[00:00:00] Bonni Stachowiak: Today on Episode Number 325, *Digital Pedagogy Lab Reprised.*

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[00:00:17] Bonni: Hello, and welcome to this episode of *Teaching in Higher Ed*. I'm Bonni Stachowiak. 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.

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I bought our kids this app the other day. It's a journal app and it lets them select different items to add to their map of journals, it can be a picture that they draw, it can be words that they speak or write, it can be sometimes something silly. Sometimes, they're having them describe pretty intense feelings that they're having. Sometimes, they even do a little selfie and take a picture of what you look like when you're mad, et cetera.

I feel a little bit for this episode like I've gotten some glimpses into some individual's journal from an experience they had at this year's Digital Pedagogy Lab. The year is/was 2020. Many of us were expecting initially to pack our bags and to head out to Colorado, but that was not what turned out to be this year's plans, but it turned out to be quite special.

There were all kinds of wonderful keynote speakers and workshops and meaningful ways to engage and learn from one another. One special memory that I've gotten my journal app of the Digital Pedagogy Lab was getting to air the episode with Jesse Stommel live and getting to have real-time on Twitter. People tweeting about questions or things that stood out to them. It was really an overwhelming

experience that I've never had before with the podcast and something I may be experimenting with in the future.

Thanks to those of you who were able to join us. Thanks to the individuals who left messages with answers to three questions that I posed. What is bringing you hope right now? What is concerning you? What advice do you have for others navigating COVID? Let's start these three questions with Heather. She'll share her hope, her concern, and her advice.

[00:02:37] Heather Walter: Hi. I'm Heather Walter, a lecturer at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. The thing that makes me hopeful in my teaching is my students. They bring so much energy to the classroom. I've spent the week trying to recreate that in a virtual classroom, learning how to bring the students closer together to have that shared energy when we're online in the fall. I know that there are so many problems in the world today, and my students are going to be facing them as they go forward in their careers and their lives. I'm hopeful because I think they are going to integrate.

A concern or a challenge that I have in my teaching is that I have so many colleagues who are so excited about using a webcam to watch their students take an exam in their room. I just find that so incredibly disturbing. It's not learning and it's not teaching. This week has been full of people who absolutely acknowledge that and are trying to break that system.

So, advice for others who are trying to navigate COVID. I spent the last two weeks being a facilitator for faculty on my campus. I see faculty who are trying to do all the things. They're using Collaborate Ultra in their LMS and they're going to have virtual classrooms and everything's going to be all synchronous all the time.

I guess my advice would be to keep it simple. I am really trying to work within my LMS because that's part of what my university wants, but also because the students want everything in one place. How many times did you have to go running around for a link during this conference? Students want to be able to find their classes on the university's LMS or otherwise, all in one place.

I know they're not perfect. I know they're problematic, but do what you can within that space and try and create your community there using some of the tools that you have, but also just by being present, showing your face in short video, and showing that you care about the students.

[00:04:55] Bonni: Next up, we have some words, a little glimpse at Dustin's experience, his hopes, his challenge, and his advice.

[00:05:06] Dustin Hosseini: Hi. My name is Dustin Hosseini and I'm responding to, "What advice do you have for others desperately trying to navigate the impact of COVID in their teaching?" I guess one thing I would say is perhaps reach out to others, take the time to get away from your screens, take the time to listen to podcasts that are relevant, but also connect with others and just ask questions, be open, ask questions of your students as well from last year to perhaps make an FAQ document of what they have learned over the last year and what they would recommend to incoming students.

You might find they're actually willing to do this. I guess I would just say take everything in stride, make sure you give yourself plenty of rest, sleep, and so on and so forth, because as far as what's making me hopeful for teaching it's that things will still go on, COVID will kind of come and go, and we'll get past this, but hopefully, we'll be in a better place and a better appreciation of blended digital education experiences because at the end of the day, we are preparing our students for the future and not just for ourselves. Thank you.

[00:06:13] Bonni: Next, we'll hear from Christina.

[00:06:15] Christina: Hi. I'm Christina and I'm a librarian. So, something that makes me hopeful in my teaching is that I get to be much more experimental. I feel like I've been forced into this place of creativity. Through constraints come creativity, right?

So, I'm trying a lot more new things. I'm getting to be interactive in different ways. I'm thinking about my teaching in an entirely different way. It's really fun actually in the different types of interactions that I have now with students to try different things. I can be the guide on the side, reference interactions, and just kind of watch students as they're doing their research, give tips, and suggestions, or I can really harness the power of breakout rooms and collaborative Google docs to watch students through their thought process as they're working through these difficult problems of research.

I think that it's going well. I love being in this place that I can really experiment, be creative, and try different things and not feel any fear in that trying and experimenting.

[00:07:23] Bonni: We'll hear next from Valerie.

[00:07:26] Valerie: What's making me hopeful in my teaching? I am an instructional designer rather than a teacher, but what's making me hopeful in that is that there are a lot of online tools that are free and available for presenting content to students in new and exciting ways that can be tailor-made for each class or each student. I'm very excited that faculty are finally finding these things and learning

how to use them and engaging with them so that they can engage with their students in meaningful ways, even across borders. I think that's fantastic.

[00:08:04] Bonni: We'll next hear from Patrick.

[00:08:07] Patrick Smith: Hello. My name is Patrick Smith. I'm a professor of psychology. What really, I guess, scares me [chuckles] in teaching is this idea of the safe spaces really always worked very hard to make my classrooms accessible to everyone, comfortable to everyone, and inviting to everyone.

Teaching psychology I think has always helped that because I have, through the wonderful opportunity to talk with our folks, so I think the thing that has been sort of the drawback recently is when I realized a student is not comfortable, does not feel safe in that environment.

That concerns me because I want to know how is it that I can step up and make a safe space, trying to get more interaction, really more openness in the classroom for everyone to have a voice, find a voice. I don't think most students really are used to that though and so they don't really know how to go there. I don't really have any problem speaking my mind, but then, I come from a culture where we have that privilege to speak our minds. That's the thing is finding ways to invite other students to do that. Anyway. Thank you.

[00:09:22] Bonni: The next person reflecting on his experience at Digital Pedagogy Lab, his hopes, his challenges, and his advice is Dr. Launch from Nigeria.

[00:09:34] Dr. Launch: One of the things that is making me hopeful in my teaching is … to start using technology to learn. So, it makes it easy for me to also introduce technology for teaching today. My challenge here really has to do with the network infrastructure here in Africa, which is usually very unstable at times and so, it makes open distance learning and eLearning via distance, remote teaching a bit challenging. That's a fear that I'm having. I hope we can overcome that. Others, who are desperately trying to navigate impact on COVID in their teaching should take advantage of the so many seminars, webinars, and things that are going on online now. They have a lot of opportunity to learn teaching aids and a number of infrastructure that could be explored for teaching, especially in higher education. They also have to begin to look at how they can document their teaching over the years, post-COVID to record their classes and things like that, and it really help you to stabilize in the classroom.

[00:10:30] Bonni: Next up, Silvia shares her concerns, her hopes, and some advice.

[00:10:35] Silvia: One concern I have about education in a time of crisis or emergency or even when we have to do a high-flex or super flexible mode for

instruction is I've gotten some pushback from instructors and teachers on whether or not they should be learning these new softwares or new tools hoping that something will be solved for them or that the situation will be temporary.

I think that now is the time to take advantage of this motivation to learn these new tools and these new softwares and these new hardwares to meet our students where they're at and push our teaching and our instruction to the next level. Something that is keeping me hopeful in teaching and learning right now is the flexibility and positive reactions of the students.

We're seeing in news and literature and firsthand that although students are reporting higher levels of stress and anxiety, we're also seeing higher levels of them being flexible and figuring things out and determining spaces and learning communities for themselves. That gives me hope for these students of all ages, and especially for the future.

There are two keywords that I use in my advice to instructors, faculty, and teachers in time of emergencies such as COVID-19. The first is simplicity, keep everything simple. If you're introducing a new tool, make sure that that tool is the singular new tool and it's not a part of a long list of new tools for the students and for you.

The other is consistency. Provide as much consistency and as much grounding that you can for the students because there's so much unknown outside of your classroom, outside of your teaching environment, and if you can provide them with the consistency and reliability within your course that you can control, that is one small piece in creating predictability in their lives and reducing stress.

[00:12:41] Bonni: Next up we hear from Leanne.

[00:12:44] Leeann Waddington: Hi. I'm Leeann Waddington and I'm the manager of learning technology at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in British Columbia, Canada. I love your questions.

So, for number one, what is making me hopeful? I'm hopeful that this initial opportunity to deliver using digital tools will help faculty to see the affordances that technology provides and to consider the possibilities for how they might deliver their courses in the future.

I'm concerned that the pace we had to make this change will negatively impact their perspective of digital delivery. I'm challenged to keep them engaged with our teaching and learning center as they make iterative adjustments to their courses and perhaps, reimagine their practice for the future.

My advice to faculty who are struggling is to be flexible with yourself and your students. Start small and make changes as you go along if you need to. Remember, innovation requires risk, so have fun with it.

[00:13:45] Bonni: Our final Digital Pedagogy Lab voicemail is coming from Dr…

[00:13:51] Speaker 10: What's hopeful in my teaching that people are still willing to listen? People are hungry for advice, any kind of information you have that will help them become better online teachers.

Concerns and challenges that I have with the subjects that I teach for being online education, online teaching is that there's a lot of misconceptions. How the mainstream people still view online learning as lower quality than our face-to-face class. I think it's challenging to constantly having to explain that it's the--

Oh, in fact, online teaching can in fact be much more deeper and more meaningful. Advice for others to navigate COVID in their teaching, I think, start small. Be flexible. Lead with compassion. Teach with care. Listen to your students. Don't use the same guidelines that you've been using pre-COVID. Again, I think it's just listening.

[00:15:00] Bonni: Thanks to everyone who left a voicemail to commemorate some portion of your experience at the Digital Pedagogy Lab and more importantly, to pass it on to others. I really appreciate getting to hear your reflections.

This is the time in the show where I get to share my recommendations and I have two of them today. The first one is a new edited collection. It's called *Open at the Margins* and it was edited by Maha Bali, Catherine Cronin, Laura, and I wish Laura I knew how to pronounce your name. [chuckles] Take it from someone with a difficult to pronounce last name, at least for people who aren't Polish. It might be a Polish last name. It could be different but Laura, you're the only person--

By the way, let me go through the last two. Robin DeRosa and Rajiv Jhangiani. You're the only person, Laura, who hasn't actually been on the show. I promise if you come on the show, [chuckles] that I will learn how to pronounce your name and I'll get it right in the future.

So, this edited collection represents a starting point toward curating and centering marginal voices and non-dominant epistemic stances in open education. It includes the work of 43 diverse authors whose perspectives challenge the dominant hegemony.

I express my thanks to Maha for sending me the collection right when it came out. I'm looking forward to things settling down from first-- My first class started today for

the start of the semester, so I told her I probably wasn't going to get to reading it until after that, but I did. I couldn't resist. I did skim some of the chapters and I'm very much looking forward to diving in even more and look forward to many of you having a chance to take a read and to reflect on all that is represented there as well.

My second recommendation is much less serious. It is a clip from one of the most delightful shows I've seen [chuckles] in a long time. It's called *Schitt's Creek*. They took a *Schitt's Creek* clip and they remixed it. So, if you've seen the show before, you might remember this scene where one of the characters is told to follow a recipe that involves folding in something, folding the cheese into a recipe, which if you, [chuckles] by the way, told me to fold cheese into a recipe, I would be about as good as he was at it, which is to say confused.

So, he asks another character, his mother in the show, to explain to him what that means and how he's supposed to fold in the cheese. It's a very funny scene to begin with, but it becomes quite a bit more funny when it is educational entities telling teachers or professors how to do their jobs and it really takes on a whole new level of humor.

So, I encourage you to go take a look at that *Schitt's Creek*-- [chuckles] it's a tongue twister. I encourage you to take a look at that *Schitt's Creek* clip remixed and get a chuckle at yourself.

So, thanks so much for listening to today's episode and for being a part of the community. I especially appreciate, again, the people from the Digital Pedagogy Lab who shared about your experiences there. That was so much fun for me to get little glimpses of it and think back to my own experience.

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I want to thank you just for being a part of the community and for listening. If you've been listening for a long while, it's been quite a road and it just keeps getting more interesting.

If you're new to the show, this is not a normal format. Usually, I interview one other guest, but it was just a fun way to kind of do something a little bit different and bring more voices into the show. So, I hope you'll keep on listening. If you want to stay connected with me, you can go over to teachinginhighered.com/subscribe, and you can get on my update emails where you'll get show notes from the most recent episode as well as a blog about teaching or productivity written by me. Thanks so much for listening and I'll see you next time on *Teaching in Higher Ed*.

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