Bonni: [00:00:00] On today's episode number 70 I speak with Dr. Amy Collier about not yet-ness.

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Bonni: [00:00:17] Welcome to this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. This is the space where we explore the art and science of being more effective at facilitating learning. We also share ways to increase our personal productivity approaches so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students.

Bonni: [00:00:44] Today on episode 60 of Teaching in Higher Ed Dr. Amy Collier joins me to talk about not yet-ness. She is the Associate Provost for digital learning in the office of the provost at Middlebury College. And that's a recent transition that she made. She'll tell us a little bit about that later on. She prior to that, was at Stanford and most recently was the Director of Digital Learning Initiatives in the office of the Vice Provost for online learning. Amy, welcome to Teaching in Higher Ed.

Amy: [00:01:18] Hi Bonni, thank you.

Bonni: [00:01:20] I noticed on your Twitter profile you said that you are very nerdy and often geeky and I'm curious how you distinguish between those two things.

Amy: [00:01:30] So I think this is this is just my definition I don't I don't claim that this is correct. I think that nerdy for me has come out of the book learning you know nailing theorists and certain books that you read about in grad school. Geeky for me is my husband.

Amy: [00:01:46] So somebody who likes Star Wars and Star Trek who likes Sci-Fi which you know he's actually quite popular these days. I kind of I begrudgingly say that I'm not as geeky as I'd like to be because it's really in right now.

Bonni: [00:02:02] And one of the other things you mention is that you enjoy shenanigans. Are there any that you care to admit to on today's podcast.

Amy: [00:02:09] Let's see a safe one might be karaoke let's go with that. Especially at conferences I have wonderful colleagues with conferences and occasionally we like to indulge in some singing and occasionally some dancing.

Bonni: [00:02:22] You also mentioned you'd like to sing the blues. Have you ever heard John Mayer on his live album Everyday I Have the Blues.

Amy: [00:02:29] I have. I have tried to channel Eric Clapton in my favor more than I do John Mayer. But my favorite blues artist is actually Stevie Ray Vaughan.

Amy: [00:02:41] My son is named after Stevie Ray Vaughan and he was born on B.B. King's birthday. He's a blues kid all the way around.

Bonni: [00:02:48] I don't have- I have lots and lots of songs from back in the days when we actually bought CDs.

Bonni: [00:02:53] You know. What would be the one album or maybe even just the one song I should absolutely go and listen to after we hang up the phone from Stevie Ray Vaughan.

Amy: [00:03:04] Goodness.

Bonni: [00:03:05] Probably too hard.

Amy: [00:03:07] I would say you know Mary Had a Little Lamb is always a super fun. I mean it's lively and hilarious and it's so he can tell he's having a great time and it's so easily.

Amy: [00:03:18] It's so easy to digest.

Bonni: [00:03:20] I haven't heard that one.

Amy: [00:03:21] A great intro into Stevie Ray Vaughan and there's a great documentary about him. So if you like what you hear, he had a tormented life. And so it's very interesting to watch. He died too young.

Bonni: [00:03:33] You studied for your Ph.D. Family Studies and that's something I don't know a lot about. Could you share how you got interested in that and also what it was like studying for your doctorate studies.

Amy: [00:03:47] It's kind of a sociology of the family kind of mixture of theology and psychology and education. Looks at the system the family system and it defines that pretty broadly. It doesn't kind of dictate what a family looks like necessarily.

Amy: [00:04:02] And it looks up that the family has been interacting with their systems like education systems and government systems and healthcare systems things like that.

Amy: [00:04:11] And looks at how the dynamics were interrelated. I got into the field mostly because I decided after declaring myself as a music major that I wasn't cut out to be a music major. Then a English or communication major wasn't really cut out for that either.

Amy: [00:04:27] And I found family studies which was an interdisciplinary program that had psychology and economics and sociology and all these different fields and I thought wow that's just interesting enough for someone who gets bored easily like I do.

Amy: [00:04:39] I started the program and fell in love with it. I love that theory building that we do. I love the kind of inclusive examination of the family I love the participatory action research. I first wanted to get into advocacy. I thought I would go be an advocate for for different kinds of policies that were funded for different kinds of families...

Amy: [00:05:00] But found education and went in that direction instead.

Bonni: [00:05:04] You said that you named your son after Stevie Ray Vaughan but then I didn't know your son's name Stevie. Is that correct.

Amy: [00:05:10] It's actually Vaughan.

Bonni: [00:05:11] Oh his name is Vaughan. Sorry if I missed that.

Bonni: [00:05:14] Tell me about.

Amy: [00:05:15] It's ok.

Bonni: [00:05:16] Tell me about Vaughan playing with Lego bricks and how that really connected you with that thought of how people learn.

Amy: [00:05:25] So I mean I think you learn a lot from parenting about you know learning and certainly you know in my studies we've studied parenting we study child development you know kind of from my nerdy side from my book side of things I knew I knew that play and that creative engagement was important to people learning but I had to witnesses it. You know very very closely.

Amy: [00:05:49] But you know as you watch your child growing up you see things happening and kind of start to wonder why are wonder what's happening inside of them. And so I began to think about his education and broader education as you know what are we trying to do here? Why do we keep seeing.

Amy: [00:06:09] Why do we keep seeing solutions and challenges thrown towards education that really paint education in this very short-sighted kind of limited light.

Amy: [00:06:20] And so as a parent could you talk on my if we talk about that and I decided just to kind of play with my son and see what happened when I gave them a couple different LEGO sets.

Amy: [00:06:35] So what I did was I gave him one LEGO set and I told him... and I had him pick out two of the exact same LEGO sets - the LEGO sets were the same. I had him build one set with the instructions.

Amy: [00:06:48] And I have a video on my blog so people can go look at these two videos of him building these LEGO sets. And they'll see in the video that when he's building according to the rules - when he's following the instructions you know. He's very concentrated because these instructions are - if you have ever built LEGOs, you know - are sometimes quite complex.

Amy: [00:07:05] So he builds and you know he accomplishes what he set out to do. And then I gave him the exact same set - the other one that was unbuilt - and I said, "Now just build it however you want." And he said, "Really? However I want?" And I said, "Yeah. Just however you want. Don't worry about the instructions."

Amy: [00:07:22] And immediately, as he started building, you know, he went to these creative places he started putting together things that look nothing like the original set.

Amy: [00:07:30] And he played the whole time he kind of you could see his enjoyment in the video. It's so palpable. There's no audio in there, but you can still see. He's making sounds he's talking the whole time - he's just having a blast.

Amy: [00:07:43] And ever since you know I watch him play with other still and you know he'll occasionally deal with that as it is supposed to be the very first time.

Amy: [00:07:50] But then from here on out is it's mayhem. You know it's whatever you want. The great thing about LEGOs is that is gives kids these tools. They don't have to be built a certain way. And you know then you then kind of take that and turn it into thinking about learning more broadly.

Amy: [00:08:08] I love that when you work with students to give them bricks to give them tools and spaces and opportunities to kind of do what you know do something related to what you're talking about in class but that they can kind of take it and build things that are their own and do something creative in ways that you might not have predicted.

Amy: [00:08:29] You see I think a lot of joy and a lot of excitement and a lot of play when that happens and that's one of the things that I think is something that she should strive to achieve as educators. Give students that space for play.

Bonni: [00:08:43] As I told you about over email I've been looking forward to this conversation for a while you actually recently moved to job so I had to be patient and wait until you settled in. Although I don't think you're probably ever likely to be too subtle of a person that think you like the adventure of it all.

Bonni: [00:08:58] But I was not as nervous today as I usually am because you and I have already - I've discovered - things in common and it helps me feel more comfortable.

Bonni: [00:09:06] Two of those things we have in common: One is our love of teaching and just passion and thinking about that and reflecting and then the second one is perhaps unexpected by some of our listeners and that is that Jazzercise has connected us.

Bonni: [00:09:19] You teach Jazzercise Classes and I take them and I have been for many moons in fact my mother took the first Jazzercise Classes from Judy Misset - who's the founder - and my brother and I would go to the Junior High School where she would teach and we would kind of toll around there while mom took her class and then as I got older I took the junior Jazzercise and got old enough to do it.

Bonni: [00:09:40] So tell me about your interest in Jazzercise and what parallels you see between it and your love of teaching and how people learn.

Amy: [00:09:49] I found Jazzercise through a good friend - my best friend at the time - I was living in Texas and she had joined and she just fell in love with it. I had just recently had my son and I said, "Well, I'll go." I tried it one time and I was just like, "Uhhhh not for me." I felt awkward. I felt like it... I had no dance background. I felt like you know maybe this just wasn't going to be for me. Eventually I decided, you know what?

Amy: [00:10:11] For my health and because my best friend goes - I'm going to try it, again. And for some reason whatever it was at that moment at that time in my life it just clicked and I think it was partly because my state of mind had changed over time. After having my son I actually had a little bit of postpartum depression and coming out of that I started to see opportunities for joy in my life differently and this became one of those opportunities for joy in my life and dance has become I think since then a place where I find freedom and I find clarity and I find health, of course, because this is a health program. Just immediately as soon as I start taking classes with a different frame of mind... Within just a couple of classes one of the teachers came up to me and she goes, "You move well... and you seem to really love this. You should try to be an instructor."

Amy: [00:11:00] At the time I was starting to apply and interview for the job at Stanford that I had before I came to Middlebury. I thought well of about move - might be something to try.

Amy: [00:11:12] And so I moved out to California. I had lots of free time on my hands because I'm my husband and son and had not moved out with me at the time. I tried out - and what I love about it in addition to just the program (It's a wonderful program) and that dance is something that I find - something that connects us as humans and something that's really for me is a place of immense joy. I find that I love the teaching [aspect?] of it. I love to connect with people

at all different kinds of skill levels and work with them to find that joy in their own way.

Amy: [00:11:47] And I think this parallels kind of how I think about teaching, too, in that - - for me, coming into the classroom from a place of acceptance. You know - each of the people who is coming into this classroom comes from a different background has a diverse experience in this case with dance has you know maybe some baggage around and some people have fear. Some people have a huge background so they come in with a lot of confidence - in the same way that I would see a student coming into my class on some educational topic.

Amy: [00:12:18] You know they come with different backgrounds and finding out what drives them, what gets them excited, what keeps them coming back... Starting from where they are and helping them to find their own voice or their own step - their own way and improvising. To me that's just that's that's what education is about. To me - that's where I find the most joy.

Amy: [00:12:39] And I think that I've been able to replicate in my job as a Jazzercise teacher the way I approach teaching is in general and because of that I think I mean I developed strong relations with my students. I feel like that classroom is a community rather than just a place where I go in and do a job. And so I think that there's a really nice parallel between my love of Jazzercise and the way I approach teaching and learning more broadly.

Bonni: [00:13:04] How do you define not yet-ness and when did this phrase first enter into your mind?

Amy: [00:13:13] So, not yet-ness is a term that Jen Ross and I - Jen is at the University of Edinburgh - she's a senior lecturer there.

Amy: [00:13:23] She and I met at a conference a few years ago and just really hit it off. We've become great colleagues and we have worked together on several projects. We were asked a few years ago to do a presentation at a conference - a keynote at a conference - and it was on kind of "mess" in online learning.

Amy: [00:13:40] The idea was for us to kind of push back on some of the ways in which we approach online learning which is to put really rigid structures on top of it whether it's using rubrics to design a course or to use a heavy handed

backward design process that doesn't allow for some creativity for some exploration both on the part of the faculty and the students.

Amy: [00:14:04] So our keynote was on and bringing mess and embracing that into online environments to allow for you know different different kinds of learner experiences and outcomes to emerge.

Amy: [00:14:18] And the notion of emergence was one that we have been playing with... We kind of ran into it through complexity theory. Complexity theory has this notion of the emergence and it was it just kind of resonated for us - kind of creating the conditions for emergence was something that we felt like was where we wanted to talk about and do additional research on.

Amy: [00:14:41] And after the presentation we had the chance to then write a kind of book [version?] for a book that George Veletsianos is the editor for. And it was again on this idea of mess in online education and as we were writing about it we came across the original the first edition of this book, in which George Veletsianos had written a introduction where he talked about the emerging technologies. He kind of explored the notion of emerging of what does emerging technologies mean?

Amy: [00:15:15] And he writes about how emerging technologies satisfy two not yet conditions. One is that they're not yet fully understood. You know that there's you know how they're used and what they're intended to be is not totally defined yet and that they're not yet fully researched.

Amy: [00:15:36] That is that we don't really totally understand how to assess those environments or those tools to whatever the emerging technology is. And we really latched on to this idea and thought about the notion of not yet because on the one hand while we're talking on emerging technologies in this case of being kind of have not yet this and not yet that, but we loved the idea of kind of living in that not yet-ness - about instead of using not yet as just a means to an end.

Amy: [00:16:08] Actually not yet-ness as an end itself... That when you embrace not yet-ness and you're kind of allowing for emergence. You're creating space for things to continue to evolve and develop as say a student grows and develops through learning certain things or when you're designing a course creating space that is not fully defined.

Amy: [00:16:33] And doesn't have maybe a specific purpose and that's ok and embracing that. And talking to students about: "You know this is a space that I put here and I don't really know what to do with it. Let's figure this out together.

Amy: [00:16:44] We love this idea of kindness and grace. Embracing not yet-ness as a place where we can see things and move to where we can give people space to to try new things without pressures of checklists and rubrics and everything has to be just perfect before it launches.

Amy: [00:17:07] And I think this is the reason it's resonated with people is that so many of the technologies we see so many times that people talk about in terms of online traditional learning.A very overly defined you know like a backwards / an ADDIE design process. That's the exact expectations of what will happen.

Amy: [00:17:28] That's the exact place that students will get to get. The expectations for how students will get there. And those are all lovely ideas and theory I think but they definitely have a lot of space for you know improvisation as you were saying before as creativity and play and discovery and awe.

Amy: [00:17:50] I can't help but think that those are parts of the education that we actually really like and so by not creating space for those things we kind of just creating as mechanistic approach to education rather than something that feels more human and more responsive to our humanity.

Amy: [00:18:11] So that's kind of the notion of well not yet but we've been working with. And you know what's great about it as a concept is that a lot of people have taken it to very different places. To talk about not yet-ness in faculty development. To talk about not yet-ness in a variety of contexts.

Amy: [00:18:27] And I think it's a lovely way to frame an embracing of emergence and find joy in the work that we do.

Bonni: [00:18:40] You earned your Ph.D. in an interdisciplinary discipline. That sounds really redundant and you also of course have worked across many disciplines in coaching and supporting faculty. What are a few examples that come to mind of whether its emergence in different disciplines or whether it's not yet this or just messiness in online education what are some stories that come to mind?

Amy: [00:19:07] One of the things that come to mind when I think about not yet-ness and the notion of interdisciplinary... is interdisciplinarity is the idea that so

much of our curriculum - even that word is kind of a funny one - and so much of the things we do in education are bound by disciplines right?

Amy: [00:19:29] Disciplines are the way in which we structure things and they guide students through a particular path and where it seems the most creative creativity and exploration is where students are allowed to cling to transverse between different paths because of interest because of things that really motivate them.

Amy: [00:19:51] So you know without thinking about technology I could think of programs where students have gotten really involved in social issues. Right?

Amy: [00:20:00] And so instead of you know just taking biology maybe I'm actually in some kind of program or some kind of interdisciplinary thing that allows me to take courses related to social issues from a different stances, or from a variety of different perspectives. And what that does is it allows me to get a better kind of a more holistic view of a phenomenon maybe if I'm studying poverty or am really interested in alleviating poverty.

Amy: [00:20:32] Seeing it from a biological lens.. seeing poverty from a social lens... seeing poverty from a humanistic lens. Although both help me to better understand the issue and to be creative about how I approach looking for solutions or engaging other human beings in solutions and that cross disciplinarity really gives me the ability to work across methodology across theoretical lenses in a way that I think is really important.

Amy: [00:21:03] When I think about that you know kind of facilitated by technology I think of things like Domain of One's Own which you know is really just a place where it's more centered around an individual.

Amy: [00:21:17] But an individual can connect to broader community - say a community about social issues that I'm interested in - through their own in their own domain and stay with that community and interact with that community in a flexible way - independent of what kind of program they are in.

Amy: [00:21:38] So you know the example that I use on my blog when I talk about not yet-ness and in this kind of interdisciplinarity is DS106 which is a digital storytelling course that was done several years ago by Jim Groome and some other folks at the time at University of Mary Washington and digital storytelling is a topic that you could approach from a number of different lenses. From the

humanistic, which I think was kind of the original framing of it, but you could approach it from psychology you know a lot of different lenses.

Amy: [00:22:15] And the space and the way that students interact with it was facilitated by the fact that they had this flexible infrastructure that they could you know push things and share their perspective and synthesize perspectives and report on perspectives while also connecting to a community that's kind of in an ongoing way was having these discussions about this topic.

Amy: [00:22:41] I guess that's how I would see the relationship between not yet-ness and you know an example the Domain of One's own and this notion of interdisciplinarity.

Bonni: [00:22:52] It's interesting to talk to people almost every week sometimes twice a week about teaching in higher ed. There are so many... I just love the diversity of conversations we've had.

Bonni: [00:23:02] And when Jesse Stommel was on he talked about teaching with Twitter among other things and he was sharing about and I just felt this tension to stop wanting to track it all and I want to have there be perfect checkboxes and know to what extent people participated and it's those are the kinds of things and I know this from online forums which I no longer use at all because I find them to be not helpful to the learning process.

Bonni: [00:23:28] But when we tell people for example go to three different students' messages and reply to their messages and that's how we decide that you check the box for that week and I get those kinds of tensions. But Twitter just opened up this whole box because there's not a nice little tidy box of how to track that sort of thing on any level.

Bonni: [00:23:48] And then last week's conversation - she was talking about that her students and this is these are Yale students. I can't even imagine how much more this is true for my students that they needed some kind of a reward to give their group answer and to have that little bit of motivation.

Bonni: [00:24:05] What where do you see this tension between me wanting to track things and have there be accountability and yet can it go too far in the messiness direction? What would be your thoughts on that? I sure am asking a very good question but hopefully I have sparked something in you.

Amy: [00:24:21] Yeah I think that's a great question and it's a question you know often when we talk about not yet-ness, this is one of the questions that comes up. Particularly you know say a faculty member might say something along the lines of, "Yes, not yet-ness is appealing to me, but the way I get rewarded as a faculty member is by my students achieving specific goals that maybe my department has outlined for me.

Amy: [00:24:53] And if I can't demonstrate in a really tangible way to them you know whoever's looking at this, my administrator or whoever that my students have achieved these particular, specific goals you know I'm in trouble. This does not work for me.

Amy: [00:25:09] And I think I think that you're right that you know there's the there's a tension between the expectations even the students bring the expectations that we have about what an education might look like and what are the telltale signs of that "good education" and messiness and the kind of exploration that we were just talking about.

Amy: [00:25:37] And clearly there's no right answer but I will propose a couple of things. I think one is one of the good things one of the fruitful things about these conversations we have been having about not yet-ness - is only raise these questions.

Amy: [00:25:50] One of the following responses and something that Jen Ross has tried to tackle is you know what if our methods of understanding evidence of learning are insufficient? Because of that, even if we try to apply them and say well really need these because you know we need evidence of learning really they are checkmarks thaty are not totally evidence of learning.

Amy: [00:26:17] And I think what this raises is the question of what how do you better understand what it means to learn and what that looks like and how diverse it can look like? What are the methods that we should be evolving in exploring alongside our teaching methods to improve our understanding, improve our assessment, and I think of assessment realizing that it's a problem word here...So that we can understand and the students themselves can understand what progress has been made and that students can feel motivated working toward something because sometimes you know about that checklist gives them something very concrete to work toward.

Amy: [00:27:01] And even if they don't really get much out of the process of checking those boxes - they're checking the boxes. And that's motivating for a

lot of students. So I guess what I would say is that one of the conversations we should be having is how do we evolve the ways in which we understand what learning is...

Amy: [00:27:20] And my concern and - this is something that I talked about in my keynote with Jesse Stommel - my concern is that we've kind of swung the pendulum swung toward we the uber accountability side of things you know the ways in which we define learning are are like you said the kind of checkboxes. There rubrics... learning outcomes.

Amy: [00:27:43] The gold standard research which is blind, empirical research that gives us these very clear answers about you know can we predict when the field will drop out? And can we can we determine what what is a student's knowledge state at a certain point in time?

Amy: [00:28:09] And so that kind of thinking does not really mesh well with the notion of kind of messiness and not yet-ness. And that tension is definitely there. So can we evolve our understanding in our thinking about the method by which we have evidence of learning and even that evidence is problematic.

Amy: [00:28:29] Jen Ross has a paper coming out about this where she talks about speculative methods and she would be much more prepared to talk about this than I am but you know she talks about embracing methods of understanding that give us give us room to explore various ways in which learning is done and demonstrated and shared and understood and motivated.

Amy: [00:28:53] And I think that's a pretty pretty exciting area to push towards. Can there be too much mess?

[00:29:02] Hard to say. One of the questions that I have been struggling with is that I don't have the answers for but I'll just throw it out there because I would love to get discussions about this going in addition to some of the assessment kind of things... is...

Amy: [00:29:16] How you know - when you embrace not yet-ness in your classes who - for students does that work best? For which students will really be an exciting proposition and a place where they can jump off from and do really exciting things. And for which students might that be scary - and maybe not scary in the sense of just it frightens them but a good frightening but more like it could cause some kind of disequilibrium that is unsafe in terms of their successful participation in the educational experience.

Amy: [00:30:03] And I don't know the answer to that. That certainly a question that I've been talking with with Sean Michael Morris and Jesse Stommel and others about you know does not yet-ness favor a certain kind of student and or student with a particular background or a student with a particular preparation.

Amy: [00:30:21] And if we embrace it are we creating a situation where we're furthering inequities in our classes or are we creating a situation where some students would just really really struggle and struggle in a completely unproductive and problematic way? I don't know, but that's something that, again...

Amy: [00:30:41] What I love about this concept is it gives us room and an opportunity for reflection to ask the question of ourselves to be critical about our own pedagogy. I don't know that we do that enough and I don't think there's enough space for us to do in addition to everything else that we do and it's often not safe for faculty and teachers to spend time being critical about their own pedagogy - and not critical in the sense of just self-evaluation but critical in the sense of thinking about inequities thinking about who who is in power who gets left behind - those kinds of things. These are all really important questions to ask and ones that and I hope we continue to discuss.

Bonni: [00:31:24] What have I not asked you about not yet-ness that we should be sure and mentioned before we go on to the recommendations segment?

Amy: [00:31:32] The one thing I would say and this relates to kind of the overall conversation that we had around kind of dance and choreography and improvisation and not yet-ness.

Amy: [00:31:43] It's really a question I have and one that you'll probably see on my blog in the very near future that I've been been world and trying to think about. And that's because the notion of embodiment.

Amy: [00:31:56] Jen [Ross] and I explore this in an upcoming chapter that we have about not yet-ness. We talk about the embodiment of online teachers and even embodiment in the classroom I think is something that we kind of have not explored enough and how that relates to not- yetness in some ways the concept itself is not yet in my mind.

Amy: [00:32:19] That's part of the issue. But I guess this is a question I want to throw out there and encourage conversation about and theorizing about it, too.

Amy: [00:32:24] Because I really want to think about embodiment as as a point of a fruitful area of discussion for thinking about relationships of power relationships of learning.

Amy: [00:32:42] I'm reminded where bell hooks in her book Teaching to Transgress talks about embodying it when you ignore the body in the classroom. You know the physical body in the classroom you often kind of ignore the things that make us who we are and therefore you kind of privilege... I think it was Audrey Watters she says "we privilege the mind over the body" and how that's a problematic thing to do because the body is very much a part of who we are and the experiences that we have and the things that we bring to our learning processes.

Amy: [00:33:14] The embodiment of something that I'm just itching to explore... I would love to have collaborators on this and I'm sure Jen would, too... on this topic. And you know in some ways it relates to my interest in dance because in many ways... I have been building a relationship with a professor here at Middlebury who's a dance professor.

Amy: [00:33:37] We've talking about the idea of embodiment and bringing embodiment into the classroom in different ways and how to talk about it and how to recognize that the body is very much a part of who we are as humans and therefore are very much part of our learning.

Amy: [00:33:50] So I invite you to bring this - all the listeners - to talk about this very Not-yet topic at least not-yet to me. And to join in the conversation.

Bonni: [00:34:06] Thanks for that. This is the time in this show that we do recommendations and my recommendation is just a quick one, it's from a former guest who has become a friend, Doug McKee from Yale.

Bonni: [00:34:17] He and I were direct messaging each other back and forth on Twitter I was having a little tough day and I had stayed at work a long time to grade essays and just thought oh gosh what are we doing.

Bonni: [00:34:28] I felt pretty discouraged about where my students were at. And he wrote back. "Your job is to move them one step along a path. You can do that job no matter where they are when they enter your class.

Bonni: [00:34:40] And I so needed to hear that last night and I hope some of you that resonates with you. We don't have to fix all of the challenges of learning in the educational system when we're teaching people who who maybe aren't where they need to be at this stage in their education. We just have to move them one step along. And what is your recommendation for people today.

Amy: [00:35:03] You know I'm reminded of. And partly because of the conversation we had, I'm reminded one of my favorite authors Anne Lammot. And she writes about a situation where she had an opportunity to facilitate a course or a class for adults with different kinds of disabilities.

Amy: [00:35:25] And she said at the end of the class a few of the participants of the class kind of said that they really appreciated her being there because she she danced with them.

Amy: [00:35:41] And Anne Lammot writes "These are the words I want on my gravestone: that I was a helper and that I danced" and I think to go along with your idea of kind of one step at a time.

Amy: [00:35:51] I think you're right that in many ways we get overwhelmed by the task to teaching and sometimes if we think of ourselves as dancers people who maybe there sometimes choreography maybe it's sometimes it's free movement.

Amy: [00:36:07] But we're human and our dance is one of the things that we bring to human interaction. So I guess if we think about ourselves as bringing our humanity to the class and being willing to sometimes be vulnerable which you know dance sometimes is vulnerable, sometimes choreographed and sometimes completely improvisational and that's ok too.

Amy: [00:36:30] If we see ourselves as dancers that might be a helpful metaphor for some of us who feel overwhelmed by teaching. That you may be a dancer and that you made a helper as teachers.

Bonni: [00:36:44] We have something else in common. Anne Lammot is also my favorite authors. What a way to end.

Bonni: [00:36:51] Thank you so much for being on Teaching in Higher Ed today and I hope this is just the beginning of a conversation and as you said even invited others into it as well. Thank you so much for being a guest.

Amy: [00:37:01] You're very welcome Bonni. It was great to chat today.

Bonni: [00:37:03] Thanks once again to Dr. Amy Collier for being a guest on today's show. If you'd like to make any comments on the episode and she's invited us in to start a conversation please do so at teachinginhighered.com/70.

Bonni: [00:37:19] As always I would love to have your feedback I'm getting so many great messages with ideas for the show and encouragement you can do that at teachinginhighered.com/feedback.

Bonni: [00:37:30] Would love to have you give a rating or review on iTunes or whatever service it is you used to listen to the show so more people can discover it. That's the way those algorithms work. To get your show up there and have more people become aware of it.

Bonni: [00:37:45] Thanks in advance for doing that and to all of those that have already written reviews. And lastly if you have yet to subscribe to the weekly email you'll get the Ed Tech Essentials Guide.

Bonni: [00:37:55] All the show notes from every episode would come into your inbox. Only one time a week and included will be an article about teaching or productivity and that can be accessed at teachinginhighered.com/subscribe. Thanks for listening and I'll see you next time.