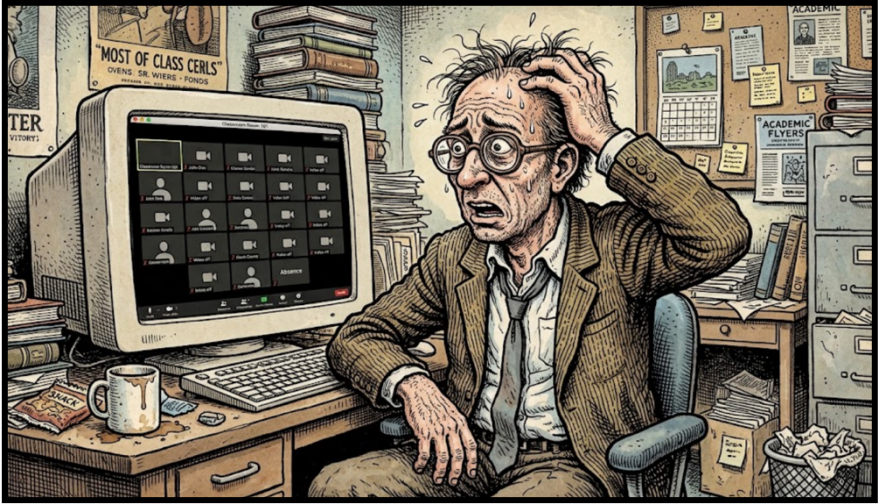




apologies to R Crumb and even Charles Bukowski.
this was made by an ai something something. I am sorry.

NWLearn 2026

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LEARNING TECHNOLOGY

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
IN ZOOMLANDIA**



Professional Development in Zoomlandia

with Todd Conaway

Introduction

I have been an instructional designer for 21 years. I graduated from Walden University in 2001 after two years of online classes. I was experimenting with “video conferencing” platforms long before Zoom was invented. I have wondered about the miracle of FaceTime and Google Hangouts. I watched my kids attend Zoom School through the pandemic. I have watched our collective culture at the university choose to remain at home.

I am waiting here.

In my empty office suite.

I hope you'll stop by.

QUESTION #1

The "Screen Buffer" & Vulnerability Question

How often do virtual meetings allow us to hide behind a "screen buffer?"

We can turn off cameras or mute mics when discussions get uncomfortable.

How does that digital distance hinder the deep, vulnerable self-reflection needed for true pedagogical growth?

QUESTION #2

Loss of Informal Connection

When a Zoom meeting ends and everyone instantly logs off, what spontaneous "small talk," informal bonding, or hallway conversations are we losing that used to build long-term trust and collegial friendships?

QUESTION #3

"Pizza Delivery" & Community Paradox

As Faculty Learning Community pioneer Dr. Milton Cox observed, building authentic community virtually is "just so hard to do!"

Are our online faculty development sessions building genuine social learning communities, or are they devolving into repetitive, one-way webinars?

QUESTION #4

Faculty Burnout & Screen Fatigue

In an environment where faculty are already overwhelmed by administrative workloads, does defaulting to Zoom for convenience lessen our burden, or does it add to screen fatigue and make faculty development feel like "just another meeting on the calendar?"

QUESTION #5

Strategic Hybrid Meetings vs. Default Habits

Which specific aspects of faculty development genuinely benefit from virtual spaces?

Which essential human elements require physical presence and face-to-face interaction?

THINGS WE CAN DO!

We can reach out to our colleagues in person. We can stop by their office, uninvited.

We can offer some professional development only in-person.

We can talk about the value of in-person events.

We can advocate for more in-person events.

We can create spaces that are inviting.

We can

We can

We can

THINGS WE CAN DREAM!

When I dream of the perfect moment in learning, I often think of this image I took of a student of mine.



What does your perfect moment look like?

How do we do whatever that is, more often?

Want to Connect?

I always enjoy talking about these things. Any time.

Visit some of my wanderings here on my place on the web.

thewholeclassroom.com