

Bonni: [00:00:00] Dr. Angela Jenks shares about her experiences encouraging accountability in her students on today's episode number 99 of the Teaching in Higher Ed podcast.

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Bonni: [00:00:22] Welcome to this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. This is the space where we explore the art and science of being more effective at facilitating learning. We also share ways to increase our personal productivity approaches so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students.

Bonni: [00:00:51] At the Lilly Conference I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Angela Jenks. Turns out that we were practically neighbors and she teaches at the University of California Irvine. She's a medical anthropologist and lecturer. She's a tenure track teaching faculty in the Department of Anthropology and she also directs the Masters in Medicine, Science and Technology studies program. Her research and teaching interests include Medical Anthropology, Race, Ethnicity and the Politics of Difference and Urban Ethnography. Angela, welcome to Teaching in Higher Ed.

Angela: [00:01:30] Thank you so much it's wonderful to be here. I really enjoyed listening to the other other episodes of the podcast.

Bonni: [00:01:35] Well I loved getting to meet you at the Lilly Conference and felt like fast and furious friends and as I said right before we pressed record I'm already thinking about how we're going to spend our summers together.

Angela: [00:01:46] I'm looking forward to time in the park.

Bonni: [00:01:48] It's going to be great. And we were talking at the conference it actually was a conversation that came up after I gave a presentation at the Lilly

conference. It started out because one of the things I shared that I have learned from having this podcast now for a year and a half to almost two years is about kindness and how important that is.

Bonni: [00:02:10] And so in this session I talked about Jessie Stommel when he talked about how kindness is just central to his entire pedagogy. And Kevin Gannon who was back on Episode 52 he talked about respect in the classroom and how crucial it is for us to respect and a lot of that respect comes out of our kindness.

Bonni: [00:02:28] And then one that I know we have in common have been a big fan of is the author James Lang. And when he wrote the book Cheating Lessons and I know you've read it too he emphasizes so much of that. It's not about catching our students plagiarizing as in word the police officers because probably we should be in a different field if that was our goal for our careers to do that for a living. And so I talked about that.

Bonni: [00:02:53] But what it translated to in some of the dialogue that we were having in that session was that kindness equals I don't want to over stress but what I heard especially because my memory isn't that good but what I remember hearing a little bits and pieces of was kindness meant that it was ok then when students didn't live up to the expectations or when they didn't fulfill some sort of an obligation such as turning things in on time.

Angela: [00:03:20] Yeah that's how I remember it too that there was this idea that kindness might mean accepting late papers from somebody or accepting assignments giving giving extensions when somebody needs them. And to some extent I think that that can that can be part of it. But I teach classes of 300 students.

Angela: [00:03:37] And so if I if I set an individual schedule for every student it's on the one hand it's chaos and chaos for me I can't manage the extensions and the deadlines and the special circumstances that many students.

Angela: [00:03:49] But it's also not as you had mentioned before we were recording it's not necessarily a kindness to allow students to to not fulfill the requirements of the class the way that we set up our classes. We do that for very good pedagogical reasons hopefully.

Angela: [00:04:04] I like to think that most of the time the the way that assignments are scaffolded the way they're constructed the way deadlines work

I do that to help my students learn and to to ignore all of that often produces a lot of the learning. And it doesn't necessarily benefit them.

Bonni: [00:04:20] Absolutely. So we wanted to start out today's episode with just making sure that everyone knows how kind we are. [laughing]

Angela: [00:04:27] Absolutely.

Bonni: [00:04:28] All right check box has been checked. And now we wanted to talk a little bit about what does kindness really mean but especially how do we as educators set expectations and then actually have those expectations come to fruition and part of that I think is you think I might be accidentally about to quote Dr. Phil that was never a good idea... [whispering and joking] He's not actually doctor...

Bonni: [00:04:54] But we do teach other people how to treat us and when we allow for excuses to happen. One of the things that I have found in teaching for more than a decade now is actually do get a reputation and early in my teaching I did have these high expectations and if there's a deadline you're going to hit the deadline.

Bonni: [00:05:13] But it did take a little while for it to sort of be across the board. She she really means what she says I guess. So there's sort of this continuum that I have found and then also within a given class where teaching constantly the students how to treat us and how to treat others.

Bonni: [00:05:28] I see it as preparing them to work in the business world and when they show up late they say oh can I sign in the sign in and say, "Oh no. You're going to call me and that's what that does is that helps you become a better business professional because that's what you would do if you were going to show up late to meet someone about your dream job" and that kind of thing.

Bonni: [00:05:50] And it's funny I say it with a smile and it said with kindness they're not signing in on that sign in sheet because theres an expectation.

Angela: [00:05:56] That's one of the challenges too is is both holding those those standards while maintaining kindness and not turning it into not turning the classroom into an adversarial situation and it can be really easy I think.

Angela: [00:06:07] But I started teaching there is this this impetus to every time there was a negative experience. I would well that needs to be line on my syllabus then.

Angela: [00:06:15] And now we need to talk about this and in this circumstance here's the rule and here's the rule this time and for a while I was always swearing that the next session I was just going to be a stickler and really really backup a lot of these rules and not get into the situation where where I'm constantly dealing with with excuse after excuse and it can often mean that the syllabus turns into this this adversarial document from the very beginning and it sets up for students this relationship that I think we don't necessarily want in the classroom and that doesn't doesn't fulfill the goals that we have.

Bonni: [00:06:49] Tell me about your typical classroom and how many students are there and what does the classroom itself look like.

Angela: [00:06:54] Well typical can vary quite a bit. So this last quarter I had one class that was 300 students. It was an upper division anthropology class race gender and science. But it also fulfills a general requirement for the course. So the majority of students were not Anthropology majors which is what what I teach. I'm an anthropologist.

Angela: [00:07:13] But a lot of them were science majors especially in the bio sciences so premed students some pre nursing some pharmacy some public health students who were fulfilling their social science requirement through this. This course a lot of the classes I teach are are bio science students I'm a medical anthropologist in particular.

Angela: [00:07:32] And so in the medical anthropology types of classes we get a lot of students interested in the field of medicine but I might have 1 300 person class and then a 15 person senior anthropology writing seminar for example.

Angela: [00:07:47] So there can be a big range and oftentimes there are some policies that I actually will use in every single class no matter what. But other times it does depend on the type of class who the students are. Are these students who are new to the field are they seniors. Majors in this field and how large the class is.

Bonni: [00:08:05] Because one of the things I don't have as diverse an audience as it sounds like actually I to take that back because the introduction to business class that I teach quite frequently. There are some people who take that just as

a general elective and that maybe there are a theater major but someone said gosh you should take at least one business class while you're in school so I get that pretty diverse in terms of the disciplines that take it.

Bonni: [00:08:29] So I think we might have that in common but some of the upper division classes that I teach those are more narrow and it's either a business major or one of our variations. Business majors marketing and accounting or sometimes communication.

Bonni: [00:08:44] And that's an entirely different discipline an entirely different department from us. I almost have to teach them what business classes are like. Because there's a in common so what tell me about what that's like for you. Teaching in such a diverse and how do you frame that for them how do you almost introduce them to the culture that you're trying to instill in your classes for maximum learning.

Angela: [00:09:06] Yeah there's a number of challenges especially for anthropology is one of those fields that a lot of students who haven't taken it don't know what it means.

Angela: [00:09:14] You know nobody nobody grows up thinking you know I'm going to be an anthropologist when I grow up. So oftentimes this college class my class might be the first time anyone's even heard of anthropology or heard of it outside of Indiana Jones which is I'm not knocking that that's honestly that's how I became an anthropologist.

Angela: [00:09:31] A great love of Indiana Jones and then taking the general requirement in college that led to a major in a career path.

Bonni: [00:09:38] I must go on a small tangent. Did you hear the news that we are going to be experiencing yet another.

Angela: [00:09:44] I have heard that news. I'm not sure how I feel about that. I was watching... The most recent movie was not.... I think the my favorite of the group.

Bonni: [00:09:53] I don't even know if I saw it.

Angela: [00:09:55] The number three - The search for the Holy Grail - is the one that as a as an adolescent I absolutely loved. And and because of that when I got to college and I could take to take any class it was amazing to see the

catalog and I saw an archaeology class listed and thought, "All right I know a little bit about archaeology because of how many times I've watched Indiana Jones," and that turns out not to be what archaeology is like but I loved the class I took more classes in anthropology.

Angela: [00:10:24] I became a major and I and then I went to graduate school and there's a lot of students who are like that who have a vague idea about what this class might be and need to take it for a requirement.

Angela: [00:10:35] And so for them very often introducing them to to the idea that on the one hand and anthropology and in the social sciences we don't often have single correct answers for things.

Angela: [00:10:46] And coming from biology or from the sciences they want they want that list of what are the terms I need to know what are the facts I need to know what's going to be on the exam and presenting them with open ended essay questions can be can be challenging for a lot of them.

Bonni: [00:11:02] Yeah.

Angela: [00:11:02] It's also often a challenge I think in especially those large diverse classes where you have students with so many different interests balancing all of their needs that some students in this class will be brand new to the field just as you are saying you have to introduce them to what is what is business what's the way of thinking but you're also going to have some majors who have heard this before who are kind of bored with this. This background in the field and so it's always it's always hard I think to balance that.

Bonni: [00:11:30] And one of the things I really enjoyed as I went to follow up after we met at the conference I went to look at your website and got lost - I think hours went by.... I love your syllabi and can you talk a little bit about how you view that as a document for describing and then actually ensuring that your expectations I was going to say ensuring your expectations are met - attempting to shape expectations through the syllabus?

Angela: [00:11:57] Sure. One of the things I focused on increasingly is is very clear policies and particularly around this idea of how it is that we enforce the the expectations we have in the class while also recognizing that students have very complicated complicated lives. They have a lot going on.

Angela: [00:12:14] Often they need to really understand what the expectations are if they're new to college. But I didn't want it to turn into something that reads like the terms of service that you signed for iTunes which you can.

Angela: [00:12:26] After a while where you know if this contingency happens and this happens to you if this happens and that happens you agree to X Y and Z and we'll all go to arbitration. If it doesn't work out I think that's what it sets up that that adversarial relationship from the beginning makes it seem like it's the student against the professor and these are the rules you have to follow.

Angela: [00:12:48] On the other hand too I think nobody reads that. I can't remember the last time I really read in detail the terms of service for iTunes or something as I'm approving the update. So I focused a lot on creating well syllabi by that that attract attention that can tell.

Angela: [00:13:05] And they're often set up as a newsletter type format. So there are certain sections that are easy to find. So when students are scanning through and trying to figure out well when is this due. What's the grading criteria. What do I do if I want to regrade they can find that easily but is also just a friendlier appearing syllabus.

Angela: [00:13:23] And so hopefully helping students understand that we are we're on the same side in this process in this classroom and where we're going to be working together and here are the resources that I can offer. And here's what they can then bring to the learning process. The expectations that I have for what they'll be bringing to the process.

Bonni: [00:13:42] I will be linking to at least one of your Syllabi if not more than one. The one that I saw I believe was from last year Race and Ethnicity.

Angela: [00:13:50] Was it race gender science?

Bonni: [00:13:52] Yeah that might have been it.

Angela: [00:13:53] Yeah that's the large 300 person class.

Bonni: [00:13:56] And one of the things that I enjoyed so much about looking at it and I encourage people to go look at it in the show notes and the show notes will be at teachinginhighered.com/99 as you go in. You start to draw me in. There were just small. I don't even know how to describe them but you're going to tell me how to describe them. Just a very compelling image and then

something that was just one fact about some aspect of the class and it made me just interested from the very beginning.

Angela: [00:14:23] I used a number of images and then just little captions about what this topic is. Sometimes there will be a question associated with it that's a question we're going to be unpacking and talking about more in the class.

Angela: [00:14:33] So the syllabus is not just the list of rules and requirements but it's about the what we're going to be doing this quarter what we're going to be talking about the types of questions we'll be focused on.

Angela: [00:14:44] And I want to say to that actually that I started using that format for the syllabus after I saw in the Chronicle of Higher Ed in the prof hacker section. They've had a couple of posts they do it about annually I think called creative approaches to the syllabus and a number of people will post a variety of options some of them text some will go I think there's one that was a graphic syllabus with like like cartoons comic book type drawings some videos syllabi by web page syllabi by just different approaches.

Angela: [00:15:17] But there were several examples that used that that newsletter type of format that I found completely inspiring and started using in my own classes. What does your syllabus say about late assignments. So in all of my classes now I have to basically late policies.

Angela: [00:15:35] One is for small assignments I often allow students to drop one and the caveat to that is that there are no late assignments accepted and I started doing that in my previous position. Actually I was at home before I was at UCI. I was at L.A. Southwest College and it both cases in both places.

Angela: [00:15:54] You can have so many student excuses and so many student concerns and asking forward to turn something and late to have an extension.

Angela: [00:16:02] And I was uncomfortable with my role as the arbiter of other people's priorities that I understand if you got sick we all get sick right these things happen for me to try to figure out is this a real sickness or was it a fake sickness and how serious was it.

Angela: [00:16:16] It just didn't feel like it was an appropriate position for me to be in. We all have other priorities that yes your job schedule got changed so you weren't able to turn this in. I understand that but the list then of what was going

to be an approved excuse versus an unapproved excuse just got too too complicated.

Angela: [00:16:33] And so I ended up using the system where maybe we have four short essays throughout the quarter but only three of them are going to count toward your final grade in the class so everybody can draw line. But none of them are accepted late.

Angela: [00:16:47] So life happens to everybody things might happen. That's OK. You get this one free pass. It has the added benefit to of giving students a chance to play with assignments in a low stakes way. So maybe you did the first essay and didn't do as well as you wanted to. It's ok you can drop a score and then go onto to improve your work. The the later ones.

Bonni: [00:17:08] That's interesting that you would bring that up because one of the things that I've shared about on the podcast is what I've been calling. Choose Your Own Adventure assessments and that worked really well to give the students a lot more agency in how they wanted to handle.

Bonni: [00:17:23] In fact they brought up with me originally I just had it. You get to choose how many of these tests you want to take. And they simple. Could we take them all and then just have the highest scores. And I thought well okay. Who loses here and I guess I guess I get someone doing the grading. But it wasn't that hard to grasp.

Bonni: [00:17:42] And I thought that was neat that they would actually have that and it sounds like with YouTube they could write all four of the essays and then just drop the lowest grade.

Angela: [00:17:50] Absolutely. And a lot of them do and I always encourage them to not just skip the first essay because life happens. And if by you know you're guaranteed almost then that by the end of the course you're going to something else come up where you won't be able to to do the requirements.

Angela: [00:18:04] I've also used - and this came from a colleague LaShawn Brinson - a colleague of mine at Southwest College who had a stuff happens coupon that she would put into her syllabus and a student could use that for one extra day on any assignment during the quarter or during the class. I've adopted that in some of my smaller classes in particular and the large ones it gets complicated on who's used their coupon and who hasn't.

Bonni: [00:18:28] How did you know what I was going about?

Angela: [00:18:30] This was this was where our classes were really 40 people about. So it was a little easier to manage in smaller classes I've done that. And it's again it's a no questions asked. You don't need to tell me justify why you need this is just stuff happens stuff happens to all of us. You just turn in your your assignment a day late and with this coupon and everybody gets a free pass.

Bonni: [00:18:51] One of the aspects of my dissertation was something called locus of control. And for anyone listening who isn't familiar with that term it is how we explain what happens to us.

Bonni: [00:19:03] And there's two parts of the continuum there's internal locus of control where I describe what happened to me because of my own success or my own failures so if I got to work on time then that meant I got up early enough and made it there and if I was late I should have gotten up earlier and then the external locus of control is the paradigm that what happened to me was because of some sort of an external factor.

Bonni: [00:19:29] I was late because there was so much traffic or people don't know how to drive in California in the rain which is true by the way but not excuse for being late. And I don't want to go too much into my dissertation because I don't want people to fall asleep while they're listening.

Bonni: [00:19:42] But it's of course it's way more complex than just one continuum. And I know that you had mentioned seen it in medical research too that comes up there it comes up in studies with academic performance and then there's all these different ways people have sort of divided it up because it's not it's not as simple as internal or external.

Bonni: [00:20:01] But we're going to speak about it a little bit looking at this paradigm. Because one of the things that we know is that an external locus of control person matched with me a very internal locus of control paradigm is going to have a mismatch. And in fact I recently spent some time with a young man who I really have been enjoying getting to know this semester and he's stuck with this whole laundry list of well this stuff.

Bonni: [00:20:30] And then this happened and then work this and then I had to stop him and go I am not wanting to be rude to you right now but I'm not at all interested in what you're telling me. And we just have this report now where I've actually described to him and in fact it's part of the class that he's in.

Bonni: [00:20:45] So he's he's heard the term he understands what it means and just talking about if he wants to have a better academic performance that's strongly correlated with an internal locus of control so perhaps he could reframe what he's trying to tell me about what happened with why this assignment didn't get turned in from an internal locus of control because I think he's probably going to have more success with that anyway. Tell me a little bit about your perspective then. I've locus of control in setting these expectations.

Angela: [00:21:11] Yeah I think I think I try to to balance that sense of the internal and external locus of control. I bet a lot of a lot of what I focused on is recognizing that there are a lot of external factors that affect many of our students.

Angela: [00:21:24] And I think a lot of faculty today have this image of the full time student or maybe not faculty today but a lot of the public image of the college student is this full time college student who is not turning in assignments because they were partying so much this weekend.

Angela: [00:21:40] But the students I have worked with are late on their assignments because they head they are working 40 hours a week. I had a student in my previous position who was in one of my evening classes and he worked a full time 40 hour week job during the day and then he came to my class which was seven to 10 p.m. at night.

Angela: [00:21:58] And then he went to his second job. And that's how he was financing college while also supporting his family. And so in those situations a lot of students and most of the students I would say who I work with have some other responsibilities that they're taking care of and that certainly affects then their ability to purchase the book or to finish an assignment on time or to print out a paper.

Angela: [00:22:20] They don't have access to a paper or to a printer and have the time to get to it. And too often we react to those failures of students as if they're there a personal affront. Why can't you just buy the book.

Angela: [00:22:32] Why can't you just get this on time why can't you just remember that something was due. And it's important to recognize that there are all of those those external factors. And part of the of being kind to students is accommodating that to some extent in the class. So maybe they can drop on assignment.

Angela: [00:22:49] Maybe they get that free pass for the day when life intervenes and you can't quite get to everything. I think that becomes a really important aspect of of of trying to balance both the accountability and kindness for students.

Bonni: [00:23:03] In that instance it sounds like you've thought about it in advance because you're thinking about your students the context that that many of your students are coming to school.

Bonni: [00:23:14] Does that then mean if I come to you and I'm doing this 40 hour week job and there were all these barriers and it's not something that's built in to the syllabus because it's not where I could drop it. What does that conversation then sound like.

Angela: [00:23:29] I think very often. I I tried to sit down with students especially in a situation where they're really focused on completing the class this quarter I have certainly had situations where students head a major life crisis that happened where I suggested that they take an incomplete or you know in a class that if it's early on a class that will be offered the following semester that that might be a better time for them to take it.

Angela: [00:23:55] But for a lot of students one of the reasons they don't they're not able to finish school is because of all of these other events that are happening. And so for a lot of them when we're talking individually I do try to talk to them about about the habits that are involved in a lot of schoolwork.

Angela: [00:24:10] I think for a lot of them how to read something is not necessarily a skill that they really have or how to go about planning your time to write an assignment or to take an assignment and break it apart into the different pieces to make it a more more manageable activity that they're doing.

Angela: [00:24:27] So I try to work with students on given all of the other things happening in their lives. How can we make this seem not like an overwhelming Oh my goodness I have a research paper that's due suddenly due at the end of the quarter but the very small steps that you can break this down and and focus on it in manageable chunks.

Bonni: [00:24:45] Do you find. I have no idea with the 300 person class. Do people try to talk to you about their challenges that they've had right after class

gets out and perhaps you have somewhere you need to be next. Does that happen to you often.

Angela: [00:24:59] Yes quite often and sometimes I have another class that I'm I'm headed to. Right after that and students will come up after class and I do encourage them to to come to office hours to be able to talk in a more extended way in the large classes also we do have teaching assistants and so working with them a lot is is also about talking about how to how to talk to the students who come in who are having a lot of other a lot of issues happening in their lives that make it difficult for them to to be working in the class.

Bonni: [00:25:27] One of the things that I've found helpful and you sort of just told me identify this is two things when they come in to see me in the office. First of all my goal is to get them to come in to see me. I'd really rather not have a rushed conversation. I think I did that a lot earlier in my teaching where I did have somewhere to be but I'm trying to because to them it's very immediate. They're needed.

Bonni: [00:25:49] And I felt empathy toward that. And now I realize that that empathy can be sometimes misplaced. And so I'll try to get them to come and see me. That's a goal.

Bonni: [00:25:58] And once they're there the first thing I try to do is see where they are in the class and I'll actually just pull out either my computer or my iPad and we'll pull it up and say just think it would be helpful before we talk about the specific thing that you wanted to talk with me about let's just see where you stand in the class because sometimes the great book can be hard to read because there are some points that might come up like attendance.

Bonni: [00:26:19] And we don't really know where you stand so let's just look at this and I find that that helps because then I know I shouldn't say I know. But generally speaking I know are they trying to pass the class or are they trying to get an A in the class. Are they trying to decide if they should stop showing up at all.

Bonni: [00:26:35] I mean it's there's a whole thing where I can get a better sense of it but also to see patterns. If this was about oh gosh this one time I got a flat tire on my way to the library to do the assignment.

Bonni: [00:26:47] Well this is interesting because I'm looking back and you've already in the last 10 weeks of those 10 weeks there were three times when you

missed these low stake assignments I don't call them most because I missed them but for people listening we start to see patterns. Right.

Angela: [00:27:03] Right. That's helpful. And then that can be helpful to have there if there was a one off that everything was going fine and then there was just this one one experience that you you had a really tough day that day of this one exam but everything else has been going fine in the class.

Bonni: [00:27:16] And then the second thing. I like to do is to have that no come from a place of kindness. And it's it's tricky. I don't have any magic answers around this other than trying to understand where they're coming from but also trying to help them see a little bit. Where I'm coming from and the integrity of one's grading processes and class I would never say class policies in front of him but that's what it is.

Angela: [00:27:42] I think it's often helpful too if and this is this is challenging and the very large classes as much as possible identifying any issues or students who are having trouble early on because then you can do exactly what you're saying.

Angela: [00:27:53] Talk to them bring them in. Look at how things are going and really talk about the rest of the class and what somebody what strategies somebody can use to study for the next them or to get started on the next assignment. It's really challenging when it's the end of the class.

Angela: [00:28:09] It's finals week and somebody comes in wanting to make up a whole the whole semester the whole quarter's worth of work. But if it's early on then you know maybe you're not able to make up this one assignment that you missed.

Angela: [00:28:20] But look at all of these other assignments that are coming up. Let's sit down together come up with a plan on how it is that you can can work on making sure that you are able to complete those are often times referring other places to I certainly in my office have the list of the study centers the writing center the counseling center where I can I can help students find other resources that might be able to assist with whatever the particular issues they have are. So it's not only me addressing helping them work on that.

Bonni: [00:28:51] You're reminding me of back when Rebecca Campbell was on the show she talked about how important it is to normalize help seeking behaviors and just having that right there that actually is something I should add

to my bulletin board on on my office wall it sits right in front of me just so I could take it off as a sheet and hand that to a student and just have it be easily accessible right there.

Angela: [00:29:11] Yeah.

Bonni: [00:29:12] This is the point in this show where we each give recommendations and I wanted to recommend a quote by one of my favorite authors Anne Lamott and actually Amy Collier back on episode number 70 also shared that she likes this author a lot.

Bonni: [00:29:27] And this is a different quote than Amy shared. This is about showing up. This is from Anne Lamott. "I had a session over the phone with my therapist today. I have these secret pangs of shame about being single like I wasn't good enough to get a husband. Rita reminded me of something I had told her once about the five rules of the world as arrived at by this Catholic priest named Tom Weston. The first rule he says is that you must not have anything wrong with you or anything different."

Bonni: [00:30:02] "The second rule is that if you do have something wrong with you you must get over it as soon as possible. The third rule is that if you can't get over it you must pretend that you have the fourth rule is that if you can't even pretend that you have you shouldn't show up you should stay home because it's hard for everyone else to have you around."

Bonni: [00:30:25] "And the fifth rule is that if you are going to insist on showing up you should at least have the decency to feel ashamed. So Rita and I decided that the most subversive revolutionary thing I could do was to show up for my life and not be ashamed.

Bonni: [00:30:44] This week I found out that one of my students lost his dad and I guess my advice to everyone today is just to allow our students to show up. And one of the things I was so appreciative with as I had a chance to talk to him this week was all the way back to my undergraduate class called Psychology of Helping and that the greatest gift we can give to anyone in this world is just to allow them to be.

Bonni: [00:31:10] And this student is coming from a culture where he's the oldest son and there is this pressure to be strong and he is showing up right now as a strong person. And maybe that's the real experience that is happening.

Bonni: [00:31:23] But what I told him was that grief is kind of a little tricky at least it has been for me in my life and it can seem like I'm doing OK on one day and the next day it's falling apart. And just to welcome him that anytime he ever wanted to talk specifically about the class he's just weeks away from graduation.

Bonni: [00:31:41] And I know that's really important to him to walk across that stage but also just if he ever wanted to just come and be that I would be a person that he could come in and talk to. And anyway that's my my recommendation is the and the quote and that we all might allow our students places where they can show up.

Angela: [00:31:59] That is a wonderful quote as we're talking about kindness to our students as well to give them the space to just be able to show up no matter what else is happening in their lives.

Bonni: [00:32:10] What do you have to recommend today Angela?

Angela: [00:32:11] Well I have two recommendations one a lot of listeners may already be familiar with but I have only recently discovered it and that was his last quarter in a class on health disparities. It was a disease. Health and inequality class. I had my students do team based projects that were action projects so they had to identify and research together a particular health disparity and then develop some sort of way to address it.

Angela: [00:32:40] And it an actionable project a way that they could do something about it. Previously when I taught this class we ended with a lot of despair. There's all these problems in the world. Have a nice summer kind of problem might come up.

Angela: [00:32:53] And so I was trying to help my students see themselves as people who could get involved in a lot of these problems and could do something about them. And I used the online system CATME that was extremely helpful. I formed the teams myself but this gave students the opportunity to think about their own participation in the team to evaluate each other and it was the probably the most successful team based project I've ever used. And I think a lot of that was due to the CATME program.

Bonni: [00:33:22] Interesting that you said the groups up yourself because that's been a mental barrier for not just me but also Doug McKee who's been on the show in the past from Yale and we both are a little bit freaked out about the

whole idea of letting that set up the groups. So you set up the groups and then did you put the students into the system.

Angela: [00:33:40] I did. I asked students to brainstorm health inequality issues that they were interested in their top five. And then I formed groups according to what their interests were so everybody was in a group that hopefully in their top one or two but at least somewhere in their top5 interest. That was a topic that they were going to be focused on.

Angela: [00:33:58] And then I just input those groups into CATME and let the system do a lot of the rest of the evaluation process.

Bonni: [00:34:05] And hypothetically you could have had CATME do the lift heavy lifting for you in terms of they could indicate their interest in different topics within it if I understand how it works, correct.

Angela: [00:34:15] Yes. And this was my first time using it. So I only discovered that after I had already done much of that myself. But you can set up a survey I believe Incat me that will also sort students according to when they are free to meet what the rest of their schedules are like so that you can make sure that that groups are generally accessible to each other.

Bonni: [00:34:33] Because Chrissy Spencer talked about it back on a prior episode and it's intrigued me and also intimidated me because when I've gone up to look at it it looks hard.

Angela: [00:34:42] There is a lot to figure out. I think in the beginning once I had done the the first there's a tutorial for the faculty putting it in. And once I had done that it started to make much more sense. And I think I only used it in a relatively simple way but I'm intrigued by it. Looking forward to trying to play around with some of the other other things that can do later on.

Bonni: [00:35:02] I didn't even realize that I had the option to use it partway and I'm going to next semester really because I teach a lot of really large classes while really large for me not for you for my beard really large and my middle of the way. It sounds like it will be really helpful thank you. And what's your second recommendation.

Angela: [00:35:20] My second one is a book that I have to admit I have not fully read yet. So I'm a little hesitant to recommend it but I have read the article that

the two authors wrote the book is *The Slow Professor* by Maggie Berg and Barbara Seeber.

Angela: [00:35:34] And the in the article I've read by them they were trying to respond to the culture of hectic ness among the professor hood and especially how it relates to our students I know that I'm guilty of sometimes showing up to a class breathless rushing in running from either my previous class or from a meeting or something else I was doing and that of course is not the best frame of mind to begin teaching.

Angela: [00:35:57] I'm not really present there for my students when I when that happens so they are interested in whether there are lessons from the slow movement for example of slow food movement that can be applied to academia and to professors and I'm I'm really interested in seeing what they think about that they would be interested in hearing what other people think about that idea.

Bonni: [00:36:17] They've been recommended as guests and I'm definitely going to be reaching out to see if they're willing to come on. Although I always laugh because I think maybe they're good about not checking their email all the time so maybe.

Bonni: [00:36:27] Hopefully I'll hear back from them. And there was a wonderful book called *In Praise of Slowness* that I read that looked at some of the slow movements like slow food and it was a fascinating book I read its quite sometime ago but it was really really good.

Bonni: [00:36:42] And this just sounds wonderful so I've definitely had to add that to my list. I perceive sometimes that I'm the only one rushing and then I get around other faculties sometimes in some contexts not all of them.

Bonni: [00:36:53] But it's it's nice. I guess it's kind of nice to know I'm not alone in my. Yeah. I really wish I didn't always feel like I was so hurried and.

Angela: [00:37:01] I think it can become a habit in a way too. And there's this the culture of busyness that everybody's always busy all the time. Yeah but taking a step back from that can be a very helpful thing to do and actually allow us to to achieve the goals that we have a little better.

Bonni: [00:37:14] Yeah well it's so fun to be sitting across the table from you today and to know that we're practically neighbors.

Angela: [00:37:19] Yes yes you too. Thank you so much for for inviting me on. I'm so happy to be able to come and talk more about this.

Bonni: [00:37:25] It's always fun to meet someone else who just had such a passion for serving our students well and facilitating learning. Also thank you for that. Thank you it was great to connect once again with Angela Jenks and hope that we'll be getting to do that over the summer as well and that I'll good to have her back on the show because we both felt like there was so much more we could have talked about today.

Bonni: [00:37:45] Thanks once again to Angela for being on Teaching in Higher Ed and thanks to all of you for listening. It's been really fun to see the community growing. We actually started a Slack channel so if you have any interest in joining us over on slack just send me an e-mail. You can go to teachinginhighered.com/feedback to find the easiest way to send me an email and I'll be happy to add you to that Slack channel it's been fun to see those early conversations happening.

Bonni: [00:38:14] And as always if you have yet to subscribe to the weekly e-mails what you will receive is the show notes with all of the links of the things that we talk about on each show and in that same email a article about either teaching or productivity on most weeks and I just once again thank all of you for the reviews and the ratings you've been putting up on iTunes or whatever service it is you used to listen to the show makes a really big difference and other people being able to discover it and to just growing the community even more. Thanks once again for listening and I'll see you next time. Next time will be episode 100. It's going to be a fun one. See you then.

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