

Bonni: [00:00:00] On today's episode of the Teaching in Higher Ed podcast number 138, Mike Caulfield prescribes a new digital literacy.

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Bonni: [00:00:22] Welcome to this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. I'm Bonnie 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 productivity so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students.

Bonni: [00:00:49] Today's guest, Mike Caulfield, is currently the Director of Blended and Networked Learning at Washington State University Vancouver. He's also the editor of The New Horizons column for the EDUCAUSE Review. He was recently appointed the first civic fellow of AASCU's American Democracy Project. He has worked to construct collaborative, net-enabled learning environments for almost 20 years. Mike, welcome to the show.

Mike: [00:01:22] Thanks.

Bonni: [00:01:23] Mike, when I was reading your bio your title struck me a bit. Director of Blended and Networked Learning at Washington State University. Could you talk a little bit about that networked learning part of it? And when that entered into your role there and some of the things that sort of show up there that don't typically show up with people that don't have that in their title or their responsibilities.

Mike: [00:01:47] Yeah sure. So it's been the title from the beginning. One of the things that benefited from here was that they were putting together a new position. And so we had we had the option to shape the title. And initially the term was going to be just Director of Blended Learning.

Mike: [00:02:07] But our aspirations are that it's not just that we're mixing say a bit of blackboard with a bit of face to face, it's actually that we're using the web in new ways that help our students to become- whatever you want to call it, connectivist, little mini connectivists running around, or networked learners, or people that use their PLN - however you want to phrase it. We want students to have experiences which don't only blend that digital and the face to face, but also introduce them to this idea of learning in the context of a network like the worldwide web.

Mike: [00:02:54] How that comes in on a day to day basis, the truth is I think like a lot of people in my position, we would love it if every person that walked in the door said "teach me more about this networked learning." In reality what we're able to do is we're able to pick a few boutique projects that we push through each semester and try to push the boundaries of what we do in a classroom around these technologies. And that may be anything from... We had a graduate project where we had students doing an annotated bibliography of public policy works in news items using hypothesis. That was a fun one. So these sorts of things are stuff that we try. And we learn from it. And we try to come up with better opportunities next time around.

Bonni: [00:03:50] I really appreciate when you talk about that. I know that even just being the person who does these interviews, I get overwhelmed sometimes thinking I couldn't possibly keep up with all the ideas, but then just that we're creating spaces in our own lives and our own careers and then trying to help our institutions do that too where if we leave ourselves a little bit of margin for that experimentation, just how that can then almost cascade throughout the organization where everyone can be where they are but be stretching themselves.

Bonni: [00:04:18] I love that inspiration you provide. I'm going to really look forward to getting whatever links you have for those, we'll put them in the show notes too so people can explore and get inspired.

Bonni: [00:04:27] There was one other thing that popped out in your bio before we actually talked about what we came here to talk about today...like we don't have enough on our plates. So tell me about this civic fellow of the AASCU's American Democracy Project, that sounded really intriguing to me as well.

Mike: [00:04:43] Yeah. So this is new. It's a new position. The American Democracy Project tries to set up educational experiences, civic engagement

experiences at the higher education level and it tries to do that through a variety of initiatives. For example, experiential learning is a big piece of what they do and service learning is a big piece of what they do. And organizing activities around Constitution Day.

Mike: [00:05:14] These sort of these you know democracy walls you see popping up on campus with various students are able to write their opinions about this or that and try to have a dialogue. So they do a lot of different things and they have a variety of different projects that they pursue. A lot of those projects are very big. They have multiple schools in a formal organizational structure pursuing them. And one of the things that they've wanted for a while is as well as doing some of those bigger projects around bigger ideas. They wanted to have an ability to do smaller, more agile projects.

Mike: [00:05:53] So this idea of the civic fellow is the idea that they would pick somebody on a regular basis who could put together maybe a smaller, more agile project around a defined idea. And just given some of the concern around digital polarization and fake news and some of these issues around the election, they offered me a chance to be that first civic fellow.

Bonni: [00:06:24] Well you brought up our topic for today which is digital literacy. And I do like to admit just right up front that I am so excited to be talking to you Mike but also completely terrified in the sense of this is really hard work that you are proposing. And I'm going to start out right out of the gate, you wrote a blog post which is going to be basically the frame for our conversation today.

Bonni: [00:06:48] And the title of it is Yes, Digital Literacy But Which One? And one of the first things you tell us is that most of the time when we- and I'm going to include myself very much in this- when I think about digital or information literacy skills until I read your article, I did tend to think of it as a skill that would be pretty universal, that if we could take everyone across multiple disciplines and just raise the bar in this area that we would be getting our jobs done. And I think that you are here to take me down on that and take the rest of us down. So talk to me in the beginning here just about how have we been wrong when we see it as a separate skill from domain knowledge?

Mike: [00:07:35] Yes. I mean it's multiple intersecting issues here. And we could drill down on any one of them. But we can start from what we do now which is- and when I say "what we do now" I do know that some people read my post and said "well that's not what we do!" And that is true. But the broad practice of information literacy across the majority of schools looks something like the stuff I

talk about in that post like the so-called CRAPP test, or RADCAB or CARS or some of these acronyms where we have a student and they look at a page, or they look at a tweet, or they look at a document, or journal, or something of that nature and they have a list of questions to ask. Usually there's four to six big questions they ask about accuracy and relevance and these sorts of things. And usually under each of those there's like six or seven subquestions. So you have all these questions you are going to ask about this article. And the idea is that students will sort of internalize these higher abstract ideas.

Mike: [00:08:55] And when they look at a page that's clearly to us a page that is not very trustworthy or a page that's not particularly suited to what they're trying to prove or establish or figure out that this understanding of these larger abstract issues will be so ingrained in them that they'll just see "oh well this is not a trustworthy page." Or "this is a fact I should check." In reality, that doesn't seem to happen.

Mike: [00:09:32] And I actually got contacted after I wrote this by Sam Winberg who has been in the news with some of his Stanford work on this issue of digital literacy. And he's been in this area for well over a decade and a half.

Mike: [00:09:50] And what they found is that, again, these sort of very broad general questions never actually translate into real world capabilities of students. What we actually use when we evaluate information are a lot of small tricks. And these can be little things that we know, as I say in the article. Or they can be little things that we know how to do. But it's those smaller things that really give us an immediate way to assess what's in front of us. And those are the things that we generally don't teach students.

Bonni: [00:10:35] One of the examples that you have in the blog post that you wrote- and again to anyone listening, we will have links to all of this in the show so you can go check it out because this is a picture so we have to close our eyes. You have five images of five different web sites. And you put forth a challenge that says "OK discern which one of these sources was the most careful with the facts." And I'm going to admit, I was reading late at night... That's my excuse.

Bonni: [00:11:04] But I started to look for a lens, very similar to the lenses that you described before. So I'm looking for trying to figure out who is this? And that wasn't necessarily obvious in the images. And then even looking at you know the web design, do you think that this one looks more professional? The top one looked really- it was very text based so I thought "is that what he's going for?"

Bonni: [00:11:26] And then I just laughed because when you keep reading, you go through a whole lens of some of the clues that stood out to you. And you talked about this- one of the images has a big W circled in the red flag. And I had no idea what this was. This was not something that stood out to me, but to you you said "Oh Nazis" Nazi warning, bells are going off.

Bonni: [00:11:47] And then there was another one. You saw the word "Illuminati" and that got you thinking about new world order. It must be a conspiracy site. And you had all these clues that for the most part were completely not noticeable to me.

Bonni: [00:12:04] So just a perfect example to show that I don't have the same domain knowledge that you had for these warning bells. And therefore even if I have my acronym of CRAPP or RADCAP or what have you, it's not going to do me any good cause I'm still not going to know about the clues that stood out to you. Would you talk a little bit about the tree octopus one too? That was another one that comes up a lot.

Mike: [00:12:27] So let's go back to something you said though because I think something you said is interesting here. So I go off of the cues that I know from my domain knowledge. And I was an online political organizer way back, about 10 years back. I created an online political activist site, 5,000 members.

Mike: [00:12:52] They got national attention and we had a lot of people sharing a lot of information on that site. So I've been immersed in online political culture for a long time. So the things that I'm going to notice there like "oh Illuminati site. This is the new world order conspiracy." Or "oh Nazis." Those are not necessarily going to be the things that you're going to notice.

Mike: [00:13:16] But you said something there that was dismissive, but I think overly so. Which is when you said "well you're kind of looking at what is the quality of the lay out of the graphic design of the site." And I think sometimes we dismiss that. We say "well you know you can't really..." But the truth is if you are trying to figure out very quickly do I trust the site or not? That is one of the things you might want to look at. And one of the reasons why you might want to look at this, as just one of many factors, is an amount of care and an amount of money that goes in those site could show that this site is careful in other ways. Right.

Mike: [00:14:02] It could show that the site has a following that is substantial enough that they work to keep it. It could also be a completely horrible site and still be graphically stunning. So this is not to say that you're proving one thing or another. But what we are looking to do is we are looking to- if you're familiar with Kahneman's system one and system two, we're looking to actually inform some of those system one feelings, those gut instinct feelings that students have. Ultimately when you're scrolling through 10, 20, 30, 40 of these things in a single refresh on Twitter or Facebook or something like that, if you haven't developed an instinct for these things you're going to struggle.

Mike: [00:14:55] So we're looking for ways whether it's domain knowledge, whether it's the background of the politics of the variety of sites, or I don't know what your background is, but your ability to recognize that certain site designs are a little more slipshod. We're looking for ways that people developed an instinct about these things because once they get that instinct and once something in them says "Oh well hold on here. Danger." Then they can start to apply what Kahneman calls system two, that reasoned, rationed, step by step rationality we rely on. The analytical side of what we do.

Mike: [00:15:36] But if we're not having that gut feeling when we first look at it, we're never actually going to get to the rationality. And actually that that's the place where most people fail. Right. There is not- I mean there are- we will talk in a minute I suppose about strategies that people have to deal with these are the sorts of things.

Mike: [00:15:56] But the place that most people fail is they don't even think about it. They don't even hear the warning bells. So there's these two sort of broad issues. The one thing is do you hear like the three alarm fire going off about this site? Do you recognize that and stop?

Mike: [00:16:16] And then there's having heard that three alarm fire, do you have the tools to investigate it? Do you have the tools to pick it apart and figure out "OK well is this something trustworthy or not?" Right. And both half of those are useful. Almost everything that we do in information literacy doesn't address that first part though. And so we get a bunch of people that may actually have higher abstract reasoning skills but are never actually going to utilize them on the things that scroll past them in their feed.

Bonni: [00:16:50] Part of what I heard you saying too is that- well maybe, I think you implied it- is that part of it is we have to care because the system one is- and for anyone who has is wondering, the wonderful book that talks about this is

Thinking Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman. And the system one is just that instant without, that's that's my a click word. That's my my conditioned response.

Bonni: [00:17:14] But in order to change that to better my own digital literacy, I have to care first. I can recall around Martin Luther King Day three, four, or five years ago something like that I saw a quote on Facebook. And "ah it's just so powerful," click share. And it turned out that was not something that was said by him. And I still remember so vividly being so disappointed in myself that now I am trained never share quote. No matter how beautiful the graphics are or how much it seems like with something that Martin Luther King would have shared. Unless you go and check it. Take the...

Mike: [00:17:56] In particular whenever you say "oh that quote is perfect," that's precisely the time that you should stop and look at it. Have I checked every quote that I have retweeted in the pas year? I'm not sure I have. But I have developed at least a reflex of if I think a quote is perfect, if a quote is just like "this is the quote I've been looking for to express myself," that's actually when I get most suspicious.

Mike: [00:18:29] And the reason why I get most suspicious about that is perfect quotes are viral. Virality is something that people seek to achieve. And so when I see a quote that almost looks like it's designed to go viral, that's precisely the quote that we should check. Because that's precisely the sort of quote that somebody would design as a hoax or as click bait or something like that. So part of it is rewiring yourself. If there's a quote about I don't know about Roman Jakobson's poetic function from his 1963 speech. Right.

Mike: [00:19:16] I'm not so worried. I'm not so worried about that because that's not something that's sort of been designed to punch all my emotional buttons. Whereas if I do look at something and I feel like an emotional charge over it, I think that's the place where you most have to slow down because again you've just got to be suspicious of those things.

Bonni: [00:19:38] There was a wonderful episode of the podcast Planet Money. It starts out by the author sharing that a few days before the election, we start getting all these thousands of people's things in our Facebook feeds. And that there was a story there. It was vivid, filled with intriguing details. And I'm reading now: "there's a photo of a burning house. Firemen rushing in. The headline read quote FBI agent suspected and Hillary e-mail leaks found dead in apparent murder suicide."

Bonni: [00:20:15] And this episode goes through and they actually were able to track down the individual who made quite a bit of money off of authoring fake news. And the guy was pretty hard to find, but once they found him he decided I guess that he was willing to share his story. And it just is a really really fascinating look at some of the ways that people have been able to generate considerable income off of taking advantage of our system one responses and not having a very good digital literacy. I know there is one that you can share with us that comes up frequently when talking about digital literacy, the tree octopus. Could you tell us that story?

Mike: [00:20:55] Yeah. This is great. If you put these two things together, the burning house with the murder suicide of the FBI agent next to the tree octopus you start to understand how ill formed our activities are for students. So there's a site, this hoax site called Save the Tree Octopus. And it's this fake site about this fake animal called the tree octopus which looks just like a little mini octopus but it supposedly lives in trees in the Pacific Northwest.

Mike: [00:21:30] So teachers send their students, it is usually used in the K-12 area but it's sometimes used in higher education as well. Teachers send their students to this and they say "hey is this real? Or is this fake?" And they go through RADCAP, they say is this relevant? Is it accurate? Is it recently updated? All these all these these sorts of questions. They go through CRAPP and they say well is a credible? What's the purpose of it? Is there bias? And so forth.

Mike: [00:22:08] And at the end of it, at least in two studies I've read, the majority of students think it's real even after sitting there with these questions right in front of them. And going through the questions it's like "well yeah, it's updated. It was updated just a couple of days ago." Is it relevant? Yeah I want to know about the tree octopus. Does it seem to be authoritative? Well it links to something called the cephalopod news organization or something.

Mike: [00:22:40] So they do all these things around information literacy. And were like well how can this happen? How can they believe in this tree octopus?. Well it's interesting because we're developing that opinion of their research having never actually looked at this page in this way or done it.

Mike: [00:23:01] The thing that we react to is the fact that if it was an evolutionary separation between an octopus in the ocean and something that came on land that was amphibious, over time you would expect these two things to look vastly different. We don't have a bunch of fish with feet walking

around on land. That's not how evolution tends to work. You tend to form to the environment.

Mike: [00:23:30] So the idea that there is this precise replica of an octopus hanging around in Pacific Northwest trees is just ridiculous. Right. But we say, we will step back and say "oh well that's not information literacy. That's not an information literacy approach to it." It's like yes it is. Of course it is. Information literacy is applying what you already know to new information that's coming in.

Mike: [00:23:56] And yet we get back and we have strapped it into these set of rules that we believe that we can use without having any domain knowledge about these things that we're looking at, without having any sense of the authorities in this area are or what we expect evolution to look like. And then we're surprised when people make just completely ridiculous decisions on whether something's authentic or not.

Mike: [00:24:29] But after a certain amount of time you have to look at that and say well are the students just particularly dumb in every study after study? Or could it be that these questions are not really that useful for figuring these things out.

Mike: [00:24:50] So that the murder suicide is an interesting one as well. Right. So you have this person who puts up this murder suicide thing. His original work was he used to put up what he thought were kind of satirical sites. Right. But he started to notice he got when he put up these sensational headlines that were just sort of bad satire, that people didn't recognize it was satire. I think partially because he wasn't a particularly good satirist.

Mike: [00:25:18] But then when he put the stuff up, people came and they clicked on it and he made a lot of money. Now how do we know that there wasn't really this murder suicide and so forth. Well that's a little harder. The site in that case was labeled the Denver Guardian. It looked like a news site. But one of the things you should recognize is wow this is actually a pretty extraordinary claim. Right.

Mike: [00:25:53] I mean it's not precisely the tree octopus, but saying that one of the candidates has or implying one of the candidates has colluded in the possible murder of an FBI agent and his wife. That's pretty big news. So you might want to slow down a little before you repost that. Now if you did slow down a little what you would find out is as you click around on that site just go to that site and look at something other than that page. And you click any other section on

that site. It looks like there's a bunch of sections on that site. In fact this is really the only news story on the site.

Mike: [00:26:35] So all you had to do right was slow down and then say well let me just see what else is on the site. Is this really a local site? But people didn't slow down. Well why didn't the people slow down? For whatever reason over time they've become so used to some of this conspiracy theory I think in their in their feed that this... They were kind of like the students with the octopus. They don't have enough sort of grounding in the reality of this that they're going to stop and they're going to look at this.

Mike: [00:27:19] I mean I know that sounds harsh. But I'm not blaming necessarily people that reposted that story. I think what I'm saying is that the problem with people that reposted that story wasn't necessarily that they didn't go and do RADCAB or they didn't go into CRAPP on the story. The big problem with that story is that their alarm bells should have been going off about the level and size and scope of this story. And it didn't. Or it didn't it in the right way.

Mike: [00:27:59] So it's again it's that level of gut instinct. Now if you understand that there are people out there trying to manipulate you and that there's this universe of fake sites and that they're all looking for your clicks so they can serve you ads. And they're all fighting for these headlines. If you understand that and you look at this then maybe your gut reaction is "oh this is a site trying to get me to click on it."

Mike: [00:28:27] And once you have that you can kind of work with that. And you can again go into this system two behavior. But if you don't have that, you're like the students without any understanding of evolution. This just seems like a completely plausible thing. Sure there's a tree octopus up there and yeah one of the major candidates just murdered two people over an e-mail server issue. So we have to look at these issues and we have to kind of the de-abstract some of this stuff.

Mike: [00:28:59] And again, I'm not saying that "well you just have to have this encyclopedic knowledge of politics and evolution and so forth to debunk these things or to work effectively on the web." But I am saying that if you don't understand that there are fake sites out there that are looking to do this, to get you to come to them and to promote them that you maybe are going to have the wrong gut reaction to seeing a headline like that.

Mike: [00:29:35] I think over time we can get our students, when they see a headline like that, to really react in a way that is not cynical, but has the appropriate level of reservation around it.

Bonni: [00:29:52] One of the common responses that I've seen on Facebook for example when someone will correct someone else... You know the classic "I'm posting this message on my status to let Facebook know that I own all my photos and I have copies of..." Someone goes and links to the Snopes article that that debunks that myth. And then there isn't really the response that I ever see of "Oh my goodness" like me with the MLK quote. I was so embarrassed and corrected it and discipline myself to always go system two the quotes because I'm overly cautious on that, as I should be. I want to be a source of reliable information as a professor and then just as a person as a human being to contribute to a better society. How do we get our students, how do we get our peers, how do we increase that care to want to be digitally literate?

Mike: [00:30:44] Yeah and how do we negotiate that tricky social situation too? Because that's one of the biggest problems. So first things first, we know from research- it's Facebook's policy research, but it is research- across millions of articles or whatever, that when people post a Snopes link in a Facebook post thread that the story has a much higher percentage chance of coming down.

Mike: [00:31:17] So people actually do react to the Snopes link often with taking the story down. And that actually does help prevent the spread of the story. And I think the same thing ends up being true of Politifact and some of these other things.

Bonni: [00:31:33] I'm so glad to hear that. I had no idea. Sorry for interrupting you, but I'm like hooray! This is great news.

Mike: [00:31:38] So when you do link the Snopes article, the research says across an insane amount of interactions that you are helping stop the spread of this. There's a bigger chance that this person will take it out. Now that chance is not 100 percent and I'm not even sure it nears 100 percent.

Mike: [00:31:57] But there's a statistically larger chance both in terms of statistical significance because it's across a million or whatever interactions, but also because you know it's a fairly large effect size. So when we look at that behavior, that behavior is actually what we want to promote. We want to promote people linking to the Snopes page, linking to the Politifact page. And we want people to feel invited to do that.

Mike: [00:32:26] But you're right. I mean socially it's very hard to do that. And very often, the person posting this thing, they found the Martin Luther King quote and they liked what he'd expressed and they posted it to express it. And to a certain extent, part of them just reacts "well I don't even care if Martin Luther King said it. That's not the point. The point is that this quote is true." Like well yeah, I mean it but it kind of is the point. I mean because if it wasn't the point there wouldn't be a picture of Martin Luther King behind it. And also just out of respect to born Luther King and his work, we shouldn't be just routinely trashing his history with things he didn't say.

Mike: [00:33:08] So how do we go about that? How do we create the social environment that actually tolerates this behavior? I think, again, this is a place where education can help. I think if we all see ourselves in this way, if we all see ourselves engaged in this effort to try to keep our news feeds clean of of the sort of garbage that can invade them, I think we're less likely to react negatively to that. I mean we are embarrassed but we do have to do that.

Mike: [00:33:50] One of the things that people should do is remember that you don't have to out people publicly. If you're on Facebook and you can use messenger to get the person that message, that's probably the better thing to allow the person to save face and take it down themselves.

Mike: [00:34:11] I will say one other thing which is that I believe organizations like Snopes and Politifact and SciCheck, I think they perform a really important function in this in that certainly they're much maligned and people contest whether they're as objective as we would like. Everybody has a problem with at least one Politifact ruling I'm sure if you've followed it for any time. But what they do give us is they give us a way to have those conversations. To start those conversations and move it beyond... If you just say I don't think Martin Luther King said that and here are 18 links that you can kind of piece together and analyze yourself to see that probably once you work this all out that he didn't say that. Well now it's just you and me arguing. And that is going to put us in the wrong mode.

Mike: [00:35:10] I do think that these sites like Snopes and Politifact are going to play an increasingly important role in this because they give us a way to kind of depersonalize the conversation between us and get into our analytical mode instead of our fighting mode.

Mike: [00:35:28] And so one of the things I'm excited about is as a civic fellow where we're putting together a student powered Snopes. This is the idea at least that students will find different claims around the Internet and work in a Snopes like fashion to either prove them or debunk them.

Mike: [00:35:49] And again the idea is not that you are you going to convince 100 percent of the people that read your article on this or that claim. The idea is that by pulling all that information together and making an attempt to get above the rhetorical into something that is more descriptive that you're giving people resources to help their friends, their peers, their colleagues be better netizens as well.

Mike: [00:36:23] So again, these sites act as starting points to the conversations that we should have. And I actually think there's got to be a lot more of them. I would like to see a whole universe of these sites. I'd like to see more ones that zone in on a particular domain, the way that Politifact checks politics. But there's so many other claims out there whether they're health claims, or claims about science, or claims about the economy that really need the attention of people that maybe have some domain knowledge in that area.

Bonni: [00:36:55] Yeah. Well this is the point in the show and we're going to do recommendations and I'm going to give mine first but also just tell you that there were a couple of things that you mentioned in your blog post that we can also use that we didn't have time to get to, but if you want to recommend some of those... But of course people need to go read those too.

Bonni: [00:37:13] I'm going to recommend actually a This American Life episode that came out and was actually a repeat from December 16, 2016. And I'm going to play just the very beginning. And I want to warn people with sensitivities about things that we tell our children because this one is some literacy that sometimes we have our our children lack. So here's a little clip from this American Life, Kid logic.

This American Life: [00:37:46] "Rebecca remembers exactly when she learned the astonishing truth. She was in second grade and ran into her best friend Rachel at school one day. And she pulled me aside and said last night I lost a tooth. And I woke up while the tooth fairy was putting the money under my pillow and guess who the tooth fairy was. I said oh my god. Who was it? I have to know. And she said my dad. My dad is the tooth fairy. And I remember running home after school and telling my mom, Mom I know who the tooth fairy is and declaring it as if I had grown up that I knew who the tooth fairy was. And

she said Oh well who is the Tooth Fairy? And I turned to her and I said Rachel's dad is the tooth fairy. Ronnie Loberfeld is the tooth fairy."

Bonni: [00:38:42] That's just the beginning. You've got to go to listen to more of it. It's a wonderful episode of kids who have misunderstood things. And I will admit that I tend to play it pretty safe on this show. I don't say a lot of controversial things but here it goes, here's my warning. My husband and I do not plan on telling our children that there is such a thing as a tooth fairy. And I apologize if that offends you.

Bonni: [00:39:07] It's one of those things that we like to think about with our kids that when we tell them things like this. And again, we're not going to judge any of you who that's your thing. But for us, we just we want to contribute to their own literacy and thinking and I'm having fun with my son who's four and a half now just talking to him about what is real, and what is imagined, and what is symbolic. And just trying to teach him what those things mean and he's pretty darn good at discerning those things at a young age. And I think one of the things is that we just watch out to any parts that we as parents might be doing to contribute to that.

Bonni: [00:39:40] But anyway, even if you don't agree and you want to tell your kids that there is such a thing as a tooth fairy in this world, it's still a really fun episode to listen to. And I just found myself smiling so much that my cheeks hurt. So that's my recommendation for today. And I'm going to pass it over to you, Mike.

Mike: [00:39:56] You know the tooth fairy thing. I don't remember being shocked finding out my parents were the tooth fairy. I remember being shocked that my mom had kept all the teeth. They were like in a little jar. This seemed like Roman or something to me, just like a jar of teeth. But her feeling was well it just seemed weird to throw them away. But the fact you guys are the tooth fairy. That's not freaking me out. No the jar of baby teeth in a cupboard, that's a that's a little Dahmer. So you might want to back off of that.

Bonni: [00:40:39] It's funny that you bring that up because of course it's always as a parent you're thinking about things in advance often of when they actually happen. But this is something I didn't even think about what do you do with those teeth?

Mike: [00:40:48] What do you do with the teeth? Yeah. So in any case, for folks out there, whether you engage in Tooth Fairyism or not that's great but don't don't keep a jar of teeth in the medicine cabinet. That's just freaky.

Bonni: [00:41:03] My parents do search and rescue with their dogs. And I'm laughing because as I'm saying this to them really is what you do with them is you give them to your parents because they use them as scent articles for the dogs as they go out to find you. Yeah, that's what they do with the teeth. And you know it's really- this is another embarrassing confession and then I'll stop. For Easter many years, I wouldn't see my parents because they would be doing cadaver Easter egg hunts with the dogs. There's a synthetic scent for dead bodies smell and they'd put it inside Easter eggs and the dogs would go find them.

Mike: [00:41:36] Oh my gosh.

Bonni: [00:41:39] I'm wondering.

Mike: [00:41:40] I feel like believing in the tooth fairy was not the worst of your childhood issues.

Bonni: [00:41:45] Yes. Perhaps.

Mike: [00:41:47] I think there's a whole other universe of things to work out for you.

Bonni: [00:41:51] Yes. There's a lot we're unpacting on this episode.

Mike: [00:41:56] So my recommendation is a new find of mine. The Verification Handbook. This is if you go to verificationhandbook.com, the European Center for Journalism something like that put out this handbook. And what it is is a handbook for journalists that when news breaks and their sources on line, so a video pops up that is supposedly a video some incident that happened at a rally or something like that, or a news story is popping up, or people on Twitter are talking about an earthquake, or something like that. How do you quickly verify the stuff that comes to you through your feed in the digital age?

Mike: [00:42:45] And what I love about Verification Handbook is it's just so specific about this stuff. So this is the polar opposite of you know the CRAPP thing that people use with him for literacy or the RADCAB or CARS or any of these other models because you look in this book and it will say OK how the

video it takes place at a certain time. Here's how you find out what the weather was in that place at that time so you can determine whether the weather in the video matches what you should be seeing.

Mike: [00:43:20] That's just there's just one thing. It goes to things like using Echosec, using Google Street View to verify locations. If someone says that there is this event that happened this or that location in Ridgefield, Washington. Well here's one thing does that location actually exist? And using Google Maps to do that. It just comes up with so many neat tricks of the trade that I hadn't really thought about. It in a world where we're all kind of forced to be our own new fact checkers, I just think it's an incredibly neat resource. I also think that in comparison to some of these other higher level approaches, it's just fun.

Mike: [00:44:13] They you look at this and you're like I'm going to find out if the weather in this video matches the weather that we know was happening at that place and that time. It feels like detective work. It feels a bit like a game. So Verificationhandbook.com is full of all these neat little tricks that the pros use that you can use on the stuff that you see in your own feed.

Bonni: [00:44:39] It looks so good. I can tell I'm going to be getting lost in there in a good way in the coming weeks. I just appreciate so much you spending your time with us today. And especially just the way in which you speak about this. Yes, we need to help our students get better at this. But I'm really hearing such a voice from you that it's a process that we all need to be continually going in. And even as you were describing the Verification Handbook just that that's, for you, another way that you can exercise those muscles and be continuing your own path of domain.

Mike: [00:45:13] Yeah. Absolutely.

Bonni: [00:45:14] Yeah. Thank you so much for being a guest on Teaching in Higher Ed. I hope it's just the first of many because it's been such an energizing and informative talk.

Mike: [00:45:21] OK. Well thank you. And I'm happy to come back sometime.

Bonni: [00:45:26] Thanks so much for listening to this episode of the Teaching in Higher Ed podcast. And thanks also to Mike for being such a funny, engaging, challenging in the best way possible guests. I really appreciate it. And thanks to Hoda who as a former guest to recommended Mike. And she said that Maha Bali had also suggested him so what a wonderful resource he is to us.

Bonni: [00:45:50] If you'd like to make any comments on today's episode. You can do that at teachinginhighered.com/138. Feel free to join us on the Teaching in Higher Ed Slack channel if you want to have some more private conversations about the things that come up on episodes or that are just of concern to us in higher ed. You can join at teachinginhighered.com/slack. There's a quick forum for you to fill out and we'll get to added to the community.

Bonni: [00:46:17] And if you have yet to rate the show, this would be a wonderful time to do it. That just helps expand our community even more and keep great guests like Mike coming into our ecosystem so we know about them and more people know about the show. You can do that using whatever podcast service it is that you use to listen to the show. Thanks so much for listening and I'll see you next time.

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