Reflecting on Practice with Annasofie Wædeled-Møller

Leading Learning Podcast Transcript for Episode 435

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:00:00] We want people to learn from their mistakes so they do better next time. We want them to reflect *over* practice so they can reflect *in* practice, but they will only do so if we have a high enough degree of psychological safety.

Celisa Steele: [00:00:17] I'm Celisa Steele.

Jeff Cobb: [00:00:18] I'm Jeff Cobb, and this is the Leading Learning Podcast.

Jeff Cobb: [00:00:26] If the goal of so much professional learning is improving the skills and abilities of learners on the job, then why put theory and methods before practice opportunities? That question gets at the core of reflective practice-based learning, which is an approach that emphasizes practice before theory.

Jeff Cobb: [00:00:45] Annasofie Wædeled-Møller, a learning and development expert, is passionate about helping educators and leaders create more practice-based, learner-centered experiences. In this episode, number 435, Annasofie talks with Celisa about how reflective practice-based learning works and how it's being applied in various contexts, including her experience with the Danish defense. Celisa and Annasofie also discuss the importance of psychological safety in learning environments, emotional intelligence in leadership, and how self-determination theory aligns with reflective learning. Celisa and Annasofie spoke in August 2024.

Celisa Steele: [00:01:33] Reflective practice-based learning is an area of focus for you. What led you to choose that as a focus area?

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:01:42] Reflective practice-based learning is something that I really started being interested in when working for the Danish defense. Because, at the end of the day, soldiers are practitioners, and when you work in Denmark, at least with reflective practice-based learning, it is the University College of Aalborg who invented that and who has

been working with that and refining that approach for years. What this approach to learning and development does is that it takes practice before theory—what happens when you are solving your task, when you're taking your classes, or when you are doing the job. That is the center and the starting point for the learning and development that takes place. Educators will look for those learning occasions, and that could be cases from practice, scenarios from practice. Whatever you may be—a registered nurse, a soldier, or you work with learning and development—you will look for occasions that call for learning and development. As an educator, the first thing I would do when starting a class, a lecture, or doing my curriculum is share a story or something that took place in practice.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:03:06] Not all educators like it, but I like to use the narrative. I like to use the story because we have a tendency to lean in to when someone's telling us the story about something that took place in practice. If you think about it, it's really just a way of also working with embodied learning. You are looking for the embodied emotion. It could also be any sort of obstacle course that you have your students or your participants do first. I'm going a long way around to say have them have an experience first before you do anything else, and, of course, you want them to experience something related to what you would like for them to acquire of knowledge, skills, and competencies, but you will do so in order to create what we call the "teachable moment." An example that I like, even though it's a bit dramatic of a teachable moment, is that young people joining gangs is a problem. We had really good, well-trained social workers trying to go out on the streets and connect to the young people and say, "This is bad for you. We have this program you should join," but the success rate wasn't very high in doing that.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:04:28] But, if you look for a teachable moment, and you put all your resources and all your well-trained people into the situation where you have a young person waking up in a hospital room, gathered around is the family, grandma's worried, and you say, "We have this problem to get you off the street and not be in a gang." I know this is a bit dramatic, but, for the sake of the argument, that's a teachable moment. As educators, if we start with, "So this is my course, and this is what I would like for them to know," I will instantly just start telling them things. I will start pouring knowledge in their direction. But several things are wrong with that. Number one, knowledge doesn't necessarily lead to action. If it did, look at where we would be because we have all the knowledge accessible to us, don't we? It's on your phone. We'd all be rich and healthy with six packs if knowledge led to actual practice or actual behavior. But it doesn't. And also, if you don't create a teachable moment, you don't have the need to learn and to develop, so you take the autonomy away from the learner.

Celisa Steele: [00:05:45] In some of those examples, it's a bit about learning in the flow of work and life. You were talking about the teachable moment, but then it also seems like you were suggesting that it can also be created, that it could be more of…even if you're going to have a seminar that's going to happen on a particular day and time, which isn't necessarily tied to each specific learner having a moment of need right then because this is going to happen on Wednesday at noon, but that you could still tap into the idea of not leading with theory. Because, by telling that narrative, by telling that story, getting someone to emotionally engage, you're beginning to create that curiosity or their own internal desire or acknowledgment of "Yes, I do need to know more. This is interesting." Is that true—you can either wait for the learner to have that realization and then have a resource available in that moment, or you can try to create that receptivity to learning, try to create that teachable moment? Is that correct? Is that fair?

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:06:47] Yes, that's absolutely what you would do because, in the best of all worlds, it would happen naturally. You will constantly, as an educator, think of yourself as a designer of learning opportunities. Don't be so caught up in "What do I want them to know?" because that leads to "What can I tell them?" But think about "What do I want them to experience? What do I want them to feel? What do I want them to acknowledge?" Of course, that is quite humbling as well. But being able to think like a designer, that's what I do, and that's what I encourage everyone to do. Constantly look for those occasions. Gather. If you hear a story, write it down. If you hear a podcast or a conversation, note that down. If you see a clip of a film or a movie, save that as well. I have a huge repertoire of learning occasions, and also, when I teach myself, it's very rare that I ask people to read things beforehand, but what I will ask them to do is to share learning occasions, experiences, or stories from their own practice. I will gather these as well. As an educator, as you think of whatever course that you are responsible for, whatever curriculum you might have, look at where would be a good point to collect stories from the learners' practice and have them hand it in beforehand, and you can use it when you want. I did that. I taught a bunch of cadets how to lead learning.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:08:24] Before the course started, what I did was quite briefly explain how do you write a case? You need a setting; you need some interaction; you need some people present; you need something to happen, conflict, and a few examples. And then they just wrote situations that they have seen in their training of learning occasions that either were really, really good—learning really took place here; this was a great situation—or a situation where learning was dropped on the floor. And they came up with so many brilliant cases, and I could use that. I could look at what would I like for them to discover? What would I like for them to feel, to acknowledge, to experience? I just use their own cases. If you use the

participants own cases, you make sure that this is true to practice. And, if it didn't happen to you yet, it will probably happen to you soon. With that acknowledgment, it's more their levels of proficiency and what they need in terms of learning and development—what knowledge, skills, and competencies do they need to acquire next?—and they're behind the steering wheel.

Jeff Cobb: [00:09:40] At Tagoras, we partner with professional and trade associations, continuing education units, training firms, and other learning businesses to help them understand market realities and potential, to connect better with existing customers and find new ones, and to make smart investment decisions around product development and portfolio management. Drawing on our expertise in lifelong learning, market assessment, and strategy formulation, we can help you achieve greater reach, revenue, and impact. Learn more at tagoras.com/more.

Celisa Steele: [00:10:16] Is this an approach to learning that really does require that human facilitator, that human educator, to be responsive and in the moment? Or have you seen this potentially work in an asynchronous, more e-learning-type approach? Could one apply that there as well?

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:10:32] When you look at reflective practice learning, when learning is taking place—meaning we will become better in the future—the difference also lies in the research of Donald Schön: reflection *in* practice and reflection *on* practice. Reflection in practice is when we're seamlessly, fluently able to navigate in solving the task. For instance, if you and I were having a conversation, and I'm trying to come across with this point of whatever, and I have a faint idea we're going to end over there, that's the goal of the conversation, but I can see it's not going well. Maybe I can see by your eyebrows, the way you clench your eyes a little bit, and I can hear it in your voice this is not going in the direction that I want. I'm going to change my example. I'm going to check my body language. I'm going to ask you more questions to get a feel of what you're at—that's navigating in practice. The bigger the repertoire, the more efficient you are, the more expertise you will have. That's reflection *in* practice.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:11:44] Reflection *on* practice is what happens afterwards—after the conversation has ended, or the one you were trying to talk to has stormed out the door. Then you will reflect over practice, and the better you are at reflecting over practice—what didn't go as planned, what didn't go according to plan, and why—the better you are at that discipline, the more you build up your repertoire of being able to navigate in different situations that you find yourself in solving your tasks. Basically, that's what needs to be present in reflective practice learning—that practice is the starting point; it's the center point, but it's

reflection *over* that enables us to reflect *in*. We don't need to necessarily be a teacher to do that; just two coworkers who are doing a project together can do that as easily. One of the researchers, Mads Hermansen, behind this theory, he puts it like this: A lot of reflection simply doesn't take place because we can't stand ourselves. We can't stand the fact that the good that we wanted to do turned out not to be great at all.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:12:59] Instead of being in that situation, you and I, maybe we had a project; the idea was great. Let's say it was the best idea ever. "This project is going to be great." And it wasn't. We failed along the way. Of course, that's really painful and very fragile and vulnerable to go into that room. A lot of reflection doesn't take place because we can't stand ourselves. The thing is, if you set out to do that, and if you—wherever you work or study—know that this is what we need to do in order to learn from what takes place in practice, the next time we will be so much better. We will not repeat the same errors that we already made, which people do. We know this from Kahneman as well: optimism bias. It's a strong one. Next time we'll get a project that's similar, and we'll go, "The last time wasn't that bad."

Celisa Steele: [00:13:55] Define for us psychological safety and its role in learning. Why is it important in terms of learning?

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:14:01] I stumbled upon psychological safety when I was trying to look for that missing link for reflective practice-based learning because, in the defense, we have structures to support reflective practice-based learning. We have after-actions review. We have lessons identified, lessons learned. But the thing is, if we want these structures to work, it will need a high enough level of psychological safety to be able to learn from what took place in practice, especially the things that we hoped were different. Psychological safety is based on the work of Dr. Amy Edmondson, and it has gone like a whirlwind over Denmark. When I talk about psychological safety, I normally start with saying—and this is directly a quote from Dr. Edmondson—"It's about the ability to be comfortable in the uncomfortable." In the Danish translation, we won't go there now, but it sounds a lot like, "Let's all be friends. Let's have a good time," which is great by all means—be friends and have a good time—but that's not the essence of psychological safety.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:15:16] Basically, it is the belief, in a team, that you can speak your mind. You can be honest about your doubts, your suggestions, your mistakes, and your new ideas without the fear of being excluded, ridiculed, being frowned upon because you know from experience that it's worth that risk. It's very important to always remember, when you work with psychological safety, to understand the social aspect of why is it difficult?

Psychological safety is when you are able to be uncomfortable, and the uncomfortable is that you are willing to take interpersonal risks. This is what we constantly do when we have to be honest with one another. To understand that, as social beings, as human beings, we are hardwired to do everything we can to stay in the group. We do not want to be excluded. We do not want to be the ones eaten by the saber-tooth. We need to stay in that group, like our lives are dependent on it.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:16:20] Of course, you have strategies for staying in that group, for not being excluded, and, if you look at it like that, who do you want to exclude? Well, we don't like people too pushy. If you don't want to come across as pushy, you don't suggest things. You don't come up with new angles or new ideas. "Let's do that. I know, we said in this meeting two weeks ago, that we were going this direction, but now, come to think of it, I think that would be a bad idea. Maybe we should go in that direction." If I don't want to come across as uncertain, insecure, and not worthy of my job or my position, don't express doubts. Don't say, "I'm not sure. What do you think we should do? Because I'm not really sure. I'm in over my head here a little bit." Of course, if you don't want to seem like you don't know what you're doing, you don't admit to errors. You don't admit to failures.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:17:17] These are pretty good strategies for not being excluded from the group, but, the thing is, it hinders learning. If you don't have a high enough degree of psychological safety, you talk about what you dare talk about, not what's important, not what you actually need to talk about. Everybody is so interested in psychological safety because it is the clearest link to high-performance teams. But what they are able to do is to develop antifragility, if we use Taleb's term here, which means that bad things can happen, but we'll still learn from it. I like antifragility because, normally, we talk about being robust—"I want people to be robust." Robust is the ability to take a hit from the side and just get up and soldier on. What we want is antifragility. We want people to learn from their mistakes so they do better next time. We want them to reflect over practice so they can reflect in practice, but they will only do so if we have a high enough degree of psychological safety.

Celisa Steele: [00:18:30] How can we promote psychological safety? I'm thinking, for our listeners, that can mean within their teams internally but also with those learners that they're bringing together to help them learn something new. How can they help those learners or their teams or both feel that psychological safety so that they do feel like they can engage, that they can share their mistakes, and we can all then therefore learn from them?

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:18:55] I look for learning occasions, steal cases and stories, but I also like quotes. I collect them as well. I think one that really nails it is Scott Stratten. He says something like, "You're not a team unless you have each other's back; then you're just a bunch of random people working for the same person." Have each other's back—what does that look like? That's a conversation you need to have in a learning community or a community of practice. There are five steps you can use. I mentioned Christian Ørsted before. Amy Edmondson works with three steps; he works with five. What I really like about this is he starts with the task in hand. So we are a group of learners or a group of workers—what are we trying to achieve here? What is the task in hand? What does it look like when we're doing a good job? That's step number one. Make sure you have that in order because that's very different from situation to situation, from team to team. It's not something that's the same all over. What are we trying to do here? As a soldier, is this a day at the office, or are you in a combat zone? The way you lead will be very different. The way you communicate will be very different.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:20:14] I find that a lot of times when working communities don't work really well, it's helpful to go back and say, "What are we trying to solve? What does it look like when we're doing a good job?" As an educator, facilitate, but have your students have that conversation. What is the task at hand? "Well, we're trying to learn here," for instance. Number two, who are the participants? Who are we? For instance, if we are in a learning situation, what we are learning is quite new, quite complex, and it's also something where we are pushed to our limits, what personalities, what expertise, and what experience are we putting in the mix? Have a talk about who are you as a person. What do you bring to the table? A lot of people like to talk about learning preferences. By all means throw that in the mix as well. Who are we dealing with here? Number three would be framing the house rules? What we're trying to do and who we are, what would be some good house rules?

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:21:27] House rules will be the rules for how we communicate, how we cooperate. And also, if we spend more time together, what are the rules here? Have them give concrete behavioral examples. What does that look like? If we disagree on something, how do we solve it? If something goes awry, how do we talk about it when we disagree? If somebody loses their cool, how do we address that? Do we have a 24-hour rule for getting back to a conflict that happened? So we have: What's the task? Who's participating? What house rules do we need? And then you have your students train inclusive behavior. Basically, how do we invite people in? And that could be as simple as asking questions, having a plan for inviting other people, listening to their suggestions.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:22:29] For instance, if you have a study group, there are always a few people who'll always be the first to talk. Then maybe you need a plan for how you begin your conversations. You need a plan where you say, "For our work group, if we have a new task in hand, we will all spend five minutes on brainstorming, and then we'll share our ideas because it's always these two who take the reins and then go. The rest of us are like, 'We didn't even see what was happening.'" So having a conversation about that as well. And then you have number five, which is committing to how will we respond to what we hope were different? That's really important as well because you can have all the good intentions, but you need a plan for how to cope, how to talk about, how to address when it goes wrong. Because it will. People working together, right? There's nothing wrong with that. We just need a plan before it actually happens.

Celisa Steele: [00:23:27] These five steps then can help a group of individuals coming together to work or to learn create that sense of psychological safety because then everyone's clear about the task, everyone's clear about who's participating, and then they're clear about all these behaviors, these rules that are going to govern behavior, making sure to be inclusive, and then being clear about how to respond. It sounds like potentially a lot of work to lay that out and get that right as a group. Or do you see this happening pretty quickly, potentially?

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:23:59] It can. I have done this in 15 minutes. I think it's so important because learning is a delicate matter. Maybe hardcore training, that's not as delicate, but learning is. And making sure that you have a good learning environment is crucial. What you give them when you support or facilitate that conversation pretty much is common sense. What people come up with is common sense. It's like, "Let's listen. Let's ask questions. Let's not interrupt. If something is starting to go off a little bit, let's take a step back." Common sense. But what you give them in supporting that conversation is that they can do what you call reframe the rules. It's very difficult to say, "Annasofie, you're interrupting again," and "Don't be too pushy." That's difficult. But, if we already have that conversation, it's very, very easy. Not true, but it's easy to say, "Annasofie, I can see you getting excited now, which is good, but we all agreed that we wanted to take turns, and I think we should let Thomas finish what he was trying to say." Making a good learning environment is not about you being wrong, but it's about we already agreed on how we want things, and we will respectfully, lovingly, in a friendly manner help each other to be true to these rules because we know that's what's best for our working community, a learning community.

Celisa Steele: [00:25:37] I would love to get your take on how self-determination theory aligns with reflective practice and what role autonomy plays in motivating adults who are going to be engaging with the learning.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:25:53] Self-determination theory is not by any means new. It's invented by Deci and Ryan back in the '80s, and, because of Professor Ib Ravn here in Denmark, it is taking a renaissance, and I think it deserves that revival, that renaissance because we see a lot of learning not taking place. A lot of motivation that seems to be lacking both in educational contexts and in working contexts all over the world—a lack of motivation and a lack of thriving. If you look at self-determination theory, which is a motivational theory, it can provide some of the answers to why. Where did that motivation go? Where did that thriving go to? It's important to distinguish between inner motivation and outer motivation. Outer motivation is the stick-or-carrot situation, and we also talk about…in a weird way, we talk about motivation as a quality, like, "You don't have so much. That's not good. Maybe we should provide you with more," thinking that it's solely external factors, and the external factors that we look for are either praise or punishment. "You don't seem motivated. What if I give you some more money? What if I give you a prize? Employee of the week. Gold star. Good grade." All outer phenomena.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:27:20] Or maybe I should try to punish you a little bit. Maybe you don't solve the test, then maybe you can't work with that person. Maybe you don't get as much money. Maybe you get a bad grade. To some, it will ring a bell: "That sounds like behaviorism." Which is true. What has been proven is that good, strong inner motivation that we all have—we're human beings; we're naturally curious. We are driven. We want to learn. We want to do better. We get excited about things. But a lot of research has been carried out, and it all showed that the more you focus on outer motivation, the more you ruin the good inner motivation. So every time you steer our attention to outer factors, outer motivation, we go, "Oh, why does she get a raise? I want a raise. I want a promotion. I deserve a good grade," and then we tend to not focus on we're doing this because it's meaningful; we're doing it because it caught our interest. We do it because we're curious. When you talk about self-determination theory (SDT), it's very much to do with inner motivation. This is what we focus on. Quick note: If we look at outer motivation—that I had so many bad things to say about—if you look at how the education system is built up, it all has to do with the grades.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:28:45] We don't learn biology because it's important. We don't learn history because we need to understand our past to understand our future. This is important. This is exciting. No. You need a good grade. And the same if you look at workplaces.

Most workplaces, it's all about outer motivation as well. Self-determination theory is a way that enables educators and leaders but also teams as well to work with inner motivation as a means to be motivated and to thrive, in your education or your work. It's a trinity. If you think of it as a bar stool on three legs, you have the three areas that you will focus on. The first leg is what we normally spend the most time on. It's not the most important, not according to Deci and Ryan. They're all equally important. But we like to talk about the first one pretty much because it's what we're not succeeding in. The first one is autonomy. In order to be motivated and driven in finding your work or your studies meaningful, you need to be behind the steering wheel. In a learning and development context, that means that you need to have a leadership or an educator that enables you to use your expertise, to use your knowledge, skills, and competencies, to use whatever you might have in your backpack.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:30:15] In SDT, you will look for as much autonomy as possible. Not saying do whatever you want, but steer them in a direction and give them as much influence as you possibly can. Say, for instance, I think psychological safety is great, and I have some students. I have a course. Let's teach psychological safety. Instead of starting with, "Okay, so this is what I want them to know. This is what I'm going to tell them." Instead I'm trying to connect some of the dots to where we started. I would look for the teachable moment. I would look for an experience. I'll use a story. I'll use a film clip. I'll use a case. I'll have them play out a scenario where they get a sense of psychological safety, and what does it mean if it's a very low level in a team of psychological safety, for instance? And then I will be interested in what do they want to learn next? What is for them most important, and how would they like to go about it? Because I could be like, "Okay, read chapters 1 to 5 in *The Fearless Organization*, listen to this podcast, listen to my lecture, and then we'll go on." But I'll listen to them. How do they want to work with it? Maybe they find it meaningful to call an expert. Maybe they want to read some of the original work of Amy Edmondson.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:31:39] There could be so many suggestions, but that doesn't have to be left up to me. Of course, it could be that they go, "Well, we would actually like a lecture on this and that according to psychological safety." But, again, where can I protect, so to speak, their autonomy? As a leader, if you're working on a project, I'll say, "I think you'd be great for this project. This is what it looks like now, but, with your expertise, what do you think that we should do? Is there something that you're seeing? How do you want to execute it?" You start off by thinking, "How much influence can I give my learners, my coworkers, or my employees?" So autonomy. We're behind the steering wheel. Number two is the need to feel competent, the need for competency. It's not good if we are behind the steering wheel if we don't know how to drive. As a leader and an educator, you will then provide whatever they

need to be able to acquire knowledge, skills, and competencies. And, if we circle back to reflective practice-based learning, this is where theory comes in. This is where they're ready to fulfill that need, but I will try to angle it in a way, as an educator, that we touch or angle at least what they ask for.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:32:58] And the third is—here we are circling back to psychological safety—we need to be a part of a meaningful community. This is where we're the most motivated. This is where we have a tendency to thrive. We need a workplace, or we need a study group where we can show up every day and feel like we're being treated well. We are being respected. We are being appreciated. We are being listened to. We need to feel listened to in order to feel like we belong. These are the three core needs, and, if they're being fulfilled, you would see a lot of inner motivation in your learners, in your employees as well. How do you work with that? You use practice. You use examples from practice. You use casework. You use your narratives, your movie clips. You make sure, as an educator, you have your repertoire ready. You don't necessarily have the whole plan for how this is going to play out, but most educators, if they have a course they're teaching or a subject that they're teaching, they will have it all in their repertoire. Maybe you, as an educator, decide, "Well, A is here, and then we're going to end over there." But that's not necessarily the way the learners are more motivated, and that's not necessarily the teachable moment. Have your students decide that.

Celisa Steele: [00:34:30] Talk a little bit about what might be the barriers to trying to tap into that internal motivation of the learners, allowing self-determination theory to be at work in what learning businesses are offering. What are those obstacles that you tend to see—and if you have solutions for how to work around some of those barriers and obstacles?

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:34:51] Brilliant questions, also the hardest. I think there are definitely some barriers that derive from how we traditionally view the role of the educator, the oracle, the expert, the one with the plan. Not saying that educators shouldn't have a plan; a plan is always good. But, as educators, teachers, learning and teaching using the approaches that we just talked about is not a traditional role of the educator. We like holding the reins. We like a more linear form of teaching. As I said, we start here, and then I have the whole plan, and you're going to end over here. But, the thing is, it often leaves the learner passive, and that's not what we want. Hence, acquiring knowledge, skills, and competencies, not being poured into. The traditional role as the teacher is what hinders us the most. I think it's the uncertainty that teachers don't appreciate. Where is that going to go? But, the thing, is they know because they know their subject so well. It's not very often that something will fall outside your repertoire. Maybe you have something that you want to tell them that you find is really important, but, if

there's no teachable moment for it, chances are the knowledge that you pour in that direction without them having a need for it is just going to vaporize.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:36:21] Look for their motivation. What do they want to learn? What do they find interesting? And you will see a different form of energy. This is also what you need. Of course, as an educator, you know best. All educators know best—that's just a rule of law. But sometimes we don't. What we're really good at is looking at our students, listening to our students, and seeing what are their learning and development needs? Where are they? I think most educators know their participants and know their zone of proximal development. They know that. They have a knack for that. They develop that throughout the years. And basically this is what you use in designing learning opportunities, in choosing what cases to use, what stories to tell them. The role of the educator but also the role as the learner. Over the years, we have been very keen to bombard our students with information. If you look at your students, and you see this grayish color in their skin, that's because they're fatigued from information overload, not just in class but everywhere. The way we design traditional teaching has taught learners to be passive and to be more or less numb recipients of knowledge being poured in that direction.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:37:43] They also need to have skin in the game to think that's a good idea as well. You need to have that conversation with your students and say, "This is the way I would like to do things, but, in order to do that, you need to come out of your shells a little bit. I'm putting myself in a vulnerable situation because I don't necessarily have all the answers. There will be some things where you suggest, 'This is what we want to learn next.' I'll go, "Well, I think it's important, and, if I look at the objectives from this course, it's definitely relevant as well. Not this lesson. Maybe in a week we'll get back to that.'" So what? Nobody ever said you're a bad teacher because you said, "Let's get back to that." But training your students in wanting to reflect together, reflect on practice, to be willing to have the humbling experience that it is when you set out to do something and you're not perfect at it.

Celisa Steele: [00:38:44] I do know that emotional intelligence is an area where you've given thought, and so I would love to get your perspective and thinking about our listeners, who are trying to lead the learning function at their organization and about what they're offering out to prospective learners in the portfolio and then with their own team. Talk a little bit about how you see emotional intelligence, the role of it in leaders and potentially, if there's any particular lens for learning leaders, what that role of emotional intelligence might be.

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:39:19] I think emotional intelligence is really important when you talk about learning and development. Being a leader or an educator, their learning and development is your responsibility. What is quite important is to be able to be a leader and educator who is very humble about what you do. Emotional intelligence has everything to do with what feelings do you drive for yourself, and what feelings do you drive for others? I don't want to reel too far off the railway tracks. If you look at psychological safety in a work group or a group of students, what we find is the ones that have a high degree or higher level of psychological safety will have a high degree of what is called social sensitivity, which is basically the ability to listen and listen to understand, not just listen to respond or to attack or to ignore. So emotional intelligence. You will be very good at asking questions, understanding others, meaning, if a situation is starting to go awry—again, circling back to reflect in practice—I can see that this is not going where I want it to, so I will change it up a bit. As I said, psychological safety is the answer that I found. That was the missing link to reflective practice-based learning. Emotional intelligence is the missing link to leading psychological safety.

Celisa Steele: [00:40:59] We always like to ask guests who come on about their own approach to lifelong learning, how they approach it. I'm especially interested in your answer, given everything that we've already talked about and how much awareness you have of what goes into effective learning. But are there habits, practices, or sources that you use to continue to learn?

Annasofie Wædeled-Møller: [00:41:19] Yes. Different strokes for different folks, but I like podcasts a lot, and I think that's definitely where I go to find new information. I listen to recommendations. "Check out this podcast," and I always will. I like the conversation. I think listening to two people reflect together is so interesting. That's where I get a lot of my knowledge from. I think I am blessed with having some brilliant people that I've worked with throughout the years. Just make sure, if you meet someone who's really interesting and preferably doesn't look like you or look at the world the same way you do, hang on to those with everything you've got. Make sure that you talk when you're doing something new, when you look at a new project, give them a call, say, "This is what I'm looking at. Can we talk about this?"

Jeff Cobb: [00:42:22] Annasofie Wædeled-Møller is a learning and development expert on a crusade to help steer education and leadership in a more practice-based, learner-oriented direction. In the show notes at leadinglearning.com/episode435, you'll find a link to Annasofie's profile on LinkedIn.

Celisa Steele: [00:42:40] At leadinglearning.com/episode435, you'll also find options for subscribing to the podcast. We'd be grateful if you would subscribe if you haven't yet, as subscriptions give us some insight into the impact of the podcast.

Jeff Cobb: [00:42:53] We'd also be grateful if you would rate us on Apple Podcasts or wherever you listen, especially if you find the Leading Learning Podcast valuable. Those ratings and reviews help us show up when people search for content on leading a learning business.

Celisa Steele: [00:43:06] And please help us grow the Leading Learning community. At leadinglearning.com/episode435, there are links to connect with us on LinkedIn, X, and Facebook.

Jeff Cobb: [00:43:16] Thanks again, and see you next time on the Leading Learning Podcast.

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