

**[00:00:00] Bonni Stachowiak:** Today on episode number 280 of the Teaching in Higher Ed podcast, Todd Zakrajsek joins me to talk about the joy of teaching sustained.

**[00:00:12] Speaker 1:** Produced by innovate learning, maximizing human potential.

**[00:00:23] Bonni:** Hello and welcome to this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. I'm Bonni Stachowiak, and this is the space where we explore the art and science of being more effective at facilitating learning. We also share ways to improve our productivity approaches so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students. I'm excited to be welcoming back a former guest of many episodes of Teaching in Higher Ed, Todd Zakrajsek. Is an associate professor in the department of family medicine at UNC Chapel Hill.

Dr. Zakrajsek was a tenured professor of psychology and built faculty development efforts at three universities before joining the UNC School of Medicine. In addition to his work at UNC, providing resources for faculty on various topics related to teaching, learning, leadership, and scholarly activity, Todd has served on many educationally related boards and work groups.

Current and past board memberships include the Journal of excellence and college teaching, International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, college teaching education in the health professions. Todd has consulted with organizations such as the American Council on Education, Ace, Lenovo computer, Microsoft, Harvard, and the Gates Foundation.

Todd also founded the International Teaching Learning Cooperative, ITLC, an organization created to bring together faculty members to advance students

learning in higher education. The ITLC currently hosts seven conferences and institute's in the US and abroad. He has delivered keynote addresses and campus workshops at over 300 conferences and university campuses.

Todd's recently co-authored books include, *The New Science of Learning second edition*, 2019; *Dynamic Lecturing*, 2017; and *Teaching For Learning*, 2015. Todd, welcome back to Teaching in Higher ED.

**[00:02:34] Todd Zakrajsek:** Thank you, Bonni, it's great to hear from you again. I miss you.

**[00:02:37] Bonni:** I miss you too. We've been talking about this subject now for what feels like nine months old, though maybe I'm exaggerating in my head, but the joy of teaching sustained. Now how long have you been teaching, Todd?

**[00:02:51] Todd:** I taught my first class, had full responsibility of statistics class, which is like an all of college curriculum, what could be a better class than that? That was 33 years ago in 1986.

**[00:03:03] Bonni:** I have been teaching in the higher education context for 15 years, so I'm your half-life, I think. [laughs]

**[00:03:11] Todd:** That's great.

**[00:03:12] Bonni:** Today, you have for us eight approaches that we can use to keep that joy of teaching. When you're new, it can be really difficult. Then we can get these highs of all the new fresh things we're teaching and exciting things we're learning, but that is really hard to sustain over 33 years. I consider you to be a really joyful person. I'm excited about exploring this. Let's start out with the first one. This was one I hear all the time. What is speaking of time, [laughs] what is the connection between sustaining our joy and our sense of time, and specifically not having enough?

**[00:03:47] Todd:** Well, this is always a tricky one because I think it's probably the most pervasive thing I hear is people saying, "Well, there's just not enough time. There's not enough time, there's not enough time." First of all time is the amount that it is. I suppose you can create additional time but it's really expensive. We have to just live with the time we have.

We do have a problem in that our job is pretty much the what, what we all do is I have believed for the longest time if you take really skilled people who have a strong personal purpose and a connection with human beings and wanting to do things, that's your purpose, and then a poor role definition. Now you got

somebody who can do a lot of things, wants to do a lot of things to help people out, and really our jobs are not very well defined.

They tell us exactly when we got to be in the classroom, but aside from that, should you be the advisor for a student group? Should you run a study group session for students? Should you meet extra office hours? All those things are really not well defined in our roles. Why wouldn't we be overrun just if it becomes overwhelming. All I want to do is be whelmed.

The concept there is you just really need to learn when to say yes, there's so many things out there about when to say no or how to say no all the time. I think you figure out when to say yes, but the number one thing is, you just have to be careful because it's going to be overarching for lots of other things we can talk about. Once you get overrun for time, you know, the joy goes, because you're not doing what you want to do, you're just always struggling to do the next thing.

**[00:05:15] Bonni:** I have a resource to share on this one. I will say that it's a great resource because it's like if you're going to try to learn how to talk slower, instead of talking at a normal pace will sometimes as coaches tell you to speak exaggeratedly slowly, so that you can come back to that normal thing. This is a book that I don't adopt every practice that he says it's called *Essentialism*, it's by Greg McKeown.

Like I said, I can't say I'm a true follower of this and I do everything he recommends, but the one thing that that book really helps me with, is this saying no. If you want to be able to say no in a really good way that doesn't have tons of professional negative consequences and really helps reinforce what you're saying yes to by saying that no, that's a one that I'll link to in the show notes to help us out with that, with saying no. I think it's really important.

**[00:06:05] Todd:** I want to jump in and say too as I think that's going to have a real quick one for me that I've used for years is think about anytime someone asks you for a commitment, break your time down into a salary, and you can do that really quickly. There's about 2,000 hours, it's actually about 2,080, but 2,000 hours per year, if you worked 40 hours a week, I know we don't, but if you did, but the 2,000 allows us to take your salary divide it by the two and drop off the three zeros, and that's your hourly amount.

If a person makes \$50,000 a year, that's \$25 an hour, \$100,000 a year is \$50 an hour. You just take whatever those thousands are, cut it in half and get rid of the zeros. The reason I do that is if you asked me to do something like, "Hey, could you help me with this committee?" I say, "Well, how long will it take," and you'll say, "I think it's going to be about three meetings at two hours each." Well that's six hours.

If I happen to be making I'm just going to say \$80,000 a year that's \$40 an hour that's \$240.

It allows you to start to think about what is it really costing me to do certain things? Then the next step is, is I never say, Yes, right away. I always say, could I have a day to think about this? Because any large purchase like \$300, \$400 item, I'd want to think about it for a day or two. If you Bonni said to me, "Hey, Todd, would you be willing to help me out with this?" I said, "Well, Bonni, could I let you know let's say it's Tuesday. Could I let you know tomorrow, maybe about noon?"

If you say no, I need to know right now, then the answer is no. I'm not going to say that. If you're so like, you got to know right this second. When I come back the next day, if I say I've given it a lot of thought, yes, I would love to help you. That shows that I'm a thoughtful person. If I come back the next day and say I have really given this a lot of thought, and I'm sorry, I cannot give it the attention that it would deserve. There's a way to put that in there where it becomes professional but gives you a little bit of space to make your decision.

**[00:07:53] Bonni:** Such a great advice. Speaking of advice, you have some things to share with us about how sleep and exercise can help us have more joy.

**[00:08:02] Todd:** Well, there's another one too. But I tell you for the sleep and exercise, Terry Doyle and I wrote a book on *The New Science of Learning*. I comment on that because the sleep became one of the biggest, when we did our second edition, the biggest changes.

There's so much research out there. For today and the conversation and really trying to come up with a couple of things that they're probably obvious, but we often let go of the obvious things, especially when we get busy. Here's the big one. If you're not feeling well, and you're talking about how tired you are, just get more sleep. There are people who have had conversations with great learning theorists like Bob York, who's done some great on the language lab and learning lab.

When people have conversations with these with really good learning folks, and they'll say, "What's the most important thing about learning?" They'll say, "Well, get some exercise and get sleep." I love to talk to people and say, "When's the last time you had a really awful night of sleep and woke up in the morning or maybe you were just up all night didn't even wake up and said today is going to be a great day?" We know that sleep has so many fabulous side effects to it having enough sleep, and the same with exercise.

It's just something that's so easy to lose track of. That concept of just making sure you get your sleep. The amount of sleep you get highly dependent on individuals. Some of you all out there need four to six hours, that's great, you should get your four to six hours, other people need eight to 10 hours, you should get your eight to 10 hours. I never tell people what you should get more or you should get less. Just watch when you feel good and get the amount of sleep that helps you to feel good.

**[00:09:34] Bonni:** We have explored ways of having joy where we don't use this excuse of not having enough time, because time is what it is. We've also looked at getting more sleep and maintaining a good exercise schedule. More broadly speaking, I know you have some advice for us just in terms of taking care of ourselves in other ways.

**[00:09:52] Todd:** Well, there's so many different ways of doing this. Actually, before I even mentioned this one Bonni, I was going to say you've written on this topic, right?

**[00:09:59] Bonni:** Well, I am writing a book. I'm almost done on productivity.

**[00:10:03] Todd:** Congratulations.

**[00:10:04] Bonni:** Thank you. In the last chapter and the conclusion, I knew I wanted to include this quote from Christopher Emdin because, for me, this is one way that I try to take care of myself. It really is all about where we spend our time and who we spend it with. This is from Christopher Emdin, "The kind of teacher you will become is directly related to the kind of teachers you associate with. Teaching as a profession where misery does more than just love company. It recruits seduces and romances it. Avoid people who are unhappy and disgruntled about the possibilities for transforming education. They are the enemy of the spirit of the teacher."

**[00:10:46] Todd:** That is a phenomenal quote. I love that quote. It's such a good quote. It has so much in there. Well, number one, that concept of taking care of yourself. There's so much written out there. Again, I really think that this episode, the concept is, just take a minute, breathe a little bit and look at the types of things that's leading you to where you're at and where you want to be.

Finding a book on self-care, there's so many things out there, I hesitate to even say anything in specific, I like that quote. Aside from the book you're working on, I don't want to really point specifics out because there are so many good ones you can find that I'm really afraid that I'll just miss somebody who's obvious, and then they'll be angry with me. If you don't take the time to look at those, to take

care of yourself, to eat well, to make sure you get hydrated, to do the exercise and the sleep and just have a chance to reflect on what you're doing. I mean, nobody's life goes well when you take those things away. That's why I love this quote.

The other thing I love about the quote, is that old concept of surround yourself with the people that you want to be with. I mean, I think that's one of the most important things that we can do is don't look for people who are like you, look for people who are like the people you would like to be, because if you surround yourself, if you don't take time right now, let's just say to do as much volunteer work in the community as you'd like to, best thing you can do is go find people who do volunteer work in the community and start hanging around those people. You will find yourself with them doing the volunteer work.

There's a great old story that I loved. My grandfather told me this years ago, the guy working at a gas station, my old gas stations. Gas stations, and outside of town and this van pulls up full of family and all their belongings. They're filling up the gas tank and they're chatting. The guy says to the driver of the van, he says, "What are you up to?" The guy said, "Well, we're moving to town with my family. What's this town like?" The gas station guy says, "Well, what's the town like where you moved from?" He says, "Oh, it was a great town block parties and lots of fun and everyone took care of each other's kids. It was a wonderful place."

The gas station attendant smiled and he says, "That's exactly what this town is going to be like. You're going to love it here." Then about an hour later, another van pulls up full of people and a guy gets out and they start chatting a little bit. The gas station attendant says, "What are you doing? Where you going?" The individual says, "Well, I'm moving to town, what's it like here?" The gas station attendant says, "What was your last town like?" He says, "Oh, is a miserable, backbiting place. Everybody is fighting with each other. We couldn't stand it anymore so we packed up and left. The gas station attendant says, "Boy, I'm really sorry to hear that but unfortunately, that's what this town is like too.

**[00:13:21] Bonni:** [laughs]

**[00:13:23] Todd:** I just think we do that. We find what we're looking for if we're not careful, which is why that quote is so powerful. You do want to surround yourself with the people you want to be like, and schedule time and figure out ways to take care of yourself. Don't let loose of that.

**[00:13:39] Bonni:** A few of the things that you recommended so far have to do with instilling good habits, the sleep, the exercise, who we choose to spend our time with. Those are all habits, but you have something to share with us as far as

a caution around habituation that may not be quite as positive. What do you have to warn us against there?

**[00:13:58] Todd:** Well, habituation in psychological terms here. Habituation is a phenomenally interesting topic to me. As you do something over and over and over again, that's long term potentiation. It becomes easier and easier to do it. As you drive, it just becomes easier to drive, as you write papers, it becomes easier to write. The things you do become easier to do. That's the way for our brain to allow us to do things without putting a lot of cognitive energy into it. Now, here's the interesting part. Cognitively, we like to be stimulated, we'd like to solve puzzles and do things. We get these little dopamine bursts as we can figure something out.

Well, habituation does the opposite of that, allows you to do something without putting cognitive energy into it. We do have to be careful. If we're doing the same things over and over again, they become very easy to do, they become a habit, a ritual, something we just do. We do them over and over and if we don't think about why they're doing them, they lose the meaning and so we can get to a situation where if we go to eat the same food three, four days in a row, I mean, who wouldn't, after three days of eating the exact same food, say, "I'm bored with this food, I'd like to try something else?"

You may have found a restaurant or a park or something that the first time you went to it, you were just so enamored and thought, this is phenomenal. Then after you went a few times, you think, "Well, it's still good but doesn't have that phenomenal approach to it." The concept there is to be excited, to keep excited about the field and to really keep that joy and enthusiasm, we have to be doing new things. In the classroom, you have to be very careful.

If you teach the classroom and I heard one person referred to a biology person one time and I'm going to call him Mr. Smith because I don't want to get in trouble on this one. They said 20 years of teaching and he was really facing burnout and really hit the joy, was gone from that individual. It was really, really sad. One of the colleagues ones said, "The problem with Mr. Smith is he's been teaching this biology class for 20 years and the students still don't get it. The issue there becomes is that he was teaching it the same way over and over and over again, the habituation takes the cognitive processor, which we all love. That comes to a point where it's just like it's routine. There's some ways around this.

You can have your students create things as you're developing your lesson plans and thinking about how you're teaching. In what way can your students do things. For instance, I like to do attention-getters at the beginning of class. After years of

coming up with attention-getters, it suddenly occurred to me, "Why don't I have my students do the attention-getters?" Each student is assigned to two different classes, multiple students on each class day so I can-- They send them to me ahead of time, like the day before class, and then I pick the one that's the most creative or the most interesting. I'm having a ball looking through these. I love it.

The other thing I can do is talk to colleagues. I can chat with colleagues about what they're doing. If I'm teaching psychology, and I have a friend who's teaching philosophy or Physiology or chemistry, I could just chat and say, "How might these line-up? Maybe there's ways for us to even look at stepping into each other's classes periodically and showing how fields come together." Or if you can even carve out a little bit of time, Christine Fitzgerald wrote a chronicle article a few years ago about intellectual wondering, just carving out a little bit of time and just running down some intellectual rabbit holes. Habituation's something we can stave off but we have to work at it.

**[00:17:29] Bonni:** That sounds like a great article. I'll link to that in the show notes. I also really think the suggestion of having our students create the work can make such a big difference. I had my business ethics students last semester build board games, well, actually they could build any big game they wanted. Most of them built board games, but one of them did an electronic one. Anyway, it was talking about really bringing freshness to the curriculum in new ways. Then another way I like to do that is by regularly reading but then bookmarking for my classes. If this semester, I'm teaching a personal leadership and productivity course, I'll bookmark something, "Oh, this is a video. It's humorous. It's related to that class, or that topic."

Students have complimented me before that I'm able to bring in a lot of current events and then I'm able to keep that teaching fresh. I think a lot of it comes down to two things that you've already talked about, Todd. One is who I spend my time with. Some of my time is spent on Twitter with this wonderful personal learning network that I have cultivated over the years. Then that's coupled with then doing something with that.

Instead of just letting the stream just pass by me, I never get to use that great Fitzgerald article that you mentioned. I guarantee you I will put that Fitzgerald article both in the show notes but also bookmark it. Well, what does that have to do with for me and my own learning and then also things I might want to share with other people. I would suggest people also think about how can you just regularly have this pot of soup that you're making that has fresh ingredients added to it all the time? Part of that comes from again, who you spend your time with.

**[00:19:03] Todd:** Well, and before we move on to is I think another important thing is not only the students have that joy and newness about it because they're figuring it out for the first time. Again, as you just said, that's the people we surround ourselves with, the ones who are excited about learning. The students as a whole, have this tremendous tendency to get a year younger every year. It's tricky, because a lot of the stuff that I like to do, and even if I think it's fun to put in there, they don't even resonate anymore. I can't use Seinfeld quotes, the students, this is the saddest one of the day we're going to talk about right now.

They weren't born yet. A lot of the places that we use, like Seinfeld quotes, they haven't really seen Seinfeld. Here's one for you the more cowbell, sometimes when I'm doing workshops, or I'm chatting with people about stuff, I'll say, "Well, maybe we could use a cowbell here because sometimes you just need a little more cowbell, we're up to and now I asked how many of you know the reference and how many don'ts so we can keep track of such things. Close to 50% of my audiences are faculty members do not know the reference more cowbell. It keeps it fresh, keeps it new, and it keeps it current.

**[00:20:10] Bonni:** The founder of the website xkcd, actually this might be right up your alley, but he has a comedy website around science, but it also talks about statistics sometimes. Do you know this one? Sarcasm, math, and language.

**[00:20:26] Todd:** This sounds great.

**[00:20:26] Bonni:** Do you know this guy?

**[00:20:27] Todd:** What was it called again?

**[00:20:29] Bonni:** I can't even say, I have to slow myself way down, xkcd.com. It's a very funny website, but that guy just came out with a book. It's called *How to: Absurd Scientific Advice for Common Real-World Problems*. Anyway, I was listening to him on a podcast yesterday and I started thinking, I'd like to have this guy on my podcast. I wonder if he'd ever come on. Even though I was fascinated, I think you'd love this but just because of your background-

**[00:20:55] Todd:** That's sounds great.

**[00:20:56] Bonnie:** -fascinating. I was literally there was one bullet that all I wanted to talk to him about was this one bullet. I don't know if I can get him to come on to the show, just for this one reason. He was talking about, he researches all this ridiculous things, like how could you fill a swimming pool the fastest.

**[00:21:13] Todd:** All right.

**[00:21:14] Bonni:** Is this ringing a bell with you?

**[00:21:17] Todd:** Yes, I didn't know what it was called but I've stumbled on to this stuff, yes.

**[00:21:20] Bonni:** It came down to, if you could even cut plastic bottles in half, so you could empty them out faster? Could you order \$100,000 worth and then somehow fill the pool?

Anyway, he was talking about how experts, the hardest thing for experts is remembering what it was like to not know. This is something that Mike Wesch talks about a lot and so many others are just, "We've got to be continually putting ourselves in the role of learner and getting that struggle back and that curiosity back". There's just so many benefits to it, but it's really you can get off track pretty easy. Speaking of habituation on things like that.

**[00:21:58] Todd:** Well, no, it does and then the last thing about this one, too since you brought that up, which is great is that's just counting your knowledge. You have to discount where you're at and down to the students. I don't mean to sound diminutive, like they're lower than you, it's the amount of knowledge they don't have as much knowledge as you.

If you discount too much, I take myself down too far, then it's boring for my students. If I don't discount enough, then it's frustrating for my students. We live in a world that's between boredom and frustration for our students. If we hit it right, it's great, otherwise it's boring or frustrating. Of course, all the students are different. Well, that's exciting. I will check out their website though. That sounds great.

**[00:22:38] Bonni:** I'm going to link to one more thing. We keep doing this, "One more thing". [laughs]

**[00:22:41] Todd:** Sure, that's what we do.

**[00:22:42] Bonni:** "We don't have one more thing" My friend Kerry Moore at Vanguard sent over to me this video of a expert and, oh gosh, I can't even remember what he's an expert in. He's a cognitive scientist. He's explaining this function of the brain, five different ways to five different levels of the expertise.

He talks to an eight year old, he talks to a high-schooler, he talks to a college student and then someone who actually is getting their PhD in this field. I'll link to that, and thank you Carrie for sharing that with me. I'll link to that video just because it exactly describes what you just said, Todd around that. Getting in the mind, and he does it brilliantly. He just seems like a phenomenal teacher.

**[00:23:21] Todd:** Excellent, that sounds great.

**[00:23:23] Bonni:** Our next moment for our next approach for having more joy over sustained periods of time has to do with maintaining a purpose.

**[00:23:32] Todd:** Yes, and actually the next couple are just real quick ones. Habituation is probably the most important time some of the ones we've talked about. This maintaining a purpose, again, it comes back to what we talked about a bit before.

If you get trapped into those daily routines, and all we end up doing is grading the papers, and meeting with people, and doing the things we click, click, click, through the day. That daily minutia, it's so easy to lose track, the important things are being done.

Industrial psychology we've known this for years, is if you understand the importance and the value of what you're doing, it just has more value for you. It just comes down to, don't lose sight of what you're doing. I have had all the way back to my dissertation was on this topic, and looking at the unitization.

What are the units of behavior? Are you just grading a paper? Are you helping provide feedback for students so they can look at the world in a different way? Maintain that purpose.

**[00:24:31] Bonni:** I love that you used the example of grading. I recently was tweeting about that and being thankful for Jesse Stommel who really has condemned us around grumbling about having to grade, especially in public spaces and what that's like for a student whatever see that. Well, you think it was a lot of fun to write this paper for you?

Now you're just diminishing the work that I put into this. Just that reminder why am I doing this? By the way, if you're grumbling a lot about your grading, you might rethink the kinds of assignments you're having because I have really been condemned around this and try to approach it differently and just had a really joyful two-hour grading time-

**[00:25:04] Todd:** great.

**[00:25:04] Bonni:** -a few days ago and part of it is what you just described. Why am I doing this? Then part of it is assigning better things that are more interesting to great.

**[00:25:14] Todd:** Yes. If we can reframe it, instead of just, "I have to grade this paper too, I wonder what feedback I can provide".

**[00:25:21] Bonni:** Then the next one is very near and dear to my heart, because it's so easy to fall victim. That's not letting the one individual comment. Whether this is something on social media, or something we get in our course evaluations or some other way where as you said, the haters are going to hate. [laughs]

How do we not get wrapped up in what feels so very big and lose sight of all the goodness that might have come through that particular channel?

**[00:25:46] Todd:** This one's just hard. Human nature it's just so hard. This is a big mistake that people make over and over again. I remember early in my career changing a textbook because one student just rant and raved about an evaluation how much she hated the textbook.

I can remember another time I changed some because a person said, "Well, I think that's stupid that we do this". Then it occurred to me one time, if I got 200 people in class and one person says they hate something, and the rest of them say, they absolutely love it, then I think we've got to be able to back up and look at that in the way in which the overall was intended.

I will say I run really teaching conferences, and one of the things I always I want to create a really strong community. That's what the conference is all about. How do you create a really strong community of people who can come together and have this joy of teaching? Then in the last conference, there was one evaluation of an individual who just hated the conference, and went on and on about how awful it was.

It's hard for me to say that doesn't impact me, but I'm getting better and better. On a question of would you recommend this conference to a colleague? 97% of the people said absolutely. If 97% of the people at a conference with hundreds of people say absolutely, that's a huge number, and one person didn't like it.

I have to let that go and say, I wished I could have talked to that person, found out why they didn't like it but there's individuals who are just going to be unhappy wherever they are, or maybe something happened. If I focus on that one individual that takes the joy away from the whole conference, which again, had a massive. That's like a 4.97, on how much people like the conference on a five-point scale.

We have to be careful. It's a human nature to pay attention to those, but we have to step back and say there's going to be individuals who have to voice these

things. Just let that go. The fact that it always happens in every environment to everybody means we have to back down and just let that go.

**[00:27:41] Bonni:** As a side note, there was a wonderful episode recently with Kelly Hogan and Vigi Sathy talking about course evaluations. I'll link to that in the show notes as well. I think one of the things they didn't say, was just ignore course evaluations. There are some people who've just decided they're never going to read them. I'm not sure that's the answer either, but having other sources of input.

Part of that source of input can be maintaining that sense of purpose. You just articulated, this is the purpose of the Lilly conference. It's about creating this community of people that are joyful in their teaching and cultivating that shared learning. If you paid too much attention to this one data point, you don't even know if this person aligns with that mission.

If they didn't even think that they wanted to go to a conference where that's the mission, then you could change things like you talked about with your textbook, that actually don't align with your mission. These two go really well together. It's almost like you thought this through in advance, Todd, I don't know. [laughs] It's wild. It's crazy.

[crosstalk]

**[00:28:35] Todd:** It's crazy, Bonni.

**[00:28:36] Bonni:** These things go together. The last one here is teaching with intentionality, which goes so nicely to close this out with these eight techniques.

**[00:28:45] Todd:** The intentionality again is, teach the students. I have a friend, Adam Persky, who's done a bit of work in this area too. It's teach the students you have. You don't live in the past, don't worry about what they could be, or what they should be. It's the concept of, this is who is present and with me right now.

I'm going to create an atmosphere that's best for this group and group of individuals. That teaching with intentionality is that idea of how I create this learning environment for this group and individually with the people I'm talking to, and stay away from that idea of, "Well, last year they did this, and five years ago, that".

As you talk to those people, you rarely see joy in the hearts of the individuals who are constantly talking about past groups. In fact, I have a phrase that I will use when someone takes a new job and they'll talk about their old jobs a lot like, "Wait with our last place we used to do like this, and our job we did that".

I love to say the phrase of, if you loved it there so much, why don't you go live there. I don't mean the last place, I mean in the past. [laughs]. People are like they really love the students they had if that's the case, you're going to lose your joy for your current students because where you're really seemed to be drawn is the past. Live in the current. Live teaching intentionality and help those people right in front of you. There are so many fabulous, fabulous people. As we wrap up, I just want to say is the joy for me, I mean each one of the listeners you have, I know you do too, Bonni. We all have what's real joy in teaching and for me, it's when I see the spark in somebody's eye who gets something that they themselves didn't know they could get. Not just that they learned, they didn't believe they could, and I helped them to believe, to open their brain a little bit and their mind a little bit and then they got it. You know what that look looks like? To me that's what I'm after. I don't need to think back five, 10 years ago to find that. I can find that yesterday and quite frankly tomorrow.

**[00:30:43] Bonni:** Yes, absolutely. I'm going to link in the show notes to an article that sounds similar to your friend Adam Persky's work. This was in the Chronicle by Jesse Stommel and Sara Goldrick-Rab, and the title of it is *Teaching the Students We Have, Not the Students We Wish We Had*. [chuckles] That is actually not something that I struggle a lot with. I've actually really enjoyed our--

The institution where I teach has become way more diverse than when I first started teaching there. We went from predominantly white institution to a Hispanic serving institution and I have delighted in that. I just find such great joy, but so it's not something I struggle with, but I know many people do and I think people probably do more than I've observed. This is anecdotal of course, but just if you really see yourself as a true researcher and a true academic and that you've just been, that's your sense of identity. To me, my sense of identity has always been in a teaching. It's so nice to have different students showing up who have different needs and different backgrounds that are unfamiliar to me and I feel like I'm always getting to learn from them as well.

**[00:31:43] Todd:** Well yes, and the one thing I guess is I keep in mind is, the easiest student to teach, and no teaching is easy, teaching is a difficult process all along. The easiest student to teach is the one that's exactly like you as the teacher. It's not hard for me to teach someone who learns the way I do, thinks the way I do, has the same lived types of experiences, I can use the examples. It all makes sense and they love my stories because they can relate to my stories. The most challenging teaching is the student who is the most different from me because I have to come up with different anecdotes, different ways of approaching, different styles and everything. The more diversity you have, almost by definition, the harder it will be to teach. We have to ask ourselves, is it worth it? It is so totally

worth it, because the joy that comes from connecting with those individuals are the best sparks I've ever seen in my life. I know it's going to take more work and I know the payoff will be bigger.

**[00:32:42] Bonni:** We're going to leave it with that, except that we also get to share some recommendations. What I have to recommend today are a couple of musical pieces. They are both from John Batiste and he is the band leader of The Late Show with Stephen Colbert. I always enjoy getting to see him play on the show, but I was on YouTube and as YouTube likes to do, it knows that I like music and so likes to recommend different numbers that are similar to other ones that I have watched in the past. I will be linking to these in the show notes under the recommendations.

The first one is a beautiful rendition of the song, *The Very Thought of You* and it's John playing the piano and Corinne Bailey Rae singing. What I particularly like about this musical number, I hope you'll go and check it out, is that it was not rehearsed. As you may have remembered from past episodes, I love to recommend swing dancing. That's unrehearsed, so they just pick a name, one of the lead and they pick a follow out of the hat, and then those two do a dance and they've maybe not danced together before but certainly not to that song and they haven't choreographed it. This is an example of that. It is just breathtakingly good. He's incredible pianist and Corinne Bailey Rae's voice is just beautiful.

That's the first one, and then the second one is also John Batiste's because of course as YouTube likes to do, it of course had to recommend another one to me, and that is John Batiste singing *What a Wonderful World* and it's just a beautiful, beautiful version of it. It's of course also on video so you can watch him play and just the beautiful lights that they have put there and the expressions on his face, it is absolutely exquisite. I'm looking forward to many of you going and checking out the links to those recommendations on the show notes and Todd, it is now your turn.

**[00:34:27] Todd:** All right. Well I got two recommendations for you then. My one is #flipgridfever. If you haven't used Flipgrid, Flipgrid is a great way of using your phone and you can create and really easily post videos. You can do it for discussion boards, you can have students create videos in a classroom. Ten minutes, everyone in class could create a video and post it. It's a great way for students to get to know each other and to build communities. Flipgrid fever or Flipgrid as an app is a great one. The second one is, I'm just going to go ahead and I just got to throw it in there is, I don't typically like to plug my own stuff because I feel like you're kind of selling.

The communities that get formed in the Lilly Conferences are just-- Every time I go to a Lilly conference, I have so much fun. There's one coming up in Traverse City and so, just if you haven't had an opportunity to check out a Lilly Teaching Conference, I hope you consider doing that and join the community.

**[00:35:23] Bonni:** Thank you so much Todd. It's just been such a delight to get to talk to you again today. I know it's not the last time and it's just really fun to be in community and to have been able to go to some of the Lilly Conferences and meet you in person and actually get to witness that amazing community in person.

**00:35:38] Todd:** Well thank you. You helped build it. That's where it comes from, so thank you for attending.

[music]

**[00:35:45] Bonni:** As always, it was so great to have this conversation with Todd Zakrajsek. This is one of those episodes that would be great for you to go to the show notes and have a look at some of the links that are posted there. There's a lot of great ones up there. You can go to the show notes at [teachinginhighered.com/280](http://teachinginhighered.com/280). You also could subscribe to the weekly updates, I should say mostly weekly updates. Sometimes I miss a week or two, but if you want to receive no more than once a week updates on the show notes from the most recent episode, as well as an article about teaching on productivity written by me, you can go to [teachinginhighered.com/subscribe](http://teachinginhighered.com/subscribe). Have a look at either of those options for checking out more about this episode, and thanks so much for listening.

If you have yet to recommend this as a resource across your campus, I hope you'll tell a friend about it this week. Thanks for listening and I'll see you next time.

[music]

**[00:36:40] [END OF AUDIO]**

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