

**Bonni:** [00:00:00] Today on episode number 183 of the Teaching in Higher Ed podcast, Robin DeRosa inspires us through open education.

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**Bonni:** [00:00:19] 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 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] I'm thrilled to be welcoming to the show today Robin DeRosa. You've probably heard me mention her name on recent episodes talking about her work in open text books, but that is just one way in which she has impacted so many of us thinking critically about how we teach and how our students can best experience learning.

**Bonni:** [00:01:08] Her research and her advocacy work focuses on open education and how universities can innovate in order to bring down costs for students, increase interdisciplinary collaboration, and refocus the academic world on strengthening the public good. She's a professor at Plymouth State University, part of the University System of New Hampshire, where she chairs the Interdisciplinary Studies program. She's also an editor for Hybrid Pedagogy, an open access peer reviewed journal that combines the strands of critical pedagogy and digital pedagogy to arrive at the best social and civil uses for technology and new media in education. Robin, welcome to Teaching in Higher Ed.

**Robin:** [00:01:57] Thank you.

**Bonni:** [00:01:58] It's so fun to be getting to talk to you today. It cracks me up. I think you're the first guest who's ever come on that we actually saw each other in person first before you came on the show.

**Robin:** [00:02:10] It was a totally surreal experience to see you in person and hear your voice coming out of an actual like three dimensional person. Because I've been so used to hearing you and my ears on airplanes for so long. Yeah, I think there's a lot of us, especially those of us who travel a lot, rely on our podcasts. Just you know sort of binge listen to you over four or five hours on certain flights. So it's pretty magical to be here.

**Bonni:** [00:02:32] There was an episode- and I will totally put this in the show notes if I can find it. I suspect I'll be able to. There was a hysterical episode of This American Life where the entire premise was that this guy's mom had things, topics you should never talk about because they're totally not interesting. And it was predictably things about the weather or things when you're sick.

**Bonni:** [00:02:54] And so the challenge was, as a radio producer, he was going to go find stories about the weather, find stories about travel, find stories about being sick, that actually were interesting.

**Robin:** [00:03:09] I heard that. That's older now, right? That was awhile ago? Yeah, I think I heard that one.

**Bonni:** [00:03:12] Yeah it totally stuck with me all this time because I feel like people who really get into podcasts. And Dave and I have gotten to podcasting conferences, if you want to just centralize the geekyness of people who just love this world. And it's so funny because I imagine to others it's just like wow that is incredibly boring.

**Bonni:** [00:03:31] But to us it's all so interesting. But I know I'm not alone. Like there's some really great posts. Bryan Alexander does a post every year of the podcast that he listens to. He's done it at least a couple of years now and I get such a kick out of it like oh what is he like and what ones does he listen to that I don't listen to yet? And then of course I can never keep up.

**Robin:** [00:03:49] Oh my gosh well his lists are like, I just didn't know there was that many podcasts the first time I saw his list. Mostly because I'm not that big of a listener, or I wasn't, until I started traveling. I have a really short commute and I have a kid. And those two things mean there's not a lot of time for things on that ear buds. But now that I fly a lot, I've really started listening a lot more.

**Bonni:** [00:04:14] Well one of the things I'm excited to talk to you about today. Well really probably one of the areas that you've been most inspiring to me I know is too myopic for you. But we can start with myopic and then we can broaden out. But that's this whole idea of- I think starting with the idea that we don't want to have throw away assignments, wanting assignments to have more meaning and significance.

**Bonni:** [00:04:41] Can you talk a little bit about where did you first start thinking about that? Where did you start to feel that friction or that tension saying this is insane we are having people do all this work that doesn't go anywhere but to the one person who's going to grade it and some of the problems there?

**Robin:** [00:04:58] Well I think almost what's most interesting to me about that story is how many years I spent being a really good teacher without ever thinking about it. I've been here at Plymouth State, where I teach now, for 18 years I think and a good 14 of them I spent I think doing a good job as a teacher with students who I connected with, who I think I inspired on some levels but especially if you think about your Moodle or your Blackboard or your Canvas or whatever, I really didn't feel that many qualms when at the end of every semester I would import those shells into the new semester and just delete all of that student work. Or in the old old days, like 11 years ago when people would literally do the thing where you know you'd leave the papers outside your office door just filled with your heart and soul, your feedback. And then many of them would not come and retrieve them once the semester was over. Partially because they literally couldn't, they were often in other places and we mostly didn't mail them back. And that was just kind of like the norm. And I'm embarrassed now at sort of how unquestioning I was about that norm.

**Robin:** [00:06:26] And one of the key things that's really happened for me and my teaching now is that I think I'm constantly looking for norms like what's invisible to me about how I'm teaching that could be better?

**Robin:** [00:06:37] But I was at a conference where Jesse Stommel and Sean Michael Morris sort of and I think an offhanded way kind of mentioned that little dance that we do when we delete out student work from the LMS and go to the next semester. I literally had tears spring to my eyes thinking of how I had taught my students to devalue their work in a sort of Pavlovian sense over all those years.

**Robin:** [00:07:04] I've had multiple epiphanies in this journey but that's really what they are, these sort of wakeup moments when you think "wow the structures that we've built to help manage learning are sending these symbolic signals to students about how meaningful or not meaningful their work is."

**Robin:** [00:07:27] And I heard that and just immediately wanted to change all my practice. Now I had no skills. I didn't know how to do anything, but the skills are so secondary to the conceptual understanding of how do you want your students to contribute? And once I cared about that question, building the skills became more of a mission and a little bit easier to do.

**Bonni:** [00:07:49] One of the things I hear you saying it's not just devaluing the students work, but I hear you also saying devaluing your own work of providing feedback. And I've never done that, put the assignments in paper because I am a germaphobe. I always get sick at the start of a semester when I give a test and I just, ah there's germs everywhere.

**Bonni:** [00:08:10] It's also just the I don't like carrying a lot of things, I have a bad shoulder and neck and too much computer work and stuff, so I've been digital. But then to discover, for whatever reason, many learning management systems- in fact, I would even go so far as to say everyone I've ever used, there's always something a little quirky, a little extra that they have to do to see your feedback. And I see that even as recently as this semester, a colleague saying that she teaches in our nursing program and she said that her entire term she hadn't realized that they hadn't been seeing it because you had to click an extra thing in order to get to that thing.

**Bonni:** [00:08:44] But how much have we mechanized. And I don't think transactionalised is a word but made transactional because it's just I just want the points and the rest of it is really devalued. You're here to transact with me a set of points and you're only going to hear back from me if I don't agree with said set of points.

**Bonni:** [00:09:03] But the feedback just feels very transactional too. So we've really sort of set up this system where we don't value our own feedback and they don't value our feedback and just just that because it is such so one way or maybe even two ways sort of thing.

**Bonni:** [00:09:19] I use the Learning Management System, Canvas. I went to a conference this summer and I don't know if it was at the conference or just in their communities, someone was saying like I want to turn this off where students

can reply. I really liked that because this is going to sound like a ridiculous thing to say, but I'm going to admit it. I wrote a nice long thing about my student and they were doing flip grid videos and I said "oh he were so articulate and you're so dynamic and is that a new pair of glasses? It sounds so lame to say, but she has a very youthful look and it was like she just grew up with this pair of glasses. It was very very sophisticated and was a really good look for her and she's about to graduate in about two seconds now. And so it sounds funny but then she can write back to me and go "Oh yeah. Just about a month ago. And people were saying that a lot" and then we can have this two way conversation and they want to turn that off. Because no I don't want to hear from them. It's just too much! It's too many messages. And I'm thinking you only want your grades to go one way and dump on them and then like wash your hands and walk away. I like that two way.

**Robin:** [00:10:23] I think just the symbolic stuff like how do I turn off my students reply. It's just if there's anything the last few years of this journey has taught me is like that is not the professor that I want to be.

**Robin:** [00:10:40] And I think the devaluing of our own feedback has more to do with- I mean the feedback is really only for students. So like it doesn't matter to me at all that that sort of sense of the feedback being meaningful or important but it matters to me what they can do with it.

**Robin:** [00:11:00] But in feedback, in general, the way we've built our course is it's like here's the feedback, here's your grade. Like why would they really care? Because what are they to do with this wonderful feedback? Which is something writing teachers have known for a long time and the more progressive brings up writing pedagogy about the importance of draft writing.

**Robin:** [00:11:24] But that sense of feed forward I think is so important. If you're going to think about students as contributors, you want to also think about the idea that we're building. I mean this of course you know we all know where this train is going and I go to open at some point right.

**Robin:** [00:11:41] So for me, this is a lot of what's meaningful about working in open ways. And I use that term specifically to refer to the open license. Because the idea there really is that we're constantly building and improving and iterating on all knowledge that's in the knowledge commons and that way we think about feedback more as feet forward right.

**Robin:** [00:12:05] So I'm going to give you this because the expectation is you will continue working, that this feedback will also be useful to others who are interacting with the work who can also work on improving this and that sense of sort of shared mission to put the best work forward into the world that we can.

**Robin:** [00:12:24] I think just makes me feel less- like you go on Facebook as a teacher and it's just normal of course. But you see people just like oh my god these stacks of papers. And of course I'm an English literature person by training so the number of just papers at the ends of the semesters.

**Robin:** [00:12:42] And I have a lot of empathy for faculty, particularly people teaching and five course loads or whatever, but part of what's draining about it is that sense of like what is this for? You know where will this go?

**Robin:** [00:12:56] But when I switched over to working in more open ways, I also built in a much structured use for feedback. So when students get feedback now, it's because they're going to be working on those things in other iterations and that makes it I think a lot more meaningful for everybody.

**Bonni:** [00:13:16] That's interesting that you talk about it. And I am cracking up because you know this already, because I've given a number of key notes recently and I'm using this tool called Glisser. And Glisser is just one of the many audience response systems.

**Bonni:** [00:13:31] But what is unique about Glisser from some of the other ones I've used is that people can tweet out the slides as I'm going through them. And people haven't used it a ton. I think at conferences, the ones I've been speaking at, there's not a huge presence of Twitter users there.

**Bonni:** [00:13:45] But enough that I chuckle because it's been a lot of keynotes I've given and I talk about you in pretty much every one. And so I'm thinking like she's just going to think like who is this person? I have a little picture of you and then they always know what you're handle is. I mean to actually start adding that to my slides because it would be probably easier then for people to get connected.

**Bonni:** [00:14:04] But I just think you see your piece come across so you know that I've talked about this idea of how much you've inspired me around open textbooks. And we don't want to think about open education equals open textbooks because that is just one of the many parts of this tapestry and the shift that you described. But it is one that's been particularly transformative to me.

**Bonni:** [00:14:25] And you may know that this term is the first time I'm doing it. And so you talk about the shift in grading. First of all, no one's talked about grading for this assignment. It hasn't come up and they know it's my first time in. But everyone- not everyone. An overwhelming majority of people are just exhilarated by this. And I find when I go- first of all, I can't keep up with them. They're completely self managing. So there's a guy who's the project lead and so I- and they know that actually tomorrow I'm giving the keynote. So I said I have got to force myself to take a back seat right now. I got to have my focus on that. But they're just delighted and passionate and excited. And they actually started stomping their feet when I told them this assignment.

**Bonni:** [00:15:10] And one thing that they're excited about, which I don't know if you've done because I certainly haven't read anything, but they are excited that they can order the book and get a printed copy of it. I don't know if you've done that yet.

**Robin:** [00:15:24] Yeah I'm usually pretty adamant about students accessing the stuff however they want. So whether it be like print on demand. Although a lot of times our stuff is so chunked up, I don't think our students really think of our open textbooks as like books.

**Robin:** [00:15:41] So those who are printing are printing in smaller chunks more locally. The other thing is that we're also doing a lot of digital stuff around the books and I think that means most of my students tend to stay digital.

**Robin:** [00:15:56] But I do have students for example who don't have broadband access outside of school who are printing out mostly in PDF forms, taking it with them, and then coming back and doing the digital stuff through our laptop checkout programs or on campus once they have the Wi-Fi.

**Robin:** [00:16:12] Yeah, to me, like the word digital... I don't even know if that word matters to me much. I mean it certainly does when you're talking about advocacy and accessibility and there's all sorts of ways in which it's helpful and also helpful to point out the problems with going digital.

**Robin:** [00:16:32] But I also think just because there's been so many things I would say you know in the last week or two depending on when this airs it's always going to be true. In the last week or two something will come out where faculty have been arguing about laptop bnsng and you know whether it's better to be

digital or print or this or that. I think I'm more interested though in being connected rather than digital.

**Robin:** [00:16:55] So when you have the option between digital and print, I just feel like talk to your students, figure out what do they need? Right? What are their learning needs? And then they can choose between digital and print. When you're talking about being connected though, that's a whole different can of cans.

**Robin:** [00:17:14] So what can you do when you take student ideas around an artifact or a learning material and then take those ideas and connect them out to the places where those learning materials were generated from? Or to the places that need to learn about those learning materials but don't have access? Or to the communities a practice where those academic ideas are in play.

**Robin:** [00:17:39] And so sometimes I think the word digital or online, especially if I go somewhere where people are talking about online learning. Like do you mean digital or connected? And I think it's really helpful to help people talk about those things in different ways because they offer such different well affordances but also pitfalls on both.

**Bonni:** [00:18:02] It might be helpful to give an example then one or two digital learning things and then one or two connected learning things. And I'm doing air quotes for people that can't see me.

**Robin:** [00:18:16] One thing that I really enjoyed that I would consider mostly just digital, but from a teaching perspective, it was kind of a handy thing and it did transform my teaching in some interesting ways was something like a little app called iAnnotate which once I realised that I didn't have to be so controlled by what words could offer me in terms of giving feedback.

**Robin:** [00:18:41] And I could be a little bit more artistic and creative in my feedback and then basically just email these docs right back to students or post them for them to to access, it was really sort of a digital tool that really made teaching better.

**Robin:** [00:18:57] I think it helped with student learning, they were able to interact with my feedback and see things in different ways including like colour and art and text and images and pasted stamps and all sorts of stuff.



**Robin:** [00:19:12] Similarly with students, I think there's all sorts of digital tools that students can use to do various kinds of projects or learning. But that is so different I think than the stuff I'm most interested in right now which is more about if a student writes something, where does that need to go to help the student grow as a learner and also to change the shape of the world that the student will be graduating into?

**Robin:** [00:19:45] We talk about for lack of a better term, and honestly it's a good term, we talk about sort of like the neo liberal sort of takeover of the university with this idea that students need to acquire certain kinds of skills in order to be job ready.

**Robin:** [00:20:00] But really I think students need to also be shaping the world in which they will be- they need to shape the labour markets, not just conform to them. And when I think about that, I think that we need to teach them to be shaping knowledge as they are interacting with it.

**Robin:** [00:20:22] So those kinds of tools have to be connected, not just digital. It is like OK so it's on a screen. But when I first realized like oh there's a difference between a website and this Moodle page. My Moodle page was digital. I've been digital for a long time and very proud of how my Moodle was compared to some other people's Moodles. But it wasn't really helping to move my students work into the world or to get them connected with communities that would make them lifelong learners.

**Robin:** [00:20:57] When we say our students are lifelong learners, why? Because they like your class? Like that does it doesn't give them a sort of connection into the kind of community that will help them keep learning when they leave. So the tools I focus on now are more connective tools rather than digital tools as I think of them. And some of those tools probably don't even have to be digital.

**Robin:** [00:21:20] Like my students are starting to realize when they're building their personal learning networks in digital and connected ways, they're also learning things about like oh this is what conferencing is about actually. You know, this is what it means to go to a professors office hours.

**Robin:** [00:21:39] This is why I might want to talk to the people in my class and get to know them. Those are not different things. It's all about how are the people that I learn with able to assist me in my growth? And how am I able to show them a different perspective? So the digital part is just a part of the personal learning network, but it's just a very very powerful part.

**Bonni:** [00:22:06] When I think back to the feedback and the excitement around this having a printed book, it isn't about having a printed book. It truly to me is that their work is going to matter in this class and that they're completely empowered to do with it what they will.

**Bonni:** [00:22:22] They don't have to order the book. They don't have to access the digital book. There was some confusion, only on the part of a couple of people, but some confusion around do I have to put my name on this? And so we've had lots of conversations.

**Bonni:** [00:22:36] But it's interesting because sometimes my empathy means that I'll take a little bit more on emotionally than I would otherwise need to if I didn't have that strong sense of empathy.

**Bonni:** [00:22:47] So I see it as like I'm failing and failing. I keep telling myself you're not failing. You talked to them about this on many occasions. And maybe you can make it clearer because you can get more finer points in the syllabus going forward or something but that's just not my nature. I'm not a policy. I do not want to define everything. This is what it is like to work in an area that is unpredictable.

**Bonni:** [00:23:12] And we try to make our classes predictable, but as you've said we're not then we are not preparing them for the world that is out there and that's completely not predictable. But It's interesting just as they start to learn oh my gosh I'm free. You know I get to put into this what I'm going to put into it. But I also get to take out of it what I'm going to take out of it. And just to see their delight. I want to share one other thing and then get your response.

**Bonni:** [00:23:37] I have a student who I've blogged a little bit about who actually wept during our first class together. She works in an inner city school and her heart is breaking. She just blogged the other day. I'll put a link in the show notes if I can get her permission, even though she's blogging openly but I'll make sure she's ready for thousands of people to get her link.

**Bonni:** [00:23:58] But she talks about having the parent teacher conference. And she's sitting there grading papers because no one came. And she's been trying to navigate and I've been trying to give her clumsy advice.

**Bonni:** [00:24:11] How do I tell the stories in a way that is positive so that I can impact change? And the first thing I told her was you've got to figure out who is

it about? Is it about the parents? Do you want to help the parents? Is it about teachers? Is it about the students? But you can't do all of those things and really get your message to come across in powerful ways as I know you want to.

**Bonni:** [00:24:33] So that's kind of what she's been wrestling with but she wanted to do it in a positive way and not be contributing to the venting and that kind of stuff. So I've been just sharing all these storytellers like here's Ear Hustle. Ear Hustle is a podcast production that's put on inside of a prison. And they're telling the stories of people in prison giving more empathy in the world for people that are in those kinds of situations.

**Bonni:** [00:24:57] And so and then there was a wonderful book written by a woman who teaches in Oakland and go read that book see how she tells the stories. In fact, now she coauthoring a book with one of her former students who was in jail and their letters back and forth. But I love that she's thinking about how to tell the stories in such a way that they are compelling, but at the same time are not contributing to just the dumping and venting.

**Robin:** [00:25:24] Yeah.

**Bonni:** [00:25:25] So anyway I'd love to hear your response. I know just gave you a lot.

**Robin:** [00:25:28] You just gave me so much Bonni that my head is exploding. Which is a problem for these fancy podcasting earphones that I'm wearing. Yeah. So I mean I a couple of things to say about all of that moving stuff. The first you have this sort of little note about students putting their name or not putting their name on this work.

**Robin:** [00:25:48] And I've been interested in- faculty always ask me when I talk about open, like do you get pushback from students who don't want to work open? Or who, for example, want you to teach them stuff? Right. Like they're paying. The demographic of students that I have are students who in many many cases are paying their own way, they're very focused on the amount of debt that they're accruing here in New Hampshire, which has one of the highest student debt loads of the nation. Yay New Hampshire. When I think about that, I think about a couple of things.

**Robin:** [00:26:21] First of all, I think about pushback against a teacher is a win for open. You know so like when I get it I usually think "exactly!" I try to celebrate any time students are being critical or saying this is what I need.

**Robin:** [00:26:39] And sometimes if students say what I need is this a very traditional thing that's much more traditional than you want to deliver. I say well you know what? You have argued for it and you've made your case and that's what you can get. When students choose not to work in the open. For example, they don't want to blog. They'd rather stay in the LMS . I totally consider that a win for open.

**Robin:** [00:27:03] One of the things I'm super fond of saying is that open is not the opposite of private. And that's advocating for privacy and autonomy in how we share is one of the key facets of helping students to develop agency and really be shapers of knowledge. Not just consumers.

**Robin:** [00:27:22] The first thing you have to do is feel I have agency here to control how I put my stuff into the world. And in many cases, it's my job as an educator actually to show them how little control they have given data mining and privacy violations of corporations. You know goodness knows how this net neutrality thing is going to work out.

**Robin:** [00:27:43] So all of that pushback I think is as healthy and important and we need to listen to students and not just try to talk them out of their resistance. But the other thing I think in terms of telling stories and moving marginalized voices into the front so that we can design around them more effectively and you know figuring out how to involve communities that need to be involved in education, I think we tend to think about that as how can I reach these individuals more effectively?

**Robin:** [00:28:17] But what are the things that I've been really thinking about more as I've become more- half of my job a sort of admin at this point. And from an administrator's position, I think a lot more of this is structural. How do we build structures that do a better job with what learning actually looks like and what what are learners actually look like?

**Robin:** [00:28:40] So when something happens and there's a failure, I tend not to say what's wrong with these parents who didn't show up? Or what's wrong with this student who doesn't want to blog? I tend to say what have we built here? And how do we need to to build it differently to get different participation?

**Robin:** [00:29:00] And that's harder. It's just so much harder and so much slower than saying oh let me look at this one person in front of me and do better. And of course, I'm all about the human interaction. So I don't want to devalue what it

means to work with one person. But that's kind of where my work lies right now is kind of asking questions about OK if we understand these pedagogies in classrooms and with people, how can we think about- instead of scaling them, because that's everybody's favorite word, Scale it! Scale it! More people." Instead of thinking about scale that way, I think about its structural scale. How can we take the lessons that we've learned, from for example open pedagogy, and apply them to programs and institutions and processes so that we start getting more participants in the conversation?

**Bonni:** [00:29:54] Oh it's so powerful. And I know that we are going to very soon get to have another conversation. So I'm going to save up some of my questions around the structural pieces for that one.

**Bonni:** [00:30:05] And at this point in the show though I think I'm going to shift over to recommendations because my pieces at least going to relate to what you just talked about a little bit. My recommendation, in general, is for us all to be thinking about the friction points that we have in our classes and just kind of get obsessed with it. I'm going to suggest obsessing about those friction points and never giving up. I've had past guests who have recommended journaling. Teddy Svoronos is one of the people who talked about using an journalling app.

**Bonni:** [00:30:36] And then Doug McKee has also talked about that on past episodes as well. And this is not something I've done in a very ritual way but I think about it all the time. And one of those was teaching in this doctoral class- people who've been listening for a while will remember that I just I have felt like a failure because what I used to get was "I'm not technical." Don't say that. Yes you are. It was in my head. I didn't of course say these things. They were all in my bubbles above my head of this tension between internal locus of control and external locus control. Or you could maybe say mind set up like "I'm not technical." Okay, then why are we here? Because I'm here to teach a class on technology and you're convinced- we would just get stuck in feeling like I could never reach some of them in the way that I just want to. I feel like such a failure when I can't.

**Bonni:** [00:31:28] And one way that my obsessing over that friction point has helped really shift the conversation and that is this idea of I'm not technical, some people will phrase that as in using digital immigrants and digital natives and "oh kids today. Those young whippersnappers that grew up with the iPad right out of the birth canal."

**Bonni:** [00:31:46] And so there's a wonderful video and a wonderful model that instead of natives and immigrants, we either are or we aren't and never the twain shall meet is looking at it from visitors and residents. And I'll link to a video from David White at the University of Oxford.

**Bonni:** [00:32:03] And he's just got a wonderful it's actually a couple of pieces. One is just reframing this conversation for us and articulating some of the myths around immigrants natives and thinking of it like that. It assumes that our students actually are more technical than they often are, especially more digitally literate. And then it assumes that we can't ever move from where we are. So he looks at that but then that's kind of where I would stop. Like the problem is solved. Myth busted.

**Bonni:** [00:32:34] But no, he then gives us a new model of visitors versus residents. And where do we just go visit for a little while? He gives the example of banking, you just go and you do your banking and then you log out and you go about your day. Or the places where we might spend more of our time and build those connections and consider ourselves actually a little bit more at home. And then he has an exercise in the second video of drawing a map of where people are and where there are residents and visitors.

**Bonni:** [00:33:01] And this idea just completely transformed the conversations we're having. They drew the maps. They could draw it any way they wanted. They could draw with crayons and colored pencils and then just take a picture of it and upload it. Or they could make it in whatever they felt like. And it was just a really great way to start.

**Bonni:** [00:33:20] So I'm not necessarily saying that's going to be the answer to everyone for every class, but in that class me obsessing about the friction points and never giving up. And then now just discovering something new and then I've talked also about just the open textbook has just transformed it to open it up.

**Bonni:** [00:33:36] And they're finding so much more meaning in what they're doing and giving each other feedback. I didn't make a formal peer review thing, and you turn it in, and then you have to review three other peoples, and write three paragraphs and it was just it's happening because they're self managed.

**Bonni:** [00:33:50] They're they're doing this project and they knew they would need to have somebody edit and somebody proof and all of that and they're doing it with very little coaching from me. And it's just it's delightful.

**Bonni:** [00:34:00] So my suggestion today is look for friction points in your class and just don't give up. Just do not give up. Because there's somebody out there who's trying something different than you are who could completely transform your teaching. So that's my recommendation. And feel free to comment on it, Robin.

**Robin:** [00:34:17] I love so many things about that. I want to get a T-shirt that says like friction fan or something like that. That's just so fabulous and so new for me because for so many years I think friction in the classroom was sort of like the thing that a skilled educator would avoid. Right.

**Robin:** [00:34:33] So to make peace with that kind of heat is awesome. And in our program, our students use Domain of One's Own. But you know basically the skinny there is that they're creating their own Web sites. And we we call them ePorts. This idea of a portal into which they can then can invite people. And when I talk about that I show an image of like- maybe some instructional designers are not fond of me for this- but I show an image of moodle as Alcatraz. You know it's all bound. It's templated versus this home that you built. This is your residence. And to use Dave's analogy there. And who do you want to invite in? And how can they come in here and work with you?

**Robin:** [00:35:22] And how can you drive? How could he create driveways and roadways so that people can get to your house and kind of look at what you're doing? It's a little romanticized because there's also challenging and horrible things that happen in space as we think about as our own on the Web. But in general, I think that's a helpful metaphor for our students I think. Yeah wonderful.

**Bonni:** [00:35:45] And we do have in two episodes on episode 185, Christian Freidrich will be coming on to talk about privacy and safety in online learning lest people think that's not really important part of the conversation.

**Robin:** [00:35:56] Chris. Oh, he's so great. That will be a wonderful conversation.

**Bonni:** [00:36:00] What do you have to recommend today?

**Robin:** [00:36:01] OK so here's my recommendation. I will tell you that the reason- this has been on my mind for a number of years. I had a dinner with Gardner

Campbell after some event somewhere and there was possibly some alcohol involved in the dinner as we were sort of talking about the state of higher education.

**Robin:** [00:36:21] And he kind of put this plea out there and he said like you need to step up. And I was like what do you mean? He said you need to think about administration. And honestly I think for many of us who are teachers, particularly good ones, meaning you're critical, you're questioning, you're learning, you're growing all the time, you love your students and your work. You do not want to be a higher ed administrator. I know there's people who aspire to that through their whole careers. But I think there's a lot of us doing important and good work who have not had that aspiration.

**Robin:** [00:37:00] But here's my idea for your listeners who I think are the kinds of people I want to put this out there to. It's time for us to step up. Because there's great people doing an important work, but it's really hard to make institutional change when we don't have people at the next layer up supportive and helping us to grow that work so that we can change some of the structures in higher ed, particularly for for public higher education.

**Robin:** [00:37:31] We need to start sending new messages and start building some new structures around students more directly. So that's one of the things I'm thinking about in my own work is instead of scaling in terms of how can we build this so we can just keep generating revenues and get more students in the door.

**Robin:** [00:37:51] I think how can we scale this so that we can recognize ourselves in our institutions? So that we don't have to keep contorting, especially when I say we I mean students have to keep contorting in order to pay for and fit into and make education work. So something to think about if you're one of those people who's doing great teaching, what would it take for you to do a few years as an administrator to see if we can grow a cohort of people working together across the U.S. in particular to to change what our institutions look like?

**Bonni:** [00:38:32] That is wonderful advice for you. And I'm excited that this is our first of two conversations and look forward to talking to you down the road.

**Robin:** [00:38:40] Great. Thank you so much Bonni.



**Bonni:** [00:38:43] My thanks once again to Robin DeRosa for joining me today on Teaching in Higher Ed. But a great conversation. I just look forward to more in the future.

**Bonni:** [00:38:55] And thanks to all of you for listening. If this is one of your first times listening to the podcast you might be interested in the weekly updates. This is an email you can subscribe to that has all the links of the great stuff that Robin and I spoke about. That week's show notes and also an article about teaching or productivity written by me.

**Bonni:** [00:39:16] So you can subscribe at [teachinginhighered.com/subscribe](https://teachinginhighered.com/subscribe). And as always, I welcome reviews from you, ratings or reviews on whatever services you use to listen to the show. That helps spread the word about Teaching in Higher Ed and just build our community. Thanks so much for listening and I'll see you next time.

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