

Bonni: [00:00:00] On today's episode of Teaching in Higher Ed number 127, I share about retrieval practice tools which is a little condensed version of the presentation I'll be giving this week at the online learning consortium conference.

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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 so we can have more peace on our lives and be even more present for our students.

Bonni: [00:00:52] Hello this is Bonni Stachowiak and if this is the first time you are listening to Teaching in Higher Ed it's a little bit different today this episode because it's going to be me giving a condensed version of a presentation I'll be giving this week at the online learning consortium conference out in Orlando Florida.

Bonni: [00:01:13] And we usually have guests and this time it is going to be me and I'm laughing because we originally we were going to have Dave on the episode to kind of break it up a little bit of it being so much me but we both are just sick and the kids are sick. Everybody's sick. So my voice, we hope it holds out hope for the episode.

Bonni: [00:01:33] As most of you know the podcast started back in June 2014. Every single week there have been episodes and by the time this airs looks like we will be on our 120 7th episode which is just amazing. And in the presentation I'll be giving. I'll be talking about three different tools that we can use for retrieval practice.

Bonni: [00:01:58] And if this is your first time listening and you're a little bit new to the scholarship of teaching and learning then you would want to know a little bit more about what retrieval practice is. And there's a couple of episodes that I'll recommend you go back and listen to first off Retrieval Practice episode 94 with Dr. Pooja Agarwal is a great one to listen to.

Bonni: [00:02:22] She is a researcher who has looked a lot at retrieval practice and other aspects of cognitive science. She's a memory expert and an education consultant so that would be one episode to go back and listen to.

Bonni: [00:02:37] And another one you won't want to miss is episode 72 with Dr. Robert Bjork. And in both of those episodes we look at something called retrieval practice which Pooja put so well when she said when we think about learning we typically focus on getting information into our students heads. What if instead we focus on getting information out of our students heads and retrieval practice when it is an action.

Bonni: [00:03:08] When you see it in the classroom it can look a lot of different ways. Sometimes it can be as simple as the classic think pair share where people are talking to someone sitting next to them and recalling information or thinking critically about information they learn putting it together in a new way.

Bonni: [00:03:28] Sometimes it can involve technology technology everything from the use of clickers the actual hardware devices but more and more people are using the devices that students are already bringing with them their cell phones or tablets their laptops.

Bonni: [00:03:44] And that'll be three tools I'll talk about today how I use those. There are three keys that if you go back and listen to those episodes you might remember about retrieval practice.

Bonni: [00:03:56] First off we know this from our own admonitions about studying spacing critical and that is that we should separate out and it would be better to study in short bursts than to try to study for hours and hours the night before the exam. As an example.

Bonni: [00:04:14] The other the second one is to include what is called interleaving and that's the idea that we don't just do retrieval practice on chapter 1 and then we're done with chapter 1 and do chapter 2 and then we're done with chapter 2 but actually to mix up the concepts to better build that network of knowledge in one's brain.

Bonni: [00:04:34] And then lastly this is so memorable to me when I think about the episode with Robert Bjork is he calls it forgetting as the friend of learning. And that's this idea that generally when we think about failing we got it wrong. It seems like such a bad thing but actually when we get the answers wrong when we're doing retrieval practice as long as we very quickly fill in that learning gap and we discover what the correct answer is there's actually a stronger connection with the information and we're more able to retrieve that information easier in the future.

Bonni: [00:05:11] A quote from the episode with Robert Bjork is as we use our memories the things that we recall become more recallable. The first service that I'm going to talk about that I use for retrieval practice is called remind. It is essential to me in my communication with my students not just in retrieval practice but just to have a way of communicating either one on one with a student or out to an entire class very easily from my cell phone without them having to have my cell phone number which is something I prefer to keep for non-student use. Although some students have.

Bonni: [00:05:52] But generally the students know a little bit of etiquette. We have an understanding together and I am going to be including in my presentation some examples of how I've used remind not necessarily with just retrieval practice but one of the things that came up this semester was the Wells Fargo debacle.

Bonni: [00:06:11] And we had been talking about it in class and then an article came out that was more of an update even since we had just talked about it a couple of days ago and I was able to send that out over remind then one of the things that happens I do as I say books with the scantron. I do a mix of things for exams so sometimes students will bring the wrong one. I could put a photograph then of the correct one to bring as a reminder.

Bonni: [00:06:38] And then another thing that I did this semester was just there's a major written assignment so I sent out a text. Have you started writing your industry analysis yet. Yes or No? and that's just a way for us to have those touch points beyond the few times actually a couple of times I see them during the week.

Bonni: [00:06:55] But none of those examples are retrieval practice though the way that I will be explaining retrieval practice. One is in my introduction to business class we're reviewing for an exam and I send out a reminder text that

says what are the four components of the marketing mix and then a student texts back and says product price place promotion. And I say perfection. Have a great weekend.

Bonni: [00:07:21] And the other thing that I liked about using retrieval practice is it could provide some of the interleaving that we talked about before we listened to an episode of a podcast called start up and it's all about Alex Bloomberg's story of starting up his podcast business.

Bonni: [00:07:41] But it did connect back with something we had studied the prior week about economics so I said after we listen to today's episode of the podcast startup are they competing as a monopoly monopolistic competition see an oligopoly or do perfect competition and that just gave a way of weaving together the content across a couple of weeks.

Bonni: [00:08:08] And in my presentation I'll be giving people an opportunity to practice using Remind. But if you're listening to this podcast and are not able to join us what I'll be asking is What's your definition of retrieval practice. What is it called in retrieval practice when you mix up the questions and that by the way is called interleaving.

Bonni: [00:08:30] And why is failure important in retrieval practice and those will be some of the questions but feel free to tweet at me @Bonni208. Let me know the answers to those questions if you're listening and not able to join us or feel free to comment on the comments section of this episode if you want to join in the conversation.

Bonni: [00:08:51] The next two we'll be talking about is Poll Everywhere. Poll Everywhere. I use quite a bit in my classes specifically for retrieval practice. One of the things to know when we're using a tool like Poll Everywhere if we show the answers as the students are answering them on their mobile devices or whatever it is they're using in the classroom they will influence each other's answers.

Bonni: [00:09:18] There is the ability within Poll Everywhere to hide all the answers until you can see you get a count that shows on your screen. Once you see that everyone has answered then you can open that up and really have a good sense that you're not having them influence each other's answers it's hysterical to watch once I do open it up you'll see them as they start talking sort of shuffling back and forth between answers.

Bonni: [00:09:41] Of course I can do True False I can do multiple choice and I also can do open ended questions I asked a question like What are the three major financial statements and the purpose of each one. And even in that case I can divide the class into thirds and have one third of the class. Answer what the first one is and what the purpose of it is and so on and so forth and I can kind of mix it up a little bit like I do that.

Bonni: [00:10:08] And then one of the things that's really nice once I've hidden the answers and then I can unhide them once I know most everyone or everyone has answered when I see them 100 percent there as in 100 percent of people have gotten it right. I don't need to go and continue to explain it any more it really helps me take a pulse on where people are in the class.

Bonni: [00:10:30] Another question format that Poll Everywhere has is called a word cloud and a word cloud you've seen them before and is just the more frequently a particular word is used. The larger that it gets and the one that I have as a sample for the presentation I'll be giving is what is McDonald's tagline and that's the Ba da ba ba I'm lovin it. That was the worst example. But it's funny to see the students try to spell out ba ba. And you can see the lovin' as super large and loving with a super large as well.

Bonni: [00:11:05] This is the point where people attending will have a chance to do a little bit of practice their own retrieval practice using pull everywhere and I'll be posing the question Which researcher runs a memory lab at UCLA. And this is not a good question for me to use retrieval practice for you because I didn't mention if you did not hear the episode with Dr. Robert Bjork. He and his wife run a memory lab at UCLA.

Bonni: [00:11:32] I didn't mention that on today's but I plan on doing that during the actual presentation so there's actually something to retrieve at that point. What are some of the keys of effective retrieval practice. People's answers might be things like interleaving failure and spacing.

Bonni: [00:11:50] And then what Ed Tech Tool have we not tried yet because in the beginning that will be mentioned we will be trying three of them and the one we have not tried yet is a Slido. Slide is one. I was actually introduced to at a conference last year and it's great it's it's a little bit like Poll Everywhere but it has a larger number of people who can be participating on the free plan actually have the paid plan because they liked it so much.

Bonni: [00:12:22] But but it's a nice option to have up to 1000 versus the 40 that the free plan of Poll Everywhere gives. It also has a little bit of a different approach. It's very similar to poll everywhere but it takes questions from the audience all along the way.

Bonni: [00:12:39] At the same time as you posing in what they called polls which are essentially your questions back to them. And I like Slido like I said both Poll Everywhere and Slido are very easy to use just on a web browser you don't need to download their apps although you can remind is less structured reminders more I'll do it because I already have students on remind and they're already signed up for the service because I do want to be able to get in touch with them that quickly are learning management system which is canvas does have the ability for people to put their text message information in there.

Bonni: [00:13:17] But I have to rely on that they all have done that in order to know that I have a unified way of reaching out to everyone which I just cannot say enough good things about Remind in terms of the ease of use to get people signed up and then to know that I can send out a text message whether it is a reminder or an opportunity for retrieval practice but the retrieval practice with Remind is pretty manual. Versus the retrieval practice with Poll Everywhere and Slido being built for that type of a purpose.

Bonni: [00:13:48] Those are the three tools that we are looking at today's slideshow Poll Everywhere and Remind I have a few general guidelines. Before I close the episode to think about whenever you're going to do retrieval practice whether you're doing retrieval practice via sticky notes or via a whiteboard or via I think parents share on a piece of paper or using technology and the first one is to be sure that you over communicate. My students regularly hear me talking about the importance of failure.

Bonni: [00:14:18] My students regularly hear me talk about what retrieval practices why we do it why spaciness so important why interleaving is so important. I say it so regularly it seems like they must be so tired of it and yet still I'll meet someone and I'll ask them a question about it and they're still confused so I just don't stop it's a regular thing that I'm communicating about throughout the semester.

Bonni: [00:14:43] My second piece of advice for you is to vary your tools. I've only talked about three. There are a bunch of other tools that I use because too much of one. I think at least in my experience it becomes too rote it becomes too predictable. There are some really fun ones like Kahoot.

Bonni: [00:15:11] And that's a really fun game based one that even her faculty have such a fun time when we play it. But if we did it all the time I think it would really get old. So I pull it out just for those times when we want to introduce a little bit of competition into the mix.

Bonni: [00:15:26] And then the last piece of advice I have for you when you do retrieval practice is to really build a culture around it. And part of building a culture around it is that it is OK to fail that we are going to have times when we're wrong and I try to really respect students privacy. Most of the time the tools that I use when they can do it anonymously and certainly there are some pros and cons to that.

Bonni: [00:15:51] But for me it just gives them an opportunity to fail in a safe way that's not being tracked by me and every little point isn't being nicked and dimed for them and they know that failing is going to be a part of deeper learning and that if we have a safe place in our classroom where that's OK to not always know the answer to things that's going to just allow them to do that that much easier.

Bonni: [00:16:18] I've built a web page for the presentation I'll be giving it's teachinginhighered.com/OLC16 which is online learning consortium o l c a. Which is the name of the conference accelerate and then 16 which if you haven't learned yet that's the year that we're in. OLC 16 they'll also be in the show notes.

Bonni: [00:16:41] Easy for you to click over to at teachinginhighered.com/127. This is the point in the show where I get to give some recommendations. I will admit I am recording this during a week that has been a very difficult week and I have been appreciating the normalcy what little bits we can grasp onto.

Bonni: [00:17:09] Taking my kids to the movies although I took them to see this Disney It was actually not a Disney movie but a new show. They showed a couple of episodes it was kind of like a marketing thing got to \$5 off at the Disney Store and it was absolutely incredibly sexist with Minnie Mouse and Daisy Duck just wanting to go shoe shopping all the time which is not something that really relate to. And of course Mickey and the other guys working on cars and racing cars.

Bonni: [00:17:37] That wasn't my favorite but the week prior my son and I had gone to see the movie trolls and that is a DreamWorks movie. And it was super

fun has a really strong female character a female lead character and the music is absolutely a blast and I would say by the way I'm not and I don't know what it is I have against trolls but as a little girl I never played with trolls and I sort of associate them with fairytales that are not ones that necessarily resonate with me.

Bonni: [00:18:09] These trolls are adorable and the characters are really fun and they're a challenge to do things to put their own needs aside and to help rescue their friends even though they could potentially have quite a bit of peril over making those choices. It's just a really fun one.

Bonni: [00:18:26] And their I'll tell you the soundtrack is amazing. There is a song which sounds a little bit more like you would hear in a musical. And I'll warn you I'm going to play a little bit of it. It's it's I don't know if bubblegum pop is the right way to describe this but it's it's got the pop to it but my kids both totally love it. And I'll admit to it getting stuck in my head as well. And what a wonderful message it has. It's called Get Back Up Again. Here we go a little a little clip.

Get Back Up Again: [00:18:57] "Get Back Up Again" plays

Bonni: [00:19:21] It's a really fun one. And again I'll take that as my kids request over some of the other ones that they request. And then one of the big memories I have of going camping with my family is the music that my dad would play on the way out to the desert and Joshua Tree. And he played a lot of Earth Wind and Fire.

Bonni: [00:19:41] And Justin Timberlake actually covers some songs from many of our childhoods or our younger days. And he covers Earth Wind and Fire's September except that Earth Wind and Fire play with him and sing with him and it's just a fun fun mix of it. I'd highly suggest checking this one out. If you've got any of the music services like Apple Music or Spotify you'll be able to find it on there.

Bonni: [00:20:07] But here's a little clip of September from the trolls sound track.

September : [00:20:12] "September" Justin Timberlake plays

Bonni: [00:20:40] Now that is totally going to be stuck in my head for the rest of this evening. But that's OK because my kids will be requesting it again soon. Thanks so much for listening in today and thanks for listening in general. I know

that for many of you this is not your first time listening and I just really appreciate the support this community has.

Bonni: [00:20:58] We do have a slack channel where we're able to have some more private conversations that are not out there for all of social media to see. And this has been an important week for us to have that space. And I just appreciate the community that's up there and if you would like to join in that conversation you can do so on the Web site teachinginhighered.com/slack.

Bonni: [00:21:25] And if you have yet to subscribe to that e-mail newsletter. This is a great time for you to get all the links to the various things that I shared about today. You'll get only a single e-mail in your inbox each week with the show notes and all those links as well as an article written about teaching or productivity written by me and you can subscribe at teachinginhighered.com/subscribe.

Bonni: [00:21:51] I hope many of you will consider this as the week it's you know we're getting in November here as people in the states are thinking about. You know Thanksgiving and show some Thanks for the podcast and radio on whatever service it is that you use to listen to it whether that's iTunes or stitcher or another one and that just helps more people be able to discover the show. Thanks again for listening. Thanks for being made that you are to me and I will see you next time I've got lots of great episodes to come.

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