



Making a Difference with Learning with Debra Zabloudil

Leading Learning Podcast Transcript for Episode 311

Debra Zabloudil (00:00):

And I think we often do a lot of measuring satisfaction and not a lot of measuring learning outcomes. So I really hope that our whole community will start really looking toward what are the learning outcomes that we're hoping to have and how are we measuring those and then how are we reporting that back to our community? I don't think there's a better way to say our programs make a difference than having positive learning outcomes.

Celisa Steele (00:33):

I'm Celisa Steele.

Jeff Cobb (00:34):

I'm Jeff Cobb, and this is the Leading Learning Podcast. Welcome to episode 311, which features a conversation with Debra Zabloudil. Debra is vice president of learning at the American Society of Association Executives. ASAE is a professional society with more than 44,000 members. ASAE educates and develops association professionals at all stages of their career. Debra and Celisa talk about Debra's priorities as she steps into the role of leading ASAE's learning portfolio; her philosophy of learning; the important work to be done in diversity, equity and inclusion and learning's part in DEI; the power of peer-to-peer learning; the need to look at learning outcomes; and the imperative to keenly understand your audience. Debra and Celisa spoke in May 2022.

Celisa Steele (01:28):

And so, as you just mentioned, you're relatively new there at ASAE. What are your priorities as you're coming in as vice president of learning? And how did you arrive at those priorities?

Debra Zabloudil (01:48):

Right, that's a really good question because there's so many things that hit you when you walk in the door in a new job. But I would say I put my consultant's hat on a little bit at the beginning and just did what I have been helping others do for a really long time, and that is starting with an exhaustive look at what the organization was offering in terms of learning. We looked at it from many different lenses: the audience it was serving, the price points to members and non-members. Was it connecting to the CAE domains? Were there things that needed to be changed about the programs? And everything that we've done, as we're looking through this, we're revisiting assumptions on every existing program because it's 2022. It's not 2019. It's not 2020 or 2021, when we were in the midst of this heightened pandemic state. But everything is being

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looked at in a completely different way in terms of making sure that it's going to resonate and that it works for the members first and foremost and then, of course, for ASAE as well, and that it makes good sense to be offering the things that we're doing and all of those things. I think that's a really important part, whether you're new in a position or you've been in a position for a long time, is to have the discipline to really revisit what you're offering, who your audiences are that you're serving, who are you serving really well, and who have not really been engaged in the association and its products and services and programs for a long time. That was a really big piece of things. And, in many cases, we've been redesigning programs and products. What you'll see toward the end of the year is a new look at some familiar products that are going to take a little bit of repositioning, and I think we'll be better for it, and we'll meet the needs of our members more and certainly where they're at in 2022.

Debra Zabloudil (03:51):

So that's been a really big piece of it. We have a lot of great data in house. And so I have been mining that and really understanding the profile of the membership and where we have the bulk of members in certain positions and roles and verticals within the association community and how we're serving them or not and, if not, then how we're going to in the future. We've been talking to councils, committees, groups of CEOs, et cetera, and really getting entrenched in conversations around what they want, what they need, what does ASAE look like, and how can we serve them moving forward? And we have a bigger portfolio than most people probably realize. This year we have 16 face-to-face programs—in 2022, when you think about coming out of COVID and having that many. And then we have 8 different types of digital programs, but a total of about probably 25 of those that we offer as well.

Debra Zabloudil (05:03):

And that is the piece that will grow dramatically over the next couple of years is the digital learning piece of things. But, as we look at 2023, we have a lot of new programs, face-to-face programs coming forward too, new design, rethinking, new audiences that we're serving. They might not be always these large two- to three- to four-day conferences, but they might be half-day, full-days in different cities where we have a lot of members. So we're looking at all of that and really just trying to manage those programs and, again, rethink it. So, in addition to coming up to speed on all that ASAE has, it's how are we differentiating some of these products from themselves, and then how are we differentiating from other things that exist in the market?

Debra Zabloudil (05:52):

So that's programming the programs. We're doing a lot of that right now, if you will. And then looking at our strategic framework and figuring out how to support that strategic framework through learning, and that's really three very important areas. One is to deeply understand and serve the CEOs and the C-suite of associations. I think we've got an eye toward the CEO, and we have for a while, and I think we're serving them fairly well, but we can always do better, of course. But it's the rest of the C-suite we haven't necessarily programmed for as much as I think we will be in the future. And then the other is, the second element of the framework is an omnichannel approach. So, in the association, we all talk about content waste a lot, and there's so much content waste that comes out of these big meetings and these great articles that end up in our publications.

Debra Zabloudil (06:51):

And so we're really looking at deploying the content that we believe our members need and that our members are telling us they need in new and different ways and not just one channel.

And then the final is the pathway to leadership. That's really understanding that we have a continuum of association execs, and we need to engage them at every step in their career. I feel really strongly about that. And I don't know—most associations, I don't think, do that exceptionally well. I think we tend to focus on the leaders, and then I think we've gotten very good at focusing on emerging professionals as a community, but I think there's a whole swath of people that are in that midpoint of their career that start to feel disengaged, or they feel like, "Well, I'm not really at the CEO level yet," but how do we help them get there if they want to get there? And if they don't want to go that route, how do we help them be the best specialist that they possibly can in the area that they choose?

Celisa Steele (07:54):

Well, it sounds like that is plenty to keep you busy for your first few months and beyond. But it makes a lot of sense to start with basically that audit and that really hard look at what is ASAE offering and then questioning those assumptions to make sure that what's out there is what it needs to be to serve the community that you're serving. So maybe one step away from ASAE specifically, although of course that's going to be a good point of reference for you, but I'm just curious about your perspective on the role that lifelong learning, professional development, continuing education, the role that those kinds of things play in society in general and then also the role of organizations like ASAE that provide that education and that learning. So it's a big, broad question, I know.

Debra Zabloudil (08:46):

Right, it is. Well, I'm a big believer in lifelong learning, and I don't know that any of us can stay relevant in today's society without continuing to learn and evolve. I think that ultimately the onus is on everyone to figure out how to do that. And, if it means that you're not getting that through your organization, I think we have to go out there, and we have to be proactive about seeking those opportunities to learn new things and to think differently and to challenge the old assumptions that we have. I think it's extremely important. One of the things, there were so many awful things that happened of course because of COVID, but one of the things that I think we learned is that we can democratize learning more than we ever have. And so it's creating access that we haven't had before for some of our members and those in underserved communities and those that need special access, et cetera.

Debra Zabloudil (09:48):

And it's just something that is so important for an association to understand how to, in my humble opinion, really reach people in many different ways because otherwise we are leaving people behind, and we can't as a professional societies or trade associations. We can't leave people behind. If we want our professions to thrive, we have to figure out how do we not just look at revenue and good learning outcomes, but how do we make sure that everyone has the ability to access learning and growth and be able to evolve? I think it's really, really important. And I think, again, there's so many ways to consume learning, which is good and bad for those of us who are in learning, right? On the one hand, for consumers and for the learners out there in the world, it's wonderful because now there's learning at every price point.

Debra Zabloudil (10:49):

There's learning that doesn't cost a penny, and then there's very sophisticated learning that you have to be much more invested in in terms of time and financial resources. So I don't think there's any excuse not to learn. And, if we're not trying to learn, we're just not going to continue to stay relevant. And I think, again, what associations need to do is we need to stay relevant so

that our members can stay relevant. And I think that's where the harmony comes in. We're relevant, and so we're keeping them relevant.

Celisa Steele (11:21):

And it very clearly ties to learning, very clearly ties to the mission of associations, the way you're describing it, that it is about serving that profession or that industry or that community, and it's right in there in why you exist in the first place.

Debra Zabloudil (11:37):

Right. And I think, for most associations, we have to look at learning through a lot of different lenses, and one of the lenses is "How do we serve the mission or the strategic plan or the strategic framework or the key objectives?" That's huge, and we do a lot of that at ASAE. We're always going back to our strategic framework and tying what we're doing to the strategic framework. And I always will tell other learning professionals out there that, if you have a great idea, and you can tie it to your strategic plan or your mission, then you have a much better chance of that succeeding and getting the green light and getting support and funding and all of those things. So that's really important. But then there's also, in many cases, the learning component of an association has a financial responsibility back to the organization.

Debra Zabloudil (12:27):

And I think that's a bigger challenge right now because of COVID, and many associations having lost their big revenue-driver for a couple of years. And so I take that very seriously. We're stewards of other people's money and trust, and we have to use it wisely. And I think, if programs are underperforming, if there's no market for something, we have to be able to make those tough decisions because otherwise we have people that aren't going to the program, aren't interested in the content, supporting those programs with their dues dollars. So I think it's really important that we're shrewd, and we're taking a really deliberate eye toward everything we're offering right now and making sure that it's hitting the mark. And we're going to all be trying things that won't work. And certainly we know that at ASAE we are not going to hit the nail on the head every single time. But we've talked about this a lot internally, and we want to do things differently.

Debra Zabloudil (13:32):

And that the essence of it right now is that, because of COVID, we all have permission to do things differently. And so some of the things that we've always done or some of the ceremonial things or the things that have always been part of our association culture, we're looking at and saying, "Is there a different way? Is there a better way to do this?" And I think the world has given us permission, and ASAE, we always feel like, "Well, if we try things and we can be transparent about what's working or not, we give others permission. We give association executives permission to do the same." So it's really important right now to be experimenting and thinking differently and knowing that you're not always going to hit the mark, but hopefully you're going to have a few really, really good ideas in there.

Jeff Cobb (14:24):

At Tagoras we're experts in the global business of lifelong learning, and we use our expertise to help clients better understand their markets, connect with new customers, make the right investment decisions, and grow their learning businesses. We achieve these goals through expert market assessment, strategy formulation, and platform selection services. If you're

looking for a partner to help your learning business achieve greater reach, revenue, and impact, learn more at tagoras.com/services.

Celisa Steele (14:59):

So you've shared some about the portfolio at ASAE. You mentioned those 16 face-to-faces. You have these 8 different types of digital products. It's a big portfolio. I'm just curious to know how you plan to think about what you offer and why and what you might add? And what you might need to sunset over time?

Debra Zabloudil (15:21):

Well, I think every association needs to be open to sunsetting programs, and that goes back to, if you're seeing a decline either in the quality of the program or in attendance, you have to stop and ask yourself why. And, in some cases, it's reinventing those programs. And, in some cases, it is sunsetting those programs. And that's just what we have to do. We have to be able to make those decisions. I'm not saying it's easy because, particularly in the association space, we have committees and boards of directors and all of these additional folks that are involved that may have conceived of these ideas. It might have been the program or the product that they brought to the table. And so it can be very political. It can be difficult to sunset products, even when all the metrics show us that we should.

Debra Zabloudil (16:13):

So I think that's just one of the things that we need to always be thinking about. But, when it comes to adding, we are looking at ways to make sure that the content that we believe and that our members are telling us is relevant to their work and right now, that those are positioned in a way that they can be successful. So we know that not every content area and not every audience that we have can support a two-day conference at a conference center or a convention center. And so we're not going to build it that way. So I think we're being really deliberate about, as we look at rolling out new content, how are we doing that? And what's the right modality for it? And then we're definitely going to be building up online. I feel that is an area that we can strengthen.

Debra Zabloudil (17:12):

We're doing a lot of synchronous right now, and we need to build our library of asynchronous programs so that, when members need to find things, they can. And we're looking at microcredentialing and doing a whole host of new and different things. And, again, really thinking about where members are at in their journey and how to keep them engaged and how to provide them what is important to their career at every step of the way. And how they can lead their associations in a really robust way into the future where they can make a difference in the world?

Celisa Steele (17:49):

What you were sharing there made me think a little bit about where ideas for new programs come from. And I'm just curious to know. I'm guessing it's probably a combination of both push and pull—you're getting suggestions that come in naturally, and you're probably soliciting opinions and proactively asking folks. But could you just talk a little bit about that? Where those ideas come from?

Debra Zabloudil (18:12):

Absolutely. The best ideas come from our members, when they tell us this is something that we're really struggling with. And the great thing about being new is a lot of members are calling and saying, "This is what we need." And, really, not just me, but we have a new CEO, Michelle Mason, we have a new COO, Nancy Green, and then I'm the new vice president of learning. One of the reasons that I wanted to be in this role as it was evolving was that nothing's off the table. It's an opportunity to do things new and look at things from a different standpoint, and no one was saying, "No, no, no. This is the way we've always done it." So that's exciting. A lot of people are engaging with us right now because we're all new, and that's wonderful. People are giving us their opinions, of course. CEOs are calling us and saying, "This is what I need for my staff members, and this is where I haven't seen ASAE offer anything in a while."

Debra Zabloudil (19:11):

So, we're taking all that under consideration. We talk to our councils a lot and our committees and sit in on their meetings, and we give them questions and assignments and things like that. We're also doing a lot of collaboration right now, which I think that was tough during COVID. I think collaboration took a little bit of a beating across the association community and every community frankly because we were all home. We were somewhat siloed. And so now we're really having really, really fantastic cross-product meetings, where I'm talking a lot to the Foundation about research and *Associations Now*, AN, and Learning are looking at how we can collaborate on content and really pulling out a content strategy more than just a series of one-off programs, research projects, articles, et cetera. We're really looking at a more holistic approach to how ASAE can address some of these, but we're always talking to customers and members.

Debra Zabloudil (20:22):

I say customers meaning everyone from a member to a non-member because I think it's very important to continue to talk to non-member customers, but we're always asking what is it we can do better. And I love hearing from members and having conversations, and not everything has the ability to be implemented. And, again, we have to go back to, in some cases, they're great ideas, but we just don't have the market. Or we're serving that market really well with another product, and we just feel like adding a new product for that same group of individuals or that same sector of our market won't benefit the program that exists, et cetera. So, again, it's just a series of looking at a lot of data points, looking at what we have complementing, what we have with what we don't have. So, if you can, imagine a grid in your mind of first we start with the CAE domains and what are we offering against the CAE domains and then the professional practices manual that many people know.

Debra Zabloudil (21:30):

And then what are we offering for those at the early stages of their career, the midpoint, the senior point? What are the prices that we're offering? And where we see real opportunity is that early to midpoint of the career, where we can really help newer or mid-level association professionals advance. And so we're really going to try to do that. And I have such a strong belief that, as we look at demographics of associations in general, we know we have to pull in new members, and we have to get those younger professionals or those who are newer to the profession in some cases that are not right out of school or necessarily young, but it's a second or it's a third career, but those are the people we need to pull in. So, unless we are comfortable with our association shrinking over time, we need to engage those folks. So that's what we're trying to do.

Celisa Steele (22:34):

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You've been deeply immersed in learning. Before joining ASAE, you spent a career focused on learning. How would you describe your learning philosophy?

Debra Zabloudil (22:46):

First and foremost, inclusive and accessible. I think that's really important. At ASAE, we have a big philosophy that is living and breathing around DEI and conscious inclusion. So that's something that we're looking at from every standpoint you can imagine and really trying to advance that. I'm a very big believer in that. And then the democratization of learning, as I mentioned before. We have to meet members where they're at, but I also think we need to lead them where we know they need to be going. And when all we do is ask members what they want, what they want, what they want, we might get a lot of the same answers of what we're already doing. It's that whole, I think it was Henry Ford that said, "If we asked people what they wanted in transportation, they'd say a faster horse."

Debra Zabloudil (23:40):

So sometimes members and those out there in the community don't know what they want until they see it. I think we can't limit ourselves to "Well, this didn't come back on the survey." We have to always have our eyes and ears open and really think about what's happening in the world. This is one of the ways that I think all the time. If I watch the news or I read an article on something, I think how does this affect the communities that I serve? How do we draw a dotted line relationship—or a solid line relationship in some cases—to some of the things that are going on out in the world that perhaps our members are not paying attention to yet but we know will impact them sooner rather than later? And so we need to prepare them.

Debra Zabloudil (24:28):

And sometimes it's that unrealized need that associations have within their members. They can see that something is evolving and coming toward the profession, but the members aren't always there yet. Now we have really savvy members because they're all association professionals and they're all doing this work, so I am not suggesting that our members don't know what's coming at them, but I do think it's the responsibility of an association and learning certainly to ask members what they want and then have that eye toward the future, reading the tea leaves and saying, "How are the things that are going on in the world going to impact associations?"

Celisa Steele (25:08):

I appreciate the big-picture philosophy, that conscious inclusion, the being accessible, the diversity, equity, inclusion piece. That all makes a lot of sense, especially with that association lens on it and just how much of a family and wanting to be what you can be for the entire industry or profession or whomever you serve. So that's at the philosophical level. At maybe more the practical level, what have you seen be the key effective ingredients in learning? What does it take to really help adults learn and learn well?

Debra Zabloudil (25:46):

I think engagement is absolutely number one, and it's engagement in the learning, engagement with the subject matter expert, the facilitator, the instructor, and its engagement with each other. And every program I've designed over the past many, many years and have facilitated, it's that peer-to-peer learning and that peer-to-peer conversation that means so much and really helps socialize the learning and apply the learning. That to me is an essential piece of what is

offered to adult learners is that we give them a community—and sometimes that community is for an hour, sometimes it's for the duration of the program, sometimes it lives on beyond that, intentionally or unintentionally—and really help them understand. I like to say, "Content is king, but context is queen."

Debra Zabloudil (26:48):

And I think that's really, really appropriate in the association world because we can take any content around, let's say, leadership or something along those lines. It might be how we change, and that could be great content, but we have to put it in the context of supply chain or healthcare or manufacturing, and what does that mean for the individuals that are working in the profession? How do you effect change? So I think relevancy is so important in learning, and everyone wants to feel understood, and everyone wants to feel that those who are helping to lead them through the learning understand where they're sitting and where they're intending to go. So I think a lot of that is extremely important.

Debra Zabloudil (27:41):

And then, right now, I just think it's really thinking about where we are in 2022 and what our members need of us. And I have seen some associations go back to, okay, now we're going back to 2019. We're going to do things the same way we have. Not many but some are a little more entrenched in the process of the way they've been doing things for a long time, and I think that there's a lot of legacy that goes on in associations, and it makes it a little bit harder to change sometimes. But we have to be thinking about what's going on in 2022 and make it extremely relevant to the day and the time we're living in.

Celisa Steele (28:20):

When you are stressing the importance of the peer-to-peer interaction and that peer-to-peer learning, first of all, I am completely on board and really do believe in that power of that social learning and the importance of it. When you were talking about earlier the growth of digital products, you were talking about especially growing ASAE's asynchronous products. How are you thinking about the social learning, the peer-to-peer learning in the context of those asynchronous online options?

Debra Zabloudil (28:50):

Right. Well, I think there's a lot of different ways that can happen. Within organizations, certainly, there can be that asynchronous component, and then there can be dialogue. There can be key questions. There can be someone facilitating small groups around that content. And certainly we will always have synchronous learning as well. And, again, this is where it comes to the omnichannel approach. So, if we're going to be talking about, let's say, governance, we're not only going to do an online seminar series on governance where everyone has to be there at that date and that time, but for those who want to be and who really want to socialize with others, whether it's in-person or online, they have that opportunity. But then for those who either might need it for a just-in-time "Oh my goodness, I have now a board retreat to plan" or "I have to onboard new board members," something along those lines, they have access as well.

Debra Zabloudil (29:54):

As an example, we have an ethics requirement for the CAE that everyone has to get so many ethics hours. And so we need to have access to that all the time. And it needs to be both real-time or synchronous. It needs to be something that people can access 24/7, at two in the

morning, if that's when they have time to do it. And then we're infusing that into a lot of conversations that we're having around DEI and around board practice and around CEO practice and strategy and all of that. So I think it's a combination. There's no one right answer. And, again, I think that's why associations really need to think about, when they have content that they know their members need, how are they deploying it in a variety of ways that meet the needs of all learners and in long format and short format. We really have to think about how much time people have. And it doesn't mean that the entirety of the learning experience is 10 or 15 minutes, but it might mean that you're segmenting it that way.

Debra Zabloudil (31:00):

So it can be consumed that way. And it's funny because I remember when we used to say, "Oh, how could we cover this topic in a half day?" And—maybe I'm showing my age here—and then it was, "How can we cover this topic in 90 minutes? An hour?" And now it's "It better not be longer than 10 minutes" in some cases. But it's different. People consume differently, so we really have to think about how to do that. Well, and then I think for all of us, we have to be willing to change our stance on things and to be proven wrong by our community, and that's okay, right? Things evolve. It doesn't mean that your last position, the stance you took on something was wrong, but things have evolved. You've gotten more knowledgeable. And I think the more knowledgeable we get about learning and about the association community and how we can serve people better and the practices out there, the better we are.

Celisa Steele (32:06):

You are spending a lot of your work time on learning, designing learning, developing learning, thinking about what needs to be in the portfolio. I'm curious, for your own lifelong learning, how do you pursue that? What are your habits or practices or sources that you go to for yourself?

Debra Zabloudil (32:26):

Well, I read a lot. I look at case studies quite a bit. I follow *McKinsey* and *HBR*, *Fast Company*, *Forbes*, *Inc.*, and I'm very interested in what is going on in the macro community, what's going on out there and how that relates back to associations and how we can, again, help prepare associations better. So I think that every piece of anything that you consume gives you a different perspective on things. As I mentioned, if I watch the news or a world event happens, the first thing my mind goes to is "How does that impact associations?" We recently did something at ASAE on the Ukraine-Russia situation, and that evolved because, on the Collaborate space, there was a number of conversations. And that's another way we know what's going on is that we monitor the Collaborate conversations, and we can see what's bubbling up and what our members are really talking about.

Debra Zabloudil (33:29):

And there was a lot of certainly uncertainty and really not knowing how to handle members in these areas, how to handle what it was doing to oil and gas and all of those things. So we quickly convened a program around the ward. It was very, very interesting, and a lot of folks really engaged with it. So, again, I think paying attention to where uncertainty is, helping people if not find answers find community that they can go to say, "What are you doing? How are you thinking about this? What are you trying? How are you solving for this?" Et cetera. So I think it's that, and I also think I'm a big traveler, and you could learn so much when you travel.

Debra Zabloudil (34:15):

I'm sure there's about 10 Anthony Bourdain quotes that I could pull up right now, but it's really to me, it's being around people that think differently, that live differently is such an unbelievable education. And what we come away with is just incredible. And then the other thing is, I think, I try to at least every two years, if not every year, do something that is a learning experience outside of the association community. To see a different way things are designed, to see how people engage, to tap my head into something new that might stretch my thinking a little bit differently. So, though I think that's really important too, that we can get so consumed in our own space, in our own community, that we lose sight sometimes of other things that are happening out there and other ways to look at things.

Celisa Steele (35:09):

I like that reminder to not always keep going deeper and deeper into one particular area but to pick up and look more broadly. So, Debra, what lessons learned or advice from your own experience leading learning would you have for others who are trying to run a successful, impactful business around lifelong learning, continuing education, professional development?

Debra Zabloudil (35:34):

I think the first piece of advice is it all starts with your audience and really keenly understanding your audience and the segments of your audience. Oftentimes we see folks jump into developing, but they haven't really stopped and said, "Who are we really developing this for? And what do we know about them?" Whether it's a persona or demographic indicators, but we need to know who those people are and what they need to know about the content at hand and where they're at, and are there barriers to them understanding some of the things that we're putting out there content-wise? So I think that's really important is just it all starts with audience, and, if we get the audience wrong, all the rest of the good work doesn't really matter. I think the other thing for association learning departments, and this is not my quote, this is from a Catholic nun that worked in healthcare.

Debra Zabloudil (36:32):

I spent years working for a healthcare association. "No margin, no mission." And I think that's really important for all of us to remember is that, even though we're not for-profit entities, we're not-for-profit, the positive bottom lines that we can show from learning products funnel back into the association for new technologies and new product development and new ways to keep, again, ourselves and our members relevant. So I think every association needs to have—this is another thing I feel very passionately about—a position on how they feel about this situation of revenue. In some associations it's sort of an ugly word. We don't talk about revenue when it comes to learning because most of their revenue comes in through membership, or most of their revenue comes in through sponsors or the trade show or et cetera.

Debra Zabloudil (37:28):

But I think it's important to have those discussions and be extremely deliberate about those discussions and decisions that follow because if we're on the same page about our education and our learning products need to produce a bottom line that will support other things, it helps us make decisions about what we can and can't do if our philosophy is we want to support the mission of the organization. And so sometimes we know we're going to be investing in that. We're not necessarily going to always see a positive bottom line on these products. Then that's important to know, and that's okay. There's nothing that is a wrong philosophy as long as the

organization is in sync on that. And I think that oftentimes the board might be thinking differently than a committee than a CEO than a department head.

Debra Zabloudil (38:21):

And it's so important that everyone is on the same page because only then can you have a really healthy learning department and learning portfolio. I think the other thing is we need to have a balanced portfolio. And I think we learned that during COVID, that we certainly need to diversify our offerings, and we can't have all of our products in one or two events because we are very vulnerable if we do that. And we also know that the possibility of being shut down exists, which we could never have imagined. And so it only helps us to build up digital products and digital assets in addition to face-to-face. I've never thought face-to-face is going away. I don't think it ever will. We had a conference earlier this week. We had hundreds of people there, and it was just joyful to see everyone.

Debra Zabloudil (39:10):

And I think everyone sort of felt the same way, but we have to pay attention to digital and access and all of those things. And then I think learning outcomes. Are we really moving the needle on what our members are learning? And are they learning and then able to put things into practice or are they able to look at something differently? Are they able to think differently than they have before? And I think we often do a lot of measuring satisfaction and not a lot of measuring learning outcomes. So I really hope that our whole community will start really looking toward what are the learning outcomes that we're hoping to have and how are we measuring those. And then how are we reporting that back to our community? I don't think there's a better way to say our programs make a difference than having positive learning outcomes.

Jeff Cobb (40:09):

Debra Zabloudil is vice president of learning at ASAE. You'll find a link to learn more about ASAE's learning in the show notes for this episode at leadinglearning.com/episode311. Debra also invites you to connect with her directly at dzabloudil@asaecenter.org.

Celisa Steele (40:26):

At leadinglearning.com/episode311, you'll also see options for subscribing to the Leading Learning Podcast. Jeff and I would be grateful if you would subscribe if you haven't yet, as subscriptions give us some data on the impact of the podcast.

Jeff Cobb (40:43):

We'd also be grateful if you'd rate us on Apple Podcast, especially if you find the Leading Learning Podcast valuable. Celisa and I personally appreciate reviews and ratings, and they also help the show pop up when people search for content on leading a learning business. Go to leadinglearning.com/apple to leave a rating.

Celisa Steele (41:00):

Lastly, please spread the word about Leading Learning. At leadinglearning.com/episode311, there are links to find us on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook.

Jeff Cobb (41:10):

*This transcript accompanies the episode of the Leading Learning Podcast
available at www.leadinglearning.com/episode311.*

Thanks again, and see you next time on the Leading Learning Podcast.

[music for this episode by DanoSongs, www.danosongs.com]

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