

**Bonni:** [00:00:00] Today on episode number 176 I share about my experiences attending OpenEd 2017 and other teaching lessons.

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**Bonni:** [00:00:20] Welcome to this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. I'm Bonni and this is the space where we explore the art and science of being more effective at facilitating learning. We also share ways to improve our personal productivity so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students.

**Bonni:** [00:00:47] It's been quite a few weeks of attending / presenting at various conferences. And I wanted to share a little bit today about my experience attending OpenEd 2017 it was here locally in Orange County California where we live and I didn't want to miss it although I will say candidly I feel more behind than I have been in quite some time but it's all going to turn out to be worth it because I learned so much.

**Bonni:** [00:01:14] And along the way I'll also share a couple of other stories not related to that conference specifically but sort of on to some of the thoughts I've been having around teaching in general and some of the lessons I've been learning.

**Bonni:** [00:01:24] The first real takeaway that I have from OpenEd but also just from other experiences I've been having lately is that it should always start with our students.

**Bonni:** [00:01:34] And speaking of starting the open ed conference started with a student panel from Santa Ana College which is a local one here. And it just created this overarching theme of that's that's why we do it. Those individuals are why we do it.

**Bonni:** [00:01:51] And the more that we can understand the context in which they experience education and some of the challenges that they have the better we're going to be able to do in our roles as educators and it sort of tied over a little bit. I was invited to speak at the American Concrete Institute's annual conference for their speakers breakfast - and thank you to Arsenio for the invitation to be there.

**Bonni:** [00:02:15] And afterward a lot of them had to race off to different committee meetings and such so they had warned me in advance that they wouldn't be able to stay long. But still a number of people stayed after and made comments and and shared their own ideas.

**Bonni:** [00:02:28] And there was a young woman who was there and I had made the faulty assumption that she was ready to speak to me but she actually wanted to speak to someone who had been talking with me one of the big things that came up was so hard to tell you this advice without you hearing the other parts of my recommendations and how it built up.

**Bonni:** [00:02:48] But essentially my disdain for giving handouts that are your same PowerPoint slides the way that PowerPoint does where you have the three slides on the left and then the lines on the right hand side and that's supposed to help everybody take notes and retain the information.

**Bonni:** [00:03:03] And this was for some the first that they had really heard about this this idea that that's not necessarily the most effective way to do it. So there was a lot of a lot more than maybe I anticipated questions around that from a few of the people there.

**Bonni:** [00:03:16] So I assume this young woman was going to ask a question and it turned out she wanted to tell the gentleman who had been speaking to me that she really thought that he should listen to me and not give those power points out the way that he has been because she is a student and she wanted to share that that makes her. This is her words not mine but she said that makes her lazy or that then she doesn't feel like she has to pay attention then she doesn't feel like she just checks her out so to speak.

**Bonni:** [00:03:44] It's really really sweet. But then I also laughed because. Oh of course you're not here to say hello to me or here to say to someone else. But it was great though and I did appreciate getting to talk. There are so many magnificent educators. There's a whole area of higher ed that I was unfamiliar

with until meeting the individuals there and getting to talk with Arsenio who listens to the podcast.

**Bonni:** [00:04:07] And he is explaining to me that it's all under civil engineering and then people with an expert expertise in concrete I learn something new every day. Anyway I had a wonderful time with those people and just loved what was at the Happiest Place on Earth too so it got to be at the Disneyland Hotel there bright and early that morning.

**Bonni:** [00:04:25] So the second big takeaway theme from the Conference on my recent weeks is that we as educators contribute a great deal to the apathy that we so dislike and the the primary way in which we do it. I mean there's many ways in which we do it.

**Bonni:** [00:04:43] But one of the primary ways is through what is known as throw away assignments. This is big in the Open Ed movement. So we asked students to write a paper. They turn in the paper just to us. The only person who ever gives them feedback is their faculty member.

**Bonni:** [00:05:00] And then this is compounded with it being in a learning management system so it's locked away behind that wall. And then when they graduate they don't get to necessarily take that feedback with them depending on how it was delivered.

**Bonni:** [00:05:12] But everything stays locked behind that LMS and everything is not related to anything they might be able to use in the future or even at present contributing to some of their interests or things that they're pursuing goals that they have.

**Bonni:** [00:05:26] And there were a lot of examples at OpenEd 2017 of how to break away from doing throw away assignments and one that I had heard before then but I was really excited just to get to hear more about in person is the idea of having students compose an open textbook and I'm going to be linking in the show notes to Robin DeRosa's Post called My Open Textbook Pedagogy and Practice.

**Bonni:** [00:05:56] And actually I am so happy I got to meet her in person and she agreed to come on the show I didn't know that she listened but she doesn't back and so that was exciting that I got to meet a potential guest and in person and kind of get over some of my nerves that I sometimes have about having people on the show that I just really respect their work so highly.

**Bonni:** [00:06:16] And she said she'd love to come on so you can look forward to hearing from Robin in future months and she's really inspired me in terms of trying to have my say train as Yoda would say do or do not there is no try but that was not a joke to impersonate. I won't even try.

**Bonni:** [00:06:35] But I am going I am. I'm in the process of teaching a doctoral class this term and we're going to be writing an open textbook. And so an open text book is one that often has a low cost or no cost at all. I'm going to be using the tool that Robin recommends called Pressbooks but of course there's lots of ways one might go about doing this but I'm a big fan already even just getting started out with it.

**Bonni:** [00:07:00] And I got to hear a presentation about Pressbooks while I was at the conference and am super excited about using it. So Pressbooks is based around another web platform called WordPress and many of us myself included have our web sites or blogs built on wordpress.

**Bonni:** [00:07:17] There's a free version of Wordpress that you could build a blog today at Wordpress.com. But many of us want to go a little layer deeper and actually pay for a self-hosted WordPress site so that we can have a little bit more customisation and ability to add stuff that we can always do on the free platform.

**Bonni:** [00:07:37] So I look at Pressbooks when I open it up and it's a familiar environment to me since it is based on Wordpress and all the things that I might think about doing in wordpress. I can think about doing with in Pressbooks because it's built on that platform.

**Bonni:** [00:07:51] And my students can be set up as authors on Pressbooks and can write various sections and there's all these different templates for it and my students I just had my a class you're going to hear this episode a few weeks after I'm recording next I'm getting ready to be on the road giving a couple of key notes at some upcoming conferences.

**Bonni:** [00:08:12] But I just cracked up because when I told them I wasn't sure how they would respond to this this is a pretty nontraditional thing we're not having a textbook in this particular class. And that's the first time they've ever not had a textbook in their doctoral program.

**Bonni:** [00:08:26] And then we're writing ours we're going to rely on web resources and academic journals that are open. And some of them they had they had almost instead of clapping they would sort of stomp their feet out.

**Bonni:** [00:08:38] And so when I told them about this literally some of them are on their feet on the ground it was hard for some of them to stay in their seats. Every single person that was there was just thrilled to have this idea.

**Bonni:** [00:08:50] Because one of the things they were really excited about was that Pressbooks you can have a digital version of your textbook and it formats it beautifully at the table of contents and cover page and all that but you also can work with a publisher that will print on demand and we'll be using the service that Amazon is tied with.

**Bonni:** [00:09:12] But the guy from Pressbook said if people have ethical concerns about Amazon there's other options as well. I chuckled to myself as he said that we write probably as we write more checks we don't literally write checks to Amazon but Amazon. Yeah we do a lot of Amazon in our house so not tons of ethical issues here.

**Bonni:** [00:09:32] So at any rate we'll be printing them using Amazon they were so excited about that. This is from what I've read a guestimate. So I know I'll learn more as we go. But I have read that for a book that was 175 pages or so would cost to have those print on demand to buy it on Amazon would be eight or nine dollars.

**Bonni:** [00:09:53] And then of course there are the teeny tiniest bit of royalties that will get paid to whoever is the primary author and so we have to talk about that in terms of because I'm the one who pressbox is free but then you have to buy a license for a book that you'd like to have in PDF format and therefore being able to print it without watermark.

**Bonni:** [00:10:14] So that's how they make their their money. And this is often called a freemium business model that's not what they called it in their presentation but just this idea of get lots of people using it but then have some more higher end features that are paid and they had a sale on it and so I was just decided to buy it and I'm glad that I did.

**Bonni:** [00:10:34] Because the students were so excited about doing it but I have tons of questions now I'm really looking forward to talking to Robin is I'm curious about you know and I'm going to learn a lot just doing it.

**Bonni:** [00:10:45] And I guess I didn't have this as one of my bullet points but I should have the theme of just get in there just start just do it. Just try it was a really big theme that came out of open to add. And so that's kind of how I felt. And I you know I don't know how many authors that Amazon will take.

**Bonni:** [00:11:00] Guess what that's probably just a Google search away and so I can learn more as we go. And you know have the students also doing their own exploring and so they're in the process of getting used to that more self-directed learning. And I think that's going to be really good modeling for them.

**Bonni:** [00:11:16] So excited to hear more from Robin I only skim the surface but a big takeaway of course is to move away from throw away assignments. Go look for all these wonderful educators that are providing such inspiration for us to something that can have a deeper connection with the students.

**Bonni:** [00:11:35] The next big key takeaway is that open isn't just about reducing costs. I got to sit in a presentation from Matthew Bloom from Scottsdale Community College and his advice to us was it's not just about free that we shouldn't just focus on it being free. He was a big part proponent also of not doing these throwaway assignments and had some really cool examples and then some ways in which he'd research the effectiveness in his classes of what he's experimenting with and it was really interesting to hear from him.

**Bonni:** [00:12:08] There were many institutions that presented studies on open educational resources the University of Ohio State was just one of them that I saw a big take away that they had was that it wasn't just free textbooks or to reduce class textbooks that turned out to be most interesting to the faculty that they interviewed after putting up a very big open educational resources initiative at their institution.

**Bonni:** [00:12:36] But actually it was the opportunity to tailor the content. So many of these open textbooks like the ones I talked about that Robin's work on and so many educators I mean there's just a bunch of different places we can go to find these open educational resources.

**Bonni:** [00:12:53] And the authors of these many times have licensed them such that you can do essentially what is called and in our word processor processors a file save as. But on the web is often called forking. You can fork a text but that just means you know prior to a prong off the side that is a version of it and then make it your own.

**Bonni:** [00:13:16] That's called forking that's the language that's used in some of the services that do this type of thing. And so you can fork content. Make it your own and have it align better with your own philosophies or other things that you want to address remove chapters add chapters.

**Bonni:** [00:13:32] And then of course professionally we just always want to make sure that we make note of the original source and that's embedded in the licenses as well and some of the tools actually do that for you and help you make sure that you're giving credit where credit is due and following those licenses that most people have some sort of attribution that they want made back to their work.

**Bonni:** [00:13:56] And so the University of Ohio State individuals said hey it was great for our faculty Yes and that the students could have reduced costs but they found even more this alignment ability to tailor and align the content with other things was really really appealing to their faculty.

**Bonni:** [00:14:14] And then the last thing I wanted to mention a theme that I just felt so much that they really do mean open that open means open in every way. I felt so welcome there. This was my first year attending this conference. I am very new in learning about open education and there were lots of acronyms used throughout the days that we were there. There were lots of companies mentioned that I had no idea who they were.

**Bonni:** [00:14:41] And I love that. I mean it's it's hard because it's it's a struggle to try to get you know get everything you're trying to get out of it. But I love it because it puts us back in the role of learner. But really what I felt every time I struggled there was always someone there who could help me whether I knew that I needed help and I just asked a question.

**Bonni:** [00:15:01] People were so kind and gracious and I got to have wonderful conversations during lunches and just just loved all those opportunities to connect.

**Bonni:** [00:15:09] But even I was sitting next to me at one of the sessions we had some of these great roundtable sessions where it is actually one of my most memorable times because really I found that people focus less on who are you and where do you work. Although yes I got asked that question a lot but more so it was.

**Bonni:** [00:15:27] What challenges are you having in doing some of this open work that you want to do and what are some of the inspirations that you have or some of the ideas that was really fun to engage in this process and one of these roundtable sessions a guy sitting next to me or I can't even believe he could read my chicken scratch notes but I was sitting there with my tablet using my stylus and do my little chicken scratch notes and he leaned over and said yeah that letter you've got to change that around.

**Bonni:** [00:15:56] I had completely misheard what someone had said the name of something was and if I had tried to google for it later I would have completely lost it and not even known what they were talking about and so it was really fun that someone's like everyone's just engaged enough to want to help other people make sure they can get as much as they want out of the experience.

**Bonni:** [00:16:18] This is the time in the show where I get to give a recommendation and that is sort of a couple related recommendations. But I recently mentioned starting that doctoral class and that morning before I started I had it was a four hour class with them. And so in the morning I was doing my last minute preparations and I just decided on Twitter to ask the question I'm starting this doctoral class would you mind sharing why you why it is you use Twitter.

**Bonni:** [00:16:47] And before I knew it over the next couple of days I think there's like 30 responses there and they're all so rich and nuanced and different from each other it was just really a delight.

**Bonni:** [00:16:59] So I'm going to suggest that you take a look at the varied reasons that people use Twitter because it might be inspiring to you and I'm going to build what's called a Storify.

**Bonni:** [00:17:10] So I guess another recommendation I have if you're not already familiar with Storify Storify takes one of the challenges of using Twitter and allows you to remedy that.

**Bonni:** [00:17:22] One of the challenges with Twitter is that threads don't always turn out as clean and tidy as we might like them to. It's not easy for someone to see all the responses that people had to me about why they use Twitter.

**Bonni:** [00:17:34] I can go over to Storify and I can through various social media not just Twitter but Instagram Facebook other types of online content like that and I can drag it over to create a story and the order of the posts or the images



or what have you are going to be the order that I want because I can drag them and move them around.

**Bonni:** [00:18:00] So it tells me more of a story just like the name Storify. So I'm going to suggest that you specifically go check out the Storify that I'll have in the show notes at [teachinginhighered.com/176](http://teachinginhighered.com/176).

**Bonni:** [00:18:13] And then if you've never used Storify before but you've found that you really wish you could share some tweets to go ahead and do that. And in fact I'll post a link to one other one as well. Josh Eyler I was remembering someone asked me the other day someone wrote into the show and asked about she's got a teaching demo coming up and she wanted some advice. And instantly I thought, "Oh Josh did something on this."

**Bonni:** [00:18:38] I thought it was a blog but it turned out to just be a big Twitter conversation and some advice that he had had as well. And when I tweeted to ask him about that he says oh it's on Storify. I'll link to his as well. So you can get an idea of another Storify.

**Bonni:** [00:18:53] But also if you wanted any advice on teaching demos or you want to bookmark that for other people that you want to support who are working at getting into higher ed or moving positions then that's a great resource for you. Thanks to to Josh for that resource.

**Bonni:** [00:19:09] I'm cracking up because I'd just put the recording on pause for a minute so I could go look up another resource and really realized that. Speaking of Twitter threads not always be very visible there was one that I missed on the same advice not a Storify but just advice thanks to Peter Newbury.

**Bonni:** [00:19:25] Looks like he's got some job advice that he's shared before with teaching demos and so I'm going to link to Peter Newbury's advice as well. And then Derek Bruff had also said there's some from Vanderbilt that a former grad fellow had provided as well so I've got lots of resources for you going to be in the show notes at [teachinginhighered.com/176](http://teachinginhighered.com/176) on teaching demos so just a little bit for you to bookmark or to use for yourself or pass on to others.

**Bonni:** [00:19:55] Thanks once again to Josh and to Peter and to Derek for that great advice. Thanks for listening to this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. As I mentioned if you want to check things out in the show notes or make comments you can do that at [teachinginhighered.com/176](http://teachinginhighered.com/176).

**Bonni:** [00:20:16] And if you have yet to subscribe to the weekly e-mail that's how you can get all of the links to the great teaching demo advice that I mentioned coming into your inbox automatically so you don't have to remember to go look for it yourself.

**Bonni:** [00:20:28] You can subscribe to those weekly e-mails at [teachingandhire.com/subscribe](http://teachingandhire.com/subscribe) and when you do you'll also get a free guide with 19 educational and productivity tools that will help you use technology in your teaching and with your productivity.

**Bonni:** [00:20:45] So it's a little free gift that comes along with your subscription. Thanks so much for listening and I'm going to see you next time there's some great guests coming up so keep on listening. See you next time.

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