

Bonni: [00:00:00] Today on episode number 145 of the Teaching and Higher Ed podcast, I talk about when things will just have to do.

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Bonni: [00:00:18] 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 our personal productivity approaches so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students.

Bonni: [00:00:47] Hello this is Bonni Stachowiak the host of the Teaching in Higher Ed. podcast. If this is your first time listening in a word of caution. This episode is a little bit different than my usual episodes for a couple of reasons. I usually have a guest with me and there are I mean there's a number of episodes that don't have guests so it's not that unusual.

Bonni: [00:01:09] But the really unusual thing is is that I'm recording this episode remotely and Andrew, our podcast editor will do the best job he can and make the sound quality as high as he can but I'm nowhere near in the same environment that I normally am when recording these in front of our professional podcasting equipment.

Bonni: [00:01:30] In fact Dave, my husband who has sometimes joined me on the show before is quite excited because we actually had to replace many of our pieces of hardware that make the magic behind both of our podcasts work and it's like he's a kid in a candy store with all his new toys. With the podcast mixer and the limited or gates and all of the equipment that help make so many of the episodes except this one sounds so good. I will say that I started with my ear pods and those do not produce high enough quality sound even for me to be able to tolerate it so I am instead recording off the Logitech HD 10 ADP

webcam that we have and I'm about to share with you why things are working a little bit differently this episode. I didn't want to just briefly mention that.

Bonni: [00:02:20] I have talked before about getting pretty nervous to record these podcasts. It's kind of some of it is inside baseball and may not be that interesting to those of you who don't do this kind of creative work but lately I have just been so amazingly incredibly thankful that people have agreed to talk with me and yet just the Imposter Syndrome has just been creeping in like nobody's business and I've been sort of lurking on these Sabbatical Beauty Facebook page posts. Sabbatical Beauty by the way is a company that was mentioned in a prior episode that is a company that was started by a professor who decided to just sort of take an alternative path in her career journey and start a company which again got the name Sabbatical Beauty and a link to that in the show notes.

Bonni: [00:03:13] But there have been a number of people who have been sharing themselves without their makeup on and some of their struggles and just celebrating the comfort and care that they're able to feel when using those products. And I laugh a little bit too myself because I feel like I'm going to share now about taking off my makeup but I actually have my makeup on because I'm sitting here at work right now but just sharing a little bit about what's been going on and why I find myself recording a podcast episode at work without the right equipment at 11:03 on Monday March 20th.

Bonni: [00:03:50] It starts with a little bit of an update if you've been listening for a while back on episode 117 I got to speak with my friend and colleague Kerry MOORE. And we spoke about the balancing act and specifically about a family member that I have who has begun to show some significant cognitive decline.

Bonni: [00:04:11] And since recording that episode things have gotten a lot worse although sometimes in life when things get so much worse then we can only know they're about to get better because we have to have hit bottom. But there have been some issues with that family member having money stolen and doctors visits that didn't produce the right forms and having to do all sorts of wrangling to make the right doctors visits happen and the right paperwork to get this family member into a safer place. There have been the hiring of some caregivers who have been a caregiver who's been just absolutely wonderful but now we realize since it's so good when she's there than we realize just how bad it is when she's not there and so we know change has to happen. And it's just been chaotic for myself and my husband and my Mom who are all working so hard to get this situation resolved.

Bonni: [00:05:09] I don't know if you saw the video but there was a man who is a BBC reporter and he was reporting on a story. And in walked his toddler with this swanky walk like I have got this all figured out and I'm coming to see my dad. And I felt a little bit like this little girl when I was in the pharmacy with this family member and our 3 year old daughter as I figure out oh well we're going to have to figure medication out when the caregiver isn't there and so I'll just get her one of the pill boxes that I have that may remember to take the pills that I need to take. You know it's got the days of the week and then it's a medicine that if she were to forget it's not the end of the world it just helps things work better if she were to remember to take them regularly.

Bonni: [00:05:59] So I got it all figured out and I've got my little walk and I'm going down and get that pill box and we go buy it and we get it home and I decided to only leave a week's worth of pills in there so that we could replenish them when my mom goes up there to visit. And my elation over having found the perfect solution for this potential problem. Quickly it crashed as I discovered that she actually cannot figure out how to open the pill box says turns it over and starts peeling off the label that I had taped to the back of it with the medicine information on it. And I just thought oh my gosh.

Bonni: [00:06:39] And my husband Dave and I were driving than just sharing because he's been going through his whole host of issues on this particular situation. More on the banking end of things and trying to protect her from having even more money stolen from her. We're driving and he says oh gosh this isn't even any of our parents that this is happening to you.

Bonni: [00:06:59] What's it going to be like if we end up you know what that season of life going to be like. And I just kept thinking back to Kerry sharing about the research on all of this just how important resilience is and I kind of was laughing and was angry all at the same time that this whole thing is just a poster child for resilience. And I don't want to be building it but I know that it's important. And I look forward with hope to have a podcast update where things are a little settled and I don't you know I'm not waking up in the middle of the night just worried and hoping that we get things resolved here in the coming days.

Bonni: [00:07:36] Well the rest of this episode I'm going to share a couple of other happier updates. And again I do believe that the update I'll be giving in the future on this family member will be a good one as well. There was a question that came in from a listener and I was going to wait until I got enough to have

an entire episode on Q&A but it just didn't make sense since I've been hanging on it for a little bit too long it's been more than a month now.

Bonni: [00:07:59] So John asked a question about handwritten notes and he says maybe this is a better question for your Slack channel. But with a debate about paper versus electronic notes being better, one criticism my students and I have to handwritten notes is being able to read them later especially during a lecture. How have you seen students cope with this?

Bonni: [00:08:23] Well this is one of those issues John where I feel like anything I say is fraught with peril because people feel so strongly about this. And I think it's important for us to just acknowledge that when we think about how great it is to look at the scholarship of teaching and learning and how far it's come and how much more attention and focus it's getting in higher ed. We still all need to come together and recognize the complexity of human learning and that we as we discover more about how we learn. That's when we realize how little that we know and I know that sounds like a cop out answer but I will share how I handle this.

Bonni: [00:09:07] The reason why I am such an advocate for blended learning is that it helps us be able to address multiple needs that our learners might have. I do tend to in my classroom have a lot of taking technology out and then being very strict about putting it back away. And in the vein of Jose Bowen when he wrote the book Teaching Naked thinking about what tools we need in the classroom and if what we're doing is taking a quiz it might make very well sense to pull our cellphones out.

Bonni: [00:09:45] But if what we're doing is trying to do deeper listening or deeper discussion or problem solving type of learning that it might be well best to have those potential distractions be put away somewhere. But the criticism comes up with disability advocates that there are some of our students who will have much more success taking electronic notes. I believe I've not read articles or seen literature but on Twitter I believe it's been noted that some people with dyslexia might have a better time taking electronic notes than they would on paper. And the literature and again it's mixed and complex but the literature has said that you know in some cases it's just so easy for us to type that we need. The difficulty that handwritten notes produce.

Bonni: [00:10:34] But advocates for those students who have dyslexia say well that's just too much difficulty to cause them. And then we don't want to ostracize them or isolate them and make them seem so where you have you

know this is the section where you sit if you have to use a computer or anyone who's using a computer is only doing it because they have my permission and sort of making them feel like they don't belong in the classroom.

Bonni: [00:11:00] So the reason why I like blended learning so much is that all of those potential differences for needs about how to take notes can be eradicated by having it delivered in a more individualized way individualized is such an overused term but that that tends to work better for me I can have what are called Pencasts and I've written some posts about Pen cast recently why I use them and how I produce them but that helps students be able to take more visual notes that don't require writing down a lot of words but can help them create a picture in their mind that when they go to take the test they tell me I see that picture when I go to write that essay question out or what have you it helps them be able to think more visually in memorizing things. And it's been really successful.

Bonni: [00:11:55] So how do I address this or how to my students cope with this is that they don't really do a lot of note taking in the class. We do a lot of retrieval practice in the class sometimes using technology sometimes using a pen and paper where they're redrawing those images that I have drawn for them initially in the pen casts in the class and teaching right now consumer behavior.

[00:12:19] I challenged myself a year ago to make every learning objective in that class be able to be represented on a single picture. And in this case it's a picture that starts with a V-neck T-shirt because a lot of things in consumer behavior come around to having value. And what's the external influences and the internal influences that will cause consumers to perceive value. And that was a really good challenge and has worked very well because frequently it'll be ok to take out the piece of paper draw your V-neck and then now we're going to look at one other aspect that eventually will tie back to value and it's worked out well not perfectly but the title of this episode is when things will just have to do. And I wanted to challenge myself with that last year. And then this is the second time that I'm teaching the course and it's going better and I anticipate that that growth will just continue where I can refine it and connect my analogies a little bit better. And even the examples that I use so it's just an answer to your question trying to be delicate about some of the complexities of this but for me trying to have note taking happen in the blended portion of my class the part that's delivered online through pen casts or videos through other means of reinforcement and minimizing any you know taking in the class unless it is again for retrieval practice.

Bonni: [00:13:49] I'm sure I'm not doing it perfect but it's really worked well for me what I commonly get from feedback from students is how much they are required to think in my classes and how challenged they are but because I regularly tell them the reason why I'm challenging them in that way they do tend to end up being not only appreciative of that but actually advocates for it and wishing that more of their professors would do that for them and challenge them in that same way.

Bonni: [00:14:20] The next message that I receive is not that I guess it is a question but not a question about teaching and learning. But more I question just about the podcasts from Lynn and she says "Hello Bonni, I love your podcast and they've taught me so many tools that I've never heard of and I'm so excited to try them in my own classrooms." Thank you. And she says "I have a question. Do you have transcripts for every episode. I don't always have a chance to listen to them except when I'm driving so it be great if I can read them instead.

Bonni: [00:14:52] The answer to your question Lynn is no and it's one of those things that I have struggled with over the years I've been doing it since June of 2014. The podcast is paid for entirely by my husband and I we haven't taken on any sponsors to date. Again this is March 20th 2017 and that's not the model that we're going with. We do make small amounts of money if somebody clicks on a link in one of the show notes and buys one of the books that our guest recommends it's never been enough to do much of anything except perhaps support the additional reading habit that I have by inviting people to come on the podcast but transcripts do tend to be quite expensive and generally speaking if a podcast comes along with transcripts they're funded either by advertising or some other way of monetizing the podcast.

Bonni: [00:15:46] This is something that I've really struggled with and I'd love to hear from any listeners who have opinions about this. I've thought of putting together some sort of crowdsourced optional funding mechanism one that I'm very familiar with is Patriae on dot com patriotic as a crowd sourcing where a podcast or an artist or a musician could say here is an opportunity to support the work that I do and you can sponsor on a per episode or per month basis and be able to provide a means for podcasts that are soul produced like mine to be able to put together things like transcripts I've thought about doing that.

Bonni: [00:16:28] I will admit to being apprehensive about doing it since I am such a big believer in the open educational resources movement and wanting to be a partner in that kind of community. So I struggle and go back and forth and have had some conversations. The summer of 2017 I'll be going to the

podcast movement conference which is going to be in our lovely Orange County here California in Anaheim. And maybe I'll get some more ideas there and I'll just continue the conversation.

Bonni: [00:17:02] But again I would be interested in knowing those of you who are listening. If you wouldn't be open to participating in a patron campaign or even if that would just turn you off whether you decided not to do it. But would you mind if I made some mentions of it on episodes or would that turn you off from listening that down the road.

Bonni: [00:17:23] So that's kind of the things that are going through my head and I'd love to be able to have transcripts for every episode. But as of this date we don't have it yet. It's not something that we're able to make work with how much money we already put into hosting the podcast all these years. The next thing I wanted to share is a little bit of good news about my role at the institution where I teach. I did get an official job announcement that went out a couple of weeks ago. I now our director of teaching excellence and digital pedagogy and it's one of those things that's a little bit hard to explain because I've been in a consulting role for a couple of years now. The institution had kept wanting me to take this job we had open a director of educational technology and I was hesitant because well I do have the technical competence and my background to have me be a good fit like that I just didn't like how geared it was specifically toward online learning and specifically toward the technical parts of our teaching.

Bonni: [00:18:29] And after all those consulting men and all that time and after some real soul searching where I found out that I actually enjoyed the role that I was playing better because even if the conversations started out being about teach or about technology they would eventually always come back to my heart and my soul and that's teaching. And I was able to correspond with a couple of past guests who've been on the show James Lang and Josh Eyler and I'm very appreciative to them for their advice and I'm also really appreciative of the individuals who are now be reporting to.

Bonni: [00:19:09] He's our senior director of our institute for faculty development. His name is Pete Menjares and part of why I agreed to take the role is just the trust that he and I have been able to build and his openness to change the job to better suit my strengths and my passions and what we both really believe our institution needs. So that was an exciting update and I my consulting agreement with them continues through the rest of this academic year. The job was announced but the actual contract gets written for next academic year. But

yes serving as the Director of Teaching Excellence and Digital Pedagogy for Vanguard University of Southern California that's exciting news.

Bonni: [00:19:52] And lastly I wanted to say that we are getting ready for episode 150 which is really amazing to think back about all that's happened since episode 1. It's just so fun and I've decided to make Episode 1 of 50 and all recommendations episode. So many of you have written or put in your iTunes reviews how you enjoy being able to have this eclectic mix of recommendations that come at the end of each episode. And I thought that you might enjoy the opportunity to participate in some of that fun and recommend something for the listening community of your own. And in order to leave a message you could record one and then email it to me. Or it may be even easier for you to go to teachinginhighered.com/contact.

Bonni: [00:20:47] And on that page is a link to leave an audio message and it's one that you can just record it right there on your computer assuming you have a microphone on your computer you'll be all set and you can record that and all receive it in the e-mail and can include it for episode 150 which again will be an all recommendations episode and really excited about that.

Bonni: [00:21:09] And I'll need to hear from you pretty quick because it's the episode is airing I believe it's mid to late April and so I need to be recording it in early April so as you're listening to this I hope you'll think about participating in that way. Speaking of recommendations this is the time of the show where I get to share one and I did mention I was being careful with my words in the beginning of this episode trying not to disclose too much about a family member who I care about very much and I also try not to just dump anybody who's listening Hey listen to this podcast. Or you can be depressed. But I also do so many of you have said how you appreciate my transparency and authenticity. So this is me attempting to do that. But that was pretty darn stress this morning when I came in to work.

Bonni: [00:22:02] It's a Monday as I'm recording this. And I had all the and had some bad dreams about the family member and just this feeling all this stress about this time of the semester and where my courses are at. And even though I'm not officially in terms of being full time in the position that I accepted as I mentioned I'm still at right now teaching two classes and it's tough it's tough to balance everything. So I came in and had all these grandiose plans of tackling what was in my head but I know better than that. And I know that the smartest thing that we can do when we're feeling that kind of stress is to stop. And do what in getting things done nomenclature is called "review" (Getting Things

Done, by the way, is in reference to a book written by David Allen and a whole methodology of tracking our commitments and prioritizing and things.)

Bonni: [00:23:00] And so for me the best thing that I could do and I did it and I already feel better is to review and in my case it's a weekly review. I also have a monthly review and have a yearly review as well. And Robert Talbert who has been on this show in the past to talk about some of his productivity in getting things done methodology. He has a post on the Chronicle about his weekly review process that's worth checking out if you want to learn a little bit more about how to have your stress go down just like I experienced this morning.

Bonni: [00:23:34] And I also spoke about my weekly review process in Episode 64 and all the resources that I'm mentioning are going to be in the show notes at teaching and higher ed dot com slash One forty five. Speaking of that show notes at teachinginhighered.com/145.

Bonni: [00:23:53] I just realized that Lynn who asked the question about transcripts she mentioned that she doesn't always have a chance to listen to the podcast except when she's driving home so she would rather read the transcripts. And Lynn I'm not sure if you're aware of this but there are show notes for each episode that well they are not exact transcripts they are links to all the things that we talk about on an episode. So if you listen in your car you would be able to follow up on many of the things that were discussed in a given episode so maybe that will help you out a little bit.

Bonni: [00:24:27] Hopefully that'll be at least some tool for you until some point in the future if we're able to get transcripts included as a part of what we offer to the community. Thanks for listening to this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. And if you're enjoying the show I would really appreciate it if you would consider raiding or reviewing the show. You can do that on whatever service it is you use to listen to it and it's really easy if you go into iTunes for example look up the show.

Bonni: [00:24:56] There is a ratings button there and you can click to give it a number of stars or even to type in some of your feedback about what it's been like to listen to the show. And lastly if you don't want to have to remember to go to the show notes every episode teachinginhighered.com/145 you could subscribe to the weekly update to get a single email with the show notes including all the links we talk about on the episodes as well as an article about either teaching or productivity that I write almost every week. Except when things get really bad.

Bonni: [00:25:30] So thanks so much for listening and thanks to all of you who've written one of those reviews and I'm really looking forward to hearing from many of you for episode 150. I'm hoping to see some more of those messages come in as of this recording I've already seen one from Steven Michael and I'm looking forward to seeing so many from so many others of you in the listening community. Thanks so much for listening and I'll see you next time.

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