Glean Education

Glean Education's Ed Leaders in Literacy Podcast
Episode #9 - Dr. Kevin Besnoy
(Virtual Learning Support Center)

Kevin Besnoy: I love teachers. I think they're the most creative group of people I've ever come across. They truly are artists, and their classrooms are their canvas. And it's okay not to produce a masterpiece every single time you go wow. Sometimes you have to take a step back and learn a new artistic technique before you can produce masterpieces.

Speaker 2:   The results, they've been immediate. And we had one of the biggest shifts in the state.

Speaker 3:   It's almost magical when it all comes together. And I think to myself, "This is what education is about."

Speaker 4:   There were inequities everywhere. My students in South Texas ultimately taught me more than I taught them.

Speaker 5:   Over 40% of our students were leaving third grade with less than proficient reading skills. And that was just something we had to stop.

Speaker 6:   The bottom line is that we can prevent reading failure. We can change the trajectory of these students' lives. And I just want to shout from the rooftops, it can be done.

Jessica Hamman: From Glean Education. This is Ed Leaders in Literacy, a podcast series that features educators and administrators who have made hard decisions about instruction, curriculum, intervention and school systems to close the achievement gap and build equity by improving literacy.

Jessica Hamman: I'm Jessica Hamman, founder of glean education. And today, we're thrilled to be talking with Dr. Kevin Besnoy, the Director of the University of Alabama's ACCESS Virtual Learning Support Center, a 7th through 12th grade online program that serves 26,000 students and employs 12,000, sorry, 1200 teachers through the Alabama Department of Education. Dr. Besnoy has over 20 years of teaching and training experience, and over two decades of experience developing, implementing and evaluating digital and online curricula for K through 12 setting. He has a Ph.D. In curriculum instruction and special education with an emphasis in gifted and talented, and his research revolves around parent advocacy with respect to twice exceptional children, identifying giftedness among culturally diverse populations and developing a

pedagogically sound online learning environment. Welcome, Dr. Besnoy. We are so glad to have you join us today.

Kevin Besnoy: Oh, thank you. Thank you for having me, very excited to be here.

Jessica Hamman: So many schools and teachers and school districts are grappling with the shift to online instruction due to coronavirus closures. And for many, it's been really tricky territory. So we're really thrilled to hear your perspective based on your extensive experience in this area. But before we head into that, I'd love to hear about your background and kind of what led you to your current position that you're in today.

Kevin Besnoy: So I started teaching in really rural Alabama in the late '90s. 1997 was my first job and there, believe it or not, I was able to start using the internet in, its infancy, as it was coming into education. I recognize that students in some of the most rural areas of the country, they don't always have access to resources. And so the internet at that time, it's able to bring in a lot of resources to students, to teachers so that you could really fill out the curriculum. As I went through my teaching career, I've taught elementary, middle school, high school and in college. And so I've had the opportunities to learn about integrating computers into the classroom. When I taught in Maryland, just outside of Washington DC, I had the unique opportunity of working as a fellow with Johns Hopkins and Towson University. We trained this for a summer on really it's where I got my first introduction into instructional design.

Kevin Besnoy: So thinking the backwards design approach, that's where I was introduced to that, identifying what are the outcomes that we're trying to get to, and then how do you design the learning activities to measure that? And so really, we came up and we started learning about WebQuest, which was really innovative at the time, but it helped me to conceptualize appropriate practices for integrating technology in purposeful ways, not just letting kids surf the internet randomly, but really directing them through and teaching those digital literacy skills, even though they weren't really defined in that sense widespread at the time. I went to the University of Southern Mississippi and I got my Ph.D. In gifted education where one of the things that we really focus on in gifted education is providing instructional delivery at a student's instructional level, and then allowing that student to progress at his or own natural pace.

Kevin Besnoy: The beauty of digital learning is especially in an online environment, many times it allows students to move on and progress through the curriculum at a pace that fits their own instructional needs without having to wait in a face to face setting for the rest of the class to catch up. And so really the idea of differentiation I learned about and how that integrates with technology. Over the years, I've taught at the Northern Kentucky University and most recently at the University of Alabama. And it was in this position at the University of Alabama where I learned of ACCESS and then the director position opened up. So I was able to transition as a university professor, bringing my years of experience as a classroom teacher and preparing pre-service teachers and graduate students to teach, and to come into this setting where I

work with a great group of people who have been working for years at building the ACCESS programs where it's one of the largest in the country where we work with teachers, helping them to transition from a traditional face to face setting into being online teachers, but also working with students as we go through this process, we learn that students need to also learn how to learn. In the short synopsis, that's how I got to this particular position and some of the things that we do.

Jessica Hamman: So many of the things you just mentioned are applicable and important to our situation right now in talking about the remote learning shift. Online instruction is a distinctly different medium than traditional learning. So can you tell us a little bit about how it differs and then you touched a bit upon backward design. I would love to hear more about how you design differently for the online space.

Kevin Besnoy: So one of the things that we have to remember when we're teaching online is that teaching is teaching. And so there are basic principles that we all know exist in the classroom. Some of those basic principles relate to teacher-student rapport, how to create a warm, safe environment, a place where it's okay for students to take risks, a place where students are held accountable, where the content is rigorous. Some of those, the basic teaching principles exist in an online classroom, as much as they do in a face to face classroom. And that's, I think something that oftentimes gets overlooked, but when we work with the teachers who start to teach for us, it's a point that we emphasize and what the difference comes down to is not are the teaching principles different? It's how do you establish

rapport in an online classroom or how do you create an environment where students feel safe to take a risk?

Kevin Besnoy: And so what that comes down to is what we call two things. One, digital presence, and make sure that your students know that you are really there and that, so using a lot of multimedia tools, whether that is simply creating a short video to introduce the week or to introduce a specific lesson. Sometimes it's using polls, so you can create an anonymous poll and send that out to your students, asking them maybe to predict what's going to happen in this week's lesson. And then taking that information and making some instructional decisions. That would be the same as a teacher asking students for an entrance ticket, where they maybe have done homework or they've previewed. And before they walk into the classroom, they have to give that teacher an admittance ticket or an entrance ticket where it would have a question on it or something like an exit ticket where the teacher would ask students questions to leave an anonymous poll so that the teacher could get some formative assessments.

Kevin Besnoy: One of the things preparing pre-service teachers that I always emphasized was for them to show up at the students' extracurricular activities. Go to a football game or go to a band concert. That helps you to establish that rapport with students that allow students to know that you care. That's very difficult to do in an online environment. So what we ask our teachers to do is to research what's going on at the various high schools where their students are attending, and put in their news announcements or in, in a posting that you recognize that something exciting happened at a certain high school. So that again lets the students know that

you're digitally there, that you're present, that kind of how do you simulate the notion that you are recognizing those non-verbal cues that students might give to let you know that you are part of their lives in an appropriate way?

Kevin Besnoy: So that's digital presence. The next is digital instruction. And so what are the basics of teaching that we know when it comes to instruction? So there's obviously delivering quality content, but assessment. Assessment is really key, how we talk to our teachers and we provide professional development on the types of tools that they can use to maintain that high level of feedback. And so A, it's timely feedback. So digital instruction, you have to respond to emails. A lot of communication happens through emails. So we have a very tight expectation of the amount of time that has, that is reasonable to pass before you respond to an email. And that's a minimum, that's a maximum of 24 hours. And we say that would be akin to a kid walking up to your desk, asking you a question and that you just stare at them and not respond.

Kevin Besnoy: It would be very awkward. It's kind of the same thing. So it is timely responses to email, timely responses to feedback on an assignment that's submitted. But then it's also the type of feedback. One of the nice things about most learning management systems is that you can annotate directly on the assignment that's submitted. So we encourage our teachers to do that. So top level feedback, but that's non multimedia based. What we also encourage our teachers to do is to who create some multimedia assets where they might talk about the good work that a student has completed or that a class has completed. A lot of times, if teachers think about this, they think when a teacher hands back a test to the students, the teacher

will describe all the good things that the class got right on the test. But they'll also talk about some things that as a whole, the classmates miss, and that's at a very generic high level. So we would expect the teachers to do the same thing, but just in a short video that they might produce. So those are just some of the examples of how the principles of teaching are universal. That hasn't changed. And I don't know that it really will change. It's the medium with which we're delivering those quality teaching best practices. How do they change for teachers to be able to still connect with their students?

Jessica Hamman: You mentioned learning management systems, and that's something that in this kind of very quick rush to remote learning, some schools and districts have not had an opportunity to engage or better understand. Maybe they already had one and maybe they didn't. Many are using Google Classroom as a system for holding teacher classrooms, if you will, remotely. Can you talk a little bit about how important a learning management system is to the online learning space and what schools who are maybe shopping for one or thinking about what their online presence looks like should look for in a learning management system?

Kevin Besnoy: Yeah, that's a really important consideration for schools. And it's really a paradigm shift that we have to make when we're talking about learning management systems. Because we think back to why the learning management system was originally created. It was to facilitate the exchange of papers more or less that teachers and students had. I mean, originally, the students would, instead of turning in an assignment physically, they would submit it through this learning management system. It allowed teachers to track

attendance, to track grades. There's a way for all of this to come together. What we're really thinking about now though is the idea of a learning management system in that sense has gone away. It's a classroom and we have to see, change the idea that it's not really a learning management system, that this is what a classroom looks like.

Kevin Besnoy: And so when thinking about what are the sort of the bells and whistles on a learning management system that a school would want to adopt, it's really important that you think about it in that light, that this is actually a classroom that you're creating. And when you talk about their online presence, it's you want to think about, well, what should somebody see when they walk into that classroom? So there needs to be a way for teachers to easily provide feedback to students, to easily show that they're present. Some of the learning management systems have built in, say the ability to produce a quick video. So instead of just typing out a digital message, you could record yourself and that would easily be posted to an announcement. The ability for that learning management system to incorporate multimedia tools into it seamlessly, that would be something that evaluators would want to take into consideration.

Kevin Besnoy: Another thing is the ease with which teachers can provide feedback. Most learning management systems have the ability when a document is submitted or an assignment is submitted for the teacher to be able to annotate directly onto that assignment, as opposed to having to download the assignment. It doesn't sound like a lot, but if you're teaching a class of 35, the process of downloading an assignment, making comments on it and then

uploading it can be burdensome. Especially if you're looking at some of the math assignments where there are procedures that are put in place and a teacher might need to circle a specific step. So the ability to annotate directly on assignments is something that really needs to be looked at. Also the ability to send out both mass communications and then individual communication is critical, the way that you communicate with them.

Kevin Besnoy: And then another thing that you want to take into consideration is the way that parents are given access to their child's work, parents should be able to go in and see everything that a student is submitting, should be able to see the student's progress. They really are a great entry way for that teacher parent relationship to blossom. What we know is, and I think this is an old adage that on any given parent teacher night, the parents that need to be there aren't, the ones that don't need to be there are. And we know that when there are strong teacher parent relationships, that the students tend to do better. And so you want to evaluate, how can you give parents access to the child's work without opening up the rest of the class, because we don't parents to have access to all the kids' work.

Kevin Besnoy: So what are the parent portal capabilities? Those are some of the sort of basic areas that an evaluator of an LMS would want to look at. And then there's the basic just user experience. Some learning management systems are more intuitive in the way that the user enters and navigates through the system. And so sometimes especially it's good in these situations to get somebody who isn't familiar with any learning management system to go in and navigate and see if they can figure it out. The learning management system is key to the online process. It just, you have to think about it as a

classroom and what are you able to do with the classroom to create that warm environment, that rigorous environment where students and teachers can interact with one another in really productive ways.

Jessica Hamman: Can you tell us a little more about backward design? You touched upon that early on, and said it was one of the initial things that got you interested in online learning and kind of raised your awareness about its effectiveness. I think a lot of teachers are trying to figure out how to design their instruction online. How can backward design help, and are there other tenets in addition to that that might help as well?

Kevin Besnoy: Yeah, so the way that I understand and I always think about backwards design is you have to know the end goal. Where are you trying to get your learners to? What are either the skill sets or the objectives that you're trying to meet? And once you know that, you have to then start at the beginning. You can't get to the end without knowing what the end is. But once you recognize your end goal, you can think about where your students currently are. And it's almost like a roadmap that you then make as you're creating a set of directions for your students to follow, to get them to that destination. And so whether it's a type of assessment to be able for your students to demonstrate the skills that they've acquired or the knowledge that they've acquired. What are all of the elements that go into the student being able to demonstrate that he or she has accomplished what you're trying to do?

Kevin Besnoy: So it doesn't always have to be a lesson or a unit or a learning experience that's filled with a lot of high tech materials, resources. A lot of times it's what is the knowledge and the skills and what can you provide them in order to get to that? So sometimes, it's simply the kind of readings that you have them engage with. What are those? And then you sort of structure it the same way that you would structure any other lesson or unit is you would not prioritize, but you would order it, create the activities that gradually build on the skill set so that your students can get to that end goal. And so, and then what was the other part of that question? I'm sorry.

Jessica Hamman: Just if there's other tenets like backward design that could be useful to teachers as they're transferring what they know about instruction to the online medium.

Kevin Besnoy: I think a lot of the other tenets to think about is for many students, this is the first time that they are learning en masse completely online. And so anytime that a student is learning something, the first thing you have to, before you can fully assess their knowledge or the skills that they've acquired, you have to first make sure that they know how to learn in that specific learning environment. So digital reading, I think is really important. How do we make sure that students take notes on the information? So a lot of times what happens in the digital online learning environment, whether it's a PowerPoint presentation that students flip through a video that a teacher has created, or even a reading that you have taken, and whether you haven't transformed it for digital online, you just put it up or you have transformed it.

Kevin Besnoy: You have to recognize that students still need those basic note taking skills. And so along that, you need to, graphic organizers that we would create in the face to face setting are just as important in many respects, more important because without them, the students might not intentionally record the key bits of information. So there are a lot of places where you would create a graphic organizer. So students would need to learn how to, in a sense, split their screen, or at least have the printable graphic organizer for them to work on. So you also have to teach them some of the digital reading strategies. One of the things that we always do when we're helping people to become teachers is we teach strategic reading, the pre, the during and the post-reading phase of any content.

Kevin Besnoy: In that pre-reading stage, what we typically do is we get the students to scaffold or preview the information. And some of that includes going through and looking at the captions, the boldface words that are in the readings. The same thing is true in digital sense. We need to get the students to engage and predict what this is going to be about. But sometimes instead of it being on one page and flip a page in a book, a lot of times the readings, the students will have to scroll up and down in order to find information. So you still need to teach those comprehension reading strategies. They just are peer different in the digital environment because of the content, the format has changed.

Kevin Besnoy: But what I see is the purposeful expectations that students still take notes, where I see students successful when I go around the state to

see the students who are working in our classes, one of the best examples is when I talk to students who are taking a foreign language class and the ones who are successful, they have a foreign language notebook with all the vocabulary, all of the different ways to conjugate verbs, to work with the grammar, just like if they were taking a foreign language class in a face to face setting. Those who struggle are those without the notebooks, those without the sort of the physical documentation of notes that they've taken to help them retain the information.

Kevin Besnoy: So I think it's getting students to transition to make sure they recognize that they still have to take notes. Those are some of the other tenets. And as you're designing your instruction, you want to make sure that you build in the resources, but also the sort of the instruction on how to do that. You almost have to teach. There are two different things that a teacher is teaching, especially for those who are novices, and speaking of students, those who are novices that online learning. You have to teach them how to learn online before you can actually get them to learn the content. And so some of those basic resources that you provide, but then the expectations and the instruction on how to do that are equally important.

Kevin Besnoy: And so if you think back to sort of the backwards design approach, then you know you're trying to get them to get to a certain point so you can assess them on their knowledge, but if they don't even know how to acquire that knowledge and you haven't given them the strategies and the skill sets to even acquire that knowledge, they're never going to get to that end point. And so you have to, at the beginning, after you recognize where you're going, one of the things that you have to do, this is a lot of times up front when the

class begins is you have to take a survey of your students to find out what is their experience with online learning, knowing about their comfort, the number of times that they've taken online classes, that will give the teacher sort of the baseline understanding of how much of that, how do I learn in a digital setting? How much of that instruction they need to provide their students? So they kind of go hand in hand in creating that rich classroom that you're looking for.

Jessica Hamman: Yeah, that's really interesting and brings me to a question about something you mentioned earlier, which is differentiating instruction in the online learning environment. I think a lot of teachers right now are just trying to get their lessons out there, but I know that very soon, they're going to start thinking about how can I differentiate these lessons and how does it change when I'm doing that online versus when I'm in a face to face setting? Can you speak to that a little bit?

Kevin Besnoy: Yeah. And one of the things that I would encourage people to do is if you're going to need to learn more about differentiation, the person to go to and to read, it would be Carol Tomlinson. And I think she's out of the University of Virginia. Carol Tomlinson would be, she's really somebody who is the pioneer of taking the idea of differentiation and promoting it and providing a lot of easy to use concepts. So product and process, what is the product that they're going to do? What is the process that they're going through? And then pace, and what is the pace in which they're going? Those are the different ways that you can differentiate. One of the things that I see in terms of pace that's difficult for teachers is when some of your students are ready to move forward and some of your

students are keeping up with the pace that you've set. And then there are those who are lagging behind.

Kevin Besnoy: And it can be difficult to manage that, but you don't want to hold anybody back. You want to let them go. You just have to be able to provide the kind of feedback that you need and the kind of instruction that holds everybody in place. It can be difficult in terms of the pace with which people work to differentiate if you're creating kind of group projects. So you have to be thoughtful of that. In terms of product, it's easy to differentiate in the online environment, because that's really where you need to look at what a student's technology skill set is. And so those students who either have greater access to resources or their skill sets are much more advanced than some of their class peers to use technology to demonstrate their learning, you're still measuring the outcomes.

Kevin Besnoy: It's just allow a student to use certain products to demonstrate that they met that. So one student might only be able to create a very simple Google slide to show that they've met, whereas another student might be able to do a podcast. It's all okay. Some students would, I have found do really well with a short recorded video as a way to introduce content. Other students, they still want to be able to read. They might need to communicate with the teacher more frequently than other students. And so, as the teacher becomes more experienced in teaching online, he or she needs to develop more and more technology skills. And it's less about the technology skill for technology skill's sake. It is learning different ways to communicate and establish that rapport with your students and knowing where your students are.

Kevin Besnoy:	But differentiation really is much easier, I think, to make happen in an online setting, if you understand the basic principles of differentiation. And I think that's really important to go back to what are those principles, and it's allowing the student to meet the instructional expectations at the place and at that instructional level where that student is, and for the teacher to be comfortable with the fact that everybody's going to be at a different level at a different pace. That's the hard part. Sometimes in an asynchronous setting though, I think it's a little easier because in a sense, you're just dealing with the content. If you imagine a classroom of 30 and you're trying to differentiate for 30 synchronously on this spot in the moment, that's very difficult.
Jessica Hamman:	Well, in a lot of ways I find that backward design enables that differentiation to occur too, because if you know where you want them all to get to, and you provide them with different opportunities to get there, it's pretty amazing the paths that you enable them to take to get to that same space. So that is kind of them all coming together.
Kevin Besnoy:	Yeah. There are a lot of menus that they talk about, ways to work through and allowing, there's a lot of student choice that's involved with appropriate differentiation where you set certain value points to the type of products and tie it in with Bloom's taxonomy. And so if you can cross those ideas together. There's a lot of powerful ways to differentiate in an online classroom.

Jessica Hamman: Excellent. I wonder if you can help us a little bit in better understanding the timeframe expectations for students online. Is it appropriate for students to be learning or expect them to be learning from 8 to 3 as in traditional school? Or does research tell us that there's more appropriate kind of shorter timeframes or that online learning happens best in bursts? What can you tell us about that in your experience?

Kevin Besnoy: Yeah, there really isn't any definitive research on sort of time on task and duration and intensity. A lot of this is going to force our field and our profession to rethink what it means to say that idea of mastery learning and working until you meet those objectives, the stated objectives. I would definitely caution against hosting a eight hour class online where the teacher and the student are face to face like you and I are right now. I'd be surprised if that worked, but I do think that there has to be some time where if it's possible for the students and the teachers to get together in a whole class setting, but also there might be some times where a teacher can lay out some individual opportunities to get together.

Kevin Besnoy: But in terms of should you create a 30 minute lesson where you're all together, I think that's going to be very contextual. What is appropriate depends on your students and the teacher and the parent expectations. I know there's discussion about appropriate amount of screen time that we have. And now here we are, we're asking our kids to be literally in front of the screen all day. A lot of that comes down to what's being supplemented. What are the kind of resources that you provide? But I do know that what is appropriate is that you create engaging resources for students where

the students are in a sense are lured into the content, just like you would in your face to face class, that there are opportunities for students to engage with a real person so the teacher, that there are opportunities for them to engage with their peers, that there is time for independent work. Some school days, it's going to, if you think about your own kids at school, I mean, there are some school days.

Kevin Besnoy: If you take a high school student, when it's Prom Week, there's no instruction going on in Prom Week or Homecoming Week. The students might be at school all day, but the amount of instruction that's happening every single day is going to vary depending on the activities that are going on at the school. And so we have to realize that from one week to the next, in an online learning environment, that that same ebb and flow of time on task is definitely going to change. Again, it comes down to the teacher knowing his or her students.

Jessica Hamman: I think it's helpful also and validating for a lot of teachers who are setting upon this new territory and not knowing what is the best practice. And I think it's validating to hear that you really have to pivot and kind of differentiate for your subject, for your students, and that there's no hard set answer right now. I think that's actually very helpful to them to know. It's a real time for an innovation for educators and education right now. And knowing we're all in this kind of pilot stage can be very useful because I bet we'll learn a lot about what works best for kindergartners remotely and third graders remotely and high schoolers remotely. I mean, this is for someone who's worked in online learning for over a decade, a very exciting thing to witness and simultaneously terrifying thing to

witness. There's so much opportunity for understanding and growth.

Kevin Besnoy: Well, I think you bring up a good point. Also, what you would do with a kindergartner and first grader is significantly different than what you would do for end of elementary school, middle school or a high school student. I mean again, it's contextualized as to the grade level. How much independent work is reasonable to expect of a kindergartner in an online environment? And without parental support, that's very difficult. In the state of Alabama, they shut schools down in the middle of March to give a three week period for schools to formulate a plan and to think about why are we even going to come back? And at the time when the decision had to be made, they said that the determination was that we are not going to come back physically, but we are going to continue the school year and we're going to move online.

Kevin Besnoy: And we extended it statewide. They extended the school year for the week that we missed. And a lot of questions came up. We're trying, and that's what I'm telling all my teachers is that we're just going to do our best for these students right now. I love teachers. I think they're the most creative group of people I've ever come across. They truly are artists, and their classrooms are their canvas and it's okay not to produce a masterpiece every single time you go out. Sometimes you have to take a step back and learn a new artistic technique before you can produce masterpieces. Let's just take the moment to learn, to learn how to teach in this medium, but it should also be a wake up call to us. Not that it was bad that there was a struggle for a lot of teachers to transition this, but it should be a wake up call to let us know that it's time for us to make sure that

we're providing the appropriate types of professional development for teachers who are in the field.

Kevin Besnoy: But it's also a wake up call for our institutions of higher learning across the country to make sure that we are sending teachers out into the workforce who are capable of creating online classrooms. And I would hate for this opportunity to pass us by without leveraging it for all that it possibly can be. There's so many people right now who are maintaining and that's reasonable, but when all this is, this will end, what will we come out from the other end in terms of a profession and what we're doing for ourselves to keep ourselves and our kids learning? Because one of the things that we really don't want to have happen, but I think many parts of the country recognize the possibility of in the fall is there will be spikes. And there will probably be schools that have to close down for a short period of time for micro periods, but the learning needs to continue.

Kevin Besnoy: What will we be able to do in those short periods of time to allow the instruction to maintain? I've seen here in rural Alabama school systems where the internet can be broadcast from school buses. And what they've done is they've taken these school buses and they've put them out into the community as sort of community hot spots. And they've had kids come into the school parking lots because in a lot of parts in Alabama and across the country where the internet just doesn't reach, as we talked about earlier, except for at schools. And so there are schools that are having kids come to the parking lot to work on their courses. What are we going to do as a profession to make sure that we can continue education? And so I'm hoping that this isn't a wasted opportunity for us.

Jessica Hamman: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. And it points to kind of the last thing I was going to ask you about which as an administrator yourself, you may have perspective on how can school leaders organize and create a learning plan moving forward that includes remote learning and establishes school systems for this approach?

Kevin Besnoy: So in my experience, I was a technology coordinator. And as now an administrator, one of the things that I learned is that too often we'll provide the money to purchase the resources for teachers to use technology. And that's where the funding for that stops. And we don't provide the funding to have sustained professional development for teachers on how to use that. And so that's I think really the critical component. It is an administrator responsibility. What we know is if an administrator values it, the administrator will evaluate it. And if the administrator evaluates it, the teachers will improve upon it. And that's just the way it works. And so if an administrator values teachers being able to create online learning environments, they'll provide the teachers with hopefully sustained professional development opportunities. And then on the back end, evaluate their teacher's ability to, to implement that.

Kevin Besnoy: It comes down to the administrator. Without the strong leadership in a building, you'll have pockets in a building where a group of teachers might be excelling, but you'll still have those teachers who don't. And it's not always that a teacher doesn't want to learn or grow in that area. Sometimes the teacher doesn't know how to grow in that area and that's okay. What's not okay is to not provide that

teacher who wants to grow, who doesn't know how to find the resources to grow his or her skills with the opportunities to do so. So it's an administrator responsibility.

Jessica Hamman: Well, I can't thank you enough, Dr. Besnoy for chatting with us today. This has been amazing. And what I hope is the start of a conversation about online learning between you and Glean Education that continues for a long time.

Kevin Besnoy: No, thank you very much for the opportunity.

Jessica Hamman: If you'd like to hear more about Dr. Besnoy and his work at ACCESS through Alabama Department of Education, you may email him at kbesnoy@ccs.ua.edu, or visit ACCESS' website, access.ua.edu.

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