

**Bonni** [00:00:00] There's so much we can learn from our students on today's show Dr Doug McKee talks with us about eliciting and Using feedback from students.

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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** [00:00:47] Today I am thrilled to be welcoming on Dr. Doug McKee who I met through the modern miracles of technology. And Doug I want to welcome you first to the show to be here.

**Doug** [00:00:58] Thanks for having me.

**Bonni** [00:00:59] I know that you have a common passion as I do about teaching. And so we're going to talk a little bit about your expertise and your teaching position now. But before we even do that would you talk a little bit about kind of how you got this passion for teaching and about your block in your upcoming podcast.

**Doug** [00:01:17] Sure I'd be happy to. So I grew up in a teaching household. My mom is a teacher her mom a teacher and so it's always been kind of around me. But it never occurred to me that I would want to be a teacher myself.

**Doug** [00:01:33] My undergraduate degree is actually in computer science. I worked in industry for a long time. I ended up getting a chance to take some time off for a while and decided that I wanted to change the world and the way to do that was designing new mechanisms through economics.

**Doug** [00:01:50] So I went and I got my Ph.D. in Economics. Whenever you're in an elite research institution as a graduate student, even if you have ideas going in about what you want to do with your degree you're brainwashed into by the faculty into trying to reproduce them.

**Doug** [00:02:08] And so I came out and I said well instead of wanting to get a job in industry or actually doing things I should get a job doing research at a big research university. After that I got a job I took a postdoc position at the University of Pennsylvania.

**Doug** [00:02:26] And where I was doing pure research I actually had an opportunity to do some teaching then. And I said No thank you. And then I came to Yale my wife actually teaches in the Sociology department here. And I got another two year postdoc position and then I had the opportunity again to teach an advanced undergraduate seminar.

**Doug** [00:02:47] That time I accepted the job. And I loved it.

**Bonni** [00:02:52] You got hooked.

**Doug** [00:02:53] Ever since I've just slowly accumulated more and more more teaching positions and really had developed a passion for it.

**Bonni** [00:03:03] And now you teach in two entirely different I mean they don't seem entirely different to you but to an outsider you teach both in Economics and also in the School of Medicine. Would you talk a little bit about kind of your expertise and how that fits into both of those areas.

**Doug** [00:03:19] So my research is in for the most part program evaluation so I evaluate things like school programs healthcare reforms things of that nature.

**Doug** [00:03:30] The tools that I use for are econometrics and statistics show when I teach in the Economics Department I'm teaching those statistical methods as well as how to use those methods to answer substantive questions.

**Doug** [00:03:43] It turns out that lots of disciplines use almost the same set of tools with a slightly different set of names. So in a school what I do is I teach three semester sequence in biostatistics. But what they don't know is I'm really teaching them econometrics applied to substantive questions on health and healthcare.

**Bonni** [00:04:08] I'm teaching right now a business ethics class which might not seem like it relates to what you're talking about but I promise. And it's been so fun for me because the students had taken philosophy from one of our polysci professors the former semester.

**Bonni** [00:04:21] And it's so rewarding for me because I teach so many foundational classes I teach intro to business principles of marketing and to get to teach something where they get to draw from the different disciplines and start to think much more cognitively much more deeply about it.

**Bonni** [00:04:39] And start to put the pieces together and then of course since it's business ethics it's very applied. It's just been really rewarding to get to experience that. And it's a sort of a different teacher I taught it at the master's level and for businesses in the past.

**Bonni** [00:04:53] And I actually designed the program for the University of California Irvine out here on the staff side of things because they had some ethical challenges shall we say. This didn't happen but it's just been really rewarding so it must be fun for you to get to see sort of those different pieces come together that.

**Doug** [00:05:11] My students done in the med school are part of the two year program for physicians where they learn how to do research. They have particular questions they want to answer. So these are people that have worked in emergency rooms and seen different ways that people do things.

**Doug** [00:05:26] They have an idea about what should be done but they don't have the skills to actually tell the story and test that hypothesis. And so when I'm teaching it's like bringing water to someone in a desert they just they can't believe that they actually get the skills they need.

**Doug** [00:05:48] And the thing is when you teach something very similar to different audiences you really end it and in different ways I teach a small seminar style I teach big lecture style I teach online. You really get a handle on kind of what works and what doesn't work and you can kind of learn things in one format and say hey wow I should try that in the other four.

**Bonni** [00:06:10] So for anyone listening we're about to start kind of shifting the conversation and I want to mention this this episode 35. So if you want to access any of the links that Doug and I are going to talk about that's at [Teachinginhigher.com/35](https://teachinginhigher.com/35).

**Bonni** [00:06:24] Because you have a blog which I'll link to teachbetter.CO. And when if anyone who goes there it's just so rich with resources and you're extremely transparent about your own teaching. I have not come across. I'm sure it exists but I just haven't come across anyone quite as transparent as you about.

**Bonni** [00:06:45] Here it is. You know for better or for worse I started doing this. Every time I get a little bit better and actually post your evaluations on a lot of reflection about how different aspects of your teaching work. Did you just start out doing that naturally because of your background in statistics or did that kind of emerge after some time.

**Doug** [00:07:03] No. So it's two things actually. So first I started blogging about three years ago just for fun. I felt like occasionally I would have these ideas about just about anything and I wanted a way to kind of think through those ideas and a way to do that would be to write down.

**Doug** [00:07:22] I've found that over time I was writing more and more about teaching and so just just this past spring is when I decided to spin out to all the teaching content into its own blog. I was also going into a period where I was going to be teaching an online class in a new way and I thought that there be a lot to contribute there.

**Doug** [00:07:41] And I was going to be teaching a large lecture for the first time. It just seemed like the right time and I know this thing is ahead of our teaching center here Yale a guy named Scott Strobel said something to me that just stuck with me he said teaching should be a public act.

**Doug** [00:07:57] And so I feel like there's so much to learn about other people's both successes and failures that there must be an audience out there for hearing about kind of what I try. So I teach in it in a in a research institution where most of the faculty they don't have the time or the incentive to try new things in the classroom.

**Doug** [00:08:19] And so what I feel. I feel part of my job as a lecturer is to try all these new things and learn as much as I can and share that with the rest of my department. And if I'm going to share with the rest of my department I might as well share it with the whole world.

**Bonni** [00:08:33] And certainly you've probably ran across people I'm sure you're aware of some of the hesitation I know for myself. I think I've held back from doing too much of the statistical analysis particularly the way that you approach it because I always feel like well it's not been.

**Bonni** [00:08:48] There's not going to be that control group and I've had colleagues who say well you know you could you could do this and I think well it's not going to be an accurate election I'll give you an example. So they were trying to figure out about whether we should do blended learning or not for a particular course.

**Bonni** [00:09:02] And I had a strong opinion one way and let's just say that's a strong opinion the other way and they wanted me in just one semester for the 9:00 class do it one way and the noon class do in another way and then you will have our answer.

**Doug** [00:09:16] And that's absurd.

**Bonni** [00:09:17] Oh yeah I thought like that because I teach. I teach a lot at nine o'clock in the morning and I teach a lot at noon and it is hysterical to me. How different. In fact last semester for the first time I taught three sections of the exact same class. I don't know if you've ever done that but it's really a wacky things start to think I feel like I just said that. Well that's because you did. But that was at 11:00 not at noon.

**Doug** [00:09:39] I'm not sure I could handle that. I have a hard time remembering things from year across the year.

**Bonni** [00:09:46] So you gave me courage though. I mean you give me courage to say no. Made me the way that they suggested isn't this just not going to be reliable. But.

**Doug** [00:09:56] It's OK. Let me say two things. First is it is true that if you can somehow keep as much the same as possible and just very one thing and you can do it such that the two groups are. I mean are very very similar. You can sometimes learn more than if you just try something new and kind of look closely at it's so I do.

**Doug** [00:10:23] I did a whole bunch. There's a skilled valuation of what happened in my class last semester. A lot of what I've learned is suggestive.

**Doug** [00:10:33] So I learned that when my students come to class and walk and there in person for the lectures they're out there midterm scores had some average if I compare that average to the midterm scores of the students that decided to only watch the lectures on video.

**Doug** [00:10:56] So all of my lectures were recorded and available to everybody in the classroom within 30 minutes of finishing each lecture. And some students decided to substitute and just watch that instead.

**Doug** [00:11:07] Those two groups did equally well in the class. I didn't randomly assigned some people to the. You have to attend and other people to the you have to watch on video. I still think we learned something valuable there.

**Bonni** [00:11:22] And then of course you do that every semester you're testing something. So you are it's it's an ongoing process and it looks like you've been doing it for years so we're able to go and kind of see a more holistic approach over that so that's helpful.

**Bonni** [00:11:35] Well I know today we're going to focus specifically on one aspect of studying our own teaching. And that's the getting feedback from our students over the course of the semester and perhaps beyond to improve our teaching. So I know you have some suggestions for us on that.

**Doug** [00:11:53] Yeah. So I'm flattered that you think I've been doing this for years and years and years because I absolutely have.

**Bonni** [00:11:59] Oh it looks like it on your blog. I got lost in there the first time I went there it was both. I both loved you and was angry with you all at the same time because I thought oh I can't step away from the computer. There's so many good resources.

**Doug** [00:12:12] I'll tell you this. Up until up until September I had never taught a class in more than 40 people in the room.

**Bonni** [00:12:19] Wow.

**Doug** [00:12:20] So stepping from there to 150 was a pretty big change.

**Bonni** [00:12:22] Yeah.

**Doug** [00:12:25] I believe you can if you experiment a lot in the classroom you can learn a lot in a short amount of time. I also remember so many years ago I was really interested and there was a five minute period of my life where I was really interested in writing science fiction novels.

**Doug** [00:12:41] Literally it lasted a week but in that time I picked up this book and the book was written by someone who was not a successful science fiction author and what he said is I feel like I'm just breaking through now.

**Doug** [00:12:54] And so I remember what it was like at the beginning and now I feel like it's the time to write my advice for the person that starting out whereas 30 years from now when I when everything is completely natural to me. I'm not going to be able to write as useful things useful advice for other people.

**Bonni** [00:13:14] Yeah yeah. There's a whole idea I don't know if you've come across this phrase or not "working out loud." Is that a phrase you've come across before.

**Doug** [00:13:24] I like to work out loud.

**Bonni** [00:13:25] Yeah. And it really I mean it's such a powerful idea and and really can teach us so much. But it's that whole courage that we have to have to say hey I don't have this all figured out yet. So it's hanging out there and that's going to show some of my weaknesses. But here we go.

**Doug** [00:13:41] Right. Right. I mean in some sense it's exactly what we want our students to do which is engage with the material not just sit there and passively experience a lecture and teach them as teachers possibly experienced the lecturer either.

**Doug** [00:13:55] If we can kind of step back and like take notes and think about it and turn over on or have it connected to other things we can learn a lot more when we're teaching. Just like we want our students to learn more while where we're teaching them.

**Bonni** [00:14:09] I had one of these moments last night because I was going back and looking at going to get his name wrong step and something. Who who coined the term working out loud I'll put it in the show notes. At any rate I thought what we're doing is teaching out loud.

**Bonni** [00:14:22] And then I looked and someone already has the domain name teaching out loud. So I thought that's exactly what we're doing. And it's such an important important work to help us ourselves but also then to be able to pass on to others. So what are some of the ways we can use feedback from our students to improve our teaching.

**Doug** [00:14:39] First of all I think waiting till the very end of the semester for your course evaluations is it's not enough. OK. I'm I'm I sometimes I feel like I'm in the minority but I actually believe that there's a lot of value and course in standard old course evaluations not so much from the numeric ratings.

**Doug** [00:14:58] But from the comments that students make and actually I have a post that I'm I'm working through I want to get it right on how to extract as much value as possible from student evaluations but that's only going to help you in the next time you teach the class.

**Doug** [00:15:14] Or maybe if you're lucky and you'll learn things that will help you in teaching some other costs that you're teaching. But if you want to get that student feedback and improve the class you're teaching right then you have to start early and that can be good for formal anonymous surveys very early on.

**Doug** [00:15:31] That can be talking to students after class. Hey how's this. How's the concert going. I usually have maybe three or four students in every class that I get to know pretty well and I'll check in with them every few weeks. How did you think that class went. What are people saying about this. What can we do differently. Those things make a big difference.

**Bonni** [00:15:51] Do you think that they make a big difference because of something called the Hawthorne Effect that was the studies that the Hawthorne company did on lighting conditions and they would go in and say it's the law. Is it better when the lights are up high for you.

**Bonni** [00:16:08] Are you able to work better is a production manufacturing facility. And so the Hawthorne Effect is the idea that when we go in and ask people how is this working for you it is that the very act of us asking makes them more satisfied do you think there's some of that going on. Or do you think it's something different in terms of asking for their input.

**Doug** [00:16:29] So it's both. Absolutely they appreciate that you're getting there. They're asking them about something. So I have a friend so we can we can actually quantify this. I have a friend who when he taught a class he taught

a class for the first time and at the mid semester he gave them this semester evaluation form.

**Doug** [00:16:49] And one of the suggestions that several students had was could you write up your notes for each class and distribute them after class. That would be really helpful. Then we wouldn't have to make sure we get down every little thing that you say.

**Doug** [00:17:04] And he came to them after it and it's an asteroid valuation and he said Okay here's what you told me and here's what I'm going to do about it. I'm going to write up these notes. And for the rest of the semester he wrote up those notes and they really appreciated it.

**Doug** [00:17:20] And so the next year rolled around and he knew that that's what they were going to ask for. And so he did not write up the notes for the first half of the semester. He waited until they said hey it would be great if you could write up notes for this class and he said that sounds great.

**Doug** [00:17:37] And so he went ahead and had all the notes already written for the second half of the semester. And so he was able to get this this bump in their happiness by doing zero work at all. I don't recommend it.

**Bonni** [00:17:56] You'd use a different approach.

**Doug** [00:17:57] Right exactly. But it is this idea that's just kind of being receptive to student feedback and gives you this level of calm it makes you it makes them realize that you're on their team or in this example it makes them think that you're on their team.

**Bonni** [00:18:13] Yeah yeah. You also use discussion boards to elicit some feedback.

**Doug** [00:18:20] I do. So I'm one of my recommendations for the at the end is and I guess I'll actually give it to you right now is a discussion board system called Piazza where it's not just any old discussion forum.

**Doug** [00:18:36] It's a website Piazza.com. It's designed specifically for classes where students post questions those questions can be about the substance of the class those questions can be about logistics. I've had plenty of students complain about exam questions.

**Doug** [00:18:54] Some of the feedback is useful some isn't. But it always is but it's a channel that you can hear things from the students. And in a large lecture you just that step to gold. At the end of the class the student in the back who's not happy and didn't understand things they just walk out the back door.

**Doug** [00:19:15] In a small class you notice that student and you can pull them aside and say hey I realize that you didn't. You didn't seem like you were following everything. Where did things go wrong.

**Doug** [00:19:25] So you need every every little channel you can get.

**Bonni** [00:19:28] At today when talking with you is the first time I have heard of this and it says the incredibly easy completely free Q and A platform. Save time and help students learn the power of community. It looks fantastic. So I'll be posting the link to that in this sentence thank you so much for sharing.

**Doug** [00:19:44] I'm A huge fan.

**Bonni** [00:19:45] It's a gem.

**Doug** [00:19:47] Another nice feature of it. She just started to wear nice features of Piazza. If you're teaching them a class that has equation's in it you can actually very easily enter equations into your questions.

**Doug** [00:19:59] So when I teach statistical methods that's a really critical piece. And then second students can't answer questions as well. And I can't mark which whether I like the answer or not. I can endorse student answers so that I don't actually have to answer everything. Of course everybody benefits from from everybody's questions.

**Bonni** [00:20:21] Sounds fantastic. And it looks it looks really slick too. That's fabulous. In addition to using technology using the end of semester surveys mid semester surveys you have an emphasis to in person opportunities the more informal.

**Doug** [00:20:36] Oh absolutely So I do two things. First something I started last semester is I have weekly lunches. So once a week I have students sign up and I go to lunch with six to eight students and I just establish that personal connection so that when they're having trouble they don't feel as bad coming to me.

**Doug** [00:20:57] And then second and this is something that I've been doing for a long time is the last 15 minutes of the semester I say OK we're going to stop teaching and we're going to have a conversation about what worked and what didn't work and that gives me two things so one.

**Doug** [00:21:12] If somebody raises an issue we can actually have a conversation about how to fix it. And and we all participate and everyone has pretty interesting ideas a lot of the time. The other thing it does is if there's one person that thinks that they have a real problem with the class but no one else believes that guy.

**Doug** [00:21:32] If there's one person that says there's way too much reading involved in this class this is an opportunity for them to realize that. Well wait a minute. No one else in the class thinks there's way too much reading. Maybe it's not as bad as I think. And that's valuable.

**Bonni** [00:21:49] Yeah. In the corporate world we do this exercise that's called start stop Keep, that in a lot of workshops so what are we going to start doing. What are we going to stop doing. What should we keep doing.

**Bonni** [00:22:03] And I tend to do that for talking about the class but of course I don't know if we've experienced this Doug but if I ever did it with just those as the parameters it would be almost entirely things that I as the professor need to stop doing keep doing start doing.

**Bonni** [00:22:19] And my dissertation was partially on something called locus of control and I know I know I have a bias toward internal locus of control but it does help because there is a strong correlation between internal locus of control and higher grades so I figure I'm you know my bias can pay off in this particular case.

**Bonni** [00:22:37] So I'll say like well what should I do. But what should you do as a student and then what should we as a learning community start stop keep and I think having those three lenses that we put on it will help those with more of an external locus of control. Start to kind of try on a different pair of lenses.

**Doug** [00:22:56] That's very interesting. I've never even occurred to me to ask them what they could do differently about the class.

**Bonni** [00:23:02] It really helps them actually I talk to them pretty transparently about well because it shows up in a couple of courses I teach this locus of control lens and so I see which ones do you think get better grades.

**Bonni** [00:23:13] Why do you think that is talking about. Well it would probably be a lot harder to change our professor than it would be to change or you know it. Absolutely right.

**Doug** [00:23:22] So what kinds of things do they come up with.

**Bonni** [00:23:24] That they need to do differently?

**Doug** [00:23:26] Yeah.

**Bonni** [00:23:26] Oh typically not not procrastinate and cram at the end of the year right before the exam. Not procrastinate manage their time better is almost I mean the preponderance of it.

**Doug** [00:23:37] I mean I think it comes down to I'm kind of a control freak. So whenever I hear those things I think what can I do such that they can't procrastinate. Yeah I have a big problem. A lot of bosses. There'll be a big paper due at the end of the semester. I think that's a terrible way to organize the class.

**Doug** [00:23:56] And so what I do instead as I say OK you need to send me your idea very early in the semester and then you have to send me a midterm draft at the halfway point of the semester and I'm going to give you lots of feedback on that midterm drop.

**Doug** [00:24:08] And then we're going to meet with two weeks to go and you're going to tell me like all the progress that you've made before you actually have to write the final draft of this paper.

**Bonni** [00:24:18] Yep. As we're recording this you already know that Ken Bain is going to be on the show soon. And I was reviewing my notes on his wonderful book and that was one of the big things that came out was that what the great teachers do what the best college teachers do is that feedback over time exactly like he just described it.

**Bonni** [00:24:36] We're not just having the paper. OK. you've procrastinated. Oh and here you go. But that that's not teaching that's.

**Doug** [00:24:45] You know it's so interesting you say that because I've been going back and thinking about how you only really learn when you make mistakes. And so I've been noticing all the things that I could have done better last semester.

**Doug** [00:24:59] And one thing I noticed as I was putting together people's final grades is there's a set of students that took my class that did poorly on the early problems. They did poorly on the midterm. And guess what they did poorly on the final two. Surely there must be some way to intervene.

**Doug** [00:25:21] So I'm looking at this and thinking Wow if I had known that I would have said like the item 10 percent of the class and e-mail and said hey please come to my office hours let's make a plan for what you can change and what we can change how I can help you succeed in this class.

**Bonni** [00:25:37] And then of course there's part of it of the release of the control saying I can't care more than they do.

**Doug** [00:25:44] That's absolutely true.

**Bonni** [00:25:45] But it is wonderful when we take is that you're showing off your internal control that you're going. What could I do differently. And that's I mean that's that makes perfect sense in terms of your passion for teaching but also your discipline of getting to where you got in your life as far as education and so forth so.

**Bonni** [00:26:04] Well talk a little bit because we've now talked about a number of ways to solicit the feedback but you really have an emphasis then on reporting back to the students what you've found and talking about will be different. So share a little bit about how you go about doing that.

**Doug** [00:26:20] So doing the survey or getting the feedback is only the first step. The second step is to decide what you're going to do about it. Sometimes that's actually doing something and sometimes they're giving you feedback that you just don't agree with.

**Doug** [00:26:35] That they just don't understand the reason you're doing something the third step beyond actually doing something or not doing something is to communicate back to the students. So there's a website. ICTEvangelist I'll send you the link in the show notes. He's high school teacher in the UK.

**Doug** [00:26:58] And he has this idea that's you say here's what you told me. And here's what I did about it or here's why I didn't do anything about it. And I think that's absolutely critical.

**Bonni** [00:27:12] And what's a time I guess Could you talk maybe about the last semester of the semester before what you found out and how you communicated it back and what you did differently.

**Doug** [00:27:21] At the beginning of the semester. I thought it would be very efficient if all my students submitted their problems electronically so they would if they would type it up. All they had to do is submit the PDF if they handwrote it they take a couple of pictures with their camera phone and upload it to the to the course website.

**Doug** [00:27:40] I heard some grumblings. I served them. What do you think of this process. We did it the first time. I would say 50 percent of the class absolutely hated it. And so what we decided to do was if you give give the students the choice however you want to submit the problems that you can submit it that way.

**Doug** [00:28:02] It made a huge difference. Similarly we had at the beginning of this semester I thought why don't I have the problems let's do on Fridays. OK. If there are let's say that the we're going to need you Thursday nights.

**Doug** [00:28:18] That way when they went into their Friday discussion section they could start fresh and focus on the task that I wanted them to do in the discussion section. Well those problems sets included material all the way up to the lecture on the day before.

**Doug** [00:28:35] And they hated it. They just wanted more time to be able to go over the material before they don't add into the problems that it was forcing them to do their homework on Wednesday nights when they wanted that flexibility. And so these are these were easy. No problem. I'm going to change the I'll change the age and all it is to me the way you want it.

**Bonni** [00:28:58] Yeah I've done the I did that with my doctoral students who they normally we have stuff for them do on Saturday nights by midnight and. And the reason I do that is because I think it's a good idea if we take a day to rest and reflect and get off of technology and all of that and they didn't have jobs where that's not the way they run their lives.

**Bonni** [00:29:19] And certainly speaking of wanting to control the universe I can't control other people and say you know if you work seven days a week for 16 hours a day it's going to really not be sustainable it's not my not my part to control. So that was like you said a really easy thing.

**Bonni** [00:29:33] Not a problem I will go through I will change all the due dates to be Sunday night. I think that sometimes it's healthy too though to set some boundaries so so that you know I struggle with making sure I take enough time for me and for my family so I'm not going to be answering e-mails on Sunday.

**Bonni** [00:29:49] So what I need from you is that I need from you any questions to come in for me by Saturday morning so I can have time to respond to them so I can take that time with my family.

**Doug** [00:30:00] Yeah that's true. You have to say you have to set those boundaries. I mean I find that most things are fairly respectful but you always have a few that will just ask us.

**Bonni** [00:30:12] Yeah. So that in addition to your focus on teaching you're also an Associate Chair so talk to me about department wide early warning systems that you've tried out.

**Doug** [00:30:23] Something or trying new this semester. Give me the backstory as last semester we had a couple of classes in our department that we didn't learn until. Pretty late in the semester. Were going very badly. So these were visiting faculty they were teaching classes and they were just things were going terribly wrong.

**Doug** [00:30:43] And we didn't learn about it until very late. And so what we're doing this semester is we're going to e-mail and this is happening like any day now. We're going to email every student that's registered in a class in the Economics Department and every undergraduate students grade majors not majors if you're in an economics cluster are going to get this e-mail.

**Doug** [00:31:04] And is going to say if you're if you're running into trouble if something is going wrong in the class you think at this point the class is not going well please go and fill out this form. OK. And the form will be very simple. What classes are you taking.

**Doug** [00:31:23] And tell us what's going on. And then we can go and we can look and we can say it's an early warning system. Where are the problems and what substantively what is actually going wrong which allows us to go to the professor and say hey something's going wrong let's fix it while there's a chance to actually do something about it.

**Bonni** [00:31:45] It might be fun after you've experimented with it for a while to also add in. Are there any classes that are going superbly for you so you could find out of classes that you know people you really want to make sure you retain.

**Bonni** [00:31:56] And because I guess I don't.

**Doug** [00:31:58] Not too late. We can do that now.

**Bonni** [00:32:00] OK cool. So this is the time in the show when we shift over to recommendations and I've got a quick one and then I'll pass it over to you to close us out.

**Bonni** [00:32:07] And mine is that we recently bought a new mac. It was very exciting. So when in the process of moving computers my husband's been installing software and there's an extension that I use on Google Chrome that is fabulous. It's called speeddial2.

**Bonni** [00:32:26] So its Speeddial2.com I'll have a link to that and the show notes at Teachinginhighered.com/35. And what's wonderful about it is I didn't have to. It's basically has little icons of the Web sites like a little almost like a speed dial on the cellphone kind of things I can easily get to the websites that I use most often and in combination with one password.

**Bonni** [00:32:50] It's just great because I can't go there and I can log in real quick and get to the tools so I've got. Are are learning management system. And then I also teach as an adjunct so I've got a different University's learning management system and they're just all little icons inside of chrome and it's just an easy way for.

**Bonni** [00:33:10] It's an easy way for if I am needing to get around on the internet being able to have everything up and running I just logged in and all my icons came over and it's just a great tool. So check out speed dial to dot com. And Doug this is the chance for you to give us a couple of recommendations.

**Doug** [00:33:28] So I have three recommendations. A big one a small one and it's an unusual one. So my first recommendation actually something I already talked about which is Piazza the discussion's system specifically for classes and I highly highly recommend it.

**Doug** [00:33:47] I've had terrific experience with it. If you teach a large class there's there's no reason not to try it out at least, okay. The second is something that that has solved a really annoying problem for me. So I used to be one of those people.

**Doug** [00:34:05] I'm a little scattered. I would send people mail and I would say I've attached a file that you that you wanted and that I had signed. And then five minutes later I thought wait a minute I didn't touch the file or. They would email me 15 minutes later and say Hey you forgot to attach the file. And now you know I find that annoying myself. It's just embarrassing.

**Doug** [00:34:31] And so [00:34:32] Chungwassoft [0.0s] makes a plug in for the Apple Mail application that searches your mail your message before you before you hit send you hit send before it actually sends the message. It looks for keywords like attach in your message and if there's no attachment actually attached it says Do you want to attach a file here.

**Doug** [00:34:55] And I don't make that mistake anymore. And boy and frankly every single time somebody sends me an e-mail without the attachment I just say no problem at all. You should install this little plugin ChungwaSoft's ForgetMeNot.

**Doug** [00:35:13] Ok so my last recommendation is actually a series of books so I have kids and they read a lot and I read a lot to them. And I like to read myself some and constantly on the lookout for books that I can read with my kids that wants destroy my brain while I'm reading them. So for example my daughter is 6 and she's really into the rainbow magic fairies and they're incredibly formulaic and that's great for her.

**Doug** [00:35:45] But it's not so great for me. But what we found in this was about a year ago is a series of books about these little trolls and different strange characters in Scandinavia. It's a series of books written by Tove Jansson.

**Doug** [00:36:03] In the mid 20th century the one to start with is called Finn Family Moomintroll, and honestly from age 4 to as old as you are. They're fantastic that

the characters are cute. They go through like these interesting adventures they're very real.

**Doug** [00:36:27] There's like these emotional conundrums that they go through. It's an incredibly rich interesting world and it's totally accessible and appreciated appreciable by little kids and adults. So Finn Family Moomintroll.

**Bonni** [00:36:42] I know it sounds fantastic I'm looking at it on Amazon so that's going to be really fun for us our kids are probably too young but they grow so fast and tuck that one away.

**Doug** [00:36:52] How Old are your kids.

**Bonni** [00:36:53] My son just turned 3 and my daughter just turned 1.

**Doug** [00:36:56] Congratulations. That's fantastic.

**Bonni** [00:36:58] Thanks. Well thank you so much for being on the show. And do you want to talk about how people can listen to your podcast when it airs or get in touch with me on your blog do you wanna just end with that.

**Doug** [00:37:10] Yes my blog is called teachbetter.co. I blog about my thoughts on teaching and what happens in my classroom as laws. Sometimes I'll analyze data that I get from students any day now will be will a friend of mine and I. Edward O'Neil will be launching our own podcasts where we just have conversations with teachers.

**Doug** [00:37:33] We're going to start. We're going to talk to teachers around Yale. I think it's going be a lot of fun. You'll be able to subscribe through iTunes and you'll also be able to get to the podcasts teachbetter.co.

**Bonni** [00:37:43] Well I'm going to be one of your early listeners and I will just say that it's so fun that you're doing this it's it's really rewarding. And there are not a lot of shows that focus exclusively on teaching so I'm excited and just thanks for the time you're going to contribute to that.

**Doug** [00:37:57] The way I see it the world has hundreds of tech outcasts. There's plenty of room for more teaching podcasts.

**Bonni** [00:38:06] I couldn't agree more. Doug and I look forward to being among the first listeners of your podcast. Thanks to everyone for listening to today's

episode and if you'd like to join in the conversation with Doug and myself please join us at [teachinginhighered.com/35](https://teachinginhighered.com/35).

**Bonni** [00:38:23] We'd love to hear your ideas and suggestions on things we talked about today. And also for future episodes guests are topics. If you would like to subscribe to the weekly update. That'll mean you don't have to remember to go to [teachinginhighered.com/35](https://teachinginhighered.com/35) you can get the notes from the podcast as well as a weekly article on teaching or productivity in your inbox.

**Bonni** [00:38:45] That's at [teachinginhighered.com/subscribe](https://teachinginhighered.com/subscribe). Thanks so much for listening and I'll see you next time.

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