

**Bonni:** [00:14:32] Today on episode number 188 of the Teaching in Higher Ed podcast, I welcome to the show Anastasia Salter to talk about designing inclusive games for the higher ed classroom.

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**Bonni:** [00:14:46] Welcome to this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. I'm Bonni Stachowiak and this is the space where we explore 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:** [00:15:04] Today's guest was recommended to me by John Stewart. Anastasia Salter is an assistant professor of digital media at the University of Central Florida. She is the author of Toxic Geek Masculinity in Media: Sexism, Trolling, and Identity Politics (with Bridgett Blogett, Palgrave Macmillan 2017), Jane Jensen: Gabriel Knight, Adventure Games, Hidden Objects (Bloomsbury 2017), and Flash Building the Interactive Web (with John Murray, MIT Press 2014). She's also the author of What is your Quest? From Adventure Games to Interactive Books. And what a source of inspiration she is for all of us. Thanks John for recommending her and let me welcome Anastasia Salter into the show. Ana, welcome to Teaching in Higher Ed.

**Anastasia:** [00:15:37] Thanks for having me.

**Bonni:** [00:15:38] I am so grateful to John Stewart for recommending to have you on the show. As I mentioned to you already, I've really enjoyed your work in ProfHacker. I'm a self professed geek when it comes to these things so that's pretty much the first thing I ever read out of the Chronicle are those columns so thank you for your work in that. But after being given a nudge to learn more about your work, I want to read every book you've ever written. I want to read everything on your blog. So I'm really just thrilled to be talking with you today.

**Anastasia:** [00:16:03] Oh thank you. That's very sweet. I love my work at ProfHacker because it lets me geek out on all of the things I'm playing around with too. That's probably where most people that I've met in academia come from is that whole community of fellow tech geeks trying to figure out what we're going to deal with all the tools we have in the state of education.

**Bonni:** [00:16:19] I really enjoy the column and especially the ones I've had a chance to read of yours. Let's start with just a softball question... Could you tell us about your love and hate of games?

**Anastasia:** [00:16:28] I grew up on videogames and I particularly grew up on narrative computer games at a time when really the designers were figuring out what these games were and they were actually more women visible in game design than people like Jane Jensen who I just got to geek out and write a book about and an interview. And Roberta Williams.

**Anastasia:** [00:16:46] And at that time, I got so engrossed in these games because there was this emphasis on slower narratives. There wasn't much graphical processing power. They couldn't really render very hot, over the top women the way that they decide to do now. There was a different feeling to games. And I've watched games grow where we have kind of this triple a mainstream industry of hyper masculine, hyper violent games that I don't really have any patience for anymore.

**Anastasia:** [00:17:10] And then all the weird indie games from people who grew up on the games like I did and want to see games become something more. And that's the space that I'm really interested in. All of the things that you can do with games. Because really it's just like talking about books or movies or comics. Right. It's just a form and what comes out of it is what someone imagines.

**Bonni:** [00:17:28] I listen to this great episode of a podcast I enjoy listening to called Reply All. I'll go find it and I'll place it in the show notes. I laugh though because they talked about someone such as yourself who just had such a fond memory of a game that they played and they actually were able to, because it wasn't produced any more, they were able to track down the person who wrote it. And it was really just this obscure game and it was so fun to hear them get inside someone else's mind as they create because it was really random things.

**Bonni:** [00:17:55] And one of the things that really struck me that I remember about the episode was just really the relationships that this woman was able to form through the game. The game, as I recall, didn't necessarily have these wonderful idealistic plotlines that I would aspire for in such a thing but just by the way that she was able to form really intimate relationships with people all over the world was just a really striking thing to think about. And I can only imagine that today those things are even amplified even more.

**Anastasia:** [00:18:25] In some ways actually I'm still nostalgic for early days of fandom and in particular games fandom because we had communities that were a little smaller. And there was a lot less emphasis in early web on occupying your real identity. So I could be in discussions about games with people as a teenager online under my pseudonym and meet people who are in universities and who are designing games since there is an opportunity for intimacy in those connections. It felt smaller even if it was really just that the number of people who were actively online in a particular space was just a little smaller.

**Anastasia:** [00:18:59] And now we have kind of communities of discourse that are a lot more problematic. They are a lot more troubled. Games fandom, games conventions have continual problems with harassment and there's a toxicity that goes with these online spaces that makes it a lot more difficult to operate within games fandom. Now so I similarly am nostalgic for many of those older games and the relationships I formed around those classic adventure games and LucasArts fandom.

**Bonni:** [00:19:26] What are some of the games that you do enjoy playing now? And maybe they still have some of these downsides. I mean just like I know you're on Twitter and we know certainly the trolling and sexism inherent there, but are there games that still play? And have they done something different to try to foster communities that are safer and more embracing of different populations?

**Anastasia:** [00:19:45] I admit I don't play many multiplayer games anymore. I play a lot of single player games that have communities around them or are very carefully orchestrated communal interactions. One of my favorite examples of that is actually the current Animal Crossing game. So this is really silly and decidedly not a hardcore game.

**Anastasia:** [00:20:03] It's the type of game that you can play very casually and actually Shira Chess wrote a great book about this type of casual game, Ready

Player 2 that talks about these games that fit into the the busier lives particularly of women at a certain age and people with a lot of combined family/ professional responsibilities that are games that provide little bits of escapism in some controlled social element.

**Anastasia:** [00:20:22] And I've been playing that a lot more than I expected, checking in on my garden and giving fish to cute little animals who smoke the fish and then give you furniture. It's a very transactional, casual game but it has just enough multiplayer and sense of community to be a space that people converse about and share Snapchats of it and send pictures on Twitter and talk about the things the characters in the camp site said today.

**Bonni:** [00:20:45] My kids are now 3 and 5, so too young to have gone into the minecraft world.

**Anastasia:** [00:20:51] Yes.

**Bonni:** [00:20:51] One of the things that I'm at least glad to have heard about from friends who are teachers are the at least the games like that. My understanding is they offer us more flexibility such that if we don't want to have our kids or our students if we are teaching K through 12 we don't want to have them interacting with the world at large. There is some control to bring that universe down to a much smaller community. I don't know if I'm right about that or if I'm understanding correctly in just that it seems like the demand is more to offer that kind of flexibility to people.

**Anastasia:** [00:21:19] Yes. I think it's essential to the enjoyment of a lot of people who are either not necessarily ready for everything was going to happen in a player game discourse, like the example of younger audiences, but also people who just don't have the mental energy left for that at the end of the day. And I think that's why single player game design which really is having a bit of a comeback in narrative's games. Everything from Dream Daddy, a dad dating simulator, which is what I am writing about right now that's a visual novel a queer Dating Game. To things like the Professor Layton games which are fantastic quirky little mystery games with logic puzzles and such about essentially mystery stories. Those sorts of single player games are also a stronger entry point for a lot of us where we just acknowledge that sometimes it's nice to have a solo experience to the story.

**Bonni:** [00:22:05] It has been so fun to just get lost, in a good way, all throughout your website and of course notice that you have created many games yourself.

I wonder if there's one or two games that you've created where you really think when all is said and done, that's the kind of impact I would like to see have in making a game. I would just love to hear some of the stories behind those games.

**Anastasia:** [00:22:26] Probably my favorite project I've worked on is Eliza and Andromeda. And that's not actually on the website because we did this is an installation piece and it was a collaboration with Dinah Larson who is an electronic literature author whose work I grew up on. So it was really cool to work with her and just have this kind of cross generational conversation about how women's voices tend to be represented within games and gaming systems. And in that work, my main piece if it was breaking the Eliza bot which is that classic code that was generated as a therapy bot, you may have interacted with Eliza online and she's like the perfect, submissive robot who's just there to talk to about your feelings. And we basically made a subversive version of her. And imagined her telling us a story. What type of stories would Eliza tell if she were conscious? That project, well it's an installation piece, so it reaches a limited audience but I also get to see people interact with it and how they kind of responded to this very hostile, very feminist, pissed off author voice. And that was really cool and it's the sort of thing I want to keep building.

**Bonni:** [00:23:27] I'm really intrigued by this. We're actually launching the first ever and probably will be a very infrequent Book Club on Teaching in Higher Ed. By the time this recording will go out, it will have already occurred.

**Bonni:** [00:23:38] But we decided to read Emotional Intelligence 2.0. And I'll put a link to the short notes in case anybody wants to read the same thing we did. And I'm both enjoying it as a read, but also I'm feeling a little bit like it's too artificial. Like if I was to be a perfectly emotionally intelligent person I wouldn't really be in touch with "gosh I actually get angry sometimes." You know it just, it's both, I think it could be helpful. I also think it could be hurtful in terms of not being able to really be who we fully are and sometimes trying to take on these airs. Especially as women, we grew up so much being socialized that we're supposed to be good, and not cause trouble, and the awful poem about sugar and spice and everything nice.

**Bonni:** [00:24:14] So I'm really intrigued by this idea of taking this "perfect" in the idealized feminine therapy bot and then just really showing what's really going on in that inner dialogue. It sounds very intriguing.

**Anastasia:** [00:24:25] Thank you. And I'm absolutely with you. I think that there's such a space for anger right now that we need to be able to be angry about what's happening in higher education about our concerns for our students about our own work. That anger is not an emotion we can just let go. And we're so often told it's one we're not supposed to have or demonstrate. It could be exhausting.

**Bonni:** [00:24:47] And if we're going to have conversations that need to happen in the healing of racial identity, sexual identity, then there's going to be anger there. And to be able to express our anger and also to really listen deeply to other people's anger without feeling like it's somehow about us. That's such a narcissistic way we can sometimes enter into these really hard conversations like "wow this is making me uncomfortable. The ways in which you've been subjugated throughout your entire life for this 15 minutes, oh it's uncomfortable. Could we be a little more friendly when we talk about our lives?" It's just something- I'm really intrigued by that.

**Bonni:** [00:25:19] Well one of the things that every time I get an honor to talk to someone like you, I walk away thinking wow I'd love to build a game and my mom has expressed her desire to build a game. Keegan actually had mentioned when I commented about her wanting to do this, "Oh tell her to get in touch with me. I'm happy to coach her." So there's just so much inspiration there but it's hard to even know how one would get started. So do you have a way that you sort of start out with thinking about... How does somebody get started? How do you create games when you've never written one before? What's a good way to get our foot in the door?

**Anastasia:** [00:25:28] So the first thing to decide is why are you making the game? How do you want people to encounter this idea that you have, whatever this concept is is sitting your head? And normally the first decision is either to make a physical game or a single person digital game of some kind.

**Anastasia:** [00:25:43] And a lot of times with the classroom and educators or people making their very first game, I will strongly recommend make a board game or card game. Don't be limited by technology as your entry point because board games and card games are inherently social. So you know you're going to get together a group of people around it.

**Anastasia:** [00:26:00] It's something that you don't invest so much time into building that you get all caught up in like "Oh I've made this brilliant game." You don't want to change it. A board game or card game is flexible. You can go

through lots of prototypes. And that's the best way to learn how to design is you build something, you put a rule system on it, you get some people to play it and it doesn't work. And you take notes on why it doesn't work and you go build it again and you get other people to play it. You keep going until it works or until your ideas change and your sense of how you want it to work has evolved.

**Anastasia:** [00:26:26] So that's the easiest, board and card games are the perfect starting point. But sometimes if you're really trying to build something that's kind of narrative driven, like what I was just talking about with Eliza and Andromeda, it's tough to build that sort of personal experience. It's almost a conversation between you and someone you imagine playing this game as a physical game. And that's where you get into tools like Twine, which is always where I send people first. Twine is text based. You really don't have to learn any coding. You can basically add any type of decision you can imagine as a text choice in the game. So you don't have to visualize things. You don't have to be a strong artist. It's all about what you can communicate with your words.

**Bonni:** [00:27:03] If I wanted to do this, should I be thinking about my ideals and my values and what I want to bring into this world and try to build a game? Or should I just try to build a fun game, get a little bit of experience building games and then bring more of my values and what I want to bring into the world into the experience?

**Anastasia:** [00:27:20] In my experience, we stick with something and we learn more when we're passionate about what we're building. So I say start out trying to build the thing that brought you to games in the first place and even if you don't build it perfectly, your passion will come through and the values that you want to embed in this world will come through. So I always say kind of start from the passion project.

**Anastasia:** [00:27:39] Often when people try to learn programming, one of the reasons why people tend to fail at learning programming is not because they can't learn programming. Of course they can learn programming. But if they're just trying to learn programming to learn programming and they're following Code Academy tutorials are kind of however they've decided to approach it. They're not trying to build something they're passionate about.

**Anastasia:** [00:27:55] They know that they're supposed to learn programming, but they don't really have a reason to care about the programming. Whereas if you decide you want to make a game in Twine to express something powerful to you or something that you've learned about or recreate an experience,

you're going to have a reason to go learn the more complex code or stylesheet aspects in order to pull that off. You're going to have a motivation that's outside of just learning to code or learning to make games. It's going to drive you to learn and create more complex things.

**Bonni:** [00:28:21] I'm teaching a business ethics class in the spring. This will be my third time teaching the class. I have thought about having them build a game. I actually built the whole course was more of a Choose Your Own Adventure so they would get it as an option.

**Bonni:** [00:28:34] They could do other things in place of that project but I thought I'd open that possibility up. Admittedly though, I feel a little bit like I'm going to be a terrible coach for that because something like ethics is so complex and I think if they make it way too obvious that "this is the right choice." You know that's really not the most interesting exploration of applied ethics. So I'm kind of at a loss, but yet I also just feel that little bit of excitement though "you might not know what's going to happen. You might not be the perfect coach, but there's a lot of people out there that could help." Lots of communities. I don't know if you have any thoughts about building games for really complex things that don't have exact paths. Like when you're building a game- I think a little bit about Twine, it is very much like a Choose Your Own Adventure and there are paths that you have to go down. How do you build paths for really complex things?

**Anastasia:** [00:29:19] Well one thing you can do is take a look at the complex and powerful games that already exist within Twine. Of course my go to for this is anything by Porpentine, her work is powerful and nuanced and it's even sometimes when the choices lead to the same place, you find yourself thinking a lot about what happened on the way. With Those We Love Alive is a perfect game for that sort of experience.

**Anastasia:** [00:29:40] But then something that comes out of the games and learning community that's really helpful when you start getting caught up in making the perfect game or stimulation is that any game can be a valuable learning experience with debriefing. So sometimes the conversation you have after playing an imperfect game is much more valuable because that game led you into the conversation. And it doesn't matter if that game was flawed or if that game's morality was too simplistic. If it causes an emotional reaction or it causes people to say "no I don't want to make either of those choices. I want to do something else." Then that conversation that you have particularly in the



classroom after introducing that type of game, that's where the learning happens.

**Bonni:** [00:30:15] That's really helpful. Some years ago, gosh it must have been 6 or so years ago, my students made a board game called Bulls and Bears and it was designed to teach around 14 to 17 year olds, maybe a little younger than 17, about the stock market. But it actually works really well with- we've played it with someone in her 70s, so I know it works across generations. It a really good game and we did it through one of those websites where you can upload Photoshop or other graphic files to it so all the board pieces the cards and things were actually printed wit, they came up with logos and it was really a really great game. But it definitely had flaws because I think it conflated the idea of buying stock in a company, versus things that happen in industries that affect all companies that compete in that industry. And the way that they designed it, the cards and the choices, just the structure of it... It's always every time I've played it I've thought "gosh they learn so much by playing this game. And they really do better on the test and it stays with them for longer." I really love the game but man this just bugs me that this one thing- so I have really found and until you said this, I didn't really realize it but I've really found well of course then de-briefing.

**Bonni:** [00:31:14] What about the game wasn't really representative of how the real stock market works? Or if you were really putting your money in there, how could we change it? And that actually is a helpful way that I sort of thought of as just mass the faults of the game. But like now I'm realizing maybe is even more ideal because of what that debriefing experience can bring them.

**Anastasia:** [00:31:31] Absolutely. And even better if this causes your students to bring that awareness to the other games and the other kind of situations where they're engaging with the simulation or claim about something real and to notice where things are being conflated and where there are flaws. And that's an incredible learning outcome of its own.

**Anastasia:** [00:31:48] Actually a community it's really good at this is professors and teachers of history. There's a great blog Playing the Past and there's a lot of games that represent history in ways that are really problematic, civilization being one of the most infamous in that you can end up facing off against Ghandi and he has nuclear weapons. There's just lots of things going on in civilization that are about civilization as a game that while they're useful for the teaching of history, the conversations about all the problems within it and all the

assumptions in the code are much more valuable if handled correctly than just playing the game unsupervised would be.

**Bonni:** [00:32:18] I really like just thinking about that a little bit. You're reminding me of my mom recently took my son to the library, we had the gal who normally watches our kids she was supposed to come all week and poor thing has been sick the whole week. So we've been doing parental juggling and all of that.

**Bonni:** [00:32:32] She came up to help us out and came back from the library and of course we had said to our son you know or remember the librarians there, they can help you and everything. And he came back with like a couple of books about weapons and we're not really into weapons in our house and so just like I thought like do I try to censor this book from him? Or could we talk about why I don't always really celebrate books about weapons.

**Bonni:** [00:32:54] In fact there was another one that was about para-rescuers I think was the name of this position. It was published in 2013 and it says right in the pages "only men can do this job in the military." So I talked to my son and I was like "why do you think the only men could do this job? Do you think there are women who can run really fast and do lots of pushups and swim?" Oh yes mommy I think there are women that could do that. So why do you think men do this job? So it's kind of one of those things of exposing our students exposing the people we're trying to influence to things and then having them work out some of these complexities and some of the ways in which their own values may or may not be reflected is probably better than you know censorship and never letting our son talk to a librarian again. I'm working this out in my mind.

**Anastasia:** [00:33:35] Absolutely. And to me, that's one of the most critical things I try to manage teaching digital media and pop culture courses is to say "look here's the stories you're embedded in. Here's the games you're playing. Let's interrogate the values system." And that's of course a first step for someone who's going to design systems to think about and interrogate what they're going to do themselves and what they're constructing. But it also I think builds some resistance and awareness of the messages that are constantly enveloping us in culture.

**Bonni:** [00:34:03] You recently released your latest book Toxic Geek Masculinity in Media: Sexism, Trolling, and Identity Policing which you cowrote with Bridget Blodgett. And so here's the lamest question of my entire interview, what got you interested in writing the book about toxic masculinity?

**Anastasia:** [00:34:16] Yeah. So that's the hardest book I've ever worked on. And actually it was for an- When Bridget and I were working together at the University of Baltimore which is a program with a very small degree in game design where almost all of the students are cisgendered men. And I don't believe their demographics have shifted that much since I was teaching. It was very very dominated by a desire to make zombie games and other kind of violent games that were very popular in the triple industry.

**Anastasia:** [00:34:41] So we were kind of embedded in that as teachers. And of course there were students who wanted to do other things, but the dominant discourse of the games industry was ever present in the classroom and ever present in our research lives. Then of course, matters in the games industry and game culture got more visibly worse and withdrew in academics with of course events like Gamergate, which I talk about in the book I don't want to drag us down that rabbit hole. But I will simply say was a very violent backlash against some particular women in the games industry driven by a lot of hatred that led to a lot of public backlash and a lot of consideration for those of us who work as scholars in this space to think about "OK what is it we're working on? What is it we're teaching? And kind of what's happening with these things that we do love that's contributing to this toxic moment?"

**Anastasia:** [00:35:27] So for us, the book which was in progress before things got really bad was it took a lot of years to work on because we were kind of trying to construct a master narrative understanding while resisting master narrative simultaneously of what's happening with geek masculinity. And kind of what is it about this moment where geek culture is huge where everybody's got a Porg and Star Wars movies are back and comic book releases are are some of the biggest releases of the year that is also causing this incredible backlash that's hurting people in the spaces and media production areas that we love.

**Anastasia:** [00:36:01] So that project became one of trying to connect some of the stories and moments happening in comics and comics fandom like the backlash against "Fake Geek Girls" and people who were told it don't belong in comics conventions. Looking at some very troubling things that happened with the Hugo Awards where people were essentially saying that they were reclaiming the Hugo Awards for traditional sci-fi and stuffing the ballot boxes with works that included sometimes very racist, very misogynist depictions. And particularly trying to make it so that many Hugo Awards were awarded to nobody because the people voting on the final versions from a thing submitted by fans were so horrified by what had been nominated in some categories. And then connecting that to Gamergate and what's happening in the triple A

games industry. Putting that all together and to have this moment where we know that geek culture has gone mainstream, but some members within the geek community are and are not thrilled with what that means for pushes towards greater inclusiveness and just the visibility of people who are not white men within spaces that they saw as theirs.

**Bonni:** [00:36:58] What are some examples of the way that seemingly innocuous shows have contributed to this problem. I mean you've got some great examples from the book.

**Anastasia:** [00:37:07] Well I particularly would point to the number of shows that tell us to exalt a particular type of white masculinity. You and I were talking briefly earlier about our mutual love of Sherlock. So I feel I have to put that particular BBC show out to dry for a moment. So of course Sherlock is a show that tells us constantly that Sherlock is a genius. And it has a very very strongly dedicated fandom of people who love this character. And of course they do. He's an amazing actor. He is portrayed constantly in ways that remind us of his intelligence and snark. He has a great relationship with his unofficial love interest Watson that all builds into a show that's very watchable.

**Bonni:** [00:37:49] And he also has difficulty forming relationships with other people. So that has just been a theme in the younger days of my life. Fortunately I grew out of part of that. But yes there's that compelling thing of "oh wow there's this wounded incredibly intelligent strong yet weak man all at the same time."

**Anastasia:** [00:38:02] And we are invited to join him in mocking the women who get attracted to him. Of course we are invited to join him in rejecting those characters and women and treating women as very secondary. When we do have a woman character actually creating a dominant role in the show, Watson's wife of course who has her own narrative but is continually Watson's wife. That character was treated horribly by the show's narrative and systematically fringed a term we drawn from comics fandom to discuss. Describe the moment when an interesting woman is killed to further the plotline or emotional development of a man. Which is very very very common thing in comics film and television.

**Anastasia:** [00:38:43] But what happens with Sherlock is even more insidious than just those portrayals because a lot of it has to do with how that show treats the women who like that show and particularly treats the women who dare to kind of write fanfiction about it or ship the characters and-

**Bonni:** [00:38:58] What does that mean to ship the characters?

**Anastasia:** [00:38:59] So shipping is just imagining a relationship between two characters on the show. So shippers are ones that are waiting for like in classic era were waiting for Mulder and Scully to kiss.

**Bonni:** [00:39:06] Okay. That is a helpful analogy.

**Anastasia:** [00:39:07] So the most of the shippers on Sherlock were waiting for Sherlock and Watson to kiss. So shippers are kind of... Stephen Moffat as a showrunner really hate shipper's. He attacks them over in Doctor Who fandom as well. But in Sherlock, they do an entire episode in the text to make fun of fans and particularly fan girls where after Sherlock apparently was dead and they left us on social media leaving people to come up with their own wild narratives for how Sherlock survived the fall.

**Anastasia:** [00:39:33] We have an episode that is entirely has unnecessary moments devoted to having a Sherlock Fan Club meeting in the narrative of the show where all the men are giving their elaborate theories and when the woman present offers a narrative that also involves a love story, she becomes the most subject to mockery.

**Anastasia:** [00:39:49] The whole show kind of reinforces this idea that these characters fates are not for you to decide or speculate on, that the women watching are held up to greater derision and indeed to say it forces something we commonly see within the media industry which is a focus on fanboys as the valued audience. And people like Steven Moffat talking about making a show for themselves and people "like them."

**Bonni:** [00:40:11] And yet I love that you said that you like the show. I just love that there can be room for both of those things. We can think critically and we can be critical of the ways in which they're reinforcing toxic masculinity. And yet I don't have to shut off the show every time it comes on because I found it to be a really good show.

**Bonni:** [00:40:26] But you've shown me some really undercurrents of things I hadn't really thought about and I really appreciate that. And I no doubt in your book we will find even more of that encourage people to check about. And this is actually the time in the show where we each get to give some recommendations.

**Bonni:** [00:40:39] And I am going to recommend going over to visit your website and having a look around learning more about your book, Toxic Geek Masculinity in Media: Sexism, Trolling, and Identity Policing which is right there on the home page. But also then click over to the games tab and of course read Anastasia's blog as well. So that's my recommendation for today is to visit your website. Go have a look at many of the resources up there. You've got a link to talks and workshops that you've given and just a whole tremendous amount of resources. I can't stop this part of the recommendation without also saying go over to read your work on ProfHacker as well. And this is the point where I get to pass it over to you to make some recommendations.

**Anastasia:** [00:41:15] So since we talked earlier about board games, one of the best ways to get started with game design and also to see games differently is to play really interesting board games. So I want to recommend a few games that are cooperative games with interesting dynamics that are great for playing with family or even bringing into a classroom as a point of discussion of how games can work as an opportunity to have really interesting co-operative discussions and debates.

**Anastasia:** [00:41:40] So my top game right now is Pandemic Legacy. Season 2 was out. It's a standalone game. And this is actually based on classic pandemic which is exactly what it sounds like, you work as a team struggling against global pandemics and trying to make the right choices to shut down this epidemic and travel around and help as many people as you can while researching and curing diseases. What's really interesting about the legacy games is there are these very long narrative games where the choices you make in one play session affect your next play session. So even though it's a board game, there's this sense of history in developing your own story as you're going through this conflict.

**Anastasia:** [00:42:16] And then another great cooperative game that might particularly interest the historically minded is called Time Stories. It is a time travel game. It's beautifully crafted gorgeous cards in these elaborate mysteries that you're traveling back in time to fix something that went wrong. It takes you through a whole bunch of different settings. Just a really beautifully designed game, the type of game that when you look at it you can kind of imagine how this type of game design can lend itself to all sorts of stories and all sorts of ideas that you might have yourself.

**Bonni:** [00:42:44] This is a whole new world to me. You said board games, so these are games that I would purchase and would have a board in them, so

images on the boards? Pieces of boards? Cards? I mean how does it work? Are they similar to other board games I would have played in terms of the actual physical playing of the game?

**Anastasia:** [00:42:57] So I'm imagining other games you've played might be Clue, Monopoly, the types of board games that people are familiar with in family game night. Imagine those but if really interesting illustrators were involved and with a whole lot more cards and moving pieces.

**Anastasia:** [00:43:11] So they are complex physical objects but they really are works of art. And in that sense those of us who collect board games will often get drawn into buying one just because it's beautiful. So this is really a place where Game Design has just been pushing forward lately and there's so many interesting indie board games out there.

**Anastasia:** [00:43:28] I highly recommend the website Boardgamegeek if you're interested in learning more about board games. And when you find one of these that you like you can go search something like "Time Stories find games" like it that are recommended by other people and it's just you can take some great journeys that way.

**Bonni:** [00:43:41] Well Anastasia, it has been such an honor to get to talk with you today. It's funny in terms of having read so much of your work but not gotten to hear your voice yet. I really enjoyed our conversation and I'm so pleased that you're passing on your expertise to the Teaching in Higher Ed community.

**Anastasia:** [00:43:55] Thank you. It was great talking with you.

**Bonni:** [00:43:56] Anastasia Salter, thank you so much for being a guest on today's Teaching in Higher Ed Podcast Episode number 188. And thanks to all of you for listening. It is incredible to think in just 12 episodes we will be to episode 200 and a lot of that is because of all of you coming and listening to the podcast and sharing what you're taking away and recommending guests and topics.

**Bonni:** [00:44:19] If you have any recommendations that you want to make, you can always get in touch with me on Twitter. My Twitter handle is @Bonni208 or you're welcome to go to [Teachinginhighered.com/feedback](https://teachinginhighered.com/feedback). Thanks so much for listening and I'll see you next time.

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