

**Bonni:** [00:00:00] Welcome to Teaching in Higher Ed. Today we talk about developing your teaching philosophy.

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**Bonni:** [00:00:20] 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:** [00:00:42] This is Bonni Stachowiak and Dave Stachowiak is back again with me today. Thanks for joining me Dave.

**Dave:** [00:00:48] I am always glad to spend time with you. What a pleasure.

**Bonni:** [00:00:51] Today we're talking about something a little bit more long term for people in their careers as professors. We're lucky in that teaching philosophy and we're going to start by looking at what is a person's teaching philosophy.

**Bonni:** [00:01:06] And so for me the teaching philosophy is a way of articulating how it is I view the role of teaching and learning and also how I play a role in it too.

**Dave:** [00:01:19] And this is going to be a good episode for me because you've if you listen the last few episodes you know I do not teach full time part time and I haven't really thought about this a little bit but not in a formal way.

**Dave:** [00:01:33] So I think I have a teaching philosophy but I think the structure will go through here today is a little new to me but it will be helpful to others as well as thinking through how we can actually put some warts behind the actions and the intentions we have.

**Bonni:** [00:01:47] I think it's somewhat unfortunate but most of the time people's teaching philosophy and actually identifying and articulating it doesn't come up in their careers until they're "forced" to do it.

**Bonni:** [00:01:59] So what might force us to do it might be an interview with an institution we want to apply for a role. You're going to need to in most institutions have your cover letter your resume your CV, but also have accompanying that your teaching philosophy.

**Bonni:** [00:02:16] And so sometimes instances when we apply for tenure or we apply for promotion or are going to be other times when we are asked to do this but it isn't something that we revisit in between.

**Bonni:** [00:02:28] And I think is an important thing for us to think about because it can really help guide us to become better at teaching and anyone listening to this show in general on this episode specifically I know cares deeply about teaching.

**Dave:** [00:02:41] And I know when you were applying for tenure you used the book cure that I have had right now called The Academic Portfolio by Selden and Miller.

**Dave:** [00:02:51] And so we're going to spend a little bit of time today looking at this book because it provides some structure for that and that like you said is a natural time to be thinking of this. But our hope is that it would guide some conversation even before you get to that point.

**Bonni:** [00:03:03] Yeah and we will have that book in the show notes a list to it on Amazon. And it's funny whenever I do go to approach something I almost always go look for the book that tells you how to do it. So this will be a great resource for anyone who does need to put together an academic portfolio.

**Bonni:** [00:03:22] Again typically applying for promotion applying for tenure and that process really get spelled out Well it's funny because I went upstairs to get it off the bookshelf Dave and I had remembered that as a very thin volume.

**Bonni:** [00:03:34] So I'm looking in the bookshelves for something really thin because it just didn't take that long to read. And it's actually a thick volume. And I had completely not remembered that it was so thick. The reason became

the first few chapters are more general in nature defining what an academic portfolio is what typically is contained in one.

**Bonni:** [00:03:55] Some of your generalities that you really do need to know. But then they pretty instantly then get into specific examples they have included and it's a very well researched book.

**Bonni:** [00:04:06] And the sense of they didn't just want to talk in broad terms, "Here's what tenure should be" but actually people who have attained tenure at specific institutions and their actual portfolios that they used.

**Dave:** [00:04:19] Oh, interesting.

**Bonni:** [00:04:20] So yeah there's a ton of examples. If you just flip through some of the types of portfolio examples that are included. I know I saw one for political science when I was flipping through someone who's a history professor or what are some other ones you're seeing there.

**Dave:** [00:04:33] Looks like psychology is in here.

**Bonni:** [00:04:38] I know business and management was in there.

**Dave:** [00:04:39] Nutritional sciences.

**Bonni:** [00:04:42] I mean hundreds of pages of samples from all different disciplines.

**Dave:** [00:04:46] Jazz and Contemporary Music and geology all kinds of all kinds of disciplines, foreign languages.

**Bonni:** [00:04:51] So in order to get to those notes by the way it's at [teachinginhighered.com/4](http://teachinginhighered.com/4). That went by fast.

**Dave:** [00:05:01] A month of shows already.

**Bonni:** [00:05:02] It's crazy. So yeah go check those notes out and we'd also love to hear from you your experience. Are you early in the process or have you already identified yours? Has it changed over time? We'd love to hear from you in the comments there.

**Bonni:** [00:05:15] So we have talked about what a teaching philosophy is. Let's share a little bit about why it's important. We already mentioned it would be important if you're applying important if you were going for promotion. Those are of course the pragmatic reasons why it's important.

**Bonni:** [00:05:30] But if we delve a little bit deeper I wish we'd talked about this more often not just when we formerly had to do something it seemed such a transactional type of exposure. Then to thinking about one's teaching philosophy.

**Bonni:** [00:05:46] And I have not found that the most enjoyable time to articulate things like teaching philosophies because you're already under pressure to produce all this documentation to prove that you're worth it or whatever.

**Bonni:** [00:05:55] So at any rate I think it really does help us get to the heart of why we teach why it matters how we have an impact what we believe and that of course translates into the classroom.

**Dave:** [00:06:09] And I probably sold myself short a little bit earlier Bonni as one of the graduate courses I teach is on educational theory and while we don't specifically talk about teaching philosophy we do talk about different theories of education.

**Dave:** [00:06:24] And how that shows up in the classroom and I find that some of the things I do are very different than some of the other faculty in the program as far as just running a class and structure of a course.

**Dave:** [00:06:35] And so we talk about the positives and negatives of each of those different philosophies and why one might be good at one situation with one group of students.

**Dave:** [00:06:43] One might be good in a different situation with a different topic and I find that that is helpful for me even as a faculty member to think through what it is that why would I make some choices to do different things and different situations and depending on the discipline of teaching depending on the students and why may I make some different decisions in different situations.

**Bonni:** [00:07:04] I have been included on grant proposals in the past because of not just my academic background but my training background before I was in academia. I was a training professional and spent more than a decade in the

franchise industry in training and so I had often times when you are listed in the grant.

**Bonni:** [00:07:24] If it's a grant that has something to do with education which so often are do or training you do need to articulate what is it that is your philosophy about learning. How is it going to be structured and for actually this is the first time Dave you and I have both been listed on a grant. I won't go into specifics because we won't know how it turns out for a while yet.

**Bonni:** [00:07:43] But Dave and I were both listed and I took out a proposal that we had done previously and had one for a major institution here in Orange County and part of I think why we were able to get that contract was because we articulated not just a training but a whole framework of what was going to happen before the actual training itself.

**Bonni:** [00:08:06] And we did have in that case and this was mostly your project Dave that you had developed. But I know I worked with you on it but articulated what was going to happen before the actual training events to sort of primed the people for the learning. Get them introduced to some vocabulary and some models before they came for those face to face sessions.

**Bonni:** [00:08:27] And then thinking even about after and having some coaching and mentoring going on and that all when I went back to look at the proposal it wasn't just about a formula but why. Why is it structured this way. How is this going to actually ultimately achieve the outcomes they were looking for.

**Dave:** [00:08:46] Yeah and we did actually put that together I know which one you're talking about through the lens of what do we do best in the classroom experience.

**Dave:** [00:08:55] So we structured the program so the time that we spent with that group in person really played to the strengths of the instructors who were involved.

**Dave:** [00:09:04] And then the times that it was virtual and there were some online components that really played to strengths that we normally wouldn't be strong with in a classroom experience.

**Dave:** [00:09:12] So we were actually able to do some program design around things that would play to the strengths of the people involved which was really cool and very successful ultimately.

**Bonni:** [00:09:24] So we've looked at what a teaching philosophy is why it's important. The rest of the episode is going to be how to identify articulate and refine our teaching philosophy over time. Now Dave the book that you have in your hand had some questions I found really useful when I was putting together my portfolio for tenure.

**Dave:** [00:09:44] This is from page 13 of the book we mentioned, some of the questions they ask is "What do I believe about the role of a teacher? The role of a student? Why do I teach the way I do? What does learning look like when it happens? Why do I choose the teaching strategies and the methods that I use and how do I assess my students learning?"

**Bonni:** [00:10:09] And I will put those questions in the show notes in case anyone just wants to go through those as prompts as a follow up from listening. You want to think through those and although I really do encourage you to check out the book it's a valuable resource.

**Bonni:** [00:10:23] It will be on my bookshelf for years to come. And I have some questions that I have found useful. I'll also include in the show notes including who are my students I find this question if you ask people or even if they just start talking about on their own really says a lot about who we are as teachers and what we believe.

**Bonni:** [00:10:48] And it's so easy for us sometimes to "Oh, those GenX-ers are always with the texts - so they never pay attention" and to start to frame a perspective of just how terrible today's students are and that's going to frame in, I would consider a pretty pretty bad way, how you approach teaching.

**Bonni:** [00:11:08] It's going to be a lot more transactional. It's going to be a lot more punishments/rewards and so that that can that can just be something to ponder and to think about who are my students. How I describe them says a lot about how I approach my teaching. Next is who am I as an educator?

**Bonni:** [00:11:29] What does that mean to be an educator, a teacher? How I describe myself says a lot about my teaching too. So I had an interesting dialogue/debate.

**Bonni:** [00:11:39] It was a debate as dialogue with a person in higher ed and he was saying... There was a blog post about really very much of a student directed learning experience where - and it's kind of how you approach your

graduate classes, Dave, where it's an a one of one of your classes you have sort of a menu of things that you might explore on a session and they get to vote and have some participation.

**Bonni:** [00:12:07] I just did a session wrapping up a doctoral course yesterday and I had some things I needed to address to really focus on the learning outcomes and clothes that our time. But there was an hour or so that I we sort of developed our own agenda out of what they really wanted to see.

**Bonni:** [00:12:25] And so my colleague - and granted he was speaking of undergraduates - He was speaking to the tone of "well they don't know what they don't know and I don't like that" because I had sent them this article about just this different method of teaching a new learning theory he hadn't heard of before and neither had I.

**Bonni:** [00:12:43] And so it was sort of interesting. And I do believe by the way at the undergraduate level that's a different framework than the me just finishing up with doctoral students. So don't misunderstand. We definitely approach those things differently.

**Bonni:** [00:12:55] I still think though that even at the undergraduate level to me the role of a teacher is more of a facilitator of learning. And if that means that the best way to facilitate that learning is for me to bring in an episode of this great podcast called Planet Money.

**Bonni:** [00:13:11] I just got the best episode. I'm going to use in the Fall. But look at this woman who became a business woman in North Korea.

**Dave:** [00:13:20] Oh. Interesting.

**Bonni:** [00:13:21] It was. It's going to be so great. It's going to hit on so many learning outcomes.

**Bonni:** [00:13:24] But if that's the best way to grab their imaginations it doesn't have to be me. I can play that 12 minute clip and then ask some questions of them and get them grappling with what does it mean to be an entrepreneur and what is it like to live under communism. Anyway so are we facilitators of learning or are we providers of information?

**Dave:** [00:13:50] Yeah. This is where I think the "Who my student is?" is a good broad question in general as a as a professor or instructor in higher ed but also is

helpful in an individual classroom depending on the discipline the age of the students their experiences.

**Dave:** [00:14:06] So you mentioned something that I do and I teach a five week graduate courses a couple times a year and one's on educational theory and there's a Saturday and on the Saturday we do like a mind map. I prepare a mind map in advance.

**Dave:** [00:14:20] And we do kind of pick and choose what you want to talk about because all of them reached the learning objectives which is kind of the way that we get there. That works amazingly well. People talk about that and I like that a lot.

**Dave:** [00:14:31] I think that would be really a poor choice for like a traditional age undergraduate population people would. These are working professionals. They've been in the field they've been in the program for you know they're there they've had a lot of experience.

**Dave:** [00:14:45] They have the tools to be able to guide those choices whereas a 18 year old who's you know a freshman or sophomore at a program doesn't really have those same kind of tools and be more directive and structured. I think as a generally speaking a smarter choice.

**Dave:** [00:15:01] So but that's the kind of thing that I've taught both of those populations and I teach very differently depending on who it is I know or at least I can anticipate that's going to show up in the classroom.

**Bonni:** [00:15:11] The next question that's really driven my teaching philosophy is what are the artifacts of my teaching now. What were some of the examples that I have here have to do with a lot of times that when people talk about organizational culture so organizational culture the experts there say how do you define a culture how do you tell what it is where you go and you see what artifacts are there to describe it.

**Bonni:** [00:15:36] So when I teach about organizational culture I talk about when I used to work at a large academic institution and they would go through and walk through just tick maze of cubicles in this particular department.

**Bonni:** [00:15:55] And what you would see along the way was just the name plates of people you know there are those cubes that are made out of bulletin board type thing where you could get a corkboard - not a corkboard but like



you could stick a pin in it if you wanted to but they were all blank all the way down.

**Bonni:** [00:16:13] And so you'd go like, "Oh this is kind of drab, kind of depressing - [of] course the fluorescent lights - you kind of get those weird flickers sometimes and it look there's a really long long department to maze of cubes and no real personality.

**Bonni:** [00:16:28] And so what that that what does that tell you about the culture? I can't go into much of a tangent here or we won't stick to our time frame.

**Bonni:** [00:16:38] But so those are artifacts - what what did those tell you about someone's organizational culture? What we can do the same thing about our teaching. What are the artifacts of our teaching what are those observable things.

**Bonni:** [00:16:49] If I came into your classroom or I looked at your online class what would I see? What would I hear? What would I experienced that might be evidence of your teaching philosophy?

**Dave:** [00:17:02] I think one of those for me that I think of is just what do you show up in the classroom with. Do you show up with a laptop do you show up with? How do you arrange the classroom when you get there? To the extent that you can do you show up with PowerPoint slides, if you do, what do they look like?

**Dave:** [00:17:19] I know mie look very different than most faculty members. Usually a four or five slides for a two or three hour class and mostly it's just a question on a side. It's not, you know: here's what you need to learn. I assume they already walk in with that at the graduate level.

**Dave:** [00:17:33] So those kinds of things just what you show up with and what you. What kinds of ways you're using different methodologies can can't really be helpful.

**Bonni:** [00:17:44] And one of the things to watch out for here is actually also someone who writes a lot about organizational leadership. Chris Argyris he talks about espoused beliefs versus theories in use.

**Bonni:** [00:18:00] So here you might as you started to reflect on your teaching philosophy and answering some of those questions that we've identified here.

You might have an idea, for example, "Oh, I believe that a teacher is a facilitator of learning." And then if you start to look at your artifacts those things I can see experience here.

**Bonni:** [00:18:24] If I were to go observe in your classroom or look at your online would I actually see things that support that. Or do you have espoused beliefs that are different than the theories that are actually in use in your teaching.

**Dave:** [00:18:38] Yeah that's where sometimes someone else can be helpful in helping you to identify that. Often were we're so close to it that it's helpful if we have a friend or colleague who can really help us to get some more clarity around that.

**Bonni:** [00:18:53] So that is a look at teaching philosophy at what it is why it's important and some of the ways that you can identify it. Again I encourage you to visit the show notes we would love to hear from you about your experiences and what more you might want help with.

**Bonni:** [00:19:09] But before we close off today's episode it is that time where we share our edtech tools. And so Dave do you want to start out this time here Ed Tech tool?.

**Dave:** [00:19:19] I would love to. This one is not specific to a tech. It is a great resource though and I know some people have heard of it already it's called Lynda.com -it is a online resource for learning all kinds of things. Originally it was for learning software and any kind of software program out there and it is still very much focused on that.

**Dave:** [00:19:45] However they now have instructional videos on many many topics learning an instrument or learning a business skill. All kinds of types of things. One thing that we use it for regularly. In fact this just happened last month.

**Dave:** [00:20:00] We were working on a project for a client. We all of a sudden halfway through the project made a decision that we needed to use a different software tool than we had anticipated using that neither of us had had much experience with or you have it was immersion. So we signed up for Lynda membership for a month.

**Dave:** [00:20:19] We had previously had memberships for a while and we let it expire and we signed up again and spent you know an hour or so getting up to

speed on the things that were different that we knew we needed to know. And it was super helpful helping us to be successful with that project. So it's a great place to turn.

**Dave:** [00:20:35] If you're looking to get up to speed on how to use some software and virtually anything out there that software tech not technology related on a computer you can find a course for even things on how to use Windows or the Mac operating system. All of that's there.

**Dave:** [00:20:49] So I continue to use that as a resource and it's a great go to you know. Fifteen years ago you had to learn software the classroom had to go take a class somewhere now you can learn so much of it online through screencast team and it's really an expensive thing it's twenty five dollars a month.

**Dave:** [00:21:06] And you can sign up for like a year two if you want. But it's a great way to learn and especially during the summer here it's a great way to keep your skills sharp if you're not already doing other things for professional development.

**Bonni:** [00:21:17] I get their e-mails of what new titles have just come out and they just announced a partnership with the author of the book Getting Things Done. His name is David Allen.

**Bonni:** [00:21:26] And so it's not as Dave just said it's not just software although he and I have typically used it for that type of perspective. But I love that they now have the opportunity to go learn more about your productivity and become better at time management and task management.

**Bonni:** [00:21:42] And that book and that philosophy getting things done often abbreviated GTD is something that is central to the way that I manage my whole entire life. And so I really look forward to seeing what's going on with that partnership and what kinds of courses are offered.

**Dave:** [00:22:00] I love getting things done. It's a great framework and a great framework for faculty to to utilize if you're looking for good type management systems. Check out David Allen's book if that's something you're looking into.

**Bonni:** [00:22:11] Lynda.com also great can be used in the classroom. They have a whole educators model to where you can somehow have forgotten about set up a class and say your students can actually buy it and then you get that for free so if you're teaching the class that needed to use Microsoft Excel they

could buy just the classes that you prescribe and then the costs are just like a textbook then the costs are burdened by the students but the costs actually I mean it's a great cost even for students to do.

**Dave:** [00:22:37] I looked into it for a course that we were putting together and it was really inexpensive and you could track student participation. And then they can kind of watch what they need to watch on skills. It's cool system.

**Bonni:** [00:22:47] Yeah. And then my ed tech tool is polleverywhere.com - it is one of those tools that we could actually spend the whole episode just talking about different creative ways to do it some is going to introduce it.

**Bonni:** [00:22:59] Now it is a great way of polling or cuisine and it's one of those tools that you can use a number of different ways you could use it. Asynchronously meaning you could have a poll that was on your learning management system that people could take.

**Bonni:** [00:23:16] But I have found it's best use and I think it's original intended use is for live polling. So you're in a classroom and you are talking about. The four Ps of marketing. And do you notice that there's not a whole lot of engagement going on.

**Bonni:** [00:23:34] You can actually then bring up some polls and start to quiz them and they answer you via their cell phone. There's actually a number of ways they can answer they can answer via text message which I think is always the easiest way but they also can answer via Twitter they can answer via the web.

**Bonni:** [00:23:50] So it really is poll everywhere. Literally. Pretty much if you've got a device there's a way to respond to one of their polls. So I used it with a doctoral class I just taught most recently. Sometimes I would ask broad questions.

**Bonni:** [00:24:03] So it was a technology and leadership class that I was teaching. So a lot of them were very resistant to technology and you could just see it in their face since the first day you're going to love me in this class.

**Bonni:** [00:24:15] So there was a lot of resistance and so I said What did the three words that you think of when you read the course description and I had to build a word cloud. And so you saw the word challenge difficult.

**Bonni:** [00:24:31] Those would really really get bold because the more people that answered with that word the bolder and bigger it would get to say a word cloud diversity. And we just wrapped up recently.

**Bonni:** [00:24:41] And so I ask the question of what's the biggest impact that you got out of the class and that when I did more as less as a short answer so it wasn't a word cloud but you could see it all popping up just like it was text messages.

**Bonni:** [00:24:53] And then one of the things I did was have each one of the learning outcomes up there and say they this was a multiple choice. So I achieved this learning outcome and I'd read it off and then they'd say strongly agree agree disagree or strongly disagree.

**Bonni:** [00:25:10] And that was a nice way to end where they could really look back at this difficult perception they had this class and it was so fun seeing them walk out with so much competence.

**Bonni:** [00:25:20] And then even having the evidence that says Of course I had the work product to that it has been evaluated against extensive rubric. So it's not just an arbitrary thing but how nice that the student's perception that they attain these learning outcomes was very much mirrored with my rubrics and my assessment of their work. So that was really nice to so polleverywhere. That's just the beginning of how you can use that tool.

**Bonni:** [00:25:44] And it is one I really highly recommend.

**Dave:** [00:25:47] And bring some quantitative elements to evaluation that you would normally only get on course evaluations so you can do some of that during the class which is exciting.

**Bonni:** [00:25:57] Oh yeah absolutely. So check it out and let us know what ideas you have for using polleverywhere or anything else let us know what questions you have and we're looking forward to your continued listening to Teaching in Higher Ed.

**Dave:** [00:26:11] Hey did you see you had a review for the show on iTunes.

**Bonni:** [00:26:15] I did. Anyone else who's listening who would like to leave this review and helps so much for other people to discover the show.

**Dave:** [00:26:21] Hey thanks for listening and see you in a week from.

**Bonni:** [00:26:24] See ya in a week.

**Dave:** [00:26:25] Take care.

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