

**Bonni:** [00:00:00] When we get creative with what we assign students, we open up a whole new set of possibilities for student engagement and learning. On today's episode Dr. Cameron Hunt McNabb helps us discover how to craft creative assignments that facilitate learning well.

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**Bonni:** [00:00:30] Welcome to this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. This is the space where we explore the art and science of being more effective at facilitating learning. We also share ways to increase our personal productivity approaches so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students.

**Bonni:** [00:00:55] I'm excited today to have on this show Dr. Cameron Hunt McNabb. She joined Southeastern University in 2012 after several years of teaching English at the University of South Florida and the University of Tampa.

**Bonni:** [00:01:09] Her interests include medieval and early modern drama medieval philosophy and creative writing. She's taught such courses as the history of the English language earlier Shakespeare and a variety of composition and literature courses and I want to welcome to the show Dr. Cameron Hunt McNabb.

**Cameron:** [00:01:29] Thank you so much for having me.

**Bonni:** [00:01:31] I'm so pleased you took up the invitation you were actually recommended to me by Josh Eyler who was back on the show earlier and he said that you're a genius. Those are his exact words. I'm so thrilled to have you here.

**Cameron:** [00:01:43] Oh my goodness.

**Cameron:** [00:01:44] Well Josh has been nothing short of just a constant source of inspiration for me and support. And so I'm always very very grateful for his friendship and his scholarship and everything in between.

**Bonni:** [00:01:59] So one of the things you both have studied is the study of disability in the middle ages. How did you get an interest in that and how did the two of you connect on that piece.

**Cameron:** [00:02:09] Josh and I crossed paths at the major medieval conference each year in Kalamazoo Michigan and I got into disability study because he was in disability studies and started attending some of their Roundtable. Some of their meetings.

**Cameron:** [00:02:24] And it's really it's a developing field right now and literature and I think it's tremendously important. It has a lot to offer the field. Another way that I increase my interest in that I suppose is Josh introduced me to one of the projects that the Society for the Study of disability in the middle ages was working on.

**Cameron:** [00:02:42] Which is a glossary for disability turn in Middle English and Old English. And he asked if I wanted to contribute to that glossary and I actually passed that opportunity on to some of my students when I was teaching history the English language.

**Cameron:** [00:02:57] So instead of me just doing your research and finishing it and I actually made it a major project of my history the English language course and my student my undergraduate students actually did all the research and writing and contributed the entry into the glossary.

**Bonni:** [00:03:12] I loved visiting your website and I will link by the way to all of the resources that Cameron talks about and any of the ones I mentioned a link to in the show notes this is the 24th episode so it will be at [teachinginhighered.com/24](http://teachinginhighered.com/24).

**Bonni:** [00:03:28] And I want to start out with your teaching philosophy I just thought you articulated it so well and you started with a quote that you have told me is mostly known as unattributed. And this is really wrapped around your teaching philosophy to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar what part of that has really resonated with you.

**Cameron:** [00:03:47] For my own work which is in medieval literature and early modern literature I think that you don't tend to approach those topics as strange because they're very they don't have much to connect with in that field.

**Cameron:** [00:04:00] And so I think one of my primary goals in teaching those course topics is to make the strange familiar and to give students some common ground and really connect with the subject. However it also kind of used the opposite when approaching subjects that students might identify at least initially as familiar pages in composition or gen ed classes.

**Cameron:** [00:04:24] Students might think of a text message for an Internet add something that's familiar they encountered over time but by looking at it to a particular rhetorical lens or by studying Plato and Aristotle and different philosophies then I make that object that artifact streams to them I give them something that they now are looking at in a different way. So I find that I actually use both sides of that quote.

**Cameron:** [00:04:50] But just depending on the subject matter and where my students are when they first encounter.

**Bonni:** [00:04:55] It really resonated with me a lot and it also links to an article that you wrote in Salon magazine the truth about internet slang. It goes way back we think of these text message TTYL, talk to you later. I'm sure I think give me the surface there but that actually is something that has happened for a lot longer than we realize.

**Cameron:** [00:05:17] Yes yes. So text speak is another good example of something that most people not just our students would identify as familiar. But the reality is it I can sort of make it strange for them by showing them that these things actually occur in medieval manuscripts as well.

**Cameron:** [00:05:36] That these pressures on the language to accommodate the shorter season are shorter time or precious resources. It's nothing new but the text message is nothing new in fact. But it occurs you know in these medieval manuscripts as well.

**Cameron:** [00:05:54] So I really enjoyed also publishing for a more popular venue instead of just a peer reviewed journal. I enjoyed the fact that you know Lisa more people than I would read it than in a peer reviewed journals.

**Bonni:** [00:06:08] Oh absolutely. And a whole bunch of reasons why that would be and well beyond academia to make it much more accessible. And it was also written very excessively too.

**Bonni:** [00:06:17] So if we were to talk about some examples of assignments that you have done. But I want to rest assured anyone who's listening if your background is not the same as Cameron's and that's actually most of our listeners.

**Bonni:** [00:06:29] Josh. If you're out there probably sorry the one medieval literature versus is possibly lissome although what do I know. I don't know everybody who listens but but I want to ask everyone to hang on.

**Bonni:** [00:06:40] We're going to get some specific examples from Cameron but then we're going to come right back out to the wide perspective of three very specific approaches that she uses that we all can leverage as we create really innovative assignments that engage our students and help them have deeper learning.

**Bonni:** [00:06:59] So let's talk a little bit about why. Why should we care. I think sometimes creativity is just such. I think sometimes it's easy to toss it aside as you know today's students they just need to learn how to focus and they need to learn how to have discipline for things that they can't instantly grasp and we can't be trainers and so why why should we care about this why is it important for our students that we tap into the creativity that's inside of all of us.

**Cameron:** [00:07:27] I do often think about particularly when designing assignments that these assignments are meeting a specific goal needing some kind of Niger herbal outcome and not just as you mentioned sort of you know edutainment trait that we want to entertain the students to get them engaged.

**Cameron:** [00:07:45] But more so to educate them to get them engaged. So I try to be very sensitive that when I'm designing them. One of the things and I know this is one of your larger topics but when I use backroad design which is a concept that comes out of the book Understanding by Design.

**Cameron:** [00:08:02] And it actually just asks you to split the way that you design assignments and so you begin by identifying goals instead of just relying on designing the assignments First you identify the goal first.

**Cameron:** [00:08:16] So the goal is education but education in a particular area you want to acquire that knowledge or demonstrate a certain understanding and then you identify that first and then you kind of work backwards from that principle and you identify what kind of evidence would exhibit whatever goals you've already set.

**Cameron:** [00:08:38] And then once you determine what kind of evidence would be appropriate then you actually have multiple options for designing assignments that would support that kind of evidence or provide that evidence.

**Bonni:** [00:08:49] I think unfortunately when people hear about creative assignments sometimes what they hear about are assignments that they perceive to be easy. But actually what we're talking about today are assignments that are actually far harder than just memorization.

**Bonni:** [00:09:05] They're far harder than just repeat back to me what I told you or what you read in a book somewhere. This is requiring a lot deeper level of critical thinking for them to be able to accomplish these tasks.

**Bonni:** [00:09:16] And I love that you started with Wiggins and again anyone listening will be linking into these resources in the show notes because it's the perfect. In fact Stephen Covey a great leadership author always talked about begin with the end in mind and we think about those concrete and measurable things and then we think about as you said what evidence will there be.

**Bonni:** [00:09:37] So talk a little bit about the process then that you go through and maybe you could even use an example of one of your creative assignments that you've used. You started with that and in mind and then how you came about with the creative assignment. I know they'd love to hear about it.

**Cameron:** [00:09:52] Sure. Well one that I found particularly effective was in my history English language class. I didn't want to do a standards the final exam no multiple choice test to identify whether students had learned some of the major themes of the class the development in language over time. Major Trends in the change of English et cetera.

**Cameron:** [00:10:20] So instead a big backward design and I identified the goals that I wanted them to meet in particular. I wanted them to have an awareness of the patterns of change in English over roughly 15 hundred years. I wanted them to be aware about how fast or slow that change to take place.

**Cameron:** [00:10:39] And then the sources of those changes over time where were these influences coming in. So I identified the schools and then I wanted to determine what kind of evidence we meet those goals. So I knew that students would need to produce some things whether it was a final exam or an essay or something that would demonstrate that.

**Cameron:** [00:10:59] So one of the assignments that I designed to identify that evidence and meet that goal was what I called Future English. So at the end of the semester I had student I assigned them to write a paragraph or excerpt in future English what they thought English would be a hundred years from now.

**Cameron:** [00:11:22] And this assignment we created. Students need to engage in critical thinking and creative thinking. But students had to reflect. It forced them to reflect on everything we covered prior in the semester how quickly or slowly would change happened in that hundred years where would be some likely sources of change.

**Cameron:** [00:11:41] And then what changes in what direction based on trends that they'd already seen over the course of the semester instead of just providing a final exam for them with multiple choice questions with. Would this be something that would be seen in future English or not.

**Cameron:** [00:11:56] I left the assignment more open for them and then they brought in their projects their assignments and then we had a great discussion about OK why did you choose this or why did you go this direction with your assignment.

**Cameron:** [00:12:09] And instead of kind of closing down possibilities which is what I think that final exam would have done just given them a small selection of possibilities. Instead the assignment opened up a lot of possibilities for them.

**Cameron:** [00:12:21] And every student came in with something different a different paragraph on the page and then the discussion even opened up possibility even more so I felt like that assignment and students in the class and in their evaluations agreed really was much more effective because it was creative and because it was you know a backward design assignment. Instead of starting with the final exam and then moving forward.

**Bonni:** [00:12:47] One of the other elements that you say is really critical in your teaching is called Authentic pedagogy or pedagogy. For anyone listening this is one of those tomato tomato words if you're not familiar .

**Bonni:** [00:12:59] And of course if we're going to be really accurate the term we would use for teaching young adults would be andragogy, which is the teaching of adults but we we tend to in higher ed still use pedagogy or pedagogies.

**Bonni:** [00:13:10] So authentic pedagogy what is that? What does that represent for you in your teaching and what's an example of how you've brought it into your work?

**Cameron:** [00:13:20] Well for authentic pedagogy tends to the philosophy tends to place an emphasis on authentic learning. We're learning that is construction of personal knowledge or utilitarian knowledge or aesthetic knowledge.

**Cameron:** [00:13:36] And it also places a high value on knowledge that extends beyond the classroom. There's a couple of ways that I include authentic pedagogy into my work particularly when working with an undergraduate gen ed classroom I teach a lot of composition.

**Cameron:** [00:13:51] And so I like to use real world texts with students at or just this past week we looked at gubernatorial debate that were going on Facebook post anything like that. The writing reading text that they would encounter in the real world and then we examine those texts using the Blackhorse tools and I also assigned real world writing to the students even this semester.

**Cameron:** [00:14:16] I have a student who is interested in working in PR and wants to learn more about how to craft kind of PR campaign. So for her project she asked if she could actually construct the PR campaign for a local company and I said absolutely right that's that's exactly what you should be doing.

**Cameron:** [00:14:34] So instead of producing assignments that get handed into a professor or a kind of audience of one and then graded and then handed back and then you really discarded at the end of the semester at the end of the year. Students have text and have assignments and work that have value beyond the classroom that they can take out into the into the real world.

**Cameron:** [00:14:56] And also for my assignments too. When I think of the real world I don't necessarily equate that as just vocational you know just giving them something that they can use in their work. But the real world is seeing ads on television.

**Cameron:** [00:15:10] It's going out to vote or it's even checking text messages or you going to the Internet. So I try to give real world examples that aren't just vocational for their careers but for every aspect of their life.

**Bonni:** [00:15:26] B.F. Skinner said in 1964: "Education is what survives when and what has been learned has been forgotten." And when we have that deeper learning when we're thinking about what value is this going to be to me after I get out of school then we can stop with the more transactional forms of learning where I got it for the final exam or for that final paper.

**Bonni:** [00:15:49] And then I'm going to move on to the next class and forget all that that I learned and so it helps I think them see the value of it not not realistically they're still getting me who aren't necessarily going to be able to see that.

**Bonni:** [00:16:03] But if you've built up that kind of trust and credibility with them sometimes they'll go along with you. With that trust that this is actually going to be important if they see that you care and they see the work that you've put into having backward design and articulating those goals for them and they can see that authentic pedagogy that is relying on their prior knowledge. Bringing that into the classroom and then making it. Fast forward to what the value might be beyond school. Tell me a little bit about how you use active learning in your creative assignments and in your teaching.

**Cameron:** [00:16:35] Yes - "active learning" - I always picture that term in kind of scare quotes because I have a lot of discussion with my colleagues about whether learning can ever be passive. You know with all learning in some way.

**Cameron:** [00:16:50] Maybe a term more like you know kind of kinesthetic learning or there's a lot of terms out there but Hands-On is a sort of you know easy way to say that I really like to do a lot of hands on learning first for students as well.

**Cameron:** [00:17:04] Even just this semester. A good example of that is I'm teaching Intro to Shakespeare and the usual approach to an intro to



Shakespeare class is a heavy emphasis on the text in reading the text then you know critically analyzing the text and we do all of that in our class.

**Cameron:** [00:17:24] But I also tend to have a heavy emphasis on the performance and performative elements of the text. And so this semester I experimented a little and I actually took one week of classes just to craft period and I hired some actors to come in and I reserved a large auditorium based on our campus.

**Cameron:** [00:17:47] And I had students come to those two class sessions prepared with a script an annotated script of a scene from Macbeth and then I had the actors to start you know working the scene workshopping the scene.

**Cameron:** [00:18:05] And I had 24 students actually sort of all collaboratively co directors actors and so students were the one saying no no let's movie here let's have you enter here let's direct this line here. And I was a little concerned about whether twenty four people could collaboratively co-direct.

**Cameron:** [00:18:26] I thought maybe this will turn into herding cats... but in fact it works really really well. And students were not just passively observing the performance process but were actually creating the performance process and it gave students a very different level of engagement than I think they would have had otherwise.

**Bonni:** [00:18:50] I don't remember where I first saw this. It was a recent blog but I know it ended up eventually getting it getting reproduced or re posted on the New York Times I believe in the editorial section.

**Bonni:** [00:19:02] And initially the author was anonymous and it was an article about a professor going and taking on the role of a student actually may not have even been in higher ed it might have been high school where the author who we later find out by the way is a woman.

**Bonni:** [00:19:17] So she goes and actually takes the classes that the students take and goes through what their days are like. And there were a number of discoveries that she made one of which really stands out to me and that was she was just so surprised about how physically exhausting it is to sit all day and those those of us that teach of course we're standing up we're walking around.

**Bonni:** [00:19:40] But for our students what that's like for them. Can she just was completely flabbergasted and I don't know if you read this too but it eventually

turned out it was actually Wiggins' daughter. Oh that's where I first saw it Wiggins (who wrote Backward Design for anyone listening). That's the first book that Cameron talked about. Backward Design learning. Sorry you said the title of it earlier learning...

**Cameron:** [00:20:01] Understanding by design.

**Bonni:** [00:20:02] Thank you Understanding by Design by Wiggins so he's a wonderful educator has lots of books that he's published and is just an expert in his field. It was initially in his blog and he wasn't trying to trick his readers or anything like that by not saying it was his daughter but he just didn't want to lose the credibility of it.

**Bonni:** [00:20:19] And of course people didn't really criticize him for that they really celebrated both that they understood why he had kept her name from them at first but then was very proud of the observations she had made. Once they discovered that was her.

**Bonni:** [00:20:33] So that's a good read all linked to that in the show notes. I think there's a lot of important things for us as educators to keep in mind of what that's like to just sit and I would say passively learn.

**Bonni:** [00:20:43] Actually I think that your colleagues are correct that passive learning doesn't exist. Unfortunately I think that we think students are learning when what they're doing is passively doing something, but it's not learning.

**Cameron:** [00:20:56] Yes passivity exists but maybe not passive learning.

**Bonni:** [00:21:00] Yes, yes. I think that's absolutely true absolutely true and then it goes back to what is our role as educators are we supposed to be where I like my husband jokes and tells me two and a half year old mom is a professor she professes things.

**Bonni:** [00:21:13] And he's completely tongue in cheek because it is our job to professors our job to facilitate learning and there's lots of different ways we can do that. I know we've only skimmed the surface on your creative assignments and we have time to wrap back around to that would you share a couple more with us and how maybe how they tied into any of these three things that we've looked at the back or design the authentic pedagogy or the active learning. I would love to hear about a couple more.

**Cameron:** [00:21:40] Sure.

**Cameron:** [00:21:40] Well one of the approaches that I also really value in the classroom is encouragement as undergraduate research and in my field that time to also fall under authentic pedagogy because as English majors if they are going to move on in their career most of them that means graduate school and so that means research.

**Cameron:** [00:22:01] I know that's not true in all fields but you know for mine undergraduate research as I mentioned with the assignment It's my history of English language students that kind of research is very authentic it's what they'll be doing in their future.

**Cameron:** [00:22:15] So actually just this summer I had another opportunity to engage in some undergraduate research with a with an undergraduate. I was working on and am still working on an article on John Bolton and Paradise Lost.

**Cameron:** [00:22:32] And so I had the opportunity to go to the Morgan Library in New York which holds one of the manuscripts one of Milton's manuscripts of one of the books of Paradise Lost. And so I decided I had a research assistant with me at an undergraduate research assistant at the time and I thought this would be such a great opportunity for the students as well.

**Cameron:** [00:22:54] I didn't even get to see manuscripts that without valuable well into grad school. So I asked if I could bring my research student research assistant along and have him gain some firsthand exposure to actual archival manuscripts research.

**Cameron:** [00:23:15] And so he did he was able to come along and visit the librarian and look at the resources. And so right now we're in the process of finalizing our finding from the manuscript and were co drafting that article together.

**Cameron:** [00:23:29] And so I do think that undergraduate research is very authentic and it's a great way for professors to really encourage research among their students but encourage it in again in a way that will have an afterlife outside of the classroom.

**Cameron:** [00:23:45] So if this article gets picked up somewhere and that student has contributed to a very real project and that's you know that's what I'm

hoping for another assignment creative assignment that I also just personally really enjoy.

**Cameron:** [00:24:03] But so did you did it my history the English language class. I had an emphasis on material culture which is you know looking at the actual material of tasks and the culture surrounding them. So in this class I wanted students to Hands-On engage kinaesthetic engage with the materials that medieval scribes or early modern printers would have been using.

**Cameron:** [00:24:30] So we actually bought vellum and quills and ink for students and they produced manuscripts with those I had been produced Quartos where you're folding paper in specific ways and sewing together another technique from medieval manuscripts. I also wanted them to know what it would have been like you know for someone like Gutenberg to set and print text on printing press.

**Cameron:** [00:24:59] And at the time that I designed these assignments well before the semester I assumed that I could just go out and purchase a small printing press from the Internet. And I was naive in that assumption.

**Cameron:** [00:25:12] So I ended up actually building a printing press in my living room. It's a very small island but I went ahead and built one and had students had to you know get letters and. And. But I had students produce printed pages on an old fashioned printing press.

**Cameron:** [00:25:28] And most students commented that that was their most valuable piece of paper. They said in their entire college career was this one piece of paper that had taken them so long to do on this printing press.

**Cameron:** [00:25:42] And I also had them do they had to type a page on the on a typewriter which was brand new for most of them and then they also produced a kind of digital project online. So those kinds of assignments they're very active. Again what students really really resonated with instead of just reading about how manuscripts were made they actually experienced it.

**Cameron:** [00:26:07] And for many of them they took away a deeper sense of learning so that it even seems like it's easier to make certain Quill strokes right for certain letters.

**Cameron:** [00:26:18] And so even the letter formation was resonating with them because they could see oh wow it's really difficult to do this stroke with a quill but it's much easier to do this kind of stroke.

**Cameron:** [00:26:29] So I feel like that assignment for those assignments were really effective and beneficial but also creative for the students.

**Bonni:** [00:26:37] Did you already have a typewriter that you owned or was that something that you had to go through the adventure of purchasing?

**Cameron:** [00:26:44] I didn't have it's typewriter already but I didn't have the ribbon and ink.

**Cameron:** [00:26:49] So luckily my university had some typewriters in the back. We tried to get pulled out are very rare occasions though and they were gracious enough to let me type on them. And even with worsening feedback from that experience was really great.

**Cameron:** [00:27:05] You know many of them were like where's the delete key.

**Cameron:** [00:27:11] So many of them were really distressed because their manuscripts were very decorative and there even their printed pages. They had managed to kind of decorate them and then they did sparse aesthetics are typewritten page you. There was a marvelous little sense of disappointment right.

**Cameron:** [00:27:31] Oh no you know it was definitely easier to preview. But what about aesthetic beauty that comes with sort of a handcrafted text so it was a really really fascinating assignment or series of assignments.

**Bonni:** [00:27:46] This coming week in my introduction to business classes my favorite week of the semester as far as the content goes. We're going to be talking about information technology and I have an old not that old. Speaking of things that are not that old thing is a two thousand ten or something. Clip from Louis C.K.

**Bonni:** [00:28:05] And it's called everything's amazing and nobody's happy. And he goes through and through his great storytelling abilities talks about that. You know we've got these smartphones and versus when we used to use the rotary phones and how you hate the guy that had the zero in his phone number and

he uses the analogy of getting on the plane and there's a guy who goes there and they have Wi-Fi on the plane.

**Bonni:** [00:28:30] He says it's the newest thing any of us know exists. And what does the guy do the second that it takes a second he just gets so mad and goes and that of course it gets beeped out because Louis C.K. has a colorful language.

**Bonni:** [00:28:42] So it's like you know what he says but you get the beep and then he says wait a second it's going to space. And every time my phone is slow I always have that quote in my hand. Give it a second. It's going to space.

**Bonni:** [00:28:54] And that's that's where you in contrast some of the students know about the credit card machines that would just do the what it's called the paper that you would read. Yes carbon copy.

**Bonni:** [00:29:05] Yeah. So some of them have seen those some of them have seen rotary phones but we're getting. I've been teaching now for 10 years so it's going to be less and less that they will have ever seen or heard those things and I was thinking it would be fun to be able to somehow acquire those things and have them in a box somewhere to just show them.

**Bonni:** [00:29:21] You know this is what when he says rotary phone this is what he means and then when we think about sometimes in my class and we talk about information technology we're talking about cloud services we're talking about security on the Internet.

**Bonni:** [00:29:32] We're talking about smart phones and now wearables are becoming such an interesting thing in the business world. So it's really a fun thing but I think when we can do what you're describing we can make it kinaesthetic they can touch it they can experience they can try to produce something and see the difference between what it's like to produce. Now. So that's that's that's a wonderful wonderful way you've done.

**Bonni:** [00:29:53] Was there anything you have left out that you want to share before we talk about recommendations because we go to a couple of minutes that there's something else you want to share.

**Cameron:** [00:30:00] I assign my first year composition students are reading by Arthur Holmes philosophy professor but he talks about the role of education and

he says that education is not to make us homo sabers which is one who does or makes something. Thinking about education not just vocational.

**Cameron:** [00:30:22] He says. Instead we're homo sapiens for people who have wisdom and where people who think and setting that connects back to what we're talking about with the assignment and that education is to equip us to think in real world thinking or authentic thinking you know is really what we're striving after for our students and for ourselves as well.

**Bonni:** [00:30:47] This is the part of the show we're speaking of our recommendations.

**Bonni:** [00:30:50] I joked with you Cameron. I stole mine from Cameron.

**Bonni:** [00:30:53] She was so gracious with this send me an email and say hey did you know that the McSweeneys.net has an article about something we did the podcast episode number three way back when we did what the princess bride has to teach us about teaching.

**Bonni:** [00:31:12] And so Cameron must have seen that show and said Oh did you know this exists so this is lines from The Princess Bride that double as comments on freshman composition papers and this is by Jennifer Simonson and this one we used in this show.

**Bonni:** [00:31:28] It's just one of the classics. You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means. And then the next quote at a time like this. That's all you can think to say. I won't read them all but I would not say such things if I were you. I do not suppose you could speed things up. Skip to the end. This is the sound of ultimate suffering.

**Bonni:** [00:31:49] And last but not least one of the great lines from the movie The Princess Bride. Inconceivable. So I will link to that in the show notes and thank you Cameron for passing that on to me and allowing me to steal it for the recommendations. What recommendations do you have for the listeners.

**Cameron:** [00:32:06] Well I was just recently reading through actually some interviews with Tina Fey and I had read her autobiography Bossypants awhile back.

**Cameron:** [00:32:16] One of the things that resonated with me from her is actually she talks about one of the cardinal rules of improv which is to always

say yes you know whenever you're on stage and you have your partner there and you're about to engage in this gloom that the rule is you just say yes you know and sometimes I feel like the classroom can be a little like him.

**Cameron:** [00:32:38] And you know I've actually come to class and overprepared very very prepared and yet still when you get in there and you've got a discussion going or you've got units responding to something there that kind of element of improvisation.

**Cameron:** [00:32:51] And so I guess my recommendation and something that I try to do in my classroom is to say yes. Say yes to student questions, say yes to a changing direction if the students are more interested in something else that discussion brought up. So say yes. And Tina Fey comments that story by saying yes that we move forward in that discussion and sort of saying no kind of closes that down. So say yes.

**Bonni:** [00:33:20] I love that I have read that book it was some time ago that I read. And I wasn't connecting it to you. And what a wonderful way to draw from that great book and have us think about our teaching in a different way.

**Bonni:** [00:33:32] Thank you so much for visiting the show and for accepting the invitation and sharing all about these creative assignments on how we can use backward design and authentic pedagogy in our teaching and how we can also connect it back with active learning. Thank you so much for being on Teaching in Higher Ed.

**Cameron:** [00:33:53] Thank you so much for having me. I really enjoyed it.

**Bonni:** [00:33:57] Thanks to all of you for listening to Episode 24 of Teaching in Higher Ed. Hope you'll visit the show notes at [teachinginhighered.com/24](http://teachinginhighered.com/24) to take advantage of all the great resources that Cameron shared with us today.

**Bonni:** [00:34:12] If you have yet to subscribe to the Teaching in Higher Ed weekly update. You could be getting these show notes right in your inbox without having to visit the show notes page. That's at [teachinginhighered.com/subscribe](http://teachinginhighered.com/subscribe).

**Bonni:** [00:34:25] And also if you have a chance would love to get a review or a rating on whatever it is you use to listen to the show whether it's iTunes or Stitcher Radio. It helps others discover the show and just begin to build the community



even more. Thanks so much for listening and I'll look forward to seeing you next time on Teaching in Higher Ed.

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