

**Bonni:** [00:00:00] Today on episode number 159 of the Teaching in Higher Ed podcast Todd Zakrajsek shares about his new book Dynamic Lecturing.

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**Bonni:** [00:00:19] Welcome to this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. I'm Bonni Stachowiak and this is the space where we explored the art and science of being more effective at facilitating learning. We also share ways to improve our personal productivity so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students.

**Bonni:** [00:00:49] Todd welcome back to Teaching in Higher Ed.

**Todd:** [00:00:52] Appreciate being here, Bonni.

**Bonni:** [00:00:54] If people have been listening for a while they know that usually this is the point in this show where I paraphrase or directly read word for word someone's bio. But you and I decided not to do that this time because people can always go look at it at the show notes of course that [teachinginhighered.com/159](https://teachinginhighered.com/159). However we thought it might just be fun to catch up a little bit with you. What's going on in your life right now? What's what you've been up to lately?

**Todd:** [00:01:20] Whew. Lots of things. At the university, I'm associate director of a fellowship program with 6000 early career doctors and there they spend five weeks in Chapel Hill and they just left last week just a great group of individuals so that was fun. Kind of working on the second book of the excellent teacher series through Silas and that one is on the syllabus.

**Todd:** [00:01:41] And then also working now on the third book in the series which is I'm looking at educational concepts what some of the educational

psychological foundational concepts that are in teaching and learning that people may not know about. So working on those.

**Todd:** [00:01:54] And the second edition of The New Science of Learning with Terry Doyle so excited about that and then kind of traveling around and doing some workshops here and there so having a good time kind of visiting campuses and helping out with teaching learning issues.

**Bonni:** [00:02:07] I know on one of your recent trips you actually got to learn something about your name that which with which I would think would be kind of unexpected on a trip you tell us about that.

**Todd:** [00:02:16] Well yeah it was kind of an interesting thing. I got an opportunity to go to University Maribor in Slovenia. And Slovenia is the origin of my name and my grandfather had told me my entire life that I said Zakrajsek wrong. And so I you know I just never knew how to pronounce my own last name and so it turns out Bonni just in the nick of time because you've learned how to say Zakrajsek that that's not actually cracked up so sorry.

**Bonni:** [00:02:42] All right. I'm ready for the new lesson. I have to unlearn so I can relearn. Yes.

**Todd:** [00:02:46] All right. The closest I can come to Todd Zakrajsek in Slovenian is Todd Zakrajsek.

**Bonni:** [00:02:53] Zakrajsek. Am I rolling my r there?

**Todd:** [00:02:56] It's a little bit of Zakrajsek.

**Bonni:** [00:02:58] Zakrajsek.

**Todd:** [00:03:01] Oh that's very close. Yes. Very close.

**Bonni:** [00:03:03] And are you going to be changing now how you pronounce your last name.

**Todd:** [00:03:07] No. I think it's mean.

**Bonni:** [00:03:08] OK. [laughing] I was telling you how comfortable I felt having you back on the show and that I already I didn't even have to look up how to pronounce your name has just come in rolls right off the tongue. And then I

already know you and feel so comfortable talking with you I don't have to have the nerves like I sometimes do. So that would that would have been a little mean. But I could have handled it though because it's a good well to exercise our brain plasticity.

**Todd:** [00:03:32] Yes. And what I what I do like to now tell people I had all these great phonetic spellings is if you just changed the J which messes people up to a long I then it's just Zakrajsek. It's kind of how it looks. And so the Americanized version actually works it's just you know so I'm not going let this go for a few years and you know maybe periodically when I need to sound fancy I can throw it in there.

**Bonni:** [00:03:54] Yeah. And then make people start questioning themselves oh my gosh I've been calling him the wrong name it's right I'll do that.

**Todd:** [00:04:01] But now we're going to try the Americanized version. Let's spend several years trying to get people rolling on that name I think we leave it alone for a while.

**Bonni:** [00:04:08] Todd I am spending a little bit of time this summer writing a book and the topic is productivity and it's been making me chuckle a little bit at myself because it's one of those words that I think people either gravitate toward like oh I'd love to get better at that. Or they find it revolting. You know that that's a whole there's a lot of baggage I guess that comes with that topic. And I'm thinking that your new book has a lot of baggage with it as well. Can you tell me a little bit about what sort of baggage goes along sometimes with talking about lecturing.

**Todd:** [00:04:42] Oh yes. So when I pitched the concept of Dynamic Lecturing I can't say that the publishing firm I mean stylist got great books and they have a lot of good progressive books and so when I told John hey what about a book on lecturing. The immediate response wasn't. This is a great idea and the concept of course being out there is that pretty much everybody is talking about how ineffective lectures are and that we shouldn't be lecturing. And I just I've really felt that that's unfair.

**Todd:** [00:05:12] And so I thought to be a good idea that we actually talk about lecturing and when I started looking at the literature that's out there there's not a lot of books about lectures there's not a lot of conference presentations about lectures and by and large it's kind of it's come to have a bad name. So I thought why not write a book about it in the shuttle but light on this topic.

**Bonni:** [00:05:31] What part of lecturing. Getting a bad name is appropriate. I mean where have the criticisms actually turned out to be valid.

**Todd:** [00:05:39] Well there are some places but I think we have to be really careful because the problem is you can't just take bad examples of something and then claim that the whole concept is bad. And so one of the things I've been saying recently and I really believe this is true it's it's overall if bad teaching if bad teaching were considered a crime. I think we've arrested the wrong suspect because what we'll do is we look at lecturing and say oh look at this terrible lectures and the students are learning anything and we shouldn't be lecturing.

**Todd:** [00:06:09] Well the problem is we shouldn't be lecturing poorly. So when we stop to think about what do you really mean by a lecture. And I think what happens is conjured up in people's minds very quickly is kind of a white haired old professor standing behind the lectern with yellowed notes who just pontificates for entire class period and it goes over the top of students heads and their board and its monotone and it's just awful.

**Todd:** [00:06:32] And if that's the concept of a bad lecture we shouldn't do that. In fact that isn't I shouldn't say if it's a concept of a bad lecture that is a bad lecture we shouldn't do that but storytelling is one of the most effective ways that humans communicate with one another. And so if we take a storytelling approach a lecturer can be good. But again I think we need to move away from the concept and we need to talk about what good lectures are and that's what this book will do.

**Todd:** [00:06:57] But there's other things we should look at and that's what's good pedagogy what's good teaching what's bad teaching what then is a lecture and what are just a few different examples of what form a lecture might take.

**Todd:** [00:07:11] Well we have definitely the formal lecture that's out there. And so that's the one that we have to be careful of and there's good data out there that suggests that if you're lecturing all the time with a formal or a paper reading lecturer it's not going to work. But there's also other types of lectures or storytelling lectures discussion lectures lectures that use audio visual or visual things movie clips. There's demonstration lectures interactive lectures there's lots of different types of lecturing that involve not just talking all the time in a way where a person is reading from a script.

**Bonni:** [00:07:44] One of the contrasts that I see showing up a lot is the idea that if we were to think of all of this on a continuum that lecturing is all the way over on one side of this continuum and what we call active learning is all the way on the other side of this continuum. Is that an appropriate way of gauging these things or do we need to put that model on the shelf or in the trash.

**Todd:** [00:08:08] Yeah I just I think the trash will be fine. I've seen a lot of people do this and I don't know what that can do to continue in my guess what it means is that you're going all the way from one way passive learning all the way over to a very engaged active learning. And so now we've got this passivity one way communication versus interactive engaged activity.

**Todd:** [00:08:28] So let me just take a second and rant and rave about this one for a little bit here. If we do that what we're basically saying is this one side over here that's the one way communication and what most people will say is you can't really learn from that. When you sit back and listen to a lecture it's like that proverbial little oh that that image that's out all over the place with a little watering can and neighbors the teachers pouring knowledge into the brain. That's the one way communication.

**Todd:** [00:08:53] So let's try this for just a second. Let's imagine that one way communication doesn't work. OK you can't just sit back and have information one way put one to you and then you suddenly learn something. If that's the case we would claim lecturing doesn't work. But if you take the lecture and write it out and then hand it to somebody especially if it's edited that would look a lot like a book. So the same argument would have to be made is that we can't learn from a book which starts to make me feel really nervous.

**Todd:** [00:09:25] If you videotape a lecture a person wandering across the stage in and using good hand gestures and good stories and really talking through what's happening that's kind of like a monologue from maybe a theater production or from a movie and now you're going to tell me that we can't possibly learn from a monologue in a movie or even the movie itself or from a book because it's one way communication. I am never going to buy that you can't learn from a book and you can't learn from a movie.

**Todd:** [00:09:54] Oh and by the way Ted talks tend to be lectures and people seemed to like those. So the point here is I'm trying to I'm kind of gone off on a long spin for this one but that idea of simply because it's one way communication you can't learn from it I think breaks down really fast.

**Bonni:** [00:10:11] One of the things that comes up for me a lot when I start thinking about becoming better at lecturing is when I think about I've gotten to see you speak a number of times and I really admire you as a presenter you're hysterical. You keep my attention really well. You are a brilliant storyteller. And you bring in so many concrete examples that make what you're trying to pass on to your audience so tangible that we can do something with you also.

**Bonni:** [00:10:36] I really have enjoyed giving time for us to reflect on things and so it's been fun but I guess what I want to explore with you a little bit is to what extent as we are observing really great speakers are watching a TED talk like you mentioned how much should we be thinking about emulating others.

**Bonni:** [00:10:55] And then where is there kind of a danger in doing that so that we don't really leverage our own strengths and just to give one example of that Todd. I don't consider myself naturally funny. I end up being my most funny when I'm not like I trip over things that are compelling and then but you know I think that that's a better thing for me than to try to be funny in front of an audience of a thousand or what have you. So what do you think about that as far as emulating others versus leveraging our own strengths?

**Todd:** [00:11:23] Well number one I think most people are the funniest when they're not even trying to be funny. I think that's what to me really good humor is just the naturally funny stuff that comes out. The canned kind of jokes that you drop into certain places those can be funny and I know that some people do it very very well but that's not what I really enjoy.

**Todd:** [00:11:40] Actually I have to say one time person wrote an evaluation for me as I don't think he's as funny as he thinks he is. And my very first thought was how would they know. Yeah. They have no clue how funny I think I am. But I was having a good time.

**Todd:** [00:11:56] So the concept here is number one the number one rule I would give anybody in terms of humor in teaching - I'll start there - is if you are not funny - which some people just naturally are not - it doesn't come across well to try to be funny. You can try some more things but you have to be really careful with that. I think it comes back to a lot of what Parker Palmer has always said is that you just need to be authentic. So a person needs to be who they are and if you can do that that's the first huge step.

**Todd:** [00:12:22] Now from there I think one of the big issues we got to keep in mind is has kind of sometimes been playing around recently is that we always

have to be mindful of how attentive the audience is at any given moment. When I say audience here I mean if you're doing a faculty development workshop then it's perhaps faculty members. If you're working in a hospital it may be residents if you're working in an undergraduate institution will be students but whomever it is that you're speaking to. Are they attending to you at the moment that you're kind of looking around the room and in any given moment.

**Todd:** [00:12:54] And so I think that's where lecturing also gets a bad rap. Is it a person who doesn't do that monitoring. Are the folks really attending to what I'm saying? Will oftentimes go off in and people lose interest they lose focus. They're not paying attention then it's not a good strategy.

**Todd:** [00:13:10] But if humor is something that you can use well you use that to draw attention if you're a good storyteller you do stories if you're really good at laying out a concept you do that. But if you are genuinely interested in what you're doing. It's amazing how much interest there is in the person watching you talk about it.

**Bonni:** [00:13:30] How much of what you have to teach us about lecturing is about us being better at planning the lecture and then how much of it is about us being better at responding to a lack of attention / engagement and being in the moment to capitalize on things that come out more spontaneously.

**Todd:** [00:13:51] Well it's a tough combination to talk about. I mean it and I think what it really comes down to I'd say is there are some basic learning principles and if you're going to be good at lecturing you have to hit those basic principles so. And I hadn't mentioned I am so sorry I should have done this earlier. Christine Harrington's actually the first author on this book though.

**Todd:** [00:14:09] So what Christine and I have done is put together some kind of framed this whole concept of effective lecturing dynamic lecturing around these psychological principles. So what we really want to be looking for is yes there's some structural things you can do. But by and large you want to do things like activating prior knowledge if in your lecture you can find ways to activate the prior knowledge that a person has that helps them tie the information you're giving them to their old information which helps them to remember it. You want to capture and maintain attention.

**Todd:** [00:14:42] That's another one of the chapters in the book and the idea there is if you can get the attention however you do that with a good anecdote a metaphor or story or whatever you do and then do something to maintain the

attention that's valuable. But what we know from psychology and learning is you have to have attention. We have to use our do things like making it meaningful. There's nothing useful to it. People are going to tune out. So somehow when you're lecturing you have to demonstrate the utility or the value of it.

**Todd:** [00:15:09] But if you can activate that prior knowledge maintain their attention and make sure that it has some utility to it. That's foundationally going to be very very good. And then you can step back also and look at things like mechanics. Let me take just a second to some of my favorite things is the human brain is actually wired to look for things that change we want new information comes from new things.

**Todd:** [00:15:34] If something is stagnant if something is just a repetitive piece of information it loses value because I know already what it is. And so one of the statements I've been using many times I do workshops is let's just say you're walking on a path and you see a tree as you walk by the tree. You'll notice that you'll glance over and see the tree and then you stop looking at it and you walk by because the tree has no new information it's not going to do anything. So you don't need to attend to it.

**Todd:** [00:16:02] If however you're walking down the path and you glance over and see a puma now a puma doesn't stay still. So as you walk by the puma even if you do walk by it you would watch it very very carefully. And the reason you watch it carefully is it's unpredictable you don't know what the next piece of information will be. Will a lunge at you will it run away. What's going to happen. And so what I've told many people is you should teach like a puma now like a tree.

**Todd:** [00:16:27] And the concept here is that we want to have new information coming and so the brain for instance shuts down this habituate to or shuts down to constant stimuli which is the reason that monotones are really hard to listen to and that is because it's a constant piece of information it doesn't fluctuate.

**Todd:** [00:16:49] So when a person starts teaching and says to you that there's 14 things that we're going to be need in doing it takes all of about 10 seconds for your brain to actually start shutting down on that. So yes mechanics like burying your voice walking around the room using your hands and good gestures and structures like storytelling and metaphors and then of course overall learning principles like activating prior knowledge and capturing attention and making it meaningful. Those all come together and that's what makes a good lecture.



**Bonni:** [00:17:20] One of the reasons why I almost always have two people on each episode of the show is for that very reason that you picture most people listen to podcasts when they're on the go or they're doing something that requires less brain functions such as washing dishes or folding them laundry etc. and it a lot of research. It was mostly around radio.

**Bonni:** [00:17:41] But was that you're going to pay a lot more attention to it if there are two different voices and those podcasts actually that have two voices that sound very similar. That's something that the audience often complains about that there's not enough different about those voices to keep grabbing their attention back. So it's one of the reasons we do that.

**Bonni:** [00:17:58] I also wanted to share that. It can seem a little bit overwhelming in terms of if people have a short amount of time that they're going to be able to speak on a topic I know for me teaching 50 minute classes is really rough because that doesn't fly. They you can do these things at the same time and I've seen you do that before so I have seen you both activate prior knowledge at the same time that you're capturing and maintaining my attention and at the same time that you're making it meaningful.

**Bonni:** [00:18:26] And one of the ways I've seen you do that is by sharing some data that you've collected around whatever topic it is that you are sharing about but instead of just sharing it you ask your audience to predict what we think it's going to be. And sometimes I've seen you do that where we actually literally would like vote in some way.

**Bonni:** [00:18:44] Could just be even you know raise your hand or lift a piece paper talked to someone sitting next to you and predict together what you think it will be but that just brings me back in because I already came to your talk so it's meaningful to me whatever it is you're saying but the act of having me predict before you share that information just really really grabs attention.

**Todd:** [00:19:05] Well I'm really glad you brought that up Bonni because the real hook in the book that we have this dynamic lecturing and that was cool.

**Bonni:** [00:19:11] I like it.

**Bonni:** [00:19:13] And then I you know well OK. I'm going to admit this one although you can't tell anybody OK. Just between you and me just between you and I see whispering that's a different voice level. It's good. Every chapter finishes with engagement strategies and so the concept is when the chapter on

for instance activating prior knowledge at the end of the chapter was lecture enhancement strategies and what this means is that if you're lecturing along on activating prior knowledge this is an important thing to do and oh by the way here are some ways of getting the students involved in it.

**Bonni:** [00:19:47] And so that's going to be in there. So just like what you are just saying that concept of making you predict something when a person makes a prediction especially when they share it with somebody else they become more vested in what the answer is because they and to some extent they want to know if they're right. They want to. Some people wonder if they're more right than the other person.

**Bonni:** [00:20:06] And so the concept is it becomes a game and so just taking a second or two and you're saying OK we're going to share this information on what percentage of the students. Do you think actually completed the developmental math class when they were taught how to learn versus just taught the strategies in the class and the audience will start to make estimates of what percentage they think it is. Some people will say maybe 5 percent maybe 30 percent maybe 10 percent.

**Bonni:** [00:20:30] And at that point right there they become more interested in hearing what the actual answer is. If I just state it 19 percent of the people are more likely to complete the course. It's just a piece of information and it kind of flows through.

**Bonni:** [00:20:43] The other thing I really enjoyed about the book not just the end of chapter summaries which are always great and that ability to actually apply it but at the very end or toward the very end you have all of that consolidated again. So around the activate in prior knowledge capture I maintain attention I can plan out my lecture with those things in mind but then also a spark for me.

**Bonni:** [00:21:05] Here are some different approaches you could use because you wouldn't want to be so predictable that every single time you tried to do this part of your lecture you always used this approach you'd give something like seven or so different approaches that we can use and actually planning that out. And I think that's really going to be a helpful resource to people who pick up the book.

**Bonni:** [00:21:24] Well and that's you hit another part that's really important to us when we look at engagement types of strategies we have to be careful. Most faculty figured this out very quickly is those have to be varied as well. If you're

going to use a think peer share it can work really really well. But if every class two or three times you say OK think Parashar ok think per share. OK think peer share. So even there it becomes redundant. So we do need them kind of a multitude of strategies so we can mix it up a little bit.

**Bonni:** [00:21:51] That's also one of those phrases I've never been a big fan of. I use the approach all the time but my gosh is it's a very overused one so you'll never hear me actually utter the words when I'm doing it because it all seems a little bit too practiced and a little bit too rote you know and then I think people don't realize that like this is actually a really important part of what we're doing here together.

**Todd:** [00:22:12] Well it is and this actually comes down to so if we could get to the real meat of what we're discussing here. Here's a I think a really really important concept here it is the big important concept is what we really should be talking about as cognitive load on all the time. And what I mean by cognitive load is there's a theory out there of this cognitive load as it's kind of like your working ram. It's what at any given moment the information you can process.

**Todd:** [00:22:38] You see that the kind of the sensory memory is almost unlimited. You can look at a whole football stadium and close your eyes and for about a quarter of a second you have the whole stadium in your mind. So it's very short in duration but it's pretty well unlimited in scope of what it can take.

**Todd:** [00:22:53] And then there's the long term memory that I don't know of any report out there other than the Farside cartoon where a person's brain is reported to be full so nobody fills their brain which is actually kind of amazing. The problem is there are times we've all felt it where we say whoa right now I cannot process any new information. That's the spot we got to watch for because when we're teaching if I'm an expert in you're a novice and I'm pushing a whole bunch of new information there's going to come a point where your little meter is going to go to the top and say I'm full right now and I can't do anymore. So that's the point where we do an activity or an engagement strategy.

**Todd:** [00:23:31] So what we're going to do is I might lecture for 15 minutes say Alright everybody now get into groups of four and we're going to come up with three applications for this. When I do that what I've actually done is given people an opportunity to practice and to try this. But I've reduced their cognitive load and by doing that it means when I come back with new

information they can then absorb it. So active learning strategies are not the breaks we take because people get bored from lecture. It's the glue it's the solidification of the new information that allows us to then move forward with more new information. So cognitive load and when we're maxed out we stop and do something with the information. I think that's where we should be looking.

**Bonni:** [00:24:14] What are one of the ways that we can enhance our lectures that most people don't make use of in your experience.

**Todd:** [00:24:21] I think that the biggest way we can enhance the lectures is to do something with the information. I mean that's the push that we're all trying to make right now in education as to these engagement kinds of strategies. But what happens and as you say OK here's a new piece of information you've been learning for the last 10 minutes.

**Todd:** [00:24:38] Now let's do something with it. Let's reflect on it. Let's apply and let's let's think about it in a new way teach it to your neighbor come up with a new concept. When you do that essentially what's happening is you're making the lecturer effective because the student now can take the information and do something with it which we know is going to help them remember it later.

**Todd:** [00:24:57] And what's really important about this is when someone says yeah but I have so much content to cover. This is the reason that you have to actually insert those engagement learning strategies. If we if we consider those engagement strategies to be something that allows the students to take a break because they get bored or they're not paying attention or we're going to take a stretch that feels like wasted time.

**Todd:** [00:25:19] But if the engagement strategies are in there to help us to actually solidify the information and to make the learning through lecturing more effective than they're not something that can be cut out. So people would no longer say yes but I have so much content I can't do engagement strategies I have to lecture all the time new because of again with cognitive load you lose people.

**Todd:** [00:25:40] So the most important thing we can always keep in mind with lecturing is are you keeping the attention. Are they understanding. Are they finding this useful and that will happen up to a point. And when you start to lose them you got to shake it up and do something else.

**Bonni:** [00:25:57] I know why you are a person who got selected to proposed a book about dynamic lecturing and it does make me curious though is there anything in there writing and research process that either you or Christine uncovered that was a surprise to either of you.

**Todd:** [00:26:12] Yes. There was one small thing that really kind of surprised me I can't find any evidence that says that lecturing is bad which caught me off guard because a lot of people talk about it. I know about Scott Freeman's meta analysis. In fact that is a massive really important to publications about analysis of active learning strategies.

**Todd:** [00:26:32] And Freeman was actually in a session that I was the facilitator for and I was so glad I didn't know he was in the audience but I was presenting because I. I cited his work in and said hey this doesn't say that lecturing is bad. It says that if you lecture all the time it's bad. And it says mixing things up and adding engagement strategies makes it better. But that doesn't mean that lecturing is bad.

**Todd:** [00:26:56] And he at the end came up and we chatted for a little bit and he said yes you're absolutely right. And so think about it this way imagine for a moment that I am dieting I dieting. I've reduced my calories I'm eating really healthy. And then we find out that if I start exercising the exercising process makes it even more effective I'm doing really really well.

**Todd:** [00:27:18] At that point we would never say hey look exercise is good and and dieting is bad. We would say the fact that you added the exercising to the nutritional eating has resulted in good health outcomes. We have been lecturing for a thousand years and we've figured out that if we add active learning strategies to it it enhances the learning process where is the process that says that the first part the lecturing was bad.

**Todd:** [00:27:46] What we're saying is adding engagement strategies makes it better and that somehow has gotten translated into lecturing is bad. And so what I what I was surprised is digging through tons of research and looking at all these articles and what everybody shows is that when you add active and engaged learning strategies you tend to get better outcomes.

**Todd:** [00:28:06] But it doesn't say that when you when you lecture for five minutes or 10 minutes and add an engagement strategy that the lecturing is bad. In fact there is some research that shows that a five or 10 minute lecture followed by engagement is actually better outcomes than all engagement.

**Bonni:** [00:28:25] What have I not asked you about dynamic lecturing that I should be sure to before we go to the recommendation segment.

**Todd:** [00:28:33] You know I you've asked such good insightful questions. I'm amazed at how well this has gone. The thing that I just had to do that Bonni. I think you're fabulous. No I think you've covered it very well. I think you've asked about the surprises and that was the big thing on the lecture thing and perhaps you could ask me the biggest takeaway.

**Bonni:** [00:28:53] Oh yeah. What's the biggest takeaway from the book.

**Todd:** [00:28:56] Yeah I think the big takeaway from the book is dynamic lecturing is really about adding these engagement strategies with it and the concept here is it's research based it's got really good foundational work in it. But what we keep saying over and over again is when you do these things it's good.

**Todd:** [00:29:11] And when you want to enhance it and make it better you will still bring in these other things which I think here's one big one I do want to leave the readers where there is no value in looking at a person or faculty member let's say a family member's been teaching for 20 years there is no value in looking at that person who has been teaching through the lecture method for 20 years. In saying lecturing is bad.

**Todd:** [00:29:32] What you're actually saying to that person is for twenty years you've been hurting and harming people and you need to do something completely different. The research doesn't support that. What you could do is look at the faculty member and say Hey you've been lecturing for 20 years. Good for you. First of all for being a teacher and congratulations on all the good work you have done. If you want to do it a little bit better here's some engagement strategies that you can add to those lectures you're doing.

**Todd:** [00:29:56] And here's a few ways to anchor your lectures. But let's honor and respect the people who have been working so hard instead of picking off a couple of really bad examples of bad lectures in saying anyone who does something that has this name is doing bad stuff. That's a huge takeaway.

**Bonni:** [00:30:14] I am so glad that I thought to ask you that last question haha. But in all seriousness that really did bring it home for me because more of my work now is in faculty development and that just really inspires me to think about

the importance of honoring what has gone on in the past and that you don't have to completely change everything that you've been doing. You can add to it and enrich it that much more really like that. Thank you so much for that last piece.

**Bonni:** [00:30:41] Well this is the point in the show where we get to recommend things and I know that we are both going to recommend something that doesn't have very much at all if anything to do with lecturing. I wanted to share that. I really found a small tool that seemed like it wouldn't make that much of a difference but has made a tremendous difference to me.

**Bonni:** [00:31:00] We have in our in our home what I refer to as a command center. Have you ever heard that before that expression like in someone's kitchen they might have a little section called the command center have you heard of that expression Todd before?

**Todd:** [00:31:12] No. I've not heard that expression.

**Bonni:** [00:31:14] So my husband is from the Midwest and also had never heard of that expression and laughed at me the first time I ever said it as we were married living together and I moved into a new house and I wanted to have a command center in our closet of all things. So he's like what on earth it's not like you're like flying in space or something. It's a place to put your purse and put your phone and all that stuff.

**Bonni:** [00:31:35] But I laugh because if you Google that you will indeed see from Pinterest many many pictures of these command centers where people can charge things and put their purses and pay bills and all that stuff. So this in my command center I tend to get rather messy. And the iPad comes home and gets plugged in and the phone does and then all of a sudden there's clothes that are folded but need to be put away and it just it just becomes a source of clutter.

**Bonni:** [00:32:02] And I think I discovered the reason why is that I didn't have a place to put those things so I bought a pretty inexpensive charging stand and what it does is it's just about I don't know six by 10 inches or something like that and it has all of my devices leaning instead so picture my phone on its side leaning against a little plastic insert and then the iPad. I also have a Kindle you can tell if a lot of plastic gadgets the headphones but they all have a little place a little slot to go in and it just completely transformed.

**Bonni:** [00:32:34] I no longer have a mess there because things have a place where they can go. So I would strongly recommend people look into these charging stands. Maybe the kind that I got might not be the best for you but I just it clears it up for me. It keeps things from getting so cluttered. And I'm a lot less likely to forget to charge something overnight that I really am going to want to use the next day. So I like these charging stations. I think they're a great way for us to keep ourselves from being so cluttered. And that's my recommendation for today.

**Todd:** [00:33:04] Wow it's a good one I like that kind of everything has its place and every place has a thing.

**Bonni:** [00:33:08] So I will tell you I'm a pretty messy person when things don't have a place. And as soon as they do I'll like keep with that system for decades. So I really do like whenever everything has its place. I'm big into that.

**Todd:** [00:33:18] That's good. Well my recommendation actually does have something do with teaching. Oh good. Unlike you who just drifts off into any direction you feel like it is mine is the Dark Sky app for my phone. And the Dark Sky app does cost a couple of dollars. I will admit that and I get no royalties I have no stake in this whole thing.

**Todd:** [00:33:39] But I love this app and it's a weather app. And the thing I like about it mostly aside from having some really good satellite images on it. The big one is it has a little grid when it's raining and it tells you how hard it's going to rain and when it's going to stop when it's going to start with like really good accuracy.

**Todd:** [00:33:58] And the reason I say it's teaching related is you know when you're getting ready to walk out of your building and go over to another building to teach your class and at least this is what it's like in North Carolina is that it can be like raining cats and dogs it's coming down our road and I can pull out my Dark Sky app and it may say something like rain stopping in five minutes or I could look outside and see as really threatening looking in it it might say rain heavy rain starting in 10 minutes.

**Todd:** [00:34:25] Well if it's a five minute walk to where I'm going I grab myself and my stuff and run even if I'm going to get there a little early and the number of times that I have run across campus with people asking me if they could stop and ask me a question and I said no I'm sorry it's going to start raining in two



minutes and they'll laugh at me. Then I get into the building and two minutes later this big rain shower comes and then they stop laughing.

**Todd:** [00:34:48] And then the other one of course is if you're sitting in your car you know you bolt for the house or you're running into a building or something. You can get drenched in a matter of a couple seconds. So what I'll do is pull out the app and look at it and if it says heavy rain stopping in five minutes I sit in my car and I do e-mail for five minutes and then I get on my car and walk in. So my teaching related component is don't show up to your class soaking wet. Use Dark Sky.

**Bonni:** [00:35:13] And that would provide even more dynamic lectures.

**Todd:** [00:35:17] It would because nobody likes to watch a person give a lecture when they're sopping wet.

**Bonni:** [00:35:22] I know that this show is going to be airing much sooner than we usually air the episodes and it might be possible people can't get it yet but they should do what Todd if they want to get their hands on the book as soon as possible.

**Todd:** [00:35:35] Actually I believe that they're available for presale right now it should be out. I am told mid to late July so probably about a month. It won't be too long. But yes it should be out soon and you can still does order it and then have it delivered. The cool thing about buying a book presale is that often at least this is me. I got a little bit of the ADD. I forget that I ordered it. And then all of a sudden one day a book shows up and it's like someone got me a surprise.

**Bonni:** [00:36:02] I have the same exact same thing when my husband asked me about a purchase that I made which I probably won't share so I can save it for a future recommendation. But like I saw this show up is this the actual charge that you know or is this a falsified charge. Oh no that's me buying myself a present for back to school.

**Bonni:** [00:36:19] I think we're nowhere near back to school but by the time it gets gets to me it's going to be brand new I'll completely forget that it ever happened.

**Todd:** [00:36:26] See I think that said I think more people if you want a little bit of spark in your life that's maybe the other side will give an order a back ordered item and then just when it shows up you can be surprised.

**Bonni:** [00:36:37] Thanks so much for coming on the show for the third time Todd and I am so looking forward to the next time we get to have a conversation like this about your next book. I've always loved the conversations with you and your generosity to contribute to our learning.

**Todd:** [00:36:51] I appreciate that. And we'll have a couple of opportunities because this excellent teacher series through Stylus is ten books and Dynamic Lecture is number one so there will be nine more books coming over the next three years.

**Bonni:** [00:37:02] Looking forward to it. And thanks for all your work too on the Lilly conferences. I really enjoyed both the years I've gotten a chance to go.

**Todd:** [00:37:09] It's always great when you're there and I appreciate you mentioning that and I look forward to the next time our professional paths cross again.

**Bonni:** [00:37:16] It was great having another conversation with Todd Zakrajsek, Zakrajsek. Sorry. I'm going to be thinking about that for a long time to come. Now I need I'm going to need additional lessons or just go back to the way we were. So thanks so much again to Todd for being on today's show.

**Bonni:** [00:37:36] If you want to have a look at the show where you can see some of the things that Todd and I referenced especially that great app that can help us from walking in the rain and arriving to our classes so you can go to [teachinginhighered.com/159](https://teachinginhighered.com/159). And if you don't want to have to remember to do that feel free to join the weekly e-mail that's just a single e-mail that comes into your inbox and that'll have all the show notes with the links that automatically come through as well as a blog posts that I write either on the subject about teaching or productivity the two goals of this show.

**Bonni:** [00:38:10] And if you'd like to subscribe you can do that at [teachinginhighered.com/subscribe](https://teachinginhighered.com/subscribe). And when you subscribe You'll also receive the Ed Tech essentials guide and has 19 tools for how to use technology in your teaching including some of the things that Todd talked about as far as enhancing your dynamic lectures so you can subscribe at [teaching in higher ed com slash subscribe](https://teachinginhighered.com/slash/subscribe). See you next time.

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