

Bonni: [00:00:00] Today on episode number 133 of Teaching in Higher Ed, I reveal what's on my someday-maybe tech list for 2017.

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Bonni: [00:00:21] Welcome to this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. I'm Bonni Stachowiak and this is the space where we explore the art and science of being more effective at facilitating learning. We also share ways to increase our personal productivity so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students.

Bonni: [00:00:48] As I've shared about on previous episodes I keep a Someday-Maybe List. And most recently I talked about this with Robert Talbert on the episode about Getting Things Done. And if you have not listened to that episode yet and you want to kind of get a hold of things for 2017 and beyond. I can't recommend highly enough going back and listening to get a sense of the Getting Things Done system which was originally described in David Allen's book but Robert Talbert and I make it specific to a higher ed context.

Bonni: [00:01:25] And one of the things that helps is having the Someday-Maybe List instead of letting our task lists get cluttered up with stuff that are full of best intentions but we never quite get to having this list where we can capture our creative ideas and then and then having a plan in place to go and review it on a regular basis.

Bonni: [00:01:44] And then deciding which one of those things we want to get off that list which I'm not quite as good at doing and which one of those things we actually want to tackle. And you probably if you've listen to the show before we have a recommendations segment at the end of the show where I recommend things but I'm always very strict with myself to not let myself recommend something that they haven't read or used or actually experienced myself.

Bonni: [00:02:09] And today I'm still going to have that for the end of today's show. But in this middle section I'm going to talk a little bit about some of the things I'm planning on doing that I've heard good things about that I now want to move from that Someday-Maybe List and actually take action on for 2017. But I haven't used all these things I've just heard about them. I've used some of them and I'll share as I go.

Bonni: [00:02:31] Beginning with Sanebox. Sanebox I have been using now for at least 90 days and Sanebox is an email magician that allows you to sort out through automation the emails that are less important to you and more important and you might have heard that some e-mail

providers like Gmail do this for you. They've got you know automatically sorted newsletters into a tab or a tag- I believe they call it for newsletters that sort of thing.

Bonni: [00:03:00] Well this Sanebox is an external service that can be used with almost any email provider and it's got all kinds of features. I have been absolutely loving it. And in fact it calculates how much time it saves me and I'd love getting that weekly e-mail to see the kinds of ways I've been able to synthesize my e-mail management through the use of Sanebox.

Bonni: [00:03:24] It is by the way a paid service and I don't regret the purchase at all. And in fact I am so excited now I know I'm not even maximizing all of the benefits I could get out of it. So my task on my Someday-Maybe List is to read a post that they have about getting even more out of Sanebox.

Bonni: [00:03:43] And one of the things I want to make more use of is it has a reminder feature I want to learn more about but I really recommend- I know it's not the recommendation segment and I already recommended it on the previous episode but if you're at all feeling overwhelmed by e-mail and just want to look at a service they've got a free trial and I just signed up and have never looked back.

Bonni: [00:04:03] The next one I want to check out is an alternative to a program amusing now called Caffeine. Caffeine is available on Windows and on the Mac and it simply runs up in our the bar at the top of your computer and whenever you want to shut off the screen saver from coming on such as a we're about to to class you just click the little caffeine button and it fills up the little coffee cup. And that means that you're not going to have your Mac or your PC go into power save mode in the middle of presentation.

Bonni: [00:04:35] Well I've been really enjoying Caffeine but there is an alternative to it called Amphetamine that my husband Dave has been using and says is actually has some improved feature so I'm going to actually make the move which is not as easy as it sounds because not only will I need to install that app but i need of course to learn what those new features are.

Bonni: [00:04:55] But I have an automated Apple script that runs every time I start either a podcast episode or if I start a presentation in a classroom that automatically goes through and shuts down certain things like Dropbox that I don't want it in up some of the bandwidth precious bandwidth while I'm presenting and it automatically turns on the screen saver thing that I just talked about.

Bonni: [00:05:18] So I do have to spend a little bit of time getting it working into my workflow but it seems like it's really cool. I've had it up there for a while I'm going to tackle that now.

Bonni: [00:05:26] The next one is that Harvard has a service called H20. And it is an open source way of collecting curating presenting publishing open source content and it links with our learning management system canvas. And I want to check that out because as you know we've been having a number of episodes about Open Source, Open Access, open educational resources. And I just want to get better at all of that. And this seems like a really neat tool to be able to serve up some open access content to my students and to do it through our learning management

system canvas I'm going to be looking into that.

Bonni: [00:06:06] Another thing I want to be looking into are and we've talked about this on the show to our Mother blogs and so I have my students blog pretty regularly in my various classes not in every class but in a number of them.

Bonni: [00:06:18] And what I have been doing to cobble them all together into one place is to use the service called Feedly and the paid version of Feedly has something called collections and that lets me put all of their blogs into one place and have a feed place where people can subscribe to and I can add and remove students you know and have a nice centralized place well.

Bonni: [00:06:44] Feedly is a little bit on the pricier end I'm trying to look a little bit closer at what subscription services I'm using and I want to look into Mother blogs where through WordPress I could set up a site that automatically could pull into one place and I think would have some other features that I might like a little bit more as well.

Bonni: [00:07:03] I'm not sure that I'll quite get to that for the upcoming classes I'm teaching. I mean it's sort of intimidates me a little bit but it is something that keeps drawing me to it. And I'm going to at least try to do some reading and see if I'm intimidated for needless or if it's as hard as it sort of it doesn't look that hard but it's still it just intimidates me a little bit.

Bonni: [00:07:26] The next service I'm going to be exploring is YouCanBook.Me. I have been using Time Trade for a long time and like it a lot. Time Trade is what I used to schedule podcast interviews. I also use it to schedule my office hours for students and I love it because you can block off certain times in the Time Trade calendar. By the way everything I'm describing you can also do in YouCanBook.Me as well.

Bonni: [00:07:54] And then I will I can have the oh you want to come on the show for the podcast here's the calendar. We can do that on only shows them the times I'm available. But if someone else books during that time or if I book an appointment on my calendar during that time it automatically stops showing that as available on the booking.

Bonni: [00:08:13] And YouCanBook.Me just has some additional features that I'm not getting in terms of customisation especially for when someone actually sets up an appointment the kinds of rules and the information I can gather on various forms. It just it just has a little bit more flexibility that I like.

Bonni: [00:08:32] And then it also has some team services so if an entire department wanted to adopt it for everybody's office hours and there's some really cool ways you can web you can embed things on the web for people schedules or just looks like something that will be a good tool for me to check out and transfer to as something I'll take some time to really figure out how to maximize those additional features.

Bonni: [00:08:55] And then next up I've been using in a class planning software for years now that has gone away and I had thought about first just trying to plan all my classes inside of campus are learning management system doing that through the calendar or doing that even

through ungraded assignments just some way of showing students Heres where were our classes meeting. Here's what we're going to talk about here is any materials that I use.

Bonni: [00:09:23] And especially if students have to miss it makes that nice where they can know what they may need to take care of to address the classes that they miss. But it's just not as good as the class planning software that I had been using for that purpose. I have not quite mastered that and I've watched a couple of webinars that people were showing what they were doing I'm just not quite there yet.

Bonni: [00:09:46] So I need to check out a web based tool called Planboard and I've been playing with a little bit. It looks pretty good though. One huge downside for me is that it doesn't have the ability for me to sync it with my calendar.

Bonni: [00:10:00] And I really like that syncing feature it's just nice to only have to look at my calendar to see what the topic of upcoming classes as an example so I'll be having to explore that a little bit more and see what's possible.

Bonni: [00:10:13] You've probably heard me talk about before on the show a quizing software, not software, a quizzing web based tool called Kahoot. That is a hoot. No joke. And it's Kahoot.it by the way. I always type in kahoot.com and it's not the right place. Kahoot.it.

Bonni: [00:10:35] And they now have a team mode that came out in the last few months that I want to check out and start using in my classes. I did announce on a former show about the quizlet team mode quizlet is a is a flash card based tool. And that team mode just brought so much excitement into my classroom that I'm just excited to see what cahoots one is like.

Bonni: [00:10:59] I think that'll be a fun way to use that with my students and also with our faculty as I have some responsibility as related to faculty development I think it will be fun to play with them and we have used the individual mode but I think the team mode might bring a little bit of additional sort of opportunities for people to connect in workshops and faculty meetings and so on.

Bonni: [00:11:20] I do like to incorporate interactive pieces when I'm presenting when I'm teaching. And sometimes the audience it makes a good opportunity to do that through something through Twitter. And there is a service I read about called Backdraft that will allow you to pre populate some tweets that you might want to tweet out during a presentation and that's just something I want to look into and see if that would work again either for my teaching or for a presentation that I give coming up.

Bonni: [00:11:52] Another service that I use, not as much as I would like to, I talked about Sanebox being a service I absolutely love but just know I'm not leveraging to its fullest is if this then that and if this then that is a seemingly simple service that says if something happens over here then do this thing over here and I have a very simple if this then that recipe's set up and it is if the forecast calls for rain to send me I don't know if it's an email or text but one of the other is saying hey bring an umbrella. Make sure.

Bonni: [00:12:27] And because we have- we probably need to get some more umbrellas. I should put that on my not my someday maybe my forsake to do this to do list.

Bonni: [00:12:35] And so even sometimes you have an umbrella in the car and then you take it out and you leave it to dry in the garage and you forget to put it back in the car and then it's pouring rain. So it's nice to have these little reminders. Yes. I'm sorry to be mentioning this I live in California we have really good weather so it doesn't rain that often for us and it's just nice to have that little reminder if it is going to rain to make sure that we have the appropriate tools that we need in the car like umbrellas.

Bonni: [00:13:01] Another tool that I get a lot out of. But even know I could get more is called Text Expander and text expander is specific to the Mac. But I have talked about before there are text expansion tools for Windows such as Breevy.

Bonni: [00:13:19] And it's just this whole idea that no matter what kind of computer we're using and or even on our phones or our tablets that we can type in a couple of keystrokes and automatically have text or images appear the most basic example of this would be typing in for me a couple of letters and then automatically having the appropriate signature show up depending on whether I want a signature appropriate that would be relevant to students or to potential podcast guests or to students in a graduate program I teach.

Bonni: [00:13:53] And those are all different programs all different needs for different Web sites to be referenced or what have you in the signature line and that makes for an easy way to do it. And one of the productivity Web sites the gurus that I really enjoy learning from are called Asian efficiency and they have an article that they wrote called Expert Level Text Expander Snippets.

Bonni: [00:14:15] Snippets are what those things are called that are the shortcuts that you use that then type in a lot of text I have that by the way I hope this doesn't offend anyone who's listening but if somebody requests to be on the slack channel for teaching in higher ed I have a snippet that says Dear fill in the person's name. Thank you for your interest in being on this lecture. It's not quite that generic but I can always type more into it by the way to personalize it a little bit but it just makes sure that I don't forget stuff that I want to make sure and mention to everyone and they really help save me a lot of time. But the more that I learn about it and the more that I realized how much time I'm saving the more I want to learn even more so I want to go look at that article and learn even more about it.

Bonni: [00:15:00] The next tools that I'm going to mention have a little bit to do with automation and one category of programs are windows resizing apps. You might have sometimes where you're working at a larger monitor and you want to have one of the windows fill the left hand side of your screen. And one of the windows for the right hand side of your screen.

Bonni: [00:15:23] And to have those things happen automatically with a little dropdown menu is a really nice thing and the one that I happened to use and by the way if you're going to mention a Mac tool but if you're on Windows they have the same sorts of tools for Windows as well. The one I have installed is called Moom like Moon in the night sky but with an M at the end instead of an n.

Bonni: [00:15:47] And I know that I'm not utilizing it to any of its fullest extent extend in fact I'm just more often using the basic window resizing that Mac has. And I want to get smarter about thinking about oh I'm on a large monitor set up or I'm on my laptop and how moom behaves based on where I am.

Bonni: [00:16:06] And there's also a similar tool called Better Touch Tool. This is on the Mac. But again they have similar programs on Windows where using my touchpad I can have shortcuts that perform certain functions and there's just a way of automating a little bit more of my workflow and I always like to do that especially because I've got pretty bad wrists and so any time that I can automate some of these things I can have a little bit less pain in my hands on my wrists and arms as I'm working.

Bonni: [00:16:36] Well we get to a fun one now and this is one I can't believe that I still haven't tried it. Given how long ago it was recommended to me Doug McKee who's been on the podcast I think a few times now he used to teach at Yale and now is over at Cornell and I had talked about an Apple TV dance game that I was really liking and he suggested the Just Dance Now game.

Bonni: [00:17:00] And I'll tell you those of you who are not on the iOS ecosystem they have this for all sorts of different platforms and so I posted a link to that Just Dance Now in the show notes and the specific one that he was recommending was the Apple TV game. But again there are a lot of different platforms including our iOS devices.

Bonni: [00:17:21] And he has specifically suggested that because the one that I had liked and had really had fun dancing he said that the Just Dance Now has a lot larger song collection and I was really excited about checking that out.

Bonni: [00:17:31] And again I can't believe it's taken me this long because it's really fun to get the kids involved and still get a little bit of exercise going and just reduces our stress allows us to burn some calories and I need to check that out. And I think the kids would really like it now to their to the age now or they'd probably play along with me.

Bonni: [00:17:50] We've talked about on the show previously the idea of social rebin sometimes called Collaborative Annotating and we have talked about a tool called Hypothesis and what Hypothesis does is allows you to put a layer on top of an article a blog post anything that you're reading on the web.

Bonni: [00:18:13] And to put your comments on this layer on top of it you can always go back and remove the hypothesis layer you're not messing with the Web site itself but you're adding a common teen really and annotating layer on top of it.

Bonni: [00:18:28] And it just adds a bit of additional nuance because instead of using comments at the bottom of the article you can actually comment on the specific line or word or section of whatever it is that you're reading. And again I've talked about it before but and I've been using it myself I've been enjoying in fact I annotated a blog post from Kevin Gannon who talked about

his teaching manifesto and really enjoyed that but I wanted to do it even more and start incorporating into my teaching.

Bonni: [00:19:01] So this is something I have to do some more preparation and thinking about how I could go about doing that. Just a couple more and then we'll get to the recommendations segment. Many of you who've been listening for a while know that I use a task management service called OmniFocus. It's an app on the Mac and iOS and my apologies this is one of the ones that is not available on Windows although I suspect there's probably something out there like it. So if you know of one please let me know.

Bonni: [00:19:29] But what this tool lets me do. I haven't tried it yet but again I've got an article that I'm going to link to in the show notes that talks about how to do this is have a hotspot a folder on my computer that any document or file that I drag to it will automatically create a task for me inside of omni focus and I can only imagine how much this would help for grading.

Bonni: [00:19:56] I've got all these papers I need to grade and I even though I'm a learning management system is kind of like your own task management system in itself. Obviously when you grade somebody's paper it kind of goes away from the queue. But I still like to sometimes have that in my main task management system so that everything's all in one place.

Bonni: [00:20:18] And I have the ability to see really what my grading workload looks like instead of just grading I need to know how many papers are we talking about here. How long do I predict it will take me to grade each paper etc.

Bonni: [00:20:30] And there's something to about seen it more holistically in relation to the other tasks that I have on my plate for a given day. And there's also something about checking it that I really feel like too that shows me just it helps me motivate one more one more we can get through one more of that kind of thing.

Bonni: [00:20:47] And speaking of which I recognize my language I'm saying get through I'm challenged by so many of the higher ed experts who have been writing about that since we can't stand grading so much maybe we should make assignments that are worthy of our joy and excitement to great and something I'm I'm doing a lot of thinking about how I might get better at doing that too so please forgive me I'm not there yet.

Bonni: [00:21:08] But at any rate I'm looking forward to looking at this hot spot for grading and thinking about how I could have a way of just dragging files to a folder and having them automatically show up as a task of something I need to do in my task manager which is called Omnifocus.

Bonni: [00:21:23] And the last one here on the list before we get to the recommendations segment is all about health and you might remember I use an apple watch and really do enjoy the ability to just be more mindful as to what is going on in terms of my exercise how much I've been sitting in front of a computer it'll tap me and say hey you haven't stood up at all this hour it's time to get out of that seat and do a little bit of walking around for at least a minute. And I really enjoy that.

Bonni: [00:21:54] But what it doesn't give me as much love is a historical look at how I've been doing there's the visual way that it communicates. It isn't quite to my liking it doesn't go quite as far it's really really good but doesn't go quite as far. And I saw an article that I have in my Someday-Maybe List I've linked to it. That's to an app called Activity. I don't know if it's plus plus it's two plus sign. I'm not sure how they how they refer to it.

Bonni: [00:22:19] But I'm really looking forward to having a little bit even more motivation on in terms of being able to see my patterns over time and I just I've loved the Apple Watch so much for what it's done for me but I think that this app me even be a little bit better than the tracking tools that are the default ones. This is the time in the show where I give a recommendation.

Bonni: [00:22:40] And again this is something that I have used it's not my Someday-Maybe List. I took it off of that. It is Dropbox Paper and you know I've been a big fan of Dropbox pretty much since I started using it years and years ago when it first came out and they now have a competitor service to Google Docs in that you can have a document that two people or more are working on at the same time and it's just a real nice interface the ability to include photos and checklists and all different kinds of items and that it's just a really nice interface.

Bonni: [00:23:14] It was super easy to use. You can make comments on everything that you might expect with social writing collaborative writing. And I would recommend if you are a Dropbox Paper, excuse me a Dropbox user, but you might want to consider using paper Dropbox Paper.

Bonni: [00:23:31] And again if you already have people that you're connected with who you're collaborating with on Dropbox it's just a really nice way to do more collaborative writing. If you're not already on Dropbox I don't suggest that this is worth to you changing. It's just once you already have a network of people that you've set up via you know that email addresses that they use for a given account it makes it really nice but if you're already on Dropbox and again how people are sharing files with etc. it's a really good tool and I recommend that one.

Bonni: [00:24:01] Thanks so much for listening today to today's Teaching in Higher Ed episode 133. And if you want to get to the show notes and add any comments on the episode as to what you are considering on your Someday-Maybe List for 2017 I would love to see those things you can comment at teachinginhighered.com/133.

Bonni: [00:24:26] And speaking of collaboration if you want to try something new. Maybe we're using Slack to collaborate a little bit more privately with members of the teaching and higher ed community. So if you go to teachinginhighered.com/slack you can put in a request to join us in that part of the community there on Slack. It's been fun to collaborate with people that way.

Bonni: [00:24:48] Thanks so much for listening. I'm looking forward to a great year 2017 teaching in higher ed already have a lot of great guests booked and look forward to more ideas that are coming in. Thanks so much for listening and I'll see you next time.

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