

Bonni: [00:00:00] Many of us are getting ready for the fall semester in today's teaching in higher ed Podcast Episode 11 our recommendations for how to make that process go as smooth as possible.

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Bonni: [00:00:25] 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: [00:00:48] Welcome to this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. This is Bonni Stachowiak. And I am joined today for the first time but definitely will not be the only time with a dear friend and colleague at Vanguard University Sandie Morgan.

Sandie: [00:01:02] Thank you. It's great to be here.

Bonni: [00:01:04] Thanks for having you here. Sandie is in addition to teaching as a professor. Like I do. She also has a role as the director of the Global Center for Women and Justice.

Sandie: [00:01:21] That's right. That's right. It is a mouthful but it does describe what we do.

Bonni: [00:01:25] Yeah. So in addition to having a role teaching she also has a lot with partnerships with our community with law enforcement with the judicial system and project management and grants. And my head just hurts.

Sandie: [00:01:39] But I get excited just like you do with a new school semester starting.

Bonni: [00:01:44] Yes it is exciting that I'm looking forward to for listeners who may not know I've been out on maternity leave in the spring of 2014. So I feel a little rusty. We'll see. We'll see how I do.

Bonni: [00:01:58] So we are going to be talking about what each one of us is focused on for the Fall and we're going to share a little bit about where our heads are at and some techniques that have worked with us in the past and kind of what we're working on. So, Sandie tell me about some of the things you're looking forward to focusing on in the fall.

Sandie: [00:02:17] Well I think getting my Moodle as we call it our beloved software program with all my class shells done updating from last year because the classes I'm teaching I've taught last fall. So the basics are already there so it saves me a lot of time and I just have to tweak them and upgrade one of the things that I'm not sure my students will be really excited about.

Sandie: [00:02:41] But I am I'm going to increase the number of quizzes that I give on Moodle because I give them a quiz that's related to the content in their reading that I want them to be able to discuss in class. And you know you always have one maybe two maybe more students that show up and they didn't get the reading done.

Sandie: [00:03:01] They're going to do it later. And so they just take copious notes. They don't really get engaged in you and I both know real learning takes that engagement.

Sandie: [00:03:09] So I started doing a quiz on Moodle. So they do it before class and they get two chances. So I don't want them to feel like this is really something really stressful. Oh if I didn't get it right I get a second chance.

Sandie: [00:03:24] But it really makes that fresh. And when they come into class they're ready to talk about it. And so we want to increase that and have more opportunities for those kinds of opportunities to take quizzes.

Bonni: [00:03:36] Sounds like a really good thing to be focused on. It reminds me of a couple of things one is and I'll put a link to this. And the show notes I recently became a member of a group on LinkedIn called technology using professors.

Bonni: [00:03:49] And there were a lot of really good discussions in there and one guy was asking about how does he get started with flipped learning. If he's

never done it before and what you're describing even with just having a quiz that happens that they take before they come into the classroom that can prime them a little bit to be more oriented toward what the discussion will be for the class.

Bonni: [00:04:10] So I think it's a wonderful way for people to get started with that technique of a protein learning. And then by the way for anyone listening flipped classroom is when instead of you doing the lecture in the classroom and people do their homework at home it tends to be a term that's used a lot with elementary school and high school kids.

Bonni: [00:04:28] But certainly it applies to higher ed as well. Instead of that we have the lecture or the learning the the more passive learning that takes place outside the classroom. So when we come together in the classroom we can do more collaborative in problem solving type of learning. So I like that.

Bonni: [00:04:47] The other thing I like is I have just a few pages shy of finishing a book called Cheating Lessons by James Lang and one of the things he reminds us in his book is that we can reduce the likelihood of cheating of having there not be so many huge high stakes assignments.

Bonni: [00:05:05] So by having there be more quizzes along the way and in your case you're allowing them to have two opportunities to take them that's reducing the intensity of those assignments which is also going to help them learn and will also reduce the likelihood of cheating because there's not so much pressure put on to one assignment.

Bonni: [00:05:25] He contrasts for example a class that might have a midterm in a final and the high stakes that those assignments represent versus more frequent quizzing along the way like like you're describing.

Bonni: [00:05:37] So that's wonderful.

Sandie: [00:05:38] And end the use of technology means that when they take the quiz it goes into their grading in moodle and then I just push a button and I get the numbers. I don't have to hand tabulate everything.

Bonni: [00:05:51] Yes so it has the added advantage of being more efficient for you as well which is fantastic. So I know one of the other things that you were talking about getting ready to do Sandie was to start using or I guess more using this app called Attendance 2.

Bonni: [00:06:07] So if you go to the app store on the iPhone. This is an iPhone specific app. But the concepts would apply to other attendants taking tools on other platforms. But if you search attendance to that is a wonderful app developed by a guy who just keeps making it better all of the time.

Bonni: [00:06:26] That's what I love about these independent developers who have such a heart for the products that they produce. And so I know you were looking forward to making better utilization of that app in the fall including getting your students pictures up there.

Sandie: [00:06:39] Oh I love having the pictures so that when I take all the first few times I'm looking at the picture the student the name because it's so important to call them by name.

Bonni: [00:06:49] Yeah I love it. And I am not afraid to admit this.

Bonni: [00:06:54] Maybe I guess a better phrase is that usually sometimes at the start of a school year maybe sort of kind of there are meetings which may not always be the best use of our time it just depends on what the meeting is and who's conducting it.

Bonni: [00:07:10] But if I get it or if I come early I'd like to arrive places early if I've got those little gaps in my day. Then I'll pull out the attendance to app and I'll start quizzing myself on the names. It doesn't necessarily have a built in way to do this what I do is I bring up the option that says to select random students in the class.

Bonni: [00:07:33] So it'll show me a random student but it has their name there and I just hover my thumb over where the names appear. So I'll just press the button for the next random student and I'll see their picture and my other thumb is covering up where their name shows up and that's how I will quiz myself on the students names and that really helps me learn the names for when the semester starts. So we have to take quizzes ourselves. Yes.

Bonni: [00:08:00] But in fact back to that so much reading I've been doing around teaching. When we quiz our students more frequently they learn more effectively. Well when we quiz ourselves more frequently like that then we can help learn it. And that works to me a lot better than a roster that you might print out with their photographs on it.

Bonni: [00:08:20] Because if you're anything like me you'll remember it then by nature of where it was on the page and the order that it was in. So I like the random feature because then I'm not caught with myself just memorizing where they were on a page.

Bonni: [00:08:33] And so because you never know where they're going to sit when they come in the classroom and hopefully they don't always sit in the same place at least not the first couple classes they haven't settled into to a spot yet.

Sandie: [00:08:43] You know talking about apps. Another one that I'm going to use more this semester and I'm excited about is the Remind 101 except I think they changed the name didn't they.

Bonni: [00:08:55] Yeah it's called remind, just remind. So that is a fabulous app for anyone listening that's not used before. It is an app that you can use to remind your students of things on the device that they look at more than anything else and that's their cell phone.

Bonni: [00:09:15] And I love being able to do this without the students having my cell phone number because I am not too keen on them having my cell phone. That's one thing I have just still never broken down and my cell phone number they can call my office line and leave a voicemail and I can get back to them or e-mail is a much better way I tell them of getting in touch with me and then I can phone them back from a line here at home that is not such a personal connection point for me as as my cell phone is.

Bonni: [00:09:44] And so with the mind what it is is a service where your students can sign up you just go up there create an account for yourself and you create a class and then your first day of class. They can all sign up using their cell phone.

Bonni: [00:09:57] They just send a text message to your class specific number and text them back and ask them to give their first and last name so that you know who it is that has the various accounts. But it actually protects you from having their cell phone.

Bonni: [00:10:13] Now most of the time I actually have the students cell phones in our student records database so that's not necessarily as important of protection. But there may be a reason why you might want to use the service

where you'd want to tell the audience hey I'm not going to have access to your cell phone for this service. And they continue to enhance this service as well.

Bonni: [00:10:32] So it's not only text based now but you can actually send images. So Sandy imagine tweeting in your class that you went through together and you were using a white board. And one of the things I guess he'll be teaching in is family violence in the fall and so perhaps you have had them come together to say let's look at some of the contributing factors to why family violence occurs and you're trying to engage them in the reading they've done before they came to class and the quiz that you gave them before they came to class and now you're trying to bring it together in the discussion.

Bonni: [00:11:06] So you're getting them to engage in or you might even I sometimes have students come up to the White Board you teach some smaller classes where that might be a good tool to use. You say you come up to the class and maybe instead of writing it draw an image that to you represents one of the contributing factors to family violence.

Bonni: [00:11:26] And then you could take a picture of that image that you collectively created there in the class and then text it out to all the students right from the app. You can text from the app on your phone or you can text from the website whichever one is easiest for you to do.

Bonni: [00:11:43] And again you can text not only words but you also can text images. That's great. And one of the things I love too is that you can schedule out when your reminders are going to show up.

Bonni: [00:11:55] One of the things that was really important to me when I dived using remind was to not have this become any more than already is unfortunately there. I'm your parental role who is responsible for reminding you to pack your lunch for school in the morning.

Bonni: [00:12:12] To me pat pat on your head. And so I was not excited about that.

Bonni: [00:12:16] So we talked about this as a class when I first started experimenting it and we built together what the rules of the road would be with it. So one of the deals was I'm not going to take the place of you having a calendar you need to have a calendar you need to write down in that calendar when exams are when things are due.

Bonni: [00:12:35] That is not what this is for is to replace that. And they they knew that was part of the deal. But out of that came that we also agreed I would have a limit which wasn't hard for me to agree to but I'd have a limit of how many times that I would use the service in a day. I thought actually one was a good maximum. But they thought three was a bad fix and we ended up starting to use it to do some reviews for quizzes.

Bonni: [00:13:00] Now it didn't work as well as I had hoped because what I had hoped was similar to my description of the flashcards to learn students names that when we take our learning and we break it into smaller chunks that's likely.

Bonni: [00:13:13] That will increase our retention. I was hoping to do that with the class concept so I would I would say What are the environmental factors that affect a business in today's world and rights. What are the five and I would tests that out to them and hope that right then in their day they might think about what that was because I would always schedule it during to arrive in their text during times when there wasn't classes at our university.

Bonni: [00:13:40] So we have a couple of blocks of time when there aren't classes or the breaks in between them I would schedule it to go out then it didn't work as I had anticipated or hoped though because what they end up doing you could probably anticipate what they would do they just save all the text up.

Bonni: [00:13:56] And then when it came time to study for the exam they'd sit down and they would have all 10 of them there or whatever so it didn't it didn't quite go like I had envisioned it but they still they really loved it and it was one of the things that showed up on the evaluations as contributing to their learning. And so it I think the experiment was successful but not how I had designed. OK.

Bonni: [00:14:18] So tell me a little bit about we're thinking about the new school year and one of the things you had sort of talked about Sandy was this idea of coming up with your checklist for to do's and one of the things I want to tell listeners is I have actually a collection of checklists that I'll be sharing with people in the show notes what you can get to by the way.

Bonni: [00:14:39] [Teachinginhighered.com/](https://teachinginhighered.com/). This will be the eleventh episode and these checklists. I just keep refining them every semester and I go and add stuff that I forgot to have in previous versions. And it's everything that I do before a semester starts.

Bonni: [00:15:00] So you mentioned Moodle as our learning management system. So one of the things I do is take the courses from the last semester and move them over into the new semester and I add any new links or add new new quizzes or that type of thing and sure that the points are all adjusted accordingly.

Bonni: [00:15:18] Another thing I always do at the start of every semester before the while before it starts is revisit the learning outcomes for the class. Are those still the most crucial learning outcomes. And I will then I actually write all of my exams before the semester starts.

Bonni: [00:15:34] So this has a number of benefits. I think it has a huge benefit of making my semester a lot less stressful. Yes it takes a lot of time to write the exams before the semester starts. I will not kid do in fact this semester I'm going to be learning a new software application called cod narrow that the publishers use for my textbooks so they'll be a learning curve there I'm sure.

Bonni: [00:15:56] But by the time I start out the first day of the first semester I already know how their learning is going to be assessed and I'm not making that up after the fact thinking Gosh if only we would have addressed this a little bit more heavily.

Bonni: [00:16:11] I know where the exams are going to assess them and I can gear their learning toward that. It's a really good to me reflective process that I think ideally should always happen before the semester starts as just since I started doing it now for a couple of years I really think it is the ideal.

Sandie: [00:16:28] Well I didn't know it was the ideal. I thought it was required. So when I started teaching I had all my exams written before I actually taught the class. So it just wasn't even on my checklist that it was required. But I do have a checklist. It's the one I got from you two years ago. So I'm really looking forward to see what's on your new checklist side love listening to the podcast.

Bonni: [00:16:54] Well it hasn't. Are the checklist I don't change them that much because they tend to work pretty well for me. But anyone listening please go download the checklist and check. Check them out.

Bonni: [00:17:05] And let us know what we might have forgotten because we would love to learn from you as well because there's always something that gets left off and you think this is a repetitive tasks that I do over and over I should really have some sort of checklist.

Bonni: [00:17:18] By the way my work on the checklist was inspired by a wonderful book I read a couple of years ago called The Checklist Manifesto and The Checklist Manifesto the author's name is Atul Gawande.

Bonni: [00:17:39] He wrote a book about he's a physician and so he talked about some of the lifesaving techniques that are happening in today's operating rooms that are as simple as a checklist that for them involves them introducing the names of each person who is involved in the surgery and what the surgery is.

Bonni: [00:18:01] And you think that can't be that life changing but it actually has been shown to save lives. And then he talks about checklists in an for pilots as they fly airplanes. He talks about checklists for architects and even if you're not in the field of medicine or art or architecture or are any of the subjects he talks about it's fascinating reading.

Bonni: [00:18:25] I've never thought that I'd be that interested in architecture till I read his book. I mean it's really really a quick rich read with so many great examples but then he has the checklist on checklists. What makes a checklist effective.

Bonni: [00:18:40] And so I use that as my inspiration as I created these. So again I'll put the link to the show notes so that has really shaped my thinking about any time in life where we find ourselves repeating things.

Bonni: [00:18:51] Another example is the number of times I get someone requesting a reference check a reference or recommendation of some kind. Happens all the time. What were the questions I have to ask. Who's it for. Is it academic or is it job. When do you need this buy it fits tomorrow.

Bonni: [00:19:09] Good luck and so any time I have a repetitive tasks like that I'll find inspiration in the checklists and it really really has worked well for me.

Bonni: [00:19:19] And then the other thinking is especially for you Sandia's you don't always work on a lottery Petitt of tasks you're working on projects that are different every time you start something new. Is David Allen's Getting Things Done in his book and his whole philosophy for how to manage time and projects.

Bonni: [00:19:39] Is thinking about how I may not know how to navigate this project because it's entirely new to me but he really encourages us to always be thinking about the next action.

Bonni: [00:19:51] So what's the next action that I'm going to take to get me toward that goal. So I think a lot when we think about these next actions they come up sometimes for us at sometimes the most in opportune times. So we always want to have our to do list as a means for capturing these next actions so that we can clear and free our mind up or not continually trying to store the to do list in our minds.

Sandie: [00:20:16] In operating room. Remember I used to be an operating room nurse. We called that anticipation and you anticipate what is going to be needed next. And when you anticipate something you don't have just one possible action you usually have two or three things ready that you might hand the surgeon or that you might ask someone in the room to do.

Sandie: [00:20:42] So that idea of anticipation is part of how I prepare for a class. And so I'm always overprepared. And that has served me really well because I bring more than enough for just the content that we have to cover.

Bonni: [00:20:57] Oh I love that. And that really adds a lot of flexibility too for meeting your students right where they are and if something comes up.

Bonni: [00:21:06] You teach classes where you can anticipate something sensitive is going to come up. Family violence hello. That's a topic that you can be guaranteed. You're going to have that. But in my business classes all the time something will come up where I think this is really something we need to address.

Bonni: [00:21:26] I've had times where the students have said something that didn't sit well with me in terms of how they referred to someone of a different ethnicity than themselves. And I don't like in the past how if I have crammed too much into that already short 15 minute in some cases time block.

Bonni: [00:21:46] If I tried to cram forty nine minutes of 50 then we don't have space for addressing sometimes those difficult issues that come up or even it can happen just on really fun for a fun reason where students can start in my classes sometimes we talk about technology and sort of where it's headed.

Bonni: [00:22:04] And I love that because they tend to really get energized by the fact that it's an art. How else to say it. They are really interested in the

technology but they're also often surprised that I know more about it than than I do. And so they get it really intrigued.

Bonni: [00:22:22] Tell me more about how payment systems are going to change in the future and what kind of technology exists now but maybe isn't something that they see all of the time but the technology actually exists it just hasn't been implemented so that's so fun for us to go on those learning.

Bonni: [00:22:38] I call them tangents but they really are related to the subject matter but I hadn't planned on spending that much time on that topic. But they're so excited about it you don't want to shut them down either.

Sandie: [00:22:48] So you have to save that space.

Bonni: [00:22:50] Yeah. Yeah.

Bonni: [00:22:51] And so you got your core objectives but as you said you're you're anticipating and you've got a few different things that may be needed that you can bring in if additional review is needed or additional discussion that kind of thing.

Bonni: [00:23:03] So this is the point in the show when we share our recommendations and Sandy I know you've got a good recommendation. That's something I had never heard of before.

Sandie: [00:23:12] Well I use Evernote and I think you and Dave are the ones who introduced me to Evernote oh so many years ago. And I discovered when I was reading some blog about how to declare your office and one really good strategy is scanning things and sometimes you don't have a scanner nearby but you have something you want to save and Evernote is searchable so the app is called cam scanner.

Sandie: [00:23:40] All one word and it you can link it to your Evernote. So when I was in a meeting last week I took a picture of the white board with all of the diagrams and used cam scanner uploaded into my Evernote into the appropriate notebook while I'm still in the room.

Sandie: [00:23:57] So I've captured it and I filed it to capture and filed it and it's searchable. That's that's the best of all worlds.

Bonni: [00:24:06] And the searchable inside of Evernote.

Bonni: [00:24:09] It doesn't just search text that was printed but Evernote itself actually searches hand written text depending on your penmanship your your mileage may vary. I know mine does.

Bonni: [00:24:22] But actually I mean I do not have great penmanship and I'm surprised at how it's able to recognize if I have been writing at least as legibly on a white board that peers might be able to get most of the words that that those kinds of notes are searchable in the future.

Bonni: [00:24:38] I was on a committee a number of years ago where let's just say our recorder did not like to show ever to me. And I was the chair and so I just it's kind of one of those do you really want to enable that and take over somebody else's job when what you committed to do was the role of the chair.

Bonni: [00:24:55] And so I would take notes on the white board. I would take a picture of it I'd have an Evernote and it was searchable for me. And I also could easily share that with other people too. But it's crazy how that technology how it works.

Sandie: [00:25:09] Wonderful.

Bonni: [00:25:10] So as far as my recommendation I think I'm going to tap onto yours and talk a little bit more about how I use Evernote.

Bonni: [00:25:16] I just got a former student who asked me to give him some feedback on his resume. And this is the kind of request that we get all the time. And I love to be able to do it but it takes a lot of time. And so what I have found as a good happy medium to still give them the feedback but at the same time.

Bonni: [00:25:38] Think about if you really want a line by line feedback. Let's start with our career center at our university and then perhaps I can give you more bigger picture feedback.

Bonni: [00:25:48] And so what I have started to do is within Evernote I'll have Evernote open on my phone. And I have their resume open on my computer screen and I will just type out a word that represents the feedback I want to give them. So for this guy there was an issue with him with white space.

Bonni: [00:26:09] So I typed on my phone inside of Evernote white space and then I inserted an audio note and I said Hey I noticed that you're trying to make

sure you're on one page but it's really obvious you're trying to make sure you're on one page because your margins serve like a quarter of an inch on both left and the right.

Bonni: [00:26:28] We're going to need to find ourselves some extra whitespace and I had some some techniques that he could specifically do let's take out your junior college because really you got your degree. That's what they're going to care about. Not not that you went to this junior college before you went to your for your school.

Bonni: [00:26:42] And so I was able to give him that feedback verbally still give him the same quality of feedback effects some people have told me they like it because they like hearing the voice and the be the inflection in the voice.

Bonni: [00:26:54] So at any rate it really saves me a lot of time but still it gives students some rich feedback on their resume and then what I'm able to do is just share the note on Evernote directly to that students email.

Bonni: [00:27:09] So I like that like sort of a kids you can record the audio notes right there from your phone you could do it on your computer screen too. I don't know why I just sort of like having a resume open on my computer screen so I'm looking at it and then my phone is just kind of works for me and mutter I'm not sure why it's like having a second monitor only of my kids it's a very small monitor. Well we're trained to talk to our phones.

Bonni: [00:27:29] Yes. So it works out great. Well Sandie thank you so much for being here. Please tell me this is not the only time you'll come by and visit and be again.

Sandie: [00:27:37] I'll be back.

Bonni: [00:27:38] Good. I am so glad. By the way Sandie and my husband Dave do a podcast called Ending Human Trafficking and that airs every couple of weeks you can find it on all the same places you can find this show.

Bonni: [00:27:49] And so if you have an interest in that you don't have an interested in that you should go listen and educate yourself and feel free to share it with others as well so you can. You can catch up with Sandy and Dave over there to.

Bonni: [00:28:04] That's it for this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. One of the things I want to remind you of is to get the educational technology essentials ebook. If you haven't already. And how do you do that. You do that by signing up for our weekly update.

Bonni: [00:28:19] Go to www.teachinginhighered.com/subscribe. And we will send you a weekly update with an article and the podcast notes like the one you're listening to right now as well as that e-book.

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