

[00:00:00] Bonni Stachowiak: Today on episode 337, Deandra Little joins me to talk about effective assessment design.

[music]

[00:00:10] Production Credit: Produced by Innovate Learning, maximizing human potential.

[music]

[00:00:20] Bonni: 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.

[music]

[00:00:48] Bonni: Joining me for today's episode is Deandra Little. She is an assistant provost and director of the Center for Advancement of Teaching and Learning, and professor of English at Elon University. Her scholarship focuses on educational development in higher education, scholarship of teaching and learning and teaching with images. Deandra is a recent former vice president for the International Consortium of Educational Development and former president of the POD Network in Higher Education, the North American Association for University Teaching and Learning Centers. Deandra, welcome to Teaching in Higher Ed.

[00:01:31] Deandra Little: Hi, Bonni. It's good to be with you this afternoon.

[00:01:33] Bonni: I always get so interested in reading people's bios but I'm also interested in knowing what's not in your bio that we might want to know about you as a person and a little bit about your life.

[00:01:44] Deandra: Oh, that's a great question. I have three kids, I guess, I should say. All three daughters. I'm a huge tea aficionado, so I'd love a good cup of tea and being outside with a good book or novel.

[00:01:58] Bonni: Is it like asking you to pick one of your favorite children if I ask you to pick a favorite tea or is that an easy question to answer?

[00:02:06] Deandra: I do like a good Assam, a nice malty tea that you're going to add milk to.

[00:02:12] Bonni: Assam. [laughs] This is the kind of tea I don't think I've ever heard of or I drink and then I didn't realize what it was but I'll put it in the show notes anyway. [chuckles]

[00:02:22] Deandra: It's a blend that you get a lot with an Irish Breakfast.

[00:02:26] Bonni: I do like those kinds of teas although, oddly, I don't tend to put milk in my tea unless I'm traveling. It's [laughs] one of those things, but I do like that taste of that. We are, today, talking about assignment design and of course, we know how much assignment design connects with learning or should, we have an opportunity to really connect it with student learning and on a broader level, connect it with assessments.

I know our conversation is going to blend between those things but we're focused today on how do we become better at designing assignments. I'm really excited to hear some of the examples and the stories that have from your experience in this.

[00:03:07] Deandra: I'm looking forward to talking about it too.

[00:03:09] Bonni: Let's start with your own teaching and I want you to think back. I don't know how far you have to think back for this question but I want you to think back to something that happened around your own way of approaching assignment design that you still carry with you today.

I know, for myself, a lot of these reflections come from my own failures but occasionally, they come from me actually experimenting and hitting it the first time. I'm having something like that right now with the class I'm teaching at this moment of like, "Wow, that went really well." I want to carry the learnings that I have from that but again, lots of time, it comes from failure. How about you? What comes to mind for you in your own teaching?

[00:03:50] Deandra: I think of two stories. One, was the time when I realized it wasn't working. When I was using a new rubric for the first time. Using the rubric, thinking about-- I teach literature courses, so I was grading a number of different literary analysis papers that were similar to the same prompts that I had been given in grad school. This is an undergrad, so students were writing in familiar ways but in ways that were increasingly boring to me to read and that they were all saying similar things.

Then when I was doing the rubric and I kept thinking, "Wow, this student doesn't understand counterarguments and this students doesn't understand that there might be a multiple interpretations of a text or of a passage." That's one of the most exciting things to me about language, is that it is often ambiguous and can mean different things and one of the key lessons I thought I was teaching them when we're talking about interpretive arguments.

I realized, looking at the rubric, it wasn't just the one student that I was giving feedback but it was 80% of the students in this particular class or in this particular assignment that didn't understand that thing. That didn't understand what does it mean to grapple with the text and to suggest not just that it means one thing but it could mean all of these other things and here's why we're going with this.

That moment of looking at it and realizing, "Oh, it is not that individual students are struggling with this assignment, it's that I haven't had them practice the skill of thinking about the different ways a text may mean. I haven't engaged them in discussion around that." It evolved into an assignment where I asked the students to teach a class in groups when they'd develop a lesson plan, but part of the thing that they have to do is to imagine different potential counterarguments and the model discussions.

They're inviting people to debate, to discuss and they're setting up that discussion so that they're getting at a number of different ways to understand what the text is talking about. That's been a really successful assignment that has morphed over the years but it also gives students in a group a chance to practice with each other different ways of understanding what something might mean.

[00:06:02] Bonni: Before you give your second example, I just want to touch a couple of things that I heard you share with this one and that is that Jesse Stommel is someone who comes to mind for me who has critiqued those of us, myself included-- I'm raising my hand, if you're listening on the podcast and aren't, Deandra can't see me doing that, but just this idea of grading boring assignments and then complaining about it in social media.

If you're going to assign something that is torturous for you to grade, the perhaps it was torturous for the students themselves.

I'm not, by the way, quoting him directly but just trying to take away what I've gleaned from him over the years on this. It isn't just because we wouldn't want to have to go through pain in order to grade but because the learning doesn't get facilitated quite as well if we're giving the same kind of assignments.

The other thing that I'm sure you've thought about as well is that we're reducing any opportunities for a lack of academic integrity to be demonstrated as well. There's a lot less temptation but also, a lot less opportunity to go about and do any attempts of plagiarism or whatever manner of things that may come up in that. What a great

example and it's great that you can still carry that with you today and draw lessons from it all this time later.

[00:07:22] Deandra: Yes, and well, this has really informed how I think too. In connection to what you're talking about, we know students are motivated by the things that they care about, that they value, that they understand as relevant and that they understand that they feel like they have some abilities to succeed at. Thinking about whether the assignments are truly authentic, that they're not just real world.

I teach 19th century literature, memoir and autobiography. The real world application is the different kind of thing sometimes, for those of us in the humanities, to think through what that means but at least the kinds of thinking we're asking them to do has real world applications or is something that can be applied to help us better understand aspects of our world. Thinking about how to make assignments more meaningful, more authentic or more, at least, realistic, I think, can also tap into those questions around motivation.

[00:08:18] Bonni: Did you say that there also was a second example you still draw from today?

[00:08:22] Deandra: Oh, it was developing the teaching assignment. Over the years, I've spent some time refining that assignment, getting them to think about why they want to teach particular elements of the text and what they're doing with it. It also selfishly brings together two things I love, one is teaching literature and one is talking about teaching and learning. It also gives me the opportunity to talk to students about approaching teaching hopefully in ways that are also connected to their own thinking about teaching and learning.

[00:08:55] Bonni: Your work today, of course, expands well beyond any of your individual classes and you have the opportunity to coach and guide not only faculty from your own institution but also that you've been involved in these different organizations. I can only imagine that you have ran across not just your own common challenges that you've faced but also in working with others. What

would you say are among the common challenges that we might have as faculty just around thinking through designing assignments?

[00:09:27] Deandra: A few come to mind. Some you've already touched on. If we're grading work that we find boring or that we keep getting the same unsatisfactory answers, then perhaps it is not actually testing the kinds of things or assessing the kinds of things that we really want, the kind of learning that we really want to see happening.

I think, two, another challenge is whether we're creating assignments that are really aligned with our goals. That may sound like a different way of saying the same thing I just said but if I'm really invested in critical thinking and getting students to think about mustering evidence to prove a particular argument, then I'm only giving them a multiple-choice exam. Then there's a misalignment between what I'm asking them to do and what kind of thinking I'm trying to create.

I think of a story that a colleague of mine tells that for her was a moment of insight. She's a historian, and synthetic thinking is really important in history. She spent the entire semester preparing them to think analytically, to analyze a text. Then the final exam was a synthetic moment, and students routinely didn't do well on it.

Her takeaway from that was too like, how do we give students practice? One common challenge that I see is we're not asking the students to practice the kind of thinking we are then grading them on or assessing them on in the end. There's a misalignment between the assignment and the learning, but also between the practice and the ultimate thing they're being graded on.

[00:11:05] Bonni: From your earlier story and then also from what you just shared, I have an example, and it's one that I just cringe that I'm about to share. [chuckles] It illustrates so many of the things that you're talking about. I'm teaching a class that's about personal leadership and productivity. We're reading a couple of different books, one of which is in the realm of productivity. It's called *Getting Things Done*. One of the things that the author, David Allen distinguishes between is what he calls a task or next action, he calls them versus the project.

Just like you were talking about that you want to be creating assignments that are building up to the kind of thinking that you want students to be able to know, the kind of language or skills. I had planned out in our synchronous session that we were going to read a few quick tips about how do you write better tasks? This idea of talking to future you.

Don't just say call John, but what are we calling John regarding, and if we don't already have his phone number in our contacts, putting it there, that kind of thing. Then I also wanted them to be able to distinguish between a next action and a project. I happen to have my air pods sitting next to me.

Sometimes you're trying to clarify something, you just look at what you've got, so I pulled it up and I said, "Okay, so I kept dropping these things over and over again, and I finally dropped them so many times that I needed to purchase a new pair. Purchasing a new pair of air pods, is that a task or project?" I think that this is an easy question. I asked them on Zoom, you have these little reactions. I said, "Okay, if you want to say that that's a task, do the clap hands thing. Then if you want to say that this is a project, then do that other thing."

Literally, one person would do it and then the next person, then you start to see it builds up, it's that-- I forget what that's called in psychology, but where others votes have influenced your votes and so they were all getting that wrong. They're all saying project. I'm like I thought this was a super easy thing to distinguish between.

Rather than tell them that they were wrong, I said, "I really need--" I did call on somebody, cold call they call it, "Would you share what you'd be thinking around? Help me understand this." He says, "Well, first, anybody would have to just save up enough money to buy the new pair of air pod." My heart. [chuckles]

That's what 100%, and they're like, "Yes, you got to save up your money again because you dropped your air pods too many times. Save up the money, and then once you have enough, you got to research so that you find the cheapest pair." Then, of course, in my thinking, I was just like, "Well, you just go and you just order it."

All this to say, you said we want to make sure that our assignments and in this case, a test that I thought had a right or wrong answer, but of course, did not is assessing the things that we actually want to measure. The other thing, of course, would be that they didn't get graded on this. They didn't get it wrong. I marked them all down minus-five points or whatever. That that was part of not just their learning process, but also mine.

[00:14:21] Deandra: I think that's such a nice example because it does a really good assignment, which is a really good assessment also teaches you something or tells the instructor something. As much as it tells you about what the students are learning, it's also telling you what they aren't learning. How you might have asked a faculty question rather than asking it a student question that they understand and think about.

You're reminding me too when you were talking about the language of task and project about the transparency and learning and teaching framework that came out ... work when she was at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. One of the things when I'm talking with colleagues too about creating effective assignments, we often use the framework that comes out of that. How do you clarify the purpose? How do you clarify the task? It's not project and task, but purpose and task.

Then how do you clarify the criteria being used to evaluate how clearly students or learners are meeting that? The interesting thing to me is that sometimes defining the purpose can be really hard for those of us who are experts. You just do it because this is the important thing, this is the way we have to think or this is the way our discipline does this thing, but the purpose can be the most important thing for students to understand because it tells them the why.

Why am I doing this? Why does this matter? Why is this more than busywork, the thing that you've assigned me to do? I'm shifting the task a little bit from that, but what you said made me think of that is that as an effective set of questions to think about, but sometimes what's the blind spot for those of us creating this?

[00:16:02] Bonni: Yes, and anyone who thinks that that is easy, is probably missing it. It's really something that haunts me in my own teaching. It's very challenging to do that. I just feel like it's a wrestling that we can never step away from, at least that's been my experience. Either that or I'm just terrible and everyone else has it figured out. In my experience, this is just an ongoing wrestling that I never really land anywhere for very long before I just start the wrestling again.

[00:16:29] Deandra: Yes, I agree. Well, and students keep changing and our context keeps changing. When you do have the perfect assignment, then the audience for that assignment or the questions that you're asking may have shifted slightly in a way that means you have to revisit it.

[00:16:45] Bonni: Yes, and of course, the time that we are all teaching and now with so much back and forth and so much individual trauma combined with a collective trauma, that's changing so much. I hope that one thing is that we are all doing just thinking about the essentials.

It really does go back to defining the purpose because you can't have 10,000 purposes. [chuckles] You really have to narrow this down both at the assignment level then also at the course level too.

[00:17:17] Deandra: Well, and also thinking about the purpose also helps you talk about meaning and meaning-making and what is meaningful. We all teach the things we teach because we think they matter. We go into our fields and our disciplines and our subject matter, because we think that it matters. It's also an opportunity for us to revisit, like why might it be meaningful in this particular moment in time and how do we prioritize the things that seem most meaningful, and how do we help students understand how what we're teaching can be used to find meaning or make meaning?

[00:17:51] Bonni: One of the things that I'm thinking about a lot is both in my own teaching, but also coaching faculty as well is just this idea of, I did a better job than I've ever done before of having more of my class done. By the time our classes started in August, I didn't get all the way a hundred percent there, but the

framework was there. I had a few asynchronous things to design and a few synchronous sessions still yet to go.

Just this idea of, I need to for my own sanity, I know so many of my colleagues, we do need to have that structure. We've got to be far enough ahead to just deal with the chaos that we're all facing. Yet, you also still want to leave enough room for what happened today, what happened this week?

To be able to more seamlessly integrate current events when appropriate in a given class, but I guess, can't really think of a given class when you can't bring in those things, but leaving those slices for assignments to draw.

That's, again, another approach. When we bring in the current events to reduce the incidence of lack of academic integrity, along with you said earlier, creating the motivation, that sense of meaning, significance. Do you have any advice for people around that kind of thing? How do you get it done enough that you can actually manage these assignments to get enough of it done while still leaving those slices of current stuff?

[00:19:19] Deandra: I think that's an excellent question. Some of it is, what you're talking about in terms of how do you think ahead to future you to October you, who may think, "Okay, a little flexibility in the schedule is helpful." Building a time in a given week or given class period, or in a given assignment to know that you might want to connect it in different ways.

Some of it to maybe thinking about those low stakes assignments. It's an opportunity to say, half the class, bring a headline tomorrow and let's talk about how that headline or how that newspaper article or tweet or whatever connects to what we're talking about in class.

How do we connect that to the content for today so that it's not a full-fledged assignment, necessarily, if you don't have time or a lot of elbow room within the content that you're teaching that semester to make room for it, but you still make those connections and help students understand how those conversations are

connected to this other assignment that may not be radically altered, but that is now connected.

[00:20:28] Bonni: I did something so similar to what you're describing in January of 2020. I taught January through May. It was this week in business news, and the class was business ethics. They would each get a sticky note and then they would write their story up. You should have seen it. [laughs] It's not funny, but oh, my God, I wish I would have taken-- I think I did take pictures.

I should go back so I could visually show this. When Coronavirus mentioned of the 25 stickies on the wall to 10%, 100%. Part of it was I really struggled because that class was not a class about misinformation. That class was not a class about evaluating the credibility of one's headlines that they've brought in, but I'm really struggling with and thinking about because I'll be teaching the class again. The sticky notes is easy. We'll do it on digital sticky notes, instead of actual sticky notes up parts.

I got that part down, but just this idea of I can't solve all of the world's problems around misinformation, but I got to do something better than I did. Just up our game a little bit so that we don't have the conspiracy theories up there. It's on all these different topics, and some of which I know about, and some of which I don't. It was really a challenge. That's probably the hardest thing that I'm thinking about for this coming year.

[00:21:50] Deandra: Yes, and which of those are directly connected to your learning outcomes for the class and which are not?

[00:21:58] Bonni: Yes.

[00:21:59] Deandra: Education learning outcomes that are connected to.

[00:22:03] Bonni: It's like I'm trying to solve a much bigger problem. That should go beyond a class and isn't even one of the learning outcomes. Yes, it's so tough.

[00:22:13] Deandra: There's also the individual academic values that we're connecting to too.

[00:22:19] Bonni: Yes.

[00:22:20] Deandra: Which I think sometimes can be the question to ask ourselves like, is this informing an assignment? Is this informing an activity or a conversation in class? Both of them are important, but they have a different weight or different scope and have a different scope in the class.

[00:22:36] Bonni: I like that you said that because you're helping me realize that-- I tend to have want to have most things somehow have a backbone of being assessed in some way, but they don't have to do it 100%. If I allowed myself a little freedom to feel like, it doesn't necessarily have to be assessed, but could they gain a few of these skills in either low stakes or no stakes opportunity? That's something for me to think about for sure.

I'm excited about this next question because you've done this work for so long, and you get to talk to so many people, and then it's so close to your own mind and your own heart as well. Could you talk about an example of a person or if you've got a couple of people in mind that are really truly doing something novel in assessment design that might inspire us in some ways?

[00:23:21] Deandra: I can think of a couple of examples. One seems appropriate on a podcast to talk about, in that is a podcast assignment. I have two colleagues in our Department of Human Service studies, which is like our social work department on campus, developed two different podcast assignments for students in classes that have community partners.

Their students are interviewing community partners and thinking about a range of issues connected to course content, but in partnership with community partners, and then it becomes public in particular ways that have been-- They're sanctioned by the community partners as well. They've created this assignment in the first year course and in the capstone course so that they can also use it as a measure of assessment to see how students have developed, how their professional identity formation has happened over four years. How they're thinking ethically or reciprocally about work with community partners over four years.

The assignments are different. It's not the exact same podcast, but they're similar enough that they can see and measure and compare learning across that time. It was really exciting. It was a really interesting assignment, and it connected to their departmental goals around diversity, equity, and inclusion. Then Corona happened in the spring and community engaged courses were being taught in totally different ways.

One of the things they did is pivot the assignment to actually have their students talking to the community partners about how is the coronavirus affecting the community members that you work with? How is it affecting the issues that you work on as a nonprofit? That was an assignment that's been really interesting to see both how they created it, and how they've structured it, how they use it a bookend, or to understand learning in the first year on the fourth year of a program, and then how they've been able to pivot with it.

I think one other assignment that's just really creative, I think is interesting it's a colleague who teaches literature from the Enlightenment period, it's 17th-century British literature. It's a language that students don't necessarily read quickly or easily. He turned it into a food studies course. In addition to reading, he teaches in a classroom where there's a kitchen attached.

In addition to reading and thinking about literature from the era, they're also cooking recipes from the same time and talking about things like how the pineapple becomes then a symbol of the empire for Britain during the time period. By the end, the final assignment, students are creating a menu that's a medley that both puts together ingredients they've talked about, but also puts together course concepts in ways that demonstrate their understanding. It's fun, and it's tasty.

[laughter]

Pretty awesome assignment.

[00:26:07] Bonni: Oh, these stories are so rich. I'm thinking about the number of times food has come up as an example in this podcast. I'd love to even just do a little analysis of that because it can enrich learning experiences in such powerful ways.

I'll just tell a quick story that I think I may have told in another episode, but I'll tell a quick in case this is someone's first time listening. [laughs]

I had an assignment, the same class I shared about earlier, the productivity class. I just needed to assess. It was a really simple assessment, took the students about 30 seconds to do it and me about 30 seconds to check it off. I needed to see that they could invite someone on a calendar invite. I had them invite me to a fictitious thing, we're not going to actually do this thing, but somebody took me to Paris and somebody else took me, I got to go for a fictitious walk on a beach and one student invited me to eat a food item from her family.

It introduced me to a part of her culture that I didn't know and I looked up what the food is and actually, I didn't even have to have done that because she put a picture of it in another assignment. You see how these assignments can bleed into other assignments. You just start to really get to know your students.

Even in this time of teaching, I feel like I know these students so much better than I ever have known students before, and I really know students pretty well in past classes. Just because of these little assignments were the parts of their life get to come and enter into it. That was one example of one that I just tripped over.

Anyway, all these things having to do with food is so intriguing. This colleague of yours just sounds, "What an amazing thing to have done that." All of a sudden, 17th-century literature starts to sound interesting to me, and candidly, it didn't before you added the pineapple into it.

[laughter]

Oh, I love that. Well, before we go to the recommendations segment, let's just talk a little bit about overwhelm. When we hear about pineapples, and when we hear about podcasts and all that might be entailed because I'm sure that that first assignment, they've put so much thought and so much work until you couldn't have pivoted that well if they didn't already have the roots established for something like that.

For some of us, it just feels too overwhelming. Can we shrink this a little bit? Could you give us some advice around one small thing a person in their classes could do to get just a little bit better when it comes to assignment design? Something to shrink it down for us that we can have a starting point.

[00:28:46] Deandra: I do think the purpose task model is helpful because you can take an existing assignment and begin to think about how do I tweak it to make sure that I'm making really clear, here's why I'm asking you to do the thing I'm doing. Then I then also begin to think about well, why am I having them do that? Are there other tiny tweaks that I could make that may move it closer to that?

I do think too thinking about whether we're asking students to do authentic work. I always like to describe it to my students because they think it's really bizarre for me to say it, but I'm asking you to do what literary scholars in the wild do all the time. It's just silly to think about. Also, this is authentically how people are using the information that we're talking about and the contexts they use it and a real audience they use it for.

Sometimes even another relatively easy thing to do is to think about how do I help students understand an audience other than me that they're doing this assignment for? Maybe that holds true more for things other than multiple choice exams. Those are harder to build an audience around but even within those, you can ask a problem set that's giving them a more authentic audience for the kind of problem you're then asking them to solve so they can visualize an audience who would use the information that they are writing up or solving for you.

[00:30:16] Bonni: Too often, we decide collectively, that the audience or the context is going to be that next stage in someone's academic experience. Oh, well, you have to write this way because you're going to go into a Masters program, a Doctoral program. Do you really know what percentage of your students are we serving them well, if we make that assumption that 100% of what we're doing is prepare them for a context that they quite likely may not go into ever but especially not perhaps immediately when they're done with their undergraduate?

Of course, I'm speaking, we have lots of people listening that teach in grad programs, et cetera. Just thinking about narrowing our context to what we understand, versus expanding our own imaginations for our students context, which is incredibly hard to do but such crucial work.

[00:31:03] Deandra: Yes, definitely.

[00:31:05] Bonni: This is the time in the show where we each get to share our recommendations. One thing I have loved always is just the beautiful writing that faculty do to their students. There's also some atrocious writing so some of you may have heard of these dear student letters. I wouldn't google dear student letters in general but some people have tried to counteract some of those really disparaging views of the people we serve and written their own beautifully written dear students.

The example I have today is not a dear student letter but it just draws from that body of writing that I treasure so much. This one is from someone I don't know but Brandon Bayne from UNC-Chapel Hill. I'll put it in the show notes so everybody else can go enjoy this. This is part of his syllabus for a class and it's called an Adjusted Syllabus. He doesn't have the entire syllabus here but the important part for us today is around five principles that he writes about. This is to really share with his students. It just oozes with empathy.

He says, principle number one, nobody signed up for this, not for the sickness, not for the social distancing, not for the sudden end of our collective lives together on campus, not for an online class, not for teaching remotely, not for learning from home, not for mastering new technologies, not for varied access to learning materials.

The second principle, the humane option is the best option. We're going to prioritize supporting each other as humans. We're going to prioritize simple solutions that make sense for the most. We're going to prioritize sharing resources and communicating clearly.

Number three, we cannot just do the same thing online. Some assignments are no longer possible. Some expectations are no longer reasonable. Some objectives are no longer valuable. Number four, we will foster intellectual nourishment, social connection, and personal accommodation, accessible asynchronous content for diverse access, time zones and contexts.

Optional synchronous discussion to learn together and combat isolation.

We will remain flexible and this is number five and adjust to the situation. Nobody knows where this is going, and what we'll need to adapt. Everybody needs support and understanding in this unprecedented moment. That's my recommendation for today. Deandra, I'm going to pass it over to you for yours.

[00:33:37] Deandra: What's fun is that we didn't talk about our recommendations beforehand, because I think mine connects some to at least the spirit of that passage you read. I had a colleague here who asked me to be her accountability buddy for this 10-day Lovingkindness Challenge with Sharon Salzberg, who does a lot of teaching and talking and has at least 10 books about different meditation practices.

It's a series of videos and she describes the series as guided meditation practices to help you cultivate love, compassion, joy, and equanimity for anyone looking for ways to find solid ground and greater serenity during our turbulent times. It's one thing I would recommend right now that it's been a challenge.

It was a 10-day challenge for me and it's been helpful to think about other ways to respond rather than fear and anxiety in a time when so much seems uncertain and so much seems so easy to push us in that direction.

[00:34:37] Bonni: I love that so much and I want to comment on it but before I do, I am cracking up at myself, because I finished with sharing the recommendation, and then I started listening very intently to you. My eyes caught the line after the link that I posted to Brandon Bayne's Adjusted Syllabus and it says, "Retweeted from Deandra." Apparently, my recommendation actually should be a credit to you so I

think I discovered Brandon's Adjusted Syllabus from you on Twitter and I didn't mention that before sharing. [laughs]

At least I caught myself plagiarizing from social media before the show has ended so I apologize for that. What I love about what you just shared with the 10-day Lovingkindness and some of your reflections on it is just that, I have to be careful how I say this, in the sense of so many of us, are experiencing things that we're not choosing. Just the way that you said that, it's just a reminder that when we do these practices we do, have an opportunity to an extent to make a different choice.

My husband took the kids on a Grand Canyon trip. He sent me a photograph of them next to the Grand Canyon, and then my fear of heights just took over and all of a sudden, I'm swimming in my own anxiety and panic. Then I literally was able to just do like, is this how you would like to spend the rest of your day?

I was able to calm myself down. I did also have a picture of them where they weren't standing next to the Grand Canyon. [laughs] I do you think-- Again, I try not to put this on other people but I find it helpful to think for myself like is this how you would like to spend your time?

Meditations like the one you're sharing can really help with that. This just sounds amazing. I can't wait to go explore it myself and to tell other people about it and not credit you. [laughs]

This has been such a joy-filled conversation. I'm so glad to have been connected with you and you were actually recommended for the show a gazillion years ago and finally got in touch with you. That happens sometimes with podcast guests but I'm so glad we're connected and a pleasure to have this conversation today.

[00:36:52] Deandra: I've really enjoyed it.

[music]

[00:36:57] Bonni: Hello, everyone. I have a special guest with me today to close out the episode.

[00:37:02] Hannah: My name is Hannah and I sometimes call myself Meow Meow.

[00:37:07] Bonni: We both would like to thank today's guest Deandra Little, for joining me on today's episode and Hannah wants to thank everybody for listening.

[00:37:18] Hannah: Thank you and watch mommy's episodes that are coming soon.

[00:37:24] Bonni: Yes, they come every week, don't they, Hannah? Rain or shine?

[00:37:27] Hannah: I never knew that.

[00:37:28] Bonni: Pandemic or no pandemic, they just keep on coming every week.

[00:37:36] Hannah: Okay, bye everyone.

[00:37:37] Bonni: Bye everyone. Happy listening.

[00:37:40] Hannah: Meow.

[music]

[00:37:56] [END OF AUDIO]

The transcript of this episode has been made possible through a financial contribution by the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE). ACUE is on a mission to ensure student success through quality instruction. In partnership with institutions of higher education nationwide, ACUE supports and credentials faculty members in the use of evidence-based teaching practices that drive student engagement, retention, and learning.

Teaching in Higher Ed transcripts are created using a combination of an automated transcription service and human beings. This text likely will not represent the precise, word-for-word conversation that was had. The accuracy of the transcripts will vary. The authoritative record of the Teaching in Higher Ed podcasts is contained in the audio file.