

**Bonni:** [00:00:00] Today on episode number 210 of the Teaching in Higher Ed podcast, James M. Lang talks about his book Teaching the Literature Survey Course.

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**Bonni:** [00:00:23] Hello I'm Bonni Stachowiak and 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 and learning. We also share ways to improve our productivity approaches so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students.

**Bonni:** [00:00:50] Hello and welcome to this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. On today's episode, James M. Lang is joining me once again. I'm so fortunate to have been able to talk to him many times on the podcast in the past. James is a professor of English and the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence at Assumption College in Massachusetts where he teaches courses in British literature and in creative nonfiction writing. He's the author of many books and more than 100 reviews or essays on topics ranging from higher education to British literature. Jim writes a monthly column for The Chronicle of Higher Education as well as contributing regularly to America and Notre Dame magazine. He edits a series of books on teaching and learning in higher education for the University of West Virginia Press, which we will be talking about today. Jim, welcome back to Teaching in Higher Ed.

**James:** [00:01:46] Thank you. I'm always glad to be here with you.

**Bonni:** [00:01:48] Oh I'm always glad to be here with you. And it's so fun. You recently took a trip with your family and I felt almost like I was on the trip with your family. It's fun being connected on social media and getting to know the different trips that you take and the institutions you get to visit with your workshops and stuff. It's really fun to have known each other for years now.

**James:** [00:02:08] Yeah. It's an amazing experience being able to go and spend some time at Central European University. Some of the opportunities that this work has opened up has been really unbelievable and things I never would have imagined.

**Bonni:** [00:02:21] Yes. And I was telling you before we started recording, I feel the same about the podcast. There's all these things I never would have imagined as well and getting to know people like you and you're such a collaborative learner and it's fun you've connected me with countless people who have either been on the podcast or just contributed to my own learning and I just thank you so much for all of that. It's really fun to be connected with you.

**James:** [00:02:44] And that's one of the joys of both writing the Chronicle column and directing our teaching center on campus. I just get exposed to a lot of people who are doing really interesting things. And selfishly, I like that from my own teaching development and writing but it also just gives you a sense of hope that there's so much great stuff going on in higher education in spite of all the-sometimes the overarching narratives might seem negative but there are a lot of great things happening.

**Bonni:** [00:03:11] One of the recent ways that we reconnected was your generous offer to have West Virginia University Press sponsor the transcripts for the Teaching in Higher Ed podcast. So we are sadly still in the process of going back through the first 200. It's actually way more challenging than I predicted. There are all these really smart people that come on the show and say things that I can't even google my way out of. So it slows down the process sometimes.

**Bonni:** [00:03:37] But today's episode is part of that sponsorship and I'm excited, I did want to say though I think you had a little bit of false advertising on this book. So would you start by just sharing the title of the book.

**James:** [00:03:51] It's called Teaching the Literature Survey Course: New Strategies for College Faculty. What do you find false advertising on that, Bonni? [laughing]

**Bonni:** [00:03:57] I was going, well maybe it's my own biases but because I did agree to read the books of course that I will talking to people about (what an idea) I'll be doing my homework on each of the authors that we have come in. I thought this was not going to apply to me very much. I thought that because I mean, I'm sure at some point I took a literature survey course somewhere in my

education, I must have but I thought it would be very specific to that application. And I'm not kidding you, every page, every single page I've got to highlight on. And I just thought what it really did for me was just ignite my imagination in all these different areas.

**Bonni:** [00:04:39] I haven't really figured out yet what I'm going to do with all of that. And we'll talk more about the specifics. I don't want to jump ahead too much but I literally, just every page was like - wow I could do something with that! Highlight, highlight, highlight. I have to then synthesize it a little bit more now. But I don't know if you- I'm wondering what your thoughts are. Because I did see recently Jesse Stommel has been tweeting about the lack of good professional development that we give to graduate students on teaching.

**Bonni:** [00:05:07] And then one of his tweets, I don't want to sound like I'm being critical, I generally when I ask a question, I mean it, it's not meant to be rhetorical. But he used the phrase "discipline specific pedagogies" and that made me curious because I always think like well doesn't it apply to everyone? Or anyway. I don't know if you have any thoughts about that.

**James:** [00:05:29] Yeah absolutely. On the one hand, the kinds of questions that are raised in the book and that the essays try to answer are in some ways potentially applicable to any discipline because almost every discipline has these kind of introductory level type survey classes. And the literature survey class is not quite an introductory level class, it's usually the one that's kind of a little bit one step into a major. But most majors will have a class like this which is designed to kind of give students abroad overview of the discipline or the content of the discipline. And those classes all face the kind of similar challenge which is they have the admirable intention of trying to give students that broad overview and a sense of the breadth of the discipline.

**James:** [00:06:15] But, to me, I'm not sure how effective the courses are in accomplishing that because of the fact that they kind of hit so lightly on lots of different topics. I'm not sure that's really an avenue towards deep learning. So, on the one hand that challenge is one that I think is sort of universal. On the other hand, I do agree that we need discipline specific pedagogical development. One of the ways that you can do that is by looking at the problem areas of a discipline. Like, what are the courses which everybody hates to teach? Or that we know are really difficult for students. Or That we have high rates of failure and dropout. Or that keep getting pushed into the curriculum because we can't decide whether they really belong or not.

**James:** [00:07:06] When you look at those areas, it's kind of like almost like a problem based approach to faculty development within the disciplines. Look at where the problems are and that's sometimes where you can identify places where you can do faculty development and think more about the purpose of a major, think more about the purpose of teaching in general. These are these are kind of interesting areas in the same way that I think you know that's sometimes my approach to faculty development in general is to look at problem areas like cheating or distraction and then try and see OK what can we learn from this about actually how to do our jobs more effectively?

**James:** [00:07:38] So these courses to me are a kind of really interesting place for English faculty on the one hand to think about the major and about what do we expect an English major to know and why do we care about them knowing these kinds of things? But then on the other hand, they do raise the more general questions of what do we expect in terms of breadth of knowledge within a discipline and how do we get students best to learn that?

**Bonni:** [00:08:05] One of the things that people will say that's really an identifier of a problem area you discuss a lot is "I can't cover it all. I can't figure out how to cover it all in the 15 weeks or 12 weeks" or what have you. What are some of the ways in which we should really pay attention to that thought process?

**James:** [00:08:27] That's a hard question, because again if you look at the purpose of the course, the purpose of the course explicitly in the way it was created and the way most departments teach it is coverage. It is designed to cover a lot of different areas of English literature. The most common way to divided up is there's one American Lit survey class and there's two British literature survey classes. So those three classes are essentially supposed to cover British and American literature from their origins to the present day.

**James:** [00:08:50] And of course that's a hopeless objective. You know if you just pick one of the anthologies, you're going to find ten times the amount of things in there that you can ask students to read. So on the one hand, we have to kind of feel this obligation of I've got to cover the major authors and trends and everything. And that puts the kind of pressure on you to feel like you have to do this.

**James:** [00:09:14] On the other hand, it's been a completely unrealistic aspiration from the start. You're never going to be able to cover everything that is potentially coverable in that area. So then if you think about it that way it kind of frees you up to think a little bit about ok so what really matters here? It's not

just acquainting students with these authority authors. That can't be the reason why we're doing this.

**James:** [00:09:39] The reason has to be more about our expectations of developing certain kinds of skills in terms of how they interpret literature, certain awareness of the way we canonize certain texts over other texts, or the ways in which we expect certain trends or larger movements in literature. And again, why do we care about those things? So once you let go of the idea that this is just a coverage course, then it really opens you up to kind of interesting questions or new ways to think about how to achieve other goals in that course.

**Bonni:** [00:10:16] I remember an early conversation of ours - and I - I mean I've just learned so much from you, Jim. But that I sort of came across, and probably rightfully so, as minimizing the importance of having a body of knowledge that is memorized. I think I dismissed it at the time in my own understanding of pedagogy. And I remember distinctly you saying like, "No. I actually think there should be things that are memorized in that we don't have to go Google or you know whatever the equivalent is in a particular discipline."

**Bonni:** [00:10:49] And so I wonder if you might contrast a little bit just this tension that we have to cover at all. That's not helpful but then - and I think this does bring us a little bit more into contrasting surface learning versus deep learning.

**James:** [00:11:18] But this literature on teaching and learning has convinced me actually that teaching skills doesn't work very well if students don't have knowledge to work with. And so it's not, for me, a question of it does not matter at all what we teach in the survey as long as we're exposing students to some literature and helping them develop skills, that would be sort of one side of it. And then the other end of that spectrum would be no we have to make sure that they have sort of memorized the core works and authors from these two countries in time periods.

**James:** [00:11:51] And there's a middle ground. The middle ground is we do want to make sure that they have some basic familiarity with the sort of core trends, some of the most important authors in work that they're going to encounter in later courses in the major or that are going to be useful to them as they go through their college education, people that are exposing them to new perspectives, ideas, ways of thinking and ways of writing. And that's our job as experts is to try to identify what those are.

**James:** [00:12:18] But five faculty members are going to come up with five

different lists. So it's not so much for me that we can let this question go entirely of knowledge and coverage, I think. But it's also not the case that we have to like identify it's going to always be these 30 authors that everybody covers. There's a middle ground here and that middle ground is we acquaint students with some core knowledge and we are going to be able to make the judgments about that because we're the experts. But then once we have identified what that is, then we think a little bit more deeply about OK so why does it matter? How does this connect to your life? What kinds of skills can we develop as you're working your way through this knowledge? So I'm a pretty middleground person and I am sort of middle ground on this, as in many other things.

**Bonni:** [00:13:05] When you talk about in the book, and of course it's threaded throughout the book, the difference between surface learning and deep learning- I'm just going to read your words now "the deep learning is when we see or create connections, when students see or create connections between the course material and their own lives and experiences when they have the opportunity to take what they're learning and process it in challenging and creative ways. And when they take active control of their learning and the ways in which they demonstrate it to their professor."

**James:** [00:13:39] Yeah, that's a pretty good list.

**Bonni:** [00:13:42] That's it right there. That's really the idea.

**James:** [00:13:46] I think those are the those are the kinds of things, there's kind of three core things that are right, like being able to see why the literature matters outside the specific context of that when you're sitting in a classroom with students. How can they transfer what they're learning or what their skills are developing the context outside of it? I mean that's that's the goal of all education. Right. But if we just sort of teach the class in such a way that here's the great author, here's the next great author. We're not giving them the opportunity to do that.

**James:** [00:14:17] So helping them see connections and make connections to context outside of the class. Giving them, secondly, sort of new and interesting opportunities to demonstrate their learning, not necessarily new but a variety of ways to do that. Instead of just take what this author said and repeat it back to me in a three page essay, We want to be able to think more- We should be able to think more creatively about that in terms of how students can demonstrate their learning to us. And that was something we were explicitly looking for in the

essays that we invited is examples of people who are letting students demonstrate their learning in survey courses and more unique and creative ways.

**James:** [00:15:00] And then the third thing in that list you just mentioned is letting students have a little bit of a voice in this process. And so it's not just about again like me saying you know you must know these 30 authors and you're going to demonstrate your knowledge in this way. But inviting students to say look, the list of authors which we believe are important are always changing and evolving. If you look at the survey anthology from today, I think I'm looking at the right now the ninth edition of the Norton Anthology of English literature. Compare that table of contents with the first edition of the Norton Anthology of English literature and you're going to see really different lists of stuff.

**James:** [00:15:37] So that's changing and evolving always and there's no reason why students shouldn't be able to think about that and try to identify here are the ones that seem to matter most to us right now or matter most to our society right now, as well as here are some ways in which I think I could demonstrate in which I think I could demonstrate this learning, here are some things I've tried in other classes which were very meaningful to me, could we do some version of that in here? I want to hear that kind of thing from students.

**Bonni:** [00:16:07] Well we get to explore just four ideas and inspirations that come from the book, although there are many more. And I do also want to mention that the book is chock full of sample documents. There's worksheets and syllabi. So it's a very practical book in terms of actually being able to take this inspiration and do something with it. And so we're going to limit it to four. I know it's hard for both of us to do. Let's start out with oh my gosh the first one I was literally just highlighting the whole chapter. So tell us about mapping early English literature.

**James:** [00:16:39] Yeah, I love that one. And that's probably why we put it first. You know takes the idea of so much of literature we think about just in terms of the survey course. We just think about them in terms of time. We break them up according to time. You know the first survey goes usually to around 1800. And the second survey goes from 1800 to present. And so in the British context and then we just kind of move chronologically through the survey and that's the sort of organizing principle.

**James:** [00:17:05] And I just love what Kevin Bourque did in this essay or what he does in his class is to think what are some other ways in which we could sort of

organize this knowledge? And he still does sort of walk students through it in a chronological fashion, but he also uses geography as an organizing principle. And so the students are kind of using Google maps to look at where the texts that they are reading are centered or located and they're kind of- one of the assignments, which I just find so amazing, is they can make an audio walking tour of something that they read in the class where they will go to, like if you're going to be a tourist in this location, you could put on the headphones and the students are kind of presenting them with an audio tour of what they would be seeing and how that relates to the literature that surrounds that place.

**James:** [00:18:00] So I just thought that was so creative and interesting both in terms of this is another way to think about how you might organize a survey, what your organizing principle is and that opens up lots of other possibilities we could organize these courses in other ways as well. But the other thing is it's just a really creative assignment. And I just always I find fascinating like specific techniques and assignments so to me that was a great example of something concrete that emerged from his survey class.

**Bonni:** [00:18:32] The other thing that I thought was unique, although please correct me if I'm wrong because this is certainly out of my areas of expertise, is just that he oriented at least in one of his classes things around London at different points of time. And I thought I wondered if that was perhaps a way to address this concern of trying to cover everything if we can have where London almost becomes a character that we become so familiar with and then we get introduced to that character through different spans of time but it can center us and make the learning easier because we have that sort of as our hub of our network of learning? I don't know if I make any sense at all or...

**James:** [00:19:14] Yeah, absolutely and that is a great example because London there becomes again it's a little bit more specific than geography. As I was saying, you're right, it's very much located around London. And that could make you bit like think of the idea well how else could I organize? What Are some other principles that I could use? I could pick up one theme and sort of see how that theme plays itself throughout this time period. Or pick one type of person and see how that character type appears throughout. I mean we just sort of take it for granted that we have to do this chronologically. And to me, Kevin's essay opens up this idea of no actually there might be other ways to do this that not only makes sense and it can help us achieve our goals but that are going to, as you said, help students organize the knowledge a little bit more effectively and think more creatively about material from the course.

**Bonni:** [00:20:07] I would become really interested I think just feeling like it wasn't all so outside of my understanding that because I then really gained this familiarity about one place then it's like OK I can take in new information but I can route it toward this common theme. I thought that was a really unique thing.

**Bonni:** [00:20:24] Well the next one is certainly a challenge many of us face isn't just the coverage but I have not heard this done in English classes, is a team based approach and in this case specifically to the American survey.

**James:** [00:20:39] Yeah. So this is Desirée Henderson's essay about using team based learning. And she of course uses the sort of formal process of team based learning that you know folks can look up online. But that has a got a pretty kind of well established process to it. And what I really like about this one and what I liked in particular about this approach to the team based learning which was developed by Larry Michaelsen back in the 1970s and is now being used in sort of disciplines across different universities and colleges.

**James:** [00:21:12] But what I really like about it are the individual and then group assessments. I love the way that this team based approach gives students the opportunities first to sort of demonstrate their own knowledge through the sort of quick little assessment that they do. But then, they get to come together and work to demonstrate their knowledge in the group. So it's got this formal process of doing that which readers can learn about again just by sort of Googling team based learning and you'll find plenty of resources on that. I just love the idea that first I am held accountable for my own. But then I get to kind of pull my knowledge correct it, improve it, and extend it by working together with my team to try and solve a problem or take my individual siloed knowledge and put it together with these other folks.

**James:** [00:22:00] So that's what I find really fascinating about that one. And I had never seen this approach used in the literature class at all actually. But the way she does it, I think is really creative and interesting.

**Bonni:** [00:22:13] I'm glad that you mentioned the formality of it. I had Jim Sibley on the podcast too described team based learning and this methodology. And I think prior to that I would have just assumed, "Oh yeah. Oh I do that." Sure we may learn in teams all the time. But it's actually a specific, defined pedagogy that we can learn more about, although I don't remember from the 1970s, that's great that's been used that long and lots of people have done a lot of work around it. So it's worth looking at.

**Bonni:** [00:22:43] And then also listen to that episode, I'll put a link in the show notes to that Jim Sibley one. And there's some resources that he linked to as well.

**James:** [00:22:50] One of the things too is the thing about team based learning is that it is problem based, like you know people pose problems that students are going to be solving in teams for a lot of the class period. And it's challenging, I think the reason I had never heard about this was because it's challenging to think about well what kinds of problems are students going to be solving in the literature class? And what this essay does is kind of show some show kind of approach to literature that would help you answer that question. So I think it's also very creative and interesting in that way.

**Bonni:** [00:23:20] Another very creative application that again I have not seen done much in English courses is the use of multimedia galleries.

**James:** [00:23:29] Yes the multimedia gallery is another one which was focused on a particular kind of demonstration of how students are going to demonstrate their learning. This one really resonated with me because I've been doing something not quite exactly like this, but I have an end of the semester assignment in British literature survey class which is very open ended. And students can do choose lots of different ways in order to select one of the works that we read throughout the semester and then show why it's still relevant to us today. And they can do that through presentations but they can also do it through paintings or making music or doing something like Jennifer Page argues here creating these kinds of multimedia galleries.

**James:** [00:24:11] So I'm really interested in seeing the alternative ways in which people are letting students demonstrate their learning and show how and why these works are still important to us today. So what I think that's good about it, what she does in particular, is first of all everybody creates these sort of multimedia galleries which draw from particular themes, or issues, or authors in the course. But then, they also have to do a little bit of academic work, so they write a brief introduction to the author of the work or the period or whatever it is that they're focusing on and they still have to do you know a kind of a traditional works cited page to show where they got their information from.

**James:** [00:24:50] So, to me, it's a nice combination of taking what we often traditionally expect students to do in survey but then adding this piece where they are now doing much more familiar with, you know creating this kind of

material with these kinds of galleries, still showing why they matter today. So the digital curation project it's really interesting stuff so that's another one. I think what she's presenting could be applied to lots of different disciplines.

**Bonni:** [00:25:19] The study of Universal Design for Learning, and I will link to an episode about that topic as well, one of the things that it advocates is having multiple representations of things we're trying to have students learn and then also giving them the opportunity to demonstrate their learning using multiple methods. And it sounds like this is a great practice to allow them to do that which is going to support that deeper learning that you talked about. And it's also going to help make more formal accommodations for those who have some sort of learning disability or something like that, it allows them to access the learning. But one of the things that I've learned about Universal Design for Learning is that these kinds of things are good for everyone. It's not only helpful to one type of a learner, it can really be something more universally held that benefits us all.

**James:** [00:26:09] I picked up this phrase from Tom Tobin the idea of plus one assessment. So plus one assignment design. You think about what your objectives are and what you want your students to be able to do and then you come up with what that's going to look like but then you think about OK but I want to be able to offer an alternative, what's another way that someone could demonstrate the same objectives to me? And I really like that as a way of inviting students to take a little bit more ownership over their education and giving people lots of different ways to demonstrate their learning.

**Bonni:** [00:26:40] I'm glad that you brought Tom Tobin up as well because he will be on the podcast later this year too to talk about his book that is a part of your same series and his book on Universal Design for Learning, so that will be fun to hear him. I've heard him speak at a conference and so it'll be funny to talk to him and not actually be able to see all his charisma and his facial expressions.

**James:** [00:26:59] He's an energetic guy.

**Bonni:** [00:27:00] I'll see if I can get him on Skype so at least I can watch him. He's great. And then the fourth one that we want to explore is just also another very innovative practice and that is the blank syllabus.

**James:** [00:27:15] Yeah, I've been interested in this approach and writing about it for several years now. Chris Walsh, who wrote that essay has written about himself as well. And you know what Chris does, again to me, is a really

fascinating thing that could be applied to any discipline. He allows his students to make some choices about some of the content of the course. And he calls this the blank syllabus approach he always says to people, it's not actually a blank syllabus. What he essentially does is he creates some blank spaces on his syllabus and he invites students to fill those blank spaces with the things that they have caught their interest.

**James:** [00:27:53] So at the beginning of the semester, he'll show them the syllabus which has the sort of open slots to it and their first assignment of the semester was to identify a work from the anthology that they were reading and nominate that work to be placed into one of those blank spots. And then they had to write an essay about why. Why do you want to choose this work? What do you think is important about it? Why do you think the class should read it? And on the days when they were talking about those works, the students who were held partially responsible for leading the discussion on those days.

**James:** [00:28:30] So again, to me, it's not so much about this specific survey or about his specific way of doing it, but I just love the idea of creating a blank space on my syllabus and inviting students to fill that in. I was very inspired by this and I did it in a different way, in my own survey class. Instead of focusing on the content and inviting students to sort of fill in one of the readings, I have a thousand points typically my classes are a thousand points are available and I just kept 100 points blank. And so I invited the students to think with me about what do you want to do for these hundred points? Here's where it's going to fall in the semester. Here's why I want you to be able to demonstrate at this at this point, or here are the kind of skills that are that we haven't I haven't yet asked you to formalize in other assessments. So that's what we need to do. But I'm open to however you guys think you can best do this.

**James:** [00:29:27] And so having that conversation was great and it was really interesting and it allowed them to take some ownership over the class. So that one has been very inspiring to me. And I think it's worth thinking about for almost any discipline and almost any type of class. Where are the opportunities in my syllabus for students to make their voices heard?

**Bonni:** [00:29:47] One thing I wanted to mention is that it's so becoming increasingly easy to allow technology to facilitate these kinds of things and in your learning management system or even if you work outside your learning management system you can embed a google doc. And what that means by embed is that it just appears there, it looks like it's in your learning management system even though it's just a window into a document that you've stored

somewhere else. But you can make that where the students can type right into it. And I did this as a means of reflective learning toward the end of one of my doctoral classes. And they were all typing into the same google doc at the same time and I never tried it before and it really worked well just as another way for them to reflect on their learning. And again, they're all typing into it.

**Bonni:** [00:30:32] And even I use the Learning Management System, Canvas and it was worth learning even that within it it has sign ups. So for student presentations, I used to have OK print out a piece of paper and everybody passed it around the class and signed up for the time that you want your presentation. Well there's two problems with that, one is I'm notorious for losing paper, and even manage to keep a hold of it because I take a picture of it, then they constantly saying "now when was I signed up for again?" And it's not helpful for anyone.

**Bonni:** [00:31:00] And it's worth it in your LMS to look for what possibilities there are to create sign ups for students and allow that to be something that they have the autonomy to do. And that that's really helpful for them. Then it's always in the same place. They know what they signed up for because it's within the central hub of their learning too.

**James:** [00:31:18] Yeah that's great. You're right. And you can use a lot of different things you can use polling as well as a way to sort of get if you are having a class discussion for example about you know here's some options for what you might do. You could use polling to get a quick sense of what students are tending toward and that's useful for students to see as well so that they can get a sense of what others are thinking and then that can be a great way to start a discussion about a blank spot on your syllabus that you're going to try and fill together.

**Bonni:** [00:31:45] Love it.

**Bonni:** [00:31:46] Well, this is the point in the show where we each get to give our recommendations and I wanted to say thanks to my friends at LSU. I got to go out and speak at their Communicating Across the Curriculum Summer Institute. And they really, speak and this last item we just talked about, they really integrated their learning management system Moodle into the whole program. And so they had it all built out and they linked out to my slides and my resources pages and all that sort of thing. And every session, same thing.

**Bonni:** [00:32:15] And one of the groupings they had was around group projects

and they linked to Carnegie Mellon's Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation. An article, actually a whole resource on what are the best practices for designing group projects. And it's built around accomplishing three aims in using group projects as a method of teaching.

**Bonni:** [00:32:39] One is to create interdependence and usually, the temptation for students is okay you take the first section, you take the second section. Any of us would do this, like let's get it done. How do we build assignments that actually are building the kind of teamwork and collaborative skills that we're looking to build by this sense of interdependence? And then how do we, in our teaching, devote time in our classes specifically to growing these teamwork skills? Because it's not something that necessarily everyone's going to come into with. So how do we have that as part of the teaching and learning process? And then how do we build in individual accountability?

**Bonni:** [00:33:17] And what I like about the resource is it's very specific, so it's tangible and we can use it, but it also recognizes that we have different teaching styles and approaches and what works in one case may not work in another. So it is just a really well done resource worth a look on the show notes when you either get them in your email or go to visit the page for this episode.

**James:** [00:33:37] Actually the Eberly Center has a great, huge set of web pages, which are resources about teaching and learning in higher education. So I'd recommend people just look at the whole site, there's a wide range of issues that are covered on those pages. I go back to them occasionally just to get ideas for things in all kinds of different areas.

**Bonni:** [00:33:56] Oh very good to know. I believe I got lost but at the same time I was at an event so I was like Stop it stop, stay focused, which is just hard to do when you come across a resource as good as that one. Well, what do you have to recommend for us today Jim?

**James:** [00:34:10] Well the first thing I just want to say quickly is that of course I'm getting all the glory for this book right now. But of course I did it with two editors Gwynn Dujardin from Queens University in Canada and John A. Staunton From Eastern Michigan. So this was absolutely a joint effort and of course as well all of our contributors. But Gwynn and John were really, all three of us worked very hard on this book. So I want to thank Gwynn and Joan for their contributions to it as well.

**James:** [00:34:33] But the book I want to recommend I'm kind of late to the party

on. But I discovered it this spring. And it's *The Slow Professor* and I know it has stirred up some controversy because not everyone agrees that first of all of the premise, that the academic world should move slowly and that we should pause and you know try to resist what they refer to as the corporatization of the university.

**James:** [00:34:57] And then there's the other sort of folks saying well you know that's a luxury that many of us can't afford, to try and move and think more slowly in the academic world. And I think those criticisms are very legitimate and worth considering. But I also think the book is very thought provoking. And so it made me kind of pause and think a little bit about what are sort of my values and priorities as an academic? Am I sort of doing everything I can to achieve those? What are the places where I need to step back and the places where I need to step up?

**James:** [00:35:28] So we're in fact going to host a faculty learning community around it on my campus, not because I'm trying to give everybody recommendations that we should follow but because I think it'll spark a good conversation precisely because there's a lot of room for disagreement about their argument. So if you're looking for a book that's thought provoking and that is going to force you to maybe confront some of your sort of settled thoughts about academia, about where we are where we're going. I think it's a good one in that respect. Like I said I don't agree with everything about but it definitely made me think and I don't know what else we could ask of the book these days.

**Bonni:** [00:36:02] Absolutely. And I have had it recommended to me and to have the authors on many times and just haven't gotten around to it yet. But your description of it is really helpful for me and makes me think I should read it. I certainly am one who would benefit in life by slowing down a bit.

**James:** [00:36:18] Well the best part about it is the book is like 100 pages long. So it's definitely manageable, even in the busy academic schedule.

**Bonni:** [00:36:28] Good to know. Well Jim, it is so great to have you back on the show and thanks for introducing us to this book in your series and I'm so excited to talk to other authors along the way and just really appreciate your work on an ongoing basis. I just love the opportunity to get to learn from you.

**James:** [00:36:43] Thank you Bonni, likewise.

**Bonni:** [00:36:45] Thank you once again to Jim Lang for joining me on today's episode. And as we were talking about, it's hard to slow down sometimes and think I need to read *The Slow Professor* so I can do that a little bit better. Today that person we had to coming to care for our kids while my husband I worked is not feeling well. So the kids are here with me in the podcasting studio.

**Bonni:** [00:37:10] Hannah, what are we going to do after we are done with the podcast?

**Hannah:** [00:37:22] Um. I am getting my haircut after this at the mall.

**Bonni:** [00:37:22] Oh. Is that your favorite place to get your haircut?

**Hannah:** [00:37:25] Yes.

**Bonni:** [00:37:25] What do you like about the mall?

**Hannah:** [00:37:32] That they give me lollipops and let me watch a show while I get my haircut.

**Bonni:** [00:37:32] Oh yeah, they have good movies playing there in the background.

**Hannah:** [00:37:38] AND GOOD LOLLIPOPS!

**Bonni:** [00:37:39] And good lollipops. Hannah, don't talk too loud or Andrew has to edit it out.

**Hannah:** [00:37:44] Ok.

**Bonni:** [00:37:45] Ok. And Luke, did you want to tell people something that you're glad for?

**Luke:** [00:37:50] Thank you for watching this, Teaching in Higher Ed.

**Bonni:** [00:37:53] Yeah thanks for listening to the Teaching in Higher Ed podcast. [podcast theme music begins playing] And Luke, did you want to say something else?

**Luke:** [00:38:03] Hmmmm... Maybe.

**Hannah:** [00:38:04] I love that music you just played Mommy.

**Bonni:** [00:38:04] It's good. If people have not signed up for the e-mail list, they should because they can get the links to all the great stuff that we talk about every week. That's at [teachinginhighered.com/subscribe](http://teachinginhighered.com/subscribe).

**Bonni:** [00:38:15] If you want to check out the notes specifically for today's episode...

**Hannah:** [00:38:18] Mommy, that is not what you were going to say.

**Bonni:** [00:38:22] Oh did I change my story up a little bit? Yeah. [Hannah and Bonni laugh] [teachinginhighered.com/210](http://teachinginhighered.com/210).

**Hannah:** [00:38:30] Let me hear you laugh again Mommy.

**Bonni:** [00:38:31] You like when I laugh Hannah?

**Hannah:** [00:38:33] Mhm.

**Bonni:** [00:38:33] I like this music, it reminds me of swing dancing in my 20s.

**Luke:** [00:38:36] Sw-sw-sw-swing dance.

**Bonni:** [00:38:36] This is good music, huh?

**Hannah:** [00:38:36] I do not like this music.

**Bonni:** [00:38:41] Not everyone likes it, it's a love/hate thing. Either you really like it or you really don't. Ok say goodbye everybody. Say goodbye.

**Hannah:** [00:38:49] I never like it, BYE!

**Luke:** [00:38:52] Bye-bye. I accidently touched my microphone. Sw-swing...

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