



Teaching with the Learning Glass with Dr. Jasmine Yur-Austin

Verbatim Transcript

FADE IN. *(Music)*

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INTERVIEWER: Dr. Yur Austin has been a Professor of Finance at California State University, Long Beach since 1995. She has used both the Studio Learning Class that is permanently housed at CSULB, as well as the Mobile Learning Glass that she's used to record videos from her own home.

INTERVIEWER: So, let me ask you what led you to choose being a professor as a career?

DR. YUR AUSTIN: That is a really interesting question. Both of my parents are K-12 educators. Then in the late 1980's, you know the movie "Wall Street?" So being a Financial Analyst working on Wall Street is a kind of a dream for all the Business major students. There is no exception for me, to be honest with you. So, I came to the United States in 1987. I went to the University of Missouri in Columbia to pursue my MBA degree and I remember that time I wanted to be the stockbroker. One of my instructors said, "Hey Jasmine, you are really, really good at articulating the concepts and the background of the case to your peers, to the class, and you have a passion for teaching." At that moment, I said I had a passion for teaching. So, as it was approaching to the end of my MBA degree, I really took the moment to think: *Do I really want to work for Wall Street? Or even go back to Taiwan where I grew up?* So, I had a conversation with my parents. I said, "Hey Dad and Mom, what made you want to be a teacher?" They said, "Well don't you see, you can convey the knowledge to the kids and see their reaction. That's a very rewarding experience." I said, "Mom, I think I'd like to do that because I like to communicate with my peers about everything." So really, it was like moving to the next phase: I got admitted to UC Irvine and I drove all the way across the country, half of the country, from Missouri to California. So that started my journey where I attended UCI, the Ph.D. program in Finance, and still relate to many issues, but it's teaching students how to manage the budget, to do personal wealth management, all of that. So then after that, I tried looking at institutions to fulfill my dream. I looked into the teaching-oriented institutions like Cal State Long Beach.

INTERVIEWER: I know a lot of people are eager to hear about how you have used the Learning Glass to record videos for your students. Talk to us about how you found out about it in the first place and what got you interested.

DR. YUR AUSTIN: Okay, this has been a wonderful journey for me to learn about the Learning Glass and what I have prepared for the lectures—recorded lectures. I pretty much use Camtasia. We have, let's

say PowerPoint slides, Word Document with my notes, and then just voice overs, right? Narrative, if the narrative is blank. But as you know, Finance is very quantitative-driven so when they come to the demo—demo for the problem solving—it's very difficult to manage Camtasia and using the pen right over your screen because it's very difficult to write in a very nice way, even using the iPad. So, I'm kind of struggling on that. In the past, I normally pre-type the equations just because I want it to look organized, very pretty, and then voice-over using Camtasia. Still not working very well until the one day I went to ATS and got into the training session. They talked about the Learning Glass and I said, "What is this?" Then I said, "Oh my goodness, this is exactly what I did in the classroom!" Just in front of the big transparent glass, I can do the demo; I can use my colorful marker to do different kind of equations to show what the variable is important. And then I said, "Yes, I want to use this!" And the thing is, my students were amazed. They told me, "Dr. J, we can see you! We can see the equations, step-by-step, evolve in front of us. It just feels like we're literally in the classroom. We did not miss any piece of you because we not only hear your voice but I can see you. I see your facial expression." Because as you can see, I like to use a lot of hand gesture and so sometimes when I do the recording, it's just like the way I did in class. I say, "Hi, welcome. And this question is an important part." I will use the marker and say, "This is an important part. This is a formula. Follow up, please." So, they feel like, hey this is my professor. She's talking to me, she's looking at me, she's doing the demo, all these things.

INTERVIEWER: So, from what you're saying, it sounds like there are two major benefits to using the Learning Glass. One it feels easy to write on, and therefore your students can see the equations that you solve unfold in a step-by-step process, which is obviously helpful for their learning. And two, your students can see you better. Can you say more about that last benefit?

DR. YUR AUSTIN: For me, I feel like I can't share my personal connection—connectedness to the student—because when you use iPad, the recording only can see your hands and the equation right? On the on the recording part. But with the Learning Glass, they can see me. I like my student to see me, especially during the pandemic. The isolation is really the biggest thing because imagine if you watch the video, you only see the equation just pop up and the professor's voice narrating over. And sometimes they check it out, you know, but if they can see the professor in person, they'll feel like they have been with that professor for a long time. From beginning to the end. So, I think the Learning Glass allows students to see the professor in person. That is a very critical moment because that's the comment from all my students. It has a positive feedback. They say, "We can see you."

INTERVIEWER: How did you first learn about the Learning Glass? You mentioned that you that you heard about it.

DR. YUR AUSTIN: I heard about it from different training sessions and they said Learning Glass. So then I went in ATS, Academic Technology Services division, and they showed me. They literally said, “Hey, this is where we do the recording. This is a studio.” Then I said, “Oh great!” We have two wonderful ATS staff there. Francisco and Preston. They were really great mentors to me as a beginner to show me how to handle myself in front of the camera, and to be comfortable, and to utilize the Learning Glass. Basically, the thing about the Learning Glass is that it’s a whiteboard—just a transparent whiteboard. The space, how do I organize my lectures? So, I really want to acknowledge Preston and Francisco. They both helped me through this journey smoothly.

INTERVIEWER: Terrific. I want to switch gears and talk about the time commitment needed to learn how to use Learning Glass. First, how long does it take to setup?

DR. YUR AUSTIN: First of all, ATS prepared it very nicely with a video to show how to do the setup. So, before I even open the box, I have read the instructions first, then watch that video multiple times—really step-by-step, then open the case. Think of it like a suitcase, really suitcase, and it has wheels. So, I followed that instruction one-by-one to set up.

INTERVIEWER: How long do you think somebody would need to take to watch the videos that ATS provides in order to set up the Learning Glass and be able to make a recording of themselves, if they haven't done it before?

DR. YUR AUSTIN: The setup itself takes like, 30 minutes?

INTERVIEWER: The setup takes 30 minutes?

DR. YUR AUSTIN: Yes, 30 minutes. But I need to be honest with you, it’s with my husband's help because the Learning Glass itself is a little bit heavy for me. So, we worked together as a team to try and put it on a sturdy table, put on top there, then make sure the connection, the cable, because I watch him connect, and then my husband double check. I just, I need to give the credit. A majority of credit to him because I watched a video, I showed him the video, then I said, “Hey, do this.” So, it's about 30 minutes to set up. Then, how to use it. How to use itself is very self-explanatory, even after watching the video. I think the whole thing is a learning curve.

INTERVIEWER: Could you tell us more about learning how to use it?

DR. YUR AUSTIN: I think the challenge is to create a dark room—a really, really, dark room. Because in the studio, everything is more professional level so I try to figure out which room can be more suitable to create a so-called dark room. And finally, I realized the best time to record is nighttime because no matter how you block the window—you know wonderful California—the sunshine will still penetrate even the black, the blanket I would say, or curtains from the back. So, after several trials in the daytime recording, then I said it doesn't really work out that well so I figured out nighttime. So, once I switched to nighttime recording, it's much, much better. So, I think the most challenging one is to create that dark room, that's a challenging part.

INTERVIEWER: Lastly, what advice do you have for people who create videos with the Learning Glass?

DR. YUR AUSTIN: I think, number one, you definitely need to prepare. This A4 size paper is your best friend. So, what I have done is think about the upcoming week. Let's say, if I am going to do the recording next week, I'll think about what kind of subject I want to talk about. And so, I literally write, okay? I don't type because Learning Glass is all about writing so I literally write out what I want to cover. So then, I structure the sequence. I say, “do this, do this, do this” because recording it without preparation, even when you finish recording, you'll find out that you probably missed a lot of important things you forgot to cover. So, preparation is very important. So normally, I will prepare four to five topics because each topic needs to take like 10 to 15 minutes. Do not do the recording, each recording set, more than 30 minutes because students check it out very easily. So, you break down to the small topics—not necessarily the problem solving, sometimes do the concept. I would do the concept, let's say pros and the cons. So I do pro and then cons. So, I when I do the recording, I will not write all the pros together. I would say, “Hey, this is the pros here. How about cons?” So, I tell myself how to do the sequence at that particular day. So, I would do these the preparation ahead of time and then on the night before, I will go over those notes one more time. Kind of like, go over and speak it out, go over, and good night sleep, preparation, and go there. Just be yourself. And I know it's difficult because as times goes by, I find out some of the early recordings I've done is not really that good so I create a new one. And so, that's why it's not like a one-time deal because even though I have done a lot of recordings in 2019, I still find out I can add more. So, during the holiday break, I created another 31 short videos to supplement something I haven't thought about before. So, it is very important to organize by the topic. And one thing that is very, very important: Francisco told me to always wear dark solid colors. Because when you wear the dark colors, kind of blended out with the glass already, and only the words you wrote on the glass will show.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you, Dr. J for talking with us.

DR. YUR AUSTIN: And thank you for inviting me to share my personal experience of using the Learning Glass with my fellow faculty at Long Beach. Thank you so much.

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