

Bonni [00:00:00] C. Edward Watson joins me to talk about Teaching Naked Techniques today on episode 137 of the Teaching in Higher Ed podcast.

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Bonni [00:00:21] 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 increase our personal productivity so we can have even more peace in our lives and be more present for our students.

Bonni [00:00:49] If you listen to the show last week number 136 you know that I got to have a conversation with Jose Bowen about his new book Teaching Naked Techniques. You also may remember he has a co-author and that is today's guest C. Edward Watson to continue that conversation. Eddie is the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning and a fellow in the Institute for Higher Education at the University of Georgia. He leads University efforts associated with faculty development teaching assistant development student learning outcomes assessment learning technologies media and production services.

Bonni [00:01:30] He also supports classroom support and learning spaces and the scholarship of teaching and learning as he teaches courses on college teaching in addition to all those other things. He's the founding editor of The International Journal of portfolio and the executive editor of The International Journal of teaching and learning in higher education. He's published on teaching and learning in a number of journals including Educational Technology, Educators Review, the Journal for Effective Teaching and To Improve the Academy among others. Eddie welcome to Teaching in Higher Ed.

Eddie [00:02:07] I'm very glad to be here. Thank you Bonni.

Bonni [00:02:09] As you already know I just read your bio and you have a lot you could talk to us about today I can tell already that you're going to have to control myself to talk to you for the next three hours because I think we'd eat a bowl or a recording in time if we try to do that. I think I'd love to just start. And have you give me a little bit of background about how you and Jose got connected and decided that Teaching Naked needed the next book in your journey of Teaching Naked.

Eddie [00:02:37] Sure well I guess it's kind of an interesting journey how we sort of first became aware of one another I guess I first heard Jose speak at one of the AAC&U conferences probably the annual meeting. I'm guessing 2013 at this point. And as I'm the director of the Center for teaching learning here at the University of Georgia I'm always looking for speakers to bring to campus and I thought he was just great.

Eddie [00:02:59] And so I engaged him to come to campus and Athens, Georgia is about 90 minutes from the airport so I went and picked him up and so we just had a great conversation in the car on the way from Atlanta to Athens and then looking back the next day and we continue that conversation and then we were together while he was here and we just kind of hit it off and saw a lot of learning challenges through the same kind of lens.

Eddie [00:03:23] And then we ran into each other at two follow up conferences and then there was another AAC&U meeting. And he was waiting for me after I finished my session and he said hey can we chat. And so he pitched the idea I guess his publisher Wiley had been eager to have him do a follow up and so he said hey you know we receive things through sort of the same kind of glasses what do you think.

Eddie [00:03:47] So that's how it got started and we ended up here I think I had him out of the house and he spent the night and we just had these long conversations and kind of gave a general map of what this should look like and from that point we were off and running.

Bonni [00:04:01] Isn't that so great when you meet someone and you have so much in common in terms of your teaching philosophy and then you get to collaborate on something. Sometimes I feel like we don't get to do that as much as at least as much as I might like to and higher ed that's so wonderful that you were able to connect in that way.

Eddie [00:04:16] Yeah I think the personality piece as well where we just sort of had a similar sort of work ethic and the ways that we were comfortable functioning. It's been just the most easy collaboration I've ever had it's just been great.

Bonni [00:04:28] Well that's fabulous. And he actually when I talked to him about what we were going to chat about on the last episode he had some suggestions of things I should hold off and not ask him about. After having read the book but really to ask you to share about and I wanted to start with this idea we talk a lot in higher ed about learning outcomes. They there's sort of this tension between those of us and I would put myself probably in this category that all of us want to define and have it be measurable.

Bonni [00:04:55] I grew up in corporate training so it was always so important to do that because businesses wanted to know I got my ROI and how - - how can you show me that? And then those who say that well no learning outcomes there are oftentimes false because what does that say about what emerges in the course of a course and that doesn't leave enough room for the messiness of learning. Anyway I'd love to hear you share a little bit just about learning outcomes but also about this phrase that was new for me of ambitious course goals because I think that zero attempt to sort of manage some of that tension I shared about.

Eddie [00:05:32] Yeah I think you said it probably more elegantly than than we did but that was something that we were trying to embrace both in terms of things that and I think I'm more like you know more of a quantitative person and I definitely believe in notions of programmatic assessment and learning. That's within my center as well so it's kind of within my bailiwick.

Eddie [00:05:51] But there's also this notion of sort of the messiness of learning and wanting to have rigorous high standards and sometimes as you move toward articulating specific measurable learning outcomes you find that you're you're sort of paring down and you're kind of narrowing in and you're creating a frame around things and then you end up with these nice discrete measurable frames.

Eddie [00:06:15] But then there's all of this other space that maybe you're no longer focusing on. So we were trying to think of a way to kind of embrace the entirety of what we might have in mind for a course. And so we thought about the notion of how do we embrace rigor and have these ambitious goals but then don't lose track of that space that's in between the discrete learning

outcomes so we advise in the book to articulate the broad conceptual goals for a course and then to start thinking not necessarily about discrete learning outcomes yet but move to the component parts that would comprise maybe the larger course goals of this course is about X and we want students to be able to have these kinds of competencies or skills or abilities when they leave the course certainly.

Eddie [00:07:06] But OK if this is the larger conceptual goal what are the ambitious goals that are within that larger goal. And then as you start to articulate a little bit smaller ambitious goals then start to then look within that discrete individual goal and look for discrete learning outcomes that might comprise that goal so other words have almost an extra step.

Eddie [00:07:30] So we use a honeycomb analogy to describe this space of trying to capture the rigorous large goals within the component pieces within without losing any of the pieces. So you've got the larger Honeycomb or business that might be the ambitious goal for the course and then water some of a little bit smaller goals that are still quite ambitious before you start articulating the discrete learning outcome. So having this extra step in of embracing the rigor before you get to the act of defining specific learning outcomes. But but we certainly see the need and value in backward design and indeed getting down to the learning outcomes and then designing instruction based upon those specific outcomes. So we're trying to add some complexity to the process of getting to learning outcomes to make sure that some of that messiness is embrace than is lost.

Bonni [00:08:26] And could you share an example either from the book or even I'd be interested in your course on college teaching just what an ambitious goal might be and then and then how we might narrow that down to one of the learning outcome.

Eddie [00:08:42] You know I think when when you think about what might be the hope that you would have for any college faculty member that might be an ambitious goal when you look at a specific university and you go, "What are our 2016 Award winners for teaching excellence? What do what do these folks possess that would be an example of an ambitious goal and what are these folks have?" And you know when you start thinking about the messiness that you could possibly lose that would be very easy to go that go to the point of will these the student should know how to do backward design.

Eddie [00:09:17] But there's also the messiness that might be around the people having passion around their content. So that's something that's more difficult to articulate possibly as a learning outcome. But if you have that as a larger goal for it to have students have the students who are going to be future teachers so sort of pre-service teachers if you will pre-service college teachers if they are able to embrace their passion about their content and make that transparent to their students as something that they couple with sort of the more discreet design aspects that you typically see in a college teaching course. That's an example of something where you don't want to lose it but how do you hold on to it and still pull it down into the level of learning outcome without it evaporating somewhere in between.

Bonni [00:10:07] I know one of the ways that you and Jose have really wanted to take our teaching to the next level is through what you call massively better classrooms and the classroom surprise. Tell us a bit about that.

Eddie [00:10:20] Yeah. So the the notion and this is really I think what excited me about Jose's first book was the notion that the most valuable thing about traditional higher education is what takes place in the classroom. Having access to the faculty member. So how do we maximize what the faculty member could do within the classroom.

Eddie [00:10:45] And so know his initial premise was that you you sort of flip the order of things where rather than content being delivered within the classroom and then students take on the challenging problems for homework that night you kind of invert the process where they get students get access to just sort of content delivery or first first contact with content before class and then when they come to class that's when you can maximize what a faculty member can bring to a classroom setting.

Eddie [00:11:17] So the challenging problems are actually done within class. Students work through challenging problems and then when they get stuck they can have access to a faculty member or a teacher or what are the structures might be in the classroom to have students have greater success than getting stuck when they're at home doing homework and they really have no one that could help them immediately whatever they are they've reached that point of challenge.

Eddie [00:11:41] So an example of this then is what we're we've began to call the classroom surprise where we have opportunities to complicate problems on the fly in a classroom. So if you have students who are working through a

problem and you've got several different parameters that are set up and as they have success with that then you can then switch the mechanics of the problem that they might be working on too complicated and new interesting ways that maybe they wouldn't have had opportunities to have experienced without that sort of in media race. Faculty voice too to think and rethink what might be taking place in the classroom at a given moment.

Bonni [00:12:25] When we think about and I'm going to use the phrase flipped classroom because that was what you were describing in the first case was just this flipping of I get the content online and then I show up for more of the problem solving in the classroom. What of the challenges that a lot of faculty talk about and maybe it actually relates back to what we were sharing about learning outcomes. There's this tension between wanting to measure every little thing that happens on line. And then you know just to what degree do I want to track this all out. I'll give you an example from my own teaching.

Bonni [00:13:02] I still would consider myself fairly new to teaching in a doctoral program I've been teaching 12 years undergrad. But just a couple to three years in a doctoral program and it's been interesting to me that the particular people I work with often want much more prescriptive and trackable things that I'm going to assign to them to do then I would have anticipated a doctoral program would entail.

Bonni [00:13:28] And one example of that recently was that I decided to rather than have them do a discussion forum I decided I wanted to invite them to tweet about their insights they were having on the textbook. And you know right away it's fairly new in the course that I'm teaching right away many of them felt very comfortable doing that and then linking to other resources in that yes this is this is why we teach you. Victory is mine.

Bonni [00:13:56] And then I started getting the how many tweets did you want us to do every weekend based on how many per chapter and I had forced myself to not really quantify that because it is more in my nature to do that because there will be those students undergrad or all the way to the doctoral level who you won't get the engagement from if there's not the bar. But then as soon as you put a bar there then I think it lowers some people's maybe any type of engagement they would have.

Bonni [00:14:21] So this is way longer of a question than I would normally ask. But I was curious what thoughts that you have around just that idea of when we do decide to get them online. You know how much do we track and what

methods do we use to track and then when do we just say hey this is just an invitation it's not a requirement.

Eddie [00:14:42] Well I think I think one thing that you kind of I think tease out in that example that you just shared is just really the aspect of human nature that our students certainly possess but certainly we all possess like as an example whenever I was selling my house in Blacksburg Virginia before moving down to Athens almost five years ago now whenever I was selling the house we went back up and I was looking at the yard and it was like late in the year and I was like you know I don't really have to mow the whole yard.

Eddie [00:15:13] I could just mow here and there and just leave these other places under the trees. I don't even have to mow it I'll save myself some time and I can go on and do other things. I think we all do that whether you're 10 years old or 30 years old or you know 90. We're all trying to figure out how can we kind of save time and cut corners and what might be an appropriate expectation here.

Eddie [00:15:33] And I was talking with a group of undergraduates probably about a year ago and they described their classes as as really they were talking about classes being largely an issue of project management but that they described all of their professors as they see them as puzzles and that they come to a class at the beginning of the semester. And what they largely engaged in for the first class are two or three is how how do I do this puzzle what are the expectations. Oh this is a high engagement class. I really need to come to class ready to talk. Oh this is a lecture class. I can just kind of sit back and just as a note taking class.

Eddie [00:16:15] Basically they learn what the norms and expectations are and then they conform to those norms. And that's that's basically the model of education that they've had multiple times over in lots of different core settings.

Eddie [00:16:28] So I think that we're all those of us that teach would prefer intrinsic motivation to be what drives a class and that we never have to articulate We need X number of text or you have to respond to three posts. I think it's absolutely expected in human nature that students would have that expectation of like well just how much do I have to do what equates to you know passing or excellence within this class.

Eddie [00:16:58] And then they can make decisions about how to how to manage that. So I think it's I guess I'm I'm like you I'm somewhat inherently

frustrated by that desire for students to want that qualification. How many of these do I have to do. But yet it's 100 percent expected and I haven't solved the puzzle myself of how do we break students free of wanting to articulator. Question How many of these do I have to do in favor of wow I'm just so heavily engaged. I'm so deep in the flow of the Course experience that I'm not thinking about what the expectations are. I'm just fully engaged. I guess that's that's where we want to take our students. But invariably invariably we're all just our courses or puzzles.

Bonni [00:17:45] Yeah I really like what you're saying there and I appreciate your patience with my long winded question. You parsed out a lot there. I was thinking one of the things I'd do is change my approach in undergrad depending on what level course it is so for the 100 level classes I actually do track a lot.

Bonni [00:18:03] An example of that would be that I have every week I do things called Pen casts and that's where I'm drawing on my iPad but I'm also can record my voice so the notes that they're able to take are far more visual than if I'd just encouraged them to take notes on their own. It sort of helps them become more visual note takers and then those great yeah they provide just great reinforcements for their own learning.

Bonni [00:18:28] But in the 100 level classes that I teach I do actually have them in this case are learning management system has a little button that they can push when they're submitting an assignment that just brings up their webcam. So I literally have a record a video of themselves holding these notes that they just took and then my teacher says they do all sorts of ridiculous things because they start to learn her personality over. Like Hi Jamie how are you.

Bonni [00:18:55] You know making jokes and stuff but that's just the lowest maintenance way on their end. To turn in what they just did. And then the lowest maintenance. And on my end to actually track it. But some would say well why would you track that because you're still having to spend your T.A.'s time and then it's up to them and I think no it's not because have. We increasingly have more and more at risk students.

Bonni [00:19:18] And I want to do everything I can to help them build those good habits. And you know by the time they're juniors or seniors as you say they should have learned better how to navigate and learn those norms and expectations that get the syllabus you know they've got it figured out by then.

But I feel like when they're freshmen we need to do a better job of helping instill those habits.

Eddie [00:19:39] You know I think some of the habits that you were just describing it. It's not like they were pointless habits either were just a means of being counting or qualified. I mean they were activities that required cognitive processing on the side of your students. There was an outcome or an out a product at the end an artifact of learning that was then shared and then you know it was able to be sort of checked off that yes they engaged in this. But the activity itself was meaningful.

Bonni [00:20:03] Yeah yeah and that's probably why I have such an aversion to the reply to three other people if there's not some reason behind it and they won't have some benefit from doing it right.

Bonni [00:20:14] One of the other things that has been coming up not just in the podcast but I wrote a blog recently about what I call the great debate and that is having to do with whether or not we should ban laptops or student devices in the classrooms or allow them or even some faculty will have a section of the class that they will cordon off and say you know this is where you sit if you have laptops cetera. And this is of course as you well know at the flurry of the debate that goes on and Jose mentioned that you actually have some research to share around this. And then your own recommendations from the book and of course we know we know Jose had some recommendations in the original teach Teaching Naked.

Eddie [00:21:00] Yeah this has definitely been an area of interest for a lot of people around the country these days and it's certainly been an area that I've been researching as well. And I guess I'll just sort of take you on through the arc of thought that has brought me to some of the recommendations that I currently have along with a little bit of a couple of studies that we've done.

Eddie [00:21:19] So I guess ultimately we've gotten to a point where I could go back quite a bit here and sort of talk about sort of a narrative around 2000 that brought us to this encouragement for students to multitask or have devices out in the classroom.

Eddie [00:21:34] I think there was certainly I guess some some wish fulfillment that we might have around the notion of students having their laptops and their device out in class that that we might be so engaging in the classroom that the students in their own intellectual curiosity goes Ah the professor she just said this

well I really want to research this. I want to follow my you know but often students aren't actually doing that more more often than not they're actually engaging in other types of off task behavior.

Eddie [00:22:02] So ultimately we were pretty confident in saying that students or humans in general can't multitask that we can't do two things that require cognitive load. If there are certain behaviors that we have practice so much that they become automated we certainly could like Bonni you and I could go for a walk across campus and we could have a deeply intellectual conversation while we're walking in the same time the act of walking and having a deeply intellectual conversation. We could we could master that because one task is so automated.

Eddie [00:22:38] But if there's a student who's walking toward us who might have her head down and maybe she's texting on her cell phone and she's walking right for us. Probably as she got closer our conversation would stop because we would then have to take evasive action. We would have to a new task is now taking over our our cognition you know the task of avoiding the student and then once that task was completed we could get back to the conversation as we walk. But for the most part two tasks that require cognitive load at the same time we're not going to be able to do so.

Eddie [00:23:13] So with that assumption now that the act of responding to attacks requires cognitive load and that would basically pull you away from engaging with the class we see in that you know multitasking is not something we can do. And that was the often cited study from August 2013 lead author was [00:23:32]Sanneh [0.0s] regarding distraction in class that students sitting in the line of sight of multi-taskers laptops did more poorly on end of class exams than even the multi-taskers themselves that the act of distraction was such a heavy determinant of what sort of a new additional multitasking behavior which is actually a quite healthy behavior when you think about it. The fact that we are easily distracted.

Eddie [00:24:01] I think we've all been at the stoplight and then as a car pulls up next to us we look over at it and that person is already looking at us and somehow we could see that they were looking at us. It's great that we have strong peripheral vision and that we are easily distracted through visuals. I mean when you think about our ancestors we're here today because our ancestors were able to see that thing on the horizon that might be able to come and get them so.

Eddie [00:24:26] So we are very distractable and certainly visuals on a computer screen especially if the visuals themselves are appealing or interesting for whatever reason. I remember the first time I did a teaching observation at the University of Georgia I was in this class and the young lady sitting in front of me spent the entirety of class shopping for one red dress. Just click click click. You know just through one screen to the next to the next often a white screen with someone wearing red dresses just one to the next to the next which is unfair she actually shopped for boots during that experience.

Eddie [00:25:02] But it was so distracting that at the end I was looking at my notes and my experience in the class and like wow is really kind of pulled pulled away just sort of over and over again without without having really kind of control. So we see that we've got we can't really multitask and distraction in class is really significant.

Eddie [00:25:25] And there's there was an argument that was made with you well we can't while students can't multitask they're really good at rapid switching. And then there was a study I guess in 2015 that was funded by Triple-A and they were able. Of course this is within a driving setting but they noted or discovered that there's sort of a lingering distraction that occurs after you do a task like if you're at a stoplight and you pull out your phone and you send a couple of texts and then the light turns green and you begin to drive.

Eddie [00:25:56] There's actually sort of this latency of distraction you're still you're not fully focused even though now you're driving and your phone's been put away. And in fact they argued from their data that that lingering distraction lasted for up to 20 seconds. So there's not really a rapid switching them. There's a. Yes it might. You could. It may take five seconds to send a text but you put your phone down and you get back to taking notes and then it takes you a while to kind of focus back in and to kind of gain gain a reorientation to the quick the content within the course.

Eddie [00:26:31] So it seems like there were three things here that have significant data that that lead me to some additional research questions so we can't multitask and even those that aren't multitasking in class can be easily distracted. And then if you are distracted or if you do engage in a different cognitive task like texting or checking your email and then coming back there's this lingering distraction things that seems like there could be significant distraction in a class setting.

Eddie [00:27:04] And so I was trying to figure out OK so if that's the case how significant is that. And then what might we do to approach how we might be able to to handle that. And there's a number of strategies and you mentioned several many that are good but so what we did was we did a predominantly an observational study where we sent in a team of graduate students probably about four or five I guess you can call that a team.

Eddie [00:27:32] But four or five into a class here at [00:27:38]Yuji [0.0s] is a large enrollment class. The faculty member had one one of which had won her college's top teaching award so she was a good good in the classroom but she was predominantly a lecturer. And that's that's what she did. She comes in she's got PowerPoint up she does she's got you know funny stories and cartoons to go along with her content. But she's she is a lecturer.

Eddie [00:28:01] So what we did is we send in students and and they have the scoring sheet and they would sit down and then they would kind of look and see how many students screams that they could see this could be laptops or cell phones and then they would kind of note. OK these are my eight students that I can see. And then every two minutes they would note what the student was doing.

Eddie [00:28:24] And so there was some judgments that were made. So like is this student OK they're on a computer or are they taking notes on the computer or read it to the class or are they doing other things. And you know the other things are easy to see like you know whether you're on snap chat on your phone or you're on a YouTube page or ESPN page. I mean there's lots of it it's pretty easy to kind of chart and so on for different days. We went into her morning class and her afternoon class.

Eddie [00:28:51] It was the same the same class just different sections and we just observed to see what what would happen and across. I think there were about 283 students across those eight classes. So those four days morning and afternoon sessions and we had six thousand six hundred ninety eight observations. So lots of data to kind of compare across these sections.

Eddie [00:29:19] What we found was there were no significant multitasking differences between the 9 a.m. class and the 2:30 class. I mean it was pretty much morning and afternoon it didn't make any difference. We did find huge differences from a sex perspective.

Eddie [00:29:33] Female students were engaged in multitasking more than male students. And not surprisingly there was a lot more multitasking that was taking place in the back of the room than the front of the room. So what we found was it was sort of like lights coming on and off in a classroom you know. Rarely did you have a student who would just kind of come in and take off their backpack and kind of hammer through an entire class of surfing the web. What we found was there were we were we found that 6 percent of students were off task 100 percent of the time and they would come in and they would just do that.

Eddie [00:30:09] We have 13 percent that were on task 100 percent of the time but it was about 37 percent of the students at any given instance whether it was the beginning of the class the middle class or in a class about a third of the students would be multitasking would be doing something else. And we found the back of the class it was almost 50 percent. We're multitasking at any given moment that you might look. And in the front of the class it was about 28 percent. What was also interesting from our observations is that students were far more likely to be asleep in the front of the class than in the back of the class.

Bonni [00:30:46] Interesting

Eddie [00:30:47] Yeah I thought that was interesting too I guess the folks in the back of the class had something else to do. They could kind of theorize that the reason for that is that there are students who sat in the front were really trying hard to be focused and engaged. So they weren't engaging in other multitasking behaviors but they just they just weren't able to stay engaged.

Eddie [00:31:07] So across the classes you know we did this for different days and for the first class in the second class we're all just pretty much the same. I mean the no differences in the amount of multitasking between the morning and the afternoon or the first day the second date but the professor gave me 30 minutes in a class following the second observation date and allowed me to do a presentation and it was a rockin presentation.

Eddie [00:31:36] I had them do a multitasking activity and show so that they couldn't do two cognitive tasks at the same time one was a written task and with a mathematical task I had some football videos to show and kind of explain a few concepts around multitasking and how this is really a negative impact on their own learning as well as those around them. I thought it was a great presentation. So we did that on a Monday and then we came back on that Wednesday. Do you think my presentation had an impact on the students so 48

hours later we come back we observe. Do you think they're multitasking behaviors had decreased not increased.

Bonni [00:32:19] Yeah.

Eddie [00:32:21] Yeah there was there was a significant decrease a very significant decrease. However we came back two and a half weeks later and observed them again. And during that fourth day their behaviors had went exactly back to how they were. The first observation that we did in other words the educational intervention had an impact but it didn't last it then there was a decay to its effectiveness.

Eddie [00:32:47] Now which that which suggests that probably you know these educational programs that we might do for first year students most likely aren't going to have the lasting impact that we would hope that they would have. So that's really problematic if it's not an educational problem.

Eddie [00:33:04] But whenever we were kind of developing the instrument that we used for these eight classes of observations we were in a different a different professor's class altogether. It's kind of come in and she was someone who did quite a bit of active learning in her large enrollment class and whenever she had the students doing various activities or discussions or worksheets. That's when multitasking would absolutely stop her seat. The students had something to do. There were things that they were expected to do in class whether it was conversation or whether it was working problems.

Eddie [00:33:38] So I think ultimately what we're seeing is that probably faculty behaviors are what's more important to managing student multitasking than maybe trying to educate students. I mean there's certainly a range of strategies that could be like you write it into the syllabus and you kind of become the technology Gestapo for the entire semester.

Eddie [00:33:59] But that really has an impact on the the class climate if that's kind of the dynamic that set up where you're always kind of looking for student technology. So that's that's that's a bit problematic though those kinds of policies can be effective. But I've been I've been thinking and truly without hyperbole thinking that maybe the greatest challenge we have to teaching and learning in higher education may indeed be student technology usage.

Eddie [00:34:26] So I don't I don't think there's a way for us to not not really engage with this notion of handling our students using technology. I think that

each faculty member has to make a decision for his or herself. However when you're making that decision there are several things that could be that could guide you. And one is the notion of using more active learning strategies in your class in that we're seeing that if you have students do things in class as alternatives to note taking than that though often keep them on task on and off of the technology.

Eddie [00:35:04] And so I guess this kind of almost brings us full circle about this notion of the classroom surprise in designing massively better classrooms where how do we maximize what faculty can provide for students in the classroom. So that's kind of a long story.

Bonni [00:35:21] Well there was a delightfully engaging story and you do owe me one. So no I really appreciate that. I'm completely riveted. I had received an e-mail from a colleague asking these kinds of questions she runs one of our grad programs and so she had been asking they were they were considering banning technology and all of their classes and because they do a cohort model and I mentioned to you I had written a blog post and then it was kind of interesting what blogs can accomplish that are not yet to the research findings like you've gone to such a greater extent to quantify things.

Bonni [00:35:54] And but it was just nice to be able to share and then it kind of took off a little bit on Twitter because someone asked questions about my course evaluations. I tried to do these things but then it doesn't work and so I got to clarify a couple of things. And one you brought up and that is that we don't just put it in our syllabus and then think that it's done or announce it or as you said give a 30 minute fantastic phrase in college and then think that it's going to stick but it is really setting new norms and you don't set norms through one incident or through a paragraph in your syllabus. It's a culture that you're trying to build. And anyone that studied leadership and culture knows it takes time to form a culture and that's sustained.

Bonni [00:36:34] And the other thing that I'm hearing you say and I have found in my experience too is that when we're so focused as professors on the punitive. I want to control these people they're so disrespectful How dare they do the same thing that I do any time I have to wait in the line or or what have you that we can shift our focus instead to make the experience of learning inviting and engaging.

Bonni [00:36:59] And we're planning to surprise them and by not in an entertaining way although there's nothing wrong with that but also through

helping them problem solve and then the problem gets deeper and more complex and they get so much more interested in what's happening as you've described it's so fun when you when you're teaching and you see them come to life in your classroom.

Eddie [00:37:19] Yeah I think you know I think part of the problem with the educational intervention that I just described was that it took place in like mid-late October. So there's students have figured out the puzzle of that class and there had been a rhythm for two semester for two months that led to be coming in and doing this presentation.

Eddie [00:37:38] But you know it could be that a statement within a syllabus then that's followed up with a sense of here's what the research is saying here are these couple of studies so the reason we have this in up in the syllabus is because we really care about your learning you know.

Eddie [00:37:53] We know that you're going to do significantly poor in the in-class parts if you engage in these behaviors. This is why we're saying this can't be done. But with that said this is going to be the best classroom ever been and here are the things we really planned for you so your engagement your attendance is really important so kind of maybe balance the you know the carrot stick kind of approach.

Eddie [00:38:14] But then once the semester gets rolling I don't I don't know. It's hard for me to envision and maybe it's just my own sort of teaching persona but playing that role of of having to step in and you know correct a student's behavior just because of the dynamic What does that set within the within the class if I'm trying to foster discussion. But at the same time I'm trying to foster discussion. I'm actually also smacking down students.

Eddie [00:38:45] I can remember one time I was teaching in a computer lab and I had a student who was watching a basketball game and had him doing something and he had this basketball game on and I walked on around and that was really sort of like chess what's what do I do here you know and I went back to him and I said hey unless you've got a thousand dollars on this game maybe you should just focus back on the activity that that I have in front of you you know he kind of smiled and you know like I'm still not satisfied that that was the best way to handle it. I made a little bit of a joke out of it. I tried to correct it made it very quiet.

[00:39:21] Luckily students were all working on something so I didn't have to stop my lecture or sit or stop what I was doing to even make a very public correction of the student. And you know often a very public correction will indeed correct that behavior. But there's a lot of downstream ramifications.

Bonni [00:39:40] So you're describing my first couple of years of teaching. I'm having flashbacks.

Eddie [00:39:46] Yeah absolutely. Yeah.

Bonni [00:39:47] Never. Never worth it in my experience. Not not worth I know. I would just rather for that one class session not say anything even though I typically do but I'd rather not say anything than publicly embarrass someone because you do. You just it's hard to ever get back from that with another person.

Eddie [00:40:05] Yeah. And it really sets a tone where there's this expect when people begin to fear you is what it really comes down to if they if if you call out somebody publicly for X then it's like well then you know what other behaviors might we get.

Eddie [00:40:18] You know you know when when you're learning is being mediated through anxiety that you know where you're always wondering can I get can I get embarrassed. Ultimately you know it changes one's behavior makes you just want to not say anything. Don't be a part of conversation and just sort of quietly come to class keep your head down gather your notes and get out of there which is which to my way of thinking that's that's counter to learning counter to the kind of environment that most of us would want to foster in our classes.

Bonni [00:40:49] Yeah and it's interesting that you would perceive it that way because as a woman teaching too I would more suspect that women or people of color with experience not the fear but the needless needlessly people despising you. And to create this power dynamic that is not worth it for what you might gain. You know I could try to show I'm the person here in charge that kind of thing. But what is the expense that comes that to me is not that I think the students will be there and fear but that I'll create this tension that doesn't need to be there.

Eddie [00:41:25] Yes I mean this really is a very thorny complex problem where we know how damaging it is to learning about the distraction factor and if

you've got a third of your class that are doing things online probably 100 percent of your students I mean literally all students are being distracted at different points during a class.

Eddie [00:41:43] So given given that we've got that that level of problem within our classes and if you is if you adopt the belief that the purpose of our of our being in the classroom is to increase the probability that the students are going to learn your content then what what what actions do you take. Band to right that ship and then it seems like most of the most of the options that we have in front of us have have downsides to them as well.

Eddie [00:42:14] I think the only one that probably doesn't have any thorns as a solution is likely the act of learning approach where we where we do this sort of a flipped model where when you come to class you come to class to do stuff and to do stuff is not taking notes that you might take notes but the stuff is you're going to work through problems and we're going to give you immediate feedback to help you you know correct and get back on the right path to solve when you get when you get stuck. It really seems like the best model from a learning perspective from multiple perspectives around learning.

Bonni [00:42:46] Yeah it's wonderful. Thank you so much for sharing the great story about your research and we'll be putting the link and the show notes which will be teachinginhighered.com/137 where people can read even more about it and of course they should buy the book and then really learn how to put the teaching naked techniques into action.

Bonni [00:43:05] This is the point in the show where we each get to give our recommendations and I just have a quick one today and that is I read a pretty good article about how to update your LinkedIn profile for 2017. And that's just something that I think is so important to do even if you're not looking for a new role. I'm certainly not. I'm very happy where I am. But I do think it's important for us to just be thinking about are LinkedIn profile if you have one. Keeping it updated and it's a great way to again not just if it's in terms of your career but lots of opportunities for networking up there and you want to make sure its representative is a good article I'd suggest people check it out if you're on LinkedIn and want to make sure yours is updated. And Eddie what do you have to recommend for us today.

Eddie [00:43:48] Well I think what brought me to this recommendation is is really the range of research regarding brain based learning neuroscience. All of the new research that's emerged over the last 10 to 15 years that really provide the

foundation for the book that Jose and I have written there's there's just been this explosion of new research that leads to very specific types of guidance for what we might do differently and in our college classroom.

Eddie [00:44:16] So another book that folks might want to think about if you missed it when it was published a few years ago is a book called Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain written by John Ratey. And what I find really exciting about that book is that it shows that some of the most important variables associated with student learning are actually kind of outside of our control and that exercise has these incredible benefits for students retention of content for processing of content for learning content.

Eddie [00:44:50] I mean it almost suggests that our college campuses should look entirely different where instead of you know everywhere that we have Coke machines on campus right now maybe we should have a couple of treadmills in their place. But it is really an engaging read that it's very much based in the science that is just sort of emblematic of the kind of research that's taking place these days regarding how people learn.

Bonni [00:45:13] Thank you so much for that recommendation and I think it's been a couple of years but a listener had written then privately to me over email and had suggested the author as a guest so I'll put him down as a potential guest too and see if I could get him on the show I really appreciate you sharing that as a recommendation and triggering me to think about this great book again that's fabulous.

Bonni [00:45:33] And Eddie I want to thank you just for investing your time to coming on the show and all the coordination that went into making it and I'm going to wish you and Jose the best as you kick off the sales of the book and I hope people are really able to get their hands on a copy and really start to put these things into practice so thank you so much for your time and your talents.

Eddie [00:45:52] Well thank you too Bonni.

Bonni [00:45:56] Thanks again for coming on Teaching in Higher Ed I absolutely loved hearing about Teaching Naked Techniques and also about the study that you did on multitasking. I'm looking forward to when that ends up getting published and added to the show link when it does to the show notes at teachinginhighered.com/137. Thanks to all of you for listening in to teaching in higher ed. As always I welcome suggestions for future guests or future topics and you can do that at teachinginhighered.com/feedback. Keep on listening. And I look forward to seeing you next time.

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