidence?

Suzy Carpenter: One thing I would say to your comment, Nancy, is that when they access the campus subscription to the New York Times, they're going to be able to identify topics they're interested in, and they will get automatic alerts, so now, you know, it's going to come up on their phone that something was just published. I think it may change where they look for news.

Nancy Remler: Okay.

Judith Garrison: Those automatic alerts are chosen. They're selected by the students. One of the things that we talk about in library instruction are the filter bubbles that people live in, so when students get their news from social media, they're just getting selective news dependent on what they have clicked on before. With the New York Times subscription they may get alerts in their topic area of interest, but it's not going to be filtered by their previous viewing habits.

Nancy Remler: Like you said Greg, the Campus Read is intended to engage a campus wide audience in something that can be used across disciplines and clearly a newspaper can be. Of course here around this table we have representatives from the humanities as well as the sciences, so can you think about different ways that different disciplines can use the New York Times in their classes?

Greg Anderson: Sure. I think it's obvious in a political science class, in a history class, economics class. I mean there are sections and stories every day that would pertain to what's going on in the classroom. Suzy had a conversation with, was it Cindy Costa?

Suzy Carpenter: Yeah, Cindy Costa's going to be teaching Arts 1100, and has already planned an assignment having to do with heists of art work, historically. Because you can actually go back in the New York Times database and so why did they do it, what was the value of the art work that was stolen, were they successful, how long were they able to keep it before they were caught. You know those sorts of things, historical perspective on art heists, which I think would be interesting. Crimes, interesting, right?

I did want to say that there is a companion piece to the New York Times called the New York Times in Education, that Armstrong also has a subscription to. That is going to be helpful to faculty because other faculty across the country, who use the New York Times in their classes, actually submit their assignments, like what it is they're doing in a history class or a chemistry class or English class, along with where they teach, what they teach, how this was used in the classroom, and then the actual assignment instructions. So that if you just looking for something to use, there will be a whole database that you will have access to.
Nancy Remler: I guess we should also clarify that this subscription to the New York Times is available to all Armstrong students and faculty.

Greg Anderson: And staff.

Judith Garrison: And staff.

Nancy Remler: And staff.

Judith Garrison: Anybody with an Armstrong email address.

Nancy Remler: Okay, great. There will be no additional fees for students or faculty to access this resource.

Judith Garrison: Well unfortunately if you're going to do the big crossword, you're going to have to pay more.

Suzy Carpenter: It's not a lot. Isn't it like 60 cents or something?

Judith Garrison: Well I don't, but I do the mini crossword almost every day.

Nancy Remler: The mini crossword is fun too, but the crossword is an additional small fee, but to get the news and to get the New York Times in Education, no cost to faculty, students or staff.

Suzy Carpenter: Right.

Greg Anderson: Right.

Nancy Remler: Great, okay. How do we get access to this resource?

Judith Garrison: The important part about getting access the very first time is that you need to go to the websites that we've set up that will help the paper identify you as an Armstrong user. The link is accessNYT.com. We have the link on a Lib Guide and once you go through this link, you register for your account. You select your password and then you can log on to the New York Times from anywhere.

Nancy Remler: Okay. To faculty who are new to Armstrong, the Lib Guide is a specifically designed web page that's housed in the library's website, so if you go to library.Armstrong.edu and just search in the search box for New York Times you should be able to get to that Lib Guide?

Judith Garrison: Exactly.

Nancy Remler: Okay. Then haven't you also created a brief Screencast video to show faculty and students how to access the New York Times and the New York Times in Education?
Greg Anderson: Yes, and by the time this podcast is available for faculty, that would have been ... a link to that Screencast would have been emailed to them.

Nancy Remler: Okay, great. We have multiple ways to instruct faculty and students to access the Campus Read materials. Good. Are there any other activities designed around the Campus Read? I know in past years we had speakers come and there have been film presentations and dramatic performances. Is there anything else that’s going to happen surrounding this Campus Read?

Greg Anderson: We’re hoping, we’re 90% sure, we will get the editor of the opinion page to come down and do a talk and hopefully visit a couple of classrooms kind of thing. There’s a connection with Armstrong to this editor, his name is Peter, I believe. We’re trying to work out a visit by him in the fall and other ideas that we have discussed, but not finalized, are things like an essay contest for students. Perhaps faculty panels on topics of interest throughout the term. We haven’t talked too much about spring semester yet, but the idea is to have a slate of events, spaced out over the entire academic year, to keep interest up but to also expose and have some fun educational activities.

Judith Garrison: Yeah and we’re looking for ideas, so if anybody has a great idea they should let us know.

Greg Anderson: Absolutely.

Nancy Remler: Okay. Good. Do you need any assistance from other faculty in organizing events or helping getting the word out or sharing instructional strategies? All of the above? Do you need any assistance?

Judith Garrison: It would be great for people to share their instructional strategies. The things that they want to try. The things that they try and are successful, and even failures because we’re all on a learning curve here.

Nancy Remler: Okay.

Suzy Carpenter: In fact Nancy, I would bring up the fact that Judith created a second tab on the Lib Guide for Teaching With the Times, where faculty can actually record a short video of what they’re using, and so your suggestion was very [crosstalk 00:13:11].

Judith Garrison: A Flip Grid.

Nancy Remler: Oh okay, you put that on the Lib Guide. Okay, great.

Suzy Carpenter: Go there.

Nancy Remler: Okay.
Caroline Hopkinson had a great idea. She was talking about the recent discovery of and discussion of Amelia Earhart and how there's been news articles and there are editorials and opinion pieces. Then there's a body of research that's been done. For anybody who wants an interesting topic to explore different types of information sources, that would be pretty cool.

That would be pretty cool.

It's there now.

Okay, so access the New York Times Lib Guide and you will see the-

It's a tab, Teaching with the Times.

Teaching with the Times.

It's very clever.

We created this Flip Grid because we were trying to come up with ideas about what teaching tools faculty might use and Nancy suggested Flip Grid, so I explored that and it's a pretty cool little thing. It's very easy to record. It would be very easy for students to record responses and you can embed into [inaudible 00:14:28].

Just for those of you who aren't familiar, Flip Grid is an app. It's an instructional app that enables students and faculty to have online discussions through video instead of through writing, so we can see some samples of that on Teaching with the Times. Great, okay. Just to make sure everybody is sure of this, the New York Times is accessible via phone or tablet or computer? Can we use any device to get these resources?


Oh really? Isn't it funny that we think of a Blackberry as a dinosaur now?

I know, like a VCR or something. This was a good chance to plug the availability of computers and iPads that are available for students to check out at the Learning Commons and at the library.

Okay, yes. Good to know.

Very good.

Is there anything else that you want the campus to know about the Campus Read or the New York Times or both?
Suzy Carpenter: We’re just looking forward to lots of engagement of all disciplines, faculty, staff and students and we really want to hear from you. How are you using it?

Nancy Remler: Great.

Greg Anderson: One thing I hope that comes of this is that students will read the New York Times because they want to. If they’re assigned to do it for this class or that, that they’ll develop a habit of becoming consumers of news, real news. Having conversations about it and getting engaged in the important conversations of our times. I think that’s an outcome that I hope to achieve with this and having college age kids myself, my oldest daughter could care less, but my younger daughter’s like, “Oh, let me look at your New York Times subscription. Let me log in.”

Nancy Remler: Oh great.

Greg Anderson: If we can generate interest that’s just as important as classroom assignments.

Nancy Remler: That’s what it’s all about isn’t it?

Judith Garrison: Yes, that’s what it’s all about.

Nancy Remler: Well great. Thank you for being here with us today. The New York Times is available right now, correct?

Judith Garrison: Yes.

Greg Anderson: Yes.

Nancy Remler: Everybody in the Armstrong community has access to it. One question I just thought of. In January when we become Georgia Southern, will the New York Times be available to just Armstrong faculty and staff, or is this going to be available across campuses?

Judith Garrison: Georgia Southern already has a subscription in place.

Nancy Remler: Okay good. There’s that too. Well wonderful. Thank you for being here with us today.

Suzy Carpenter: Oh thank you Nancy.

Judith Garrison: Thank you.

Nancy Remler: Thank you listeners for tuning in to Teach Strong and we hope to hear from you on the next episode. Bye, bye.