

[00:00:00] Bonni Stachowiak: Today on episode number 316 of the *Teaching in Higher Ed* podcast, Maria Andersen joins me to discuss designing for the uncertain fall.

[00:00:12] Production Credit: Produced by Innovate Learning, maximizing human potential.

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[00:00:22] 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. Today, I welcome back to the show, once again, Maria Andersen. She's a salt Lake city-based consultant who spent 14 years teaching at the college level, 16 years writing curriculum, and 6 years developing digital products for learning as you'll hear a little bit about on today's episode.

She built iPad games to teach algebra, launched the canvas network MOOC platform, built adaptive learning platforms used by McGraw Hill, and worked as a director of learning design for WGU, a fully online competency-based education institution. While a professor at Muskegon Community College in Michigan, she directed the week-long MCC math and technology workshop for five years helping faculty to prepare to teach online and improve their skills. Andersen is a software developer and a CEO of a startup, author, speaker, and a learning futurist. She holds degrees in math, chemistry, biology, business administration, and higher education leadership. Maria, welcome back to *Teaching in Higher Ed*.

[00:01:56] Maria Andersen: Happy to be here.

[00:01:58] Bonni: It is always such fun for me to have someone like you back because first of all, you never left because we stay in touch, and I love following your work. I have learned so much from you both on the podcast and on Twitter and your blog. You're such a great resource for you. Thanks for coming back.

[00:02:13] Maria: I'm happy to be here. I'm glad that I hear about you proselytizing the ESIL lens out there because I think it's one of those things that it's time has come, we're ready for it in education.

[00:02:25] Bonni: Yes. Speaking of being ready for things, tell us what your spring, 2020, was it a term or a semester? What did it look like because I know you were teaching?

[00:02:35] Maria: Yes. I was teaching math for elementary teachers this spring, and the virus hits. At that time, I had already been away for several conferences, and my students are used to being taught remotely. When I go to a conference, I just duck out of the conference, teach my class. I have all my manipulative kits, my document camera, and everything with me. I have a little portable kit for that. For them, nothing much changed. They can also come to class remotely if they can't make a class. We were already used to running Zoom sessions and doing things remotely, and all of their assignments are turned in digitally.

They actually said on our first meeting back, after we had a week of-- the campus canceled class for a week to figure out what was going on. We came back to class, and one of the first things that one of the students said to me was like, "Hey, this is the only class we knew would be just the same as it was before we left," and it was."

[00:03:25] Bonni: Yes, I had a similar thing that happened in the sense that my students were really used to a portion of their learning that happened, asynchronously online. They were accustomed to that. Instead of me being gone, like you going to a conference, they also had experienced some guest speakers. We got to speak to a former student of mine who lives down in a more remote part near Senegal. For them, they were used to, what does it like to connect with someone who is geographically so far away, but how much you could learn from them. To me, when we went online, they were already prepped and ready to go and had that culture of curiosity and learning.

It didn't feel like a big shift. I did think it was so funny. One of them says, I sound like I'm bragging, but they're like, "This was so good. Could you please teach other people how to do this?" I'm laughing so hard, like, "Oh, she doesn't know I have a podcast where I do attempt to do that, and it's also part of my job," but it was fun that they had such a positive experience during such a stressful time in their lives.

[00:04:28] Bonni: Yes. I think it comes back to good course design and then just having been willing to embrace for a long time tools that enable students to succeed. It's not so much that's the technology that you have to embrace. It helps to embrace that, but I think for a lot of years there have been faculty members who were like, "I don't need to learn that new technology. I don't need to learn that

technology." It's not about new technology. It's about finding new ways to let students participate if they have barriers in their life, if their car breaks down, if there's snow that day and it's not safe for them to drive, if somebody in their family is sick and they need to stay home, if they're sick and they need to stay home.

Those were all things that kept students from succeeding. As soon as you added a Zoom room to class so that those students could attend remotely on the days they needed to, you are enabling their success. It really was never that, "I don't want to learn the technology part." That was the problem. It was the, "I don't want to do this to help students," that was, I think, the problem or the lack of realization that that was why some of this technology is so important.

[00:05:37] Bonni: Today's episode is all about designing for the unexpected. Before we dive into your suggestions, I want to just start with the challenges. What challenges do you see emerging for us as educators to plan? What are you seeing faculty struggling with? How do we plan for the unexpected?

[00:05:58] Maria: I think the hardest thing is that we are planning literally for the unexpected. Even after schools announced their plans for the fall, I think very few of us believe that these plans will actually happen the way they've been announced. We are all creatures of habit in that I typically know what I'm going to teach a year or more ahead of when I'm going to teach it. It's on my calendar at 8:00 AM, Monday and Wednesday in 2022, and people will try to schedule me first thing, "I'm busy," then, "How can you be busy in 2022?" Because my calendar is actually scheduled for a class then.

We are used to always knowing exactly what's going to be happening. We are suddenly being thrust into a position where even when we're told what's going to be happening, nobody believes it anymore. We're not just planning for being on campus in the fall, or teaching online in the fall, or teaching remotely in the fall, or in some bizarre cases, teaching every other class with half the students in the fall while the rest of them remote in, which just sounds like the worst nightmare possible in terms of logistics for students and faculty where we actually don't know what's going to happen. I think that's the biggest challenge.

I think that faculty are having a super hard time becoming motivated to-- They know in their heart of hearts, they need to start right now getting ready for the fall. This lack of knowledge for what is concretely going to happen is a barrier for a lot of people. I think like, "Until I know what's really going to happen, I'm not going to start." That's really not the attitude to be taking right now because you really want to have your act together no matter what happens. That really goes to good design and not necessarily rigid design. You want consistent design, that's flexible

for the situations that happen, but a lot of what we can do in course design can easily allow that flexibility.

There's a lot of tricks to getting good flexibility in the course, both for the students, the course itself, and even within the structures of the course. Let me give you an example. I teach a math class, it's a four-credit class, and I have it broken down into like 22 topics that we teach. It might seem 22 topics that's like way too granular, except that the fact that there are 22 topics gives me the flexibility to easily change from 15 weeks to 12 weeks to 8 weeks to 5 weeks. Whatever format I get, I just have to stack up the topics a little differently for that.

Whereas, if I teach that class in 5 units, it becomes a lot harder to figure out how to divide 5 units into 12 weeks or 8 weeks. It might fit nicely into a 15-week semester, but it doesn't fit nicely into these other formats. It also gives me the flexibility to move topics around holidays easily. Again, if you're working in big chunks, it's a little difficult to figure out how you flex them around holidays appropriately. You end up with tests in weird places or projects due right after a holiday. Now, I teach a lot of topics that are very objective. There's a lot of learning objectives. A lot of things we cover in STEM-type classes. Again, I find that having the more granular unit size makes it a lot easier.

Then within each of those topics, I try to be as consistent as possible. While I do have activities that span many topics like a midterm or final, or projects, within a topic, there's always a nice repeating consistent unit. There's some learning to do, there's an exploration activity, and for me, there's a problem set to turn in. That exploration activity in the learning part where you can get a lot of flexibility. Exploration activity, it could be a discussion board. It could be a virtual session. It could be a video demo that students are going to do for me. It could be some exploration of a topic of interest to the student. Exploration is just my 10-point activity of the week or of the topic, so to speak, where we can flex in and out of things that are important to that topic or to the students to what's going on in the world.

[00:10:15] Bonni: Last time you were here, I remember you gave an example of different ways of solving an equation or was this a specific kind of equation.

[00:10:23] Maria: Yes, quadratic equation. All different ways you can solve a quadratic equation.

[00:10:26] Bonni: Can you give us a specific example of what these three things look like in a given class? Because I think to hear a little bit more about-- I know you said that type of activity--

[00:10:37] Maria: For example, let's see, so this topic we're doing right now is linear regression. The learning part of that consists of some guided notes, which are like an outline of a set of notes with problems to do, but the problems are not done for the student. Each page of that has a little video they can watch to learn about the technique, to learn about how to do it with technology, with their Desmos calculator, and there are places where I say, "Pause and try this problem." Some of them pause, some don't, but they know who they are and what they do. That's the learning portion.

[00:11:15] Bonni: Question on that. Is it something that they submit? Is there an accountability to actually turn in their [crosstalk] notes?

[00:11:19] Maria: Yes. I have flexibility there. Here's what happens. As long as you're getting above a 14 out of 20 on your problem sets, you decide what videos you need to watch. You decide what notes you need to take. Now, you can use all those notes when you get to the exam. If you don't take any notes, you just have nothing. You don't have that resource. The more notes you take, the more careful you are about trying the problems, the more resources you have when you get to the exam. That's a natural intrinsic incentive to just help yourself. It's really up to the student to decide what they know and don't know when they're doing the problem sets.

As long as they stay above a 14 out of 20, I don't interfere. If they fall below a 14 out of 20, then they have to turn in the full set of guided notes for the next three topics. Then they restart. They get to do it on their own again. It's like they're adults. They should be able to self-regulate, but sometimes we need to step in and be accountable. There's no extra points or anything like that when they have to turn in the notes, but I won't grade the assignment unless they turn it in with the notes attached. That's how I do it, so that there's some flexibility, self-accountability, self motivation. At some point I feel like that I have to step in and say, "All right, let's try something else." [laughs]

[00:12:38] Bonni: All right. I love that you picked a topic I actually know what it is. For linear regression, how about the exploration parts? What's something you liked.

[00:12:46] Maria: The exploration in this case is we have a discussion board. For this one, they go to Graphs in the World and find something that looks linear and make a set of data to go with the graph. Find the points that are on the graph. They share the graph and the data in the discussion board, and then someone else will come along and actually do linear regression on it, and then another person will come along and talk about the coefficient of determination and correlation and what that means based on what they saw.

[00:13:19] Bonni: Questions on this. I'm so curious, if I'm your student, am I going to end up doing each of these three things you just mentioned within a discussion board or do I want to get in there first and post that graph, so that someone else does?

[00:13:33] Maria: It's like hundreds of graphs at Graphs in the World. They have no trouble finding a graph that sings to them and these are what I called structured discussions, which we often use in STEM in particular. Because in STEM, you can't simply just post a problem and then have 30 people give you different versions of an answer, because all the answers look pretty much the same. We tend to move towards structured discussions, which means, I say like, "Your initial post is this. Reply one on somebody's post will be this and reply two on somebody's post will be this." You have the discussion you engage with many topics by looking for the ones you want to respond to.

Lurking on some topics that you figured out the ones you want to respond to, but then everybody has a very set role when they get to that discussion. In fact, when we're working in STEM workplaces and things like that, we often check each other's work. We think about the software industry, you do Q&A, and all the tickets. If you work in a NASA control room and you're putting up a new dragon rocket and somebody has to do a calculation, you're not going to rely on one person to do the calculation. You're going to rely on several people to check it and make sure that it's okay. Just trying to create that collaboration space for students. That's the exploration activity for regression, for example.

[00:14:54] Bonni: I'm sorry if I'm going to take you on too much of a tangent, but because you just mentioned it, could you discuss a little bit about how this particular example you just gave supports greater equity in your classes?

[00:15:07] Maria: Yes. I really want students to be able to explore things that are of interest to them. I think that often in STEM we get into this really lock step with the curriculum where there's not a lot of flexibility to explore topics. I do try where we can to let them bring in some of their own interests. We'll try at the beginning of the term, my introduction board is always around like, "What are you planning to eventually do and you see yourself using math in this, in any way." Turns out, my students this semester are all biology majors. It's a weird summer term where I have only biology majors or neuroscience.

We're going to do a lot of biology problems in the problem sets because my problem sets pull from a lot of real world ... data, and so I'll just go find all the biology ones that we've got, and we'll do those for our problem sets. I couldn't do that for the first because those were already scheduled when I got the new students, but I can do it from this point on. I can make sure we are always looking at

some of the epidemiology of COVID or other genetics issues. Anything I can find graphs for we can go through.

[00:16:12] Bonni: I also wanted to point out, not only is your approaches that you're recommending helping us have greater equity, they're also helping us have a greater likelihood of academic integrity. By the fact that I'm using, you're asking me to go find a chart that I like on graphs of the world, graphs of the world is not a static website. I don't know if you put any limits, it has to be within the last month or whatever it is since you said there's hundreds and hundreds there.

[00:16:39] Maria: No, if they end up looking through 200 graphs to find the one they want, have I lost? [laughs] There's a ton more we could talk about around issues of ways we assess in STEM and equity around that. We can do a whole podcast episode on that. I've been doing a lot of talks around academic integrity in STEM fields in particular for online work.

[00:17:02] Bonni: I'm so excited because not only could we, ladies and gentlemen, we actually have already bookmarked that idea because I want to have you back and hear even more about that because I know you do have so much to share. I will bring us back to, we had three things. We had our learning, we had our exploration, and then what's the last piece of your structure?

[00:17:23] Maria: The last piece of that topic structure is a problem set. This is a math class, and I want to see their student voice come out. This is something we talk about in a non-science and a math subjects that you know that it's the student, because you've seen their student voice in their drafts over and over. You can tell that it's the student because of that. It's difficult to do in STEM, especially, if what you're doing is doing just like online homework, where they just click, A, B, C, or D or fill in a blank. I prefer to do problem sets where they are able to write out their solutions, discuss the ideas, really surface the work themselves instead of having to just choose it on a screen. I try to keep the problem sets to just a few problems.

For me, a topic is maybe about four to six problems on a problem set, but they go in deeply, and the goal is to do them perfectly. To do them very, very well. They have the videos to support their learning. They can ask questions if they have them. What I want to see is not like a half baked effort, I want to see their best effort. Their best effort at completing the work as if they were in the workplace. A lot of the questions are really oriented around datasets from the real world, graphs from the real world, situations from the real world. They're very rarely just like an algebra problem. There are a topic or two that land that way, but for the most part they're all around actually analyzing real world situations.

[00:18:58] Bonni: I think so often about curiosity and learning, and all the ways that we just squelched it and something like this, where you can really get people

thinking. I'm thinking way back to one of the early episodes with Doug McKee who teaches an economics. I'm embarrassed to say, but it's my prior professors that should be embarrassed. I just never had that experience as a student to be like, "What do you care about?" Maybe I wouldn't even know that I cared about it until I even knew that a data set that was real, that a credible institution has available for us to go. I've got a colleague who's doing that a lot with data sets for voting. What an opportunity.

[00:19:39] Maria: To be fair, we didn't have the data like we have today. You and I went to school. We were just starting to get things like Google, and nobody was putting out this much data because nobody had this much data. It's only the last 10 or 20 years where businesses started to collect this much data and just publicly make it available in easy to access format. I think Graphs in the World are something that would have been really difficult to do even 10 years ago, but all of the trends and how much data we create every day in the world are just exponential.

[00:20:15] Bonni: I'm hoping we can talk about two more challenges before we get over to the recommendations. The first one I shared with you that I'm seeing a lot of people have is that they're hearing that they need to go back and revisit their learning outcomes. What I was hearing would be, "Now we're in the middle of this pandemic. We've shifted online, so I'm going to revisit." My concern is that when we actually go and revisit, we're assuming what was there was effective in the first place. Could you talk a little bit about your advice? How do we revisit with new eyes, but not just COVID eyes, bigger eyes than COVID, our learning outcomes for our course?

[00:20:54] Maria: I am happy to talk about this subject [laughs] as you know I am. I think the first thing you have to do is take a look at whatever the course learning objectives are, the competencies of the course, whatever your institution calls them. Those should be the five to seven skills that students should leave your course with. We're talking like three to four-credit class, and before you even look at what those are, you should probably just take out a sheet of paper and see if you can write down what you think the five to seven skills that a student should have when they leave your course are. I'm not talking about topics, I'm talking about skills. Skill is to be able to apply the scientific method.

That's a skill. A topic is genetics. You think about that realistically, it just depends on the class how many you actually land on. Once you think you know what those skills are, then go look at your course objectives, and see if there's any relation between what you think students should be leaving the course with and what those course objectives say. You may not be able to do anything immediately about your course objectives because those usually go through approval processes, but if you realize

there's a disconnect right there, start that process, say, "I would like to discuss these this fall. I think these need to revamp."

What you can do when you're stuck in that position is you've got the ones that your department advocates for, and if you notice that you have skills that are there, you can just add them as like, "These are the department goals, these are my goals," so that you may end up with a few more than normal. Then as you go through the learning objectives for the course, you really, really want to have learning objectives for the course. These are the granular objectives, like we talked about in previous episode. Like solve a quadratic equation using a quadratic formula. That's a granular, very specific learning objective that's going to be taught.

We're going into all of this uncertainty. You must know what it is you really want to be teaching for sure, and you're going to forget as things get crazy. Just this fall, you're going to forget where you put things, unless you are labeling all of your activities with your learning objectives. When I make a video, I put the learning objectives covered on the video, in the description. When I make a problem on a problem set, I put the learning objectives that go with that section of problems or that problem on the problem set. When I do a discussion board, I mark down what learning objective I'm planning to have them cover on that discussion board.

One of the things you're hoping to do as you look at your learning objectives, you need to put them up against those course objectives and say, "Does this learning objective actually correspond to the course objective anywhere? If the answer is no, ask yourself that serious question like, "Does this learning objective need to be here?" Because most of our classes already have way too much to teach in them, and we need to make careful choices right now. Everybody's a little bit stressed. Everybody's a little bit anxious. These courses were already loaded to begin with, and we need to make smarter decisions.

Better to go deep than to go wide. After you're sure your learning objectives actually matched your course objectives, which is an interesting exercise all by itself. It's one of the reasons that we have this two layer view and coarse tune is that one layer is for looking at it as you teach it. The other layer is looking at every learning objective and whether it meets a course objective. That's one of the reasons we did that. It was just to draw your attention to like, "Wait a second, why is this here?" Then after I do that, I actually really look at the learning objectives using that ESIL lens, and ask myself the question of, "How deeply do students actually have to be able to perform on this?"

Do they need to be able to do it with assistance supported with help? Do they need to be able to do it independently to the next class? Do they need to be able to do it for a lifetime? Do I just need to mentioned that this exists to move on with

life?" Getting a handle on that level of depth of assessment that you're going to have really starts to speak to a lot of equity issues, I think, because at least in STEM fields, it does. I'm sure you can speak to it in other places as well since you've talked to so many people. We tend to have a favorite assessment, and then that's all we do. In STEM fields, it tends to be tests, get tests on everything.

If you didn't grow up in a household where somebody could help you learn how to become good at tests, where you never had test prep, where you never quite figured out how to read a textbook to the depth at which you could answer really technical, multiple choice questions, then you're never going to do well in these classes. On the other hand, if you have a variety of assessments, because you've looked at your learning objectives and you recognize that they need to be assessed at a variety of levels. If you have some assessments where they do a video demonstration, some assessments where they write, some assessments where they do an oral part, an oral exam.

When you do that, you are asking students to demonstrate what they know, instead of just taking your one assessment that's a hammer and looking at all the world like it's a nail. I think that's where we really start to get at making sure that students can persist in our STEM courses, making sure that you feel like you can demonstrate a lot of your abilities instead of demonstrating the gaps in your abilities. I think careful design is actually what gets us there. It's knowing what we're really teaching. Then very carefully deciding the level of assessment we're going to do, what learning objectives that covers all of that. It's super important work.

It seems like it'd be extra work right now, but you are not going to survive the fall if you don't know what you're doing. You're really not going to survive next year, if you can't remember what you did in the fall. Because to build an online class or a class that can flex in and out of anything that get thrown at us, you need to know the structure of that course. You need to be able to go back to it next year. If you can't remember what you put on your videos next year, that's going to be a lot of time wasted. If you don't know what needs to go on which assessments, that's going to be a lot of time wasted. Having the plan up front, having the blueprint up front is going to be a godsend when you get to that, suddenly moving in the course into whatever new format it happens to be as well.

[00:27:12] Bonni: I want to point back to what you said earlier, and it's definitely going to be a takeaway for me from this conversation is this idea of having a space for the exploration, because if you don't have a space for exploration, then it is going to be harder for you to intentionally design in those opportunities to bring in things that are most relevant to students, as well as to be bringing in timely events, which students really, really love when we do that. They treasure those opportunities to be seeing what's happening today and how it relates to what they're learning.

I did also just want to mention, I'm going to put a couple of links. You've mentioned the ESIL lens a couple of times, but for anyone not familiar with it, that's a must-listen. A prior episode when Maria has been here, I'll link to that in the show notes. I'll also be linking over to an episode with one of the faculty from the California State University series that I did, and his name is John June Wang. He teaches math as well, and he gave such a beautiful illustration that I wish I could replicate at this moment, but he was really talking about the way that those cultures with a more individualistic culture would answer a mathematical equation, and then an example of how a more collectivist culture would answer.

It's such a beautiful story, and not one because I didn't grow up in a very collectivist culture, not one that I could really understand until he said it. Then I thought, "Oh my gosh, that makes so much sense. Their mathematical thinking was sound. They just had a different cultural way of understanding the question was being asked." That is definitely one worth going back and listening to. If nothing else for that story, it's just such a great example. I don't want to go too much on this because I know I still have one more thing to ask you before we do [chuckles] the recommendations. This always happens to us, Maria.

Thinking about these standardized tests and how so many institutions now have done away with them either entirely, or at least I'm seeing for the next year or two. All these themes go together when we start looking at issues of equity. I did want to ask you about the last challenge. I know you have a little bit more to share with us about your tool that so many of us can access. It actually ties back to what we were just talking about but leaving room for what's emerging in the moment. Because that's the often challenge people have if we over structure our classes, then we're leaving our students out of the things that they're really curious about that are most relevant to them.

[00:29:46] Maria: I think that's why you have to have whatever your recurring structures are, you have to have a space for those other things too. For me, it's explorations in the topics. You can have activities that arc across several topics, projects, papers, presentations, things that the students will do on top of the repeating structure of what they're going to be learning and being assessed on. Of course, I found my own ways of making sure we always have relevant content. For me, that's using Graphs in the World and looking at all of the wonderful ways we can quantify the world and learn about the world by just looking at a graph every day. I can't tell you the number of things I know now that I didn't know two years ago because I simply found a graph on it.

Our brains are wired to remember pictures, so it's real easy to remember the information. I think you have to think about where in your course you could do that. For me that happens in every problem set, I can bring in new content, fresh

content, anything that's going on in the world into the problem sets, I can bring it into the explorations. The videos, I'm a little nervous because I recorded all the videos last fall and that was way before the world changed. [chuckles] I'm sure there's some stuff in those videos that isn't going to age very well like predict what the retail sells for-- Trying to think of some company that's recently gone out of business. It's going to be in 2023 like, "Oh, that business doesn't exist anymore." [laughs] Anyways, we do our best.

[00:31:20] Bonni: Tell us a little bit about Coursetune and how we can make use of it in our teaching.

[00:31:25] Maria Andersen: My company Coursetune, we just put out a brand new product called course plan, and it's really our first single-user license experience. It's designed really for professors and teachers who want to do this careful design for their classes. You can go in and build up to eight classes with a license, and you can do the alignment of learning objectives to the level of organization like the topics, for example. You can do the alignment to the course objectives, you can add your ESIL scale to that, you can add Bloom's taxonomy if you'd like. Then once you have that structure you can build the learning and assessment activities, a design for them, not the actual activities that go on those learning objectives.

You'd say like, "I'm going to have a discussion that covers these two learning objectives. I'm going to have a project that covers these 10 objectives." You can actually visually see the entire structure of the course being built like the blueprint for a house. You can see like, "Do I have enough learning? Do I have enough assessment?" It helps to keep you from over assessing or assessing in the wrong way because you can suddenly see that nuance of variety on things and generate all sorts of interesting correlation reports, design reports for those courses. That when you go into building an LMS or redesigning for the fall, you have a really good idea of what's there in your course, and always have a place you can go back to grab what the learning objectives actually are.

You want to write an assessment tomorrow for exam two, you can just click a button and say, "Give me all the learning objectives for exam two," you got them. We've really been working hard to try to make sure that we can give instructors the tools they might need right now. I've never seen so many instructors start actually caring about course design. I'm not sure if it's a panic care or I'm caring for my course care but either way, we'll take it. I'm glad that people are paying more attention to course design, and we're hoping to bring a lot of people into this new view of your course.

[00:33:27] Bonni: Much of the literature around change starts with creating a sense of urgency, and we don't really have to create one these days. [laughs] It's just right there.

[00:33:37] Maria: I do think that higher ed has moved a decade forward in time in just a couple of weeks. That is really something to behold. The time it would have taken for these many instructors to learn to put their classes into online formats, remote meetings, all of that stuff. I'm guessing it would have taken us a decade of very hard work.

[00:33:56] Bonni: My concern is over the summer, I work at a more traditional institution where a lot of our faculty are on nine-month contracts. Then the concern of course is then can that sense of urgency-- Our bodies and our minds can't really hang on to the house is burning down for that long. Will there be enough momentum to keep making that kind of transformative change?

[00:34:19] Maria: I hope so. I think that what you just said actually brings up a point that we should all think about. We have a lot of students who are always in the house is burning down anxiety phase. They are always living paycheck to paycheck, they are always \$100 away from a crisis, they're always in danger of having to drop out of their classes because of other things going on in their lives.

If we are experiencing this and thinking like, "Oh my gosh, I can't do this for the four months of summer too." Guess what? Plenty of our students are doing this all the time. You need to think about that when you set deadlines that are really harsh, and when you aren't forgiving of circumstances students are in. You know how you felt during this time, just imagine feeling that all the time,

[00:35:01] Bonni: That is so essential for us, any opportunity that we can have to feel greater empathy for our students and to try, we'll never get there but to try to understand the circumstances that they're living in. Absolutely. Before Maria and I get to the recommendation segment, I want to spend a little time to thank today's sponsor and also to recommend it to you. It's such an essential part of my own productivity system and it's called TextExpander. They are the longest-running sponsor of *Teaching in Higher Ed*, so if you've listened for a while, you've heard me talk about the ways in which it helps me be more productive.

What it does is it's a app that's really, really easy to use and it's on a number of platforms. You can use it on a Mac, on iOS, and on windows. It uses what are called snippets that are really easy things that you can enter in, think of them as abbreviations. You press your space bar and all of a sudden, out comes texts that you've pre-programmed in there. It can be something as simple as a web link that you want to be able to easily send people to. We've got all kinds of professional development going on over the summer. I want to be able to easily direct people

to the websites where they can get more information and register for those programs. I don't want to have to every single time go looking for that link every time I want to share it with someone.

You can find out a lot more about creative ways to use TextExpander. Oh gosh, I've had people brainstorm on the *Teaching in Higher Ed* Slack channel about using it for letters of recommendation, about remembering things like phone numbers, I've talked about that before. I recently did get a new computer. As I've been telling you for many years now, it was one of the first things I was going to say that I installed, but my husband listens to every episode. He's going to know, he's actually the one that installed TextExpander on the new computer. As promised, it was definitely so essential. It was among the first apps that got put on that new computer. We want to thank them for sponsoring.

If you head on over to textexpander.com/podcast, you'll get 20% off your first year, and it'll save you a bunch of time. Sometimes people worry about focusing too much on efficiency, what that frees us up to do just like we talk about at the start of every episode is to be more present, more present for our students, more present for the others in our life. Have a look at it. In a little bit, when we get to the recommendations, spoiler alert, TextExpander is going to come up yet again. This is the time in the show where we each get to share our recommendations. Mine are related to each other.

I have to confess that when I've had Mike Caulfield who is a misinformation expert, when he's been on the show in the past, I have tended to feel so intimidated by equipping myself to be able to do this, and especially because he used to really stress the importance of domain-specific knowledge in order to counter misinformation. Now, a lot of his materials have moved a little bit away from that. He's got the SIFT Model which we have talked about many times on the show, most recently I recommended his SIFT model specific to the coronavirus. Today I want to just recall our attention to the SIFT Model in general.

Those are four steps that we can take for really fighting against a lot of different misinformation, and what he's stressing so much now is just do it. Make it so that it's just rote for yourself, you just go through these four steps. They are not hard, and yet I still found myself just holding back from it. A relative of mine sent me over-- There was a Facebook message thing that was like, "Oh, here's the origins of the song *Blackbird*." I love it that song, in fact, I've recommended a version of that song before in the podcast. If you've been listening for a while, you know I've been a fan. It was one of those things where I was like, "This sounds a little too neat and tidy." I went through the steps, and found out that indeed, the story is a little bit more complex than this little quick Facebook story would seem to indicate. I felt my confidence building.

When we look at all of the racial unrest that is happening around the world and we couple that with the pandemic, and we couple that within the States, we have a very important election coming in November 2020, we've got to get it together. Including me, I'm pointing a finger right at myself. Maria can see me pointing my fingers. It is no longer that we can just say, "That's not my thing. I'm not good at that, I can't do that." We all can do this. I'm going to post to a MIT technology review article about protest, misinformation is riding on the success of pandemic hoaxes.

We've got to be able to suss out misinformation and find the information that we need to be good citizens and to make this world a better place. Saying that white supremacy has no place in it and that black lives matter, and that we need to be doing better for our students of color. I really want to challenge myself. I don't get to feel all insecure. "Oh, how convenient for me that I get to do that?" No, the steps are right there. You can go through his course. It's a three-hour course if you were to go through it all at once, but of course you can take it as you need it.

Then take these opportunities, whether it's *Blackbird* or whether it's something about the protest or anything in between, and just get it to be a regular part of your routine, so you don't even have to think about it and you can be a part of helping us be a more informed society. I am now going to pass it over to Maria, and I already know what she's recommending. You're going to hear an echo, but it's a coincidence that she just happens to be recommending something that also happens to be a sponsor of today's episode.

[00:40:45] Maria: It's funny cause I'm going to tie it into what you just said too. I am big fan of TextExpander. I use it all the time for assessment, so that I can bring a consistent feedback to students. I recently realized that I could use it to make responses to people that I'm arguing with on the internet. Not necessarily to argue, I've been trying to like craft responses that don't attack and just seek to inform, and try to leave an opening there for people to change their minds, but it gets exhausting to do these over and over and over. I've been using TextExpander to make little lists of like, "What do we actually know about coronavirus? What do we actually know about protests? What do we actually know about police brutality?"

Then when I hit somebody who's got one of these really inflammatory half-baked responses to something I can just go to my TextExpander, pop in the right response with facts and move on. That way I can keep refining my statements and things to be better and better. That's just my newest use of TextExpander. I love it and if you don't use it, you should probably go find it.

[00:41:56] Bonni: Maria, thank you so much for coming back on *Teaching in Higher Ed*. You know I always love anytime I get to talk to you, and I also am so excited

that you'll be coming back to talk specifically about assessment within STEM. To me, it's going to bleed over to a lot more than just STEM, I already know it.

[00:42:12] Maria: I'm sure. Yes. Thank you for having me.

[00:42:16] Bonni: Usually, I record the introduction and the conclusion on the very day that I interview the person, so that it all goes seamlessly, but I'm recording this a few days after talking with Maria Andersen, and I am still thinking about all the ideas she shared. She's given me so much to think about for my fall classes. I'm just excited to put some of those things into practice. We'd love to hear from you what your takeaways are. I'm over at Twitter @bonni208 where there's also information about other ways to contact me on the Teaching in Higher Ed website. Thanks so much for listening, and I'll see you next time on *Teaching in Higher Ed*. Thanks once again to TextExpander for being such a long time supporter and sponsor of *Teaching in Higher Ed*. See you next time.

[music]

[00:43:11] [END OF AUDIO]

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