Bonni Stachowiak [00:00:00]:
Today, on episode number 580 of the teaching in Higher Ed podcast, the Joy of Embodied Learning with Leslie Bayers.

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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. I'm so pleased to be welcoming to the show today. Dr. Leslie Bayers. She's the director of the center for Teaching and Learning at the University of Pacific, where she promotes equity minded and evident informed teaching and facilitates faculty mentoring and scholarship support.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:01:06]:
Before shifting her focus to educational development, she was a faculty member in Spanish and Latin American studies and taught language, writing, literature, and film courses. She's published in Critical Exploring Intersections of Power, Race, and Performance in Andean Literature, as well as in translations of Peruvian poetry. Her more recent scholarship questions inherited practices in higher ed and explores frameworks that empower college teachers and learners. Most recently, and the topic for today's interview, she contributed the Joy of Embodied Learning to the book Joy Centered Pedagogy in Higher Uplifting Teaching and Learning for all, edited by Eileen Camfield. Leslie Bayers, welcome to Teaching in Higher Ed.

Leslie Bayers [00:01:59]:
Thank you, Bonni. It's so wonderful to be here. I'm a longtime listener and fan of the podcast and thrilled to be having this conversation with you.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:02:07]:
I'm glad to be having this conversation about a book that I loved so much and specifically today on your chapter the Joy of Embodied Learning, and you invite

us into that conversation in the chapter with a question, and it's one that I'd like to pose to you now. Throughout your academic journey, what explicit or implicit messages did you receive about the role of the body in our learning?

Leslie Bayers [00:02:39]:
Yeah, I wanted to open with a question because it's one that really drew me to delving into this literature and I was so grateful to be able to contribute to this book. In terms of explicit messages, very little. The evidence of the critical role that movement plays in brain health and learning was simply not in the mainstream. I think there may have been some vague sort of healthy body, healthy mind messaging, but that was tangled up with some 80s and 90s diet and fitness culture, which frankly wasn't always very healthy. I certainly wasn't taught body literacy in school, and what I mean by that is sort of how to read the internal signals that body might be communicating. The agency that I Had to translate some of those cues in either motivating or empowering ways. The ways that I could activate my body to support and strengthen learning, the importance of resting my body when necessary to sustain learning, and so many other things that I think we'll talk about today. What I had absorbed were so many implicit messages, and they varied depending on context.

Leslie Bayers [00:03:47]:
So, for example, as I sat in lecture hall seats, fixed lecture hall seats facing other students, backs looking forward, or even smaller classrooms with that very traditional setup, I learned that hard thinking happens in the brain and that the body should be quiet and still to learn that connecting with other bodies in the room was not a priority. Interestingly, however, the professor's body was often in motion. So I also learned a little bit of an embodied hierarchy there. These kinds of learning contexts solidified a view of learning as transactional and classrooms as spaces perhaps more concerned with compliance than creativity, curiosity, and connection. In other classes, however, I had the opportunity to engage my body and to interact meaningfully with different sensory textures, with movement, with others in the room. And I'm thinking in particular about my undergraduate language classes. I ended up becoming a Spanish professor. And there's a reason for it that I felt very alive in those classrooms.

Leslie Bayers [00:04:55]:
And I didn't have the language of embodied learning then, but these spaces shaped the work that I was drawn to and the kind of learning that was joyful to me.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:05:08]:

And as you think about a shift from what you were taught, implicitly or explicitly, as you said, mostly implicitly, and then thinking about going into the role of a teacher, what did you notice about the impact of environments on students bodies and on those learning experiences?

Leslie Bayers [00:05:30]:
Yeah, I'm fortunate that as a language teacher, I've often had the privilege of teaching smaller classes in more flexible spaces that do allow for the kinds of embodied connections that I celebrate. In this chapter, students engaging with each other, with objects, with movement, with music and the like, and the energy when those kinds of connections can happen, is tangible and joyful. But I've also taught in some joyless spaces. We've, we've all been there with drab concrete walls, immovable, unaccommodating furniture, flickering fluorescent lights, no windows, podiums at the front that can feel like really powerful magnets for whoever's teaching. And I've. I've been on that end of the scenario too, where you're just drawn to that, to that podium, and it feels like it's telling you how to teach. And that further entrenches that sense of distance between the teacher and students. And I Think between everybody in the room and their own embodiment.

Leslie Bayers [00:06:36]:
So these spaces are the opposite of enlivening. They encourage passivity in and a disconnect between learners. So yeah, I've noticed both the ways that spaces and our practices too can spark joyful embodiment in the ways that they can be really disembodying.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:06:55]:
I was thinking as you were describing that even just something as simple but as profound a message as a podium, and then of course all the different kinds of podiums that exist there. And then also as you were sharing, I was thinking about how we really don't tend. At least I can't think of a time when I've ever heard anyone discuss this whole phenomenon of not knowing what to do with our hands. But then if we get up and we have maybe haven't done public speaking in a while, I can certainly recall the first keynote that I gave after we were back more doing in person events after the COVID 19 pandemic. And then all of a sudden rediscovering, oh no, I have once again forgotten what to do with my. Yeah, but then the podium is kind of a way in which we might feel that we, we, we might hide, we might want to retain perhaps not even being aware of wanting to come back to retain some of our pet sense of power or I mean all of that. There's just so much that the physical things in that room that we interact with them whether we realize it or not.

Leslie Bayers [00:08:02]:
Yeah, and that's unfortunate because there's a lot of evidence about the power of. So you mentioned what do we do with our hands? But what I've learned in del do the research on embodied cognition is to embrace that. That those gestures are a way for me to tap into thoughts that perhaps I'm not able to articulate yet. They've been described by some researchers as sort of a bridge between cognition and action. And that's something that we might get into a little bit more in a bit.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:08:30]:
Yes. I also will tell listeners that I too enjoy using gestures, but though I have been coached to use them, you know, as a gesture and not as just a nervous infliction and even just the lightest touching together of the tips of one's fingers, allowing our hands to rest quietly by the sides of our body can then allow us to gesture more naturally that the conversation might be inviting us to do so. To me, it just feels so much more natural if I can start out in that neutral pose, perhaps take a breath and then allow my body to communicate what it really wants to communicate, which is messages about what I'm sharing and not messages about perhaps being terrified or some. Or, you know, the discomfort of a new community of learners and. And all the. The flurry of nerves that we sometimes get. Well, before we get too far, Leslie, I want to ask you about something that isn't necessarily the focus of your chapter, but I do just want us to just to talk about a bit. And that is, could you just reiterate for us some of the evidence that medical research and other types of research tell us about sedentary lifestyles?

Leslie Bayers [00:09:49]:
Yeah, I'm really glad that you asked this question because as you mentioned, I say at the outset of this piece of writing that my focus is not on exercise per se, or the irrefutable evidence around the impact of sedentary lifestyles. And that's really just being. Because I want this chapter to be an invitation to bring embodiment into the classroom at a very small, accessible scale. I'm not saying we should all be doing jumping jack. Well, maybe we're PE teachers and we should be. But I do think it's important to note that the average adult in the US Sits for different sources will cite different numbers, but it's looking like nine to nine and a half hours a day of sitting, and that's in our waking hours. And our classrooms encourage more of that. So this is connected to what I talk about in the chapter, bringing the body back into the classroom.

Leslie Bayers [00:10:42]:
And the cost of that much sitting ranges from sore backs and perhaps, you know, sore bodies to chronic disease and mental health challenges, and again, a sense of disconnect from each other in the room and so much more. And so

that in and of itself is a really powerful rationale for disrupting sedentarism. However we can, if we look at CDC estimates and alongside the current physical activity guidelines put out by the government, the majority of us are not meeting them, the minimum guidelines to support physical and mental health. So about 1 in 4 adults and 1 in 5 adolescents in the US are meeting those guidelines. If we look at the World Health Organization data, the numbers are pretty similar. Adults do a little bit better by those measures, but still, about 70% of adults are simply not moving enough in that data. We also see that 80% of adolescents are not meeting the recommended levels of physical activity. So this is obviously associated with increasing aches and pains, chronic disease, widespread mental health challenges, and there are other costs that we might not always be thinking about.

Leslie Bayers [00:11:58]:
So Katy Bowman is a movement teacher. She's a biomechanist whose work has really inspired me because I teach movement as well as and gives a book, Movement Matters. And I'm going to quote her here. She says sedentarism is very much linked to consumerism, materialism, colonialism, and the destruction of the planet. If you're not moving, someone else is moving for you, either directly or indirectly, by making stuff to make not moving easier on you. And some of that stuff is digital devices, which we know that's having the impact in terms of sedentary lifestyles. And I want to make a really clear distinction between convenience and accessible design. Accessible design is so critical.

Leslie Bayers [00:12:41]:
What we're talking about here are built environments that discourage movement. And I think it's also important to mention along those lines that this is not about individual shame or blame. Our work, educational, community, and leisure environments tend to discourage movement. And I myself am not immune to this. I might do a workout in the morning and then go sit at my desk for eight hours. And then I get home and I feel really drained and I'm really drawn to the couch. So this is a fundamental sort of human conundrum in that we are wired to conserve energy. That's part of our biological underpinning.

Leslie Bayers [00:13:20]:
So it's in our nature to move as little as necessary for survival. At the same time, we used to have to move a lot more for survival. Our brains evolved in the context of hunting and gathering, and our bigger brains developed alongside the increasing complexity of those pursuits. And so we feel and also think better when we move. So these are great arguments to bring more embodiment into the classroom.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:13:52]:
And that's a perfect segue then, for us to think about what might we do with that information? What might we do with that data? How can it transform how we think about teaching?

Leslie Bayers [00:14:05]:
Yeah, I think about the role of the body in designing learning experiences much more since delving into this research, including research on embodied cognition, which I think we might talk about in a little bit. But on the one hand, I'm more mindful of offering options to support different energy levels and physical needs in the classroom. So I think that has to always be where we start and when feasible, I try to get students moving or engaged with sensory textures as much as possible to spark learning. So as I said before, I'm not suggesting that we should be asking our students to exercise in the classroom per se. Again, unless we're PE teachers, that might be appropriate, or that it should be all movement, all the time. Rest is really important too. But I do look for opportunities in classes to support students in tuning into the body, to stand up and break up those nine, nine and a half sedentary hours to connect with their spaces, with tools in those spaces, with communities, other bodies in those spaces to nurture learning. And I try to do so transparently so that my students understand and can start to leverage the ways that the body can support learning to make it more explicit for them than it was for me.

Leslie Bayers [00:15:30]:
I knew what felt good and what didn't feel good, but I didn't really know why. And so I tried to share some sound bites from the research to help them have more body literacy than I did. And I also seek out opportunities to get students outside of the classroom when that's feasible and appropriate. I was very fortunate to lead students on study tours to Ecuador a couple of times. So I've seen the impact of immersive place based learning. But we can translate some of that to our own campuses as well. Taking advantage of outdoor spaces if we have them taking students to more novel spaces and not that we want all new all the time. I talk about this balance between a sense of predictability and safety of whatever the learning space is the classroom, but then also changing things up with either outdoor spaces or I've taken students to the campus art gallery, held classes there, for example.

Leslie Bayers [00:16:33]:
Or just encouraging students to go outside. They can do a think pair share outside just as easily as they can do it in the classroom. They can do their group work in another space that might spark some openness and creativity that might not be there in some of those less inspiring spaces that we talked about

earlier. So there are lots of smaller scale ways that we can spark learning with, with different environments and also just bringing movement and sensory texture into the classroom.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:17:07]:
I like how I'm hearing a theme of some wanting to give people permission to tune in to their own needs. And so there's the individual permission to and a transparent way that to know that that's okay. But then at least in my experience, and I suspect probably anyone who's tried this, it isn't until you actually start making invitations to the group as a whole that you're likely to get too many people taking you up on the invitation. You said something very small that I just want to bring back because it's. It's big but I don't want people to miss it that left to our own devices, human beings where we evolved to be sitting in one place. So the it sometimes there needs to be that group pressure of oh, we're all standing up now and we Are all going to play sticky notes on the, you know, map in the wall or back on the wall to, you know, indicate our reflection on something. Or we're all going to, as you mentioned, go outside or. I used to give exams in class.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:18:11]:
I don't tend to give. I don't mostly I'm teaching online these days, but. But I. Halfway through the exam. Okay, this is my little, little break. If you all would just stand up or we're going to do. We're going to kind of, you know, a little. A little physical.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:18:24]:
Physical break. It really only worked if I had everyone do it, you know, versus just if you feel like standing up is going to be a whole different thing, then let's all stand up. You know, if able. Of course, you. You do want to add in if you're. If you're able to. But having those bold proclamations that now is the time where we are going to move, I found works really well. You started to touch embodied cognition.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:18:48]:
Tell us what that is and why we might care about it.

Leslie Bayers [00:18:52]:
Yeah, I will do my best to summarize it here. It is a vast research program in many different disciplines, but I think it helps to actually start with a contrast. So if you do a Google image search for cognition or thinking, it's very likely that you'll see on your screen a bunch of pictures of brains or heads, which reflects a broader conception of the brain as the center and controller of cognition. This

was really reinforced by cognitive theories of learning that see the brain almost like a computer or a central processor, manipulating inputs and symbols and then dispatching actions. In this scenario, the body and its associated feelings are not only separate from, but also secondary to the brain. So here the body becomes more of an object, something that we have rather than something that we are or sort of a process of being. And that enhances a sense of disconnect not only from our own bodies, but also other bodies in our environments. And so embodied cognition theories offer a different perspective.

Leslie Bayers [00:20:07]:
And they, in fact, see bodily sensations and movements and experiences as very central to cognitive processes. There is a constant electrical, chemical, and mechanical flow of communication happening in the body. So there's movement happening on the inside all the time, much of it below our level of consciousness. But this tells us that the body is an intelligent system. It's constantly turning dials to keep us alive and thriving. And the brain is part of that system. So I'm not trying to displace the importance of the brain. Perception emerges through predictive interpretations of a combination of these internal goings on and external stimuli.

Leslie Bayers [00:20:52]:
And so in this sense, embodied cognition questions the idea that our bodies end with our skin. It's not only inward looking, but it's also outward looking. It encourages us to transcend perceived boundaries or slicing and dicing both within our bodies and and around our bodies, and pushes us to think in terms of interdependent systems. There is evidence, again, from a variety of disciplines. There are so many studies happening and kind of an explosion of research around embodied cognition. But I'll just mention a few examples of where the evidence is coming from. I mean, first of all, I think this is one that we all probably know and have felt in our own bodies. But the degree to which learning is accessible depends on the body and the environment it's in.

Leslie Bayers [00:21:41]:
So we all know how learning is impacted by whether we're tired or well rested, hungry or nourished, feeling threatened or safe, and other sensations in the body. In addition to that, we can tap into the body to shift our perception and our openness to learning and connection. And these are some of the things that I would hope that students would also start to appreciate. Studies verify the ways that, for example, slouching versus sitting up straight shifts our state of mind. We can shift our thoughts and feelings by manipulating our breath. There's a lot of evidence that abstract thinking is grounded in the body. So we talked a little bit about gesture earlier. I'm fascinated by studies of how gesture can help

us arrive at thoughts before we're able to verbalize them and help us remember concepts.

Leslie Bayers [00:22:31]:
Other kinds of movement beyond gesture can create physiological and psychological responses that shift our thinking. So there's a lot of evidence that standing up, some of the activities we were just talking about and engaging in light movement, like walking, boosts attention, memory, creative thinking, and executive functioning. And then if we are sort of looking outward, even beyond the classroom, there's really good evidence that thinking in outdoor spaces boosts our cognitive strengths and our creative thinking. The more access we have to different kinds of affordances, which are just tools that allow us to sometimes offload our thinking. So this might be a whiteboard, it might be a smartphone. It could be a piece of poster paper or a sticky note. These can extend our thinking and sort of allow us to set aside things that might be getting in the way of what we need to be holding in our working memory in the moment. So, and I'll just mention a couple more, there's some really exciting work in collective neuroscience that demonstrates how shared attention and synchronized movement.

Leslie Bayers [00:23:41]:
So if we can get our students to share attention. And maybe some of those gestures are done together. Or there might be other ways that we can bring synchronized movement into the classroom, strengthen empathy and collaboration. And some researchers have actually witnessed heartbeats and brainwaves syncing up through these moments of shared experience. So. And again, I think many of us have felt the sense of being on the same wavelength with somebody else or in the flow. And we now have brain imaging to help us understand why that's happening and what's happening. So I think this brings us back to where I started.

Leslie Bayers [00:24:25]:
Is that how we feel? Absolutely shapes if and how we learn. And we felt this in our bodies, Many of us.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:24:33]:
There's another part of the chapter that resonated so much. But before we get to it, I wanted to just remind people about this phrase that you use, but I first heard about from Karen Costa called the scope of practice. And so would you first tell us what a scope of practice is and then I'm going to quote you and we can talk more about it?

Leslie Bayers [00:24:54]:
Yeah. And I actually cite Karen Costa the first time I mentioned that phrase in the chapter because I really appreciate how she's brought that. That concept into conversations about teaching and really thinking about what is within my scope of practice as an educator. So kind of figuring out what that line is between supporting students and stepping outside of what we should be doing based on our expertise. So this phrase first became a part of my own vocabulary as a movement teacher. I've been teaching Pilates for about a decade now, and I've completed several movement teacher trainings and certifications. And scope of practice is always part of that conversation. My Pilates students might ask me to speculate about injuries, for example.

Leslie Bayers [00:25:42]:
And while it is within my scope of practice to suggest ways of moving that can support somebody who might be working through an injury or a chronic condition with doctor's approval, it's way out of my scope of practice to be diagnosing an injury. I learned the phrase when in doubt, refer out early on. And I think this conveys really well to academic teaching spaces as well. And it is something that's important for us to think about. I'm not a mental health professional. It's out of my scope of practice to support students in that way. But I can create a supportive environment and conditions for them to feel safe and welcome and open to learning.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:26:24]:
Yes. So much. And so I'll quote from you in just a moment. But you're. I think it can be so difficult for people who. For whom these things might feel so scary. You know, it perhaps if you have not ever been up close and personal with depression or anxiety or a death. I mean, of course now we're really talking about no one, right? But I mean these things can be.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:26:45]:
If you, if you feel so much, if you embrace this idea that it's totally outside your scope of practice, we wouldn't want to just be making someone feel rejected. So I think it's nice if we can have a little being able to name something such that we might better promote that help seeking behavior. So I'm going to read from you now. And the, the quote goes all the way back to you talking about even just checking in with how people are feeling. So I quote from you now. Opportunities to anonymously share how students are feeling via a poll, for example, can foster mutual care. And this is where we get to the scope of practice part. If a student shares something that falls outside of your scope, practice to support, you will then have an opportunity to connect them to campus resources.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:27:39]:
So another concern related to all this might be, hey, this seems like, you know, I teach chemistry or I teach history, I teach computer science. I don't have this kind of time and it's totally not in my scope of practice. How might you address that kind of concern that this could take a long time?

Leslie Bayers [00:27:57]:
Yeah, I think this is such a great question and I have so many reasons why I think it's worth taking that moment to check in. First, it's just a moment to allow students to transition to the here and now. Right. Given the social and academic. Some of the social and academic settings that we've discussed that do tend to be more disembodying. Our students might not see their feelings as relevant to learning. And that's why I think some instructors might not see that as relevant to the teacher teaching and learning event. But they are.

Leslie Bayers [00:28:30]:
And inviting our students to tune into how they're feeling can serve a number of purposes. I think I want to start by saying though, this is always an invitation. We've been using the invitation, the word invitation a lot in this conversation and I think it's so important to stress that, that it's an invitation. But we are not asking anybody to engage in practices that don't feel safe to them. And we're not asking them to disclose anything that they're not comfortable disclosing. But if we invite to just check in with how they're feeling, then first they might notice ways that they can support their bodies in learning. Am I tired? Am I hungry? Would more sleep or a snack before class or during class, help me focus. Am I feeling restless? Would standing up help me learn better? Maybe I need to fidget a little bit to be able to focus.

Leslie Bayers [00:29:22]:
On the other hand, am I, like, riding a weight of joy and really primed to learn? And I'm excited about that and I want to go with that. How could I replicate that in the future? So maybe there are feelings that could be set aside in the moment to support learning. Maybe I want to check in and just to myself acknowledge that something's going on and that maybe I can set it aside just for the class session to be able to focus on learning. That might not always be appropriate, though. And this is where maybe a student will let you know that they're struggling with something and they need support. And so having those resources on hand to be able to refer them when something does fall out of your scope of practice to support. I think that giving students a moment to check in with how they're feeling signals that they matter. It signals care.

Leslie Bayers [00:30:13]:
So that's one reason this sort of checking in can also help students develop emotional literacy. And here I really draw on the work of Lisa Feldman Barrett in considering how tuning into our inner feelings interoception, so just the sensations in the body and then thinking about ways to name and sometimes maybe reframe those sensations can be empowering. So one of the examples I talk about in my chapter is my development of public speaking nerves a few years into my faculty career when I should have been feeling pretty good about life and about where I was at. And it kind of took me by surprise because I had left graduate school feeling really confident and ready to take on the academic world. And I started experiencing these debilitating cases of nerves anytime I would do a conference presentation or even a guest lecture in a. In a colleague's classroom, where in theory, I should have felt really comfortable. And what I learned to do was take those butterflies and that sense of racing heartbeat that I was feeling and reframe it from, oh my gosh, I don't belong here. Who am I to be talking about this? What am I doing here? And then everything just shutting down to reading those as signals of excitement of me really caring about the topic and wanting to connect with people in the room about it.

Leslie Bayers [00:31:45]:
And so just shifting into a more positive framing of those feelings that could be really empowering to students in so many scenarios, maybe for presentations or if they're doing an exam or really anything that kind of gives them that nervous feeling, to have some agency over it. And Reframe it in a positive way. I think checking in at the beginning of class can also establish a baseline to help students notice how the activities that we invite them to engage in. And I'm thinking specifically about embodied activities, some of the things we were talking about before standing up, maybe stepping outside, engaging in ways that perhaps our ingrained educational habits haven't promoted. If we have that baseline of how I'm feeling now in class, and then we invite them to reflect on how did you feel after we all stood up and you talked to a few different people? You started to connect on these issues and share ideas and hear ideas that might help them notice the ways that leveraging the body in different ways can create smart creativity, bring feelings of joy and connection, help them focus and remember. Or maybe they're kind of using the body in a different way to create more calm. Right. So just being able to notice how they might be able to turn some dials to find more joy in the learning.

Leslie Bayers [00:33:16]:
And then I think one more thing I'd like to say here is talking about how we feel in class and I think about this. I've done this particularly toward the beginning of

the semester, but it's worth doing it throughout is sort of a reminder that learning won't always feel great. Learning is incredibly hard work. It's one of the things that does drain the body of energy. That creates some friction. Again, we've all experienced those moments of needing to push through the friction to get to the other side and feel that sense of satisfaction and joy of learning. I think helping students to notice when that's happening and to be okay with that. Here, I think it's important to distinguish between comfort and safety.

Leslie Bayers [00:34:04]:
We want to always create those conditions of safety, but help them to embrace the discomfort that learning sometimes brings and to notice that and then to notice what happens on the other side of it.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:34:19]:
I'm going to actually transition us now to the part of the show where we each share our recommendations because mine relates to what you were just saying. I'm going to make an invitation. I'm going to make an invitation, a continued invitation to myself as well as to anyone listening who we may have convinced ourselves that we don't have time for these sorts of things. And in my case, what I had convinced myself for many years I didn't have time to do was to stretch. And listeners to recent episodes will know that there's a happy ending to that story and that I have managed, in fact, real time update. Leslie. This will be totally out of order. Because I don't.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:34:56]:
I do not update the episodes in order. But I'm going to go to the app which I've recommended previously called Bend. It's worked really well for me. It's a stretching and flexibility app that has been spectacular. And I'm going to go and see this is just something if you know me, you know I love streaks. So yes, as of today, 67 days in a row of stretching and what made it work, really shrinking it down. So to say that I stretched in a day is to have done some sort of stretching for four minutes. You want to tell me that you don't have four minutes in a day? Okay, let's reframe this.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:35:34]:
It's an invitation to rethink what we do or don't have time to do. So maybe perhaps even in your teaching, specific to Leslie's advice, could we have 60 seconds out of a class to invite some of the benefits that she described to us both in terms of combating the sedentary lifestyle and also just in terms of the other benefits that she talked about with embodied cognition. So I would just, that's my invitation is it's been really working well for me. So I'm going to continue to invite myself to do it. And if anyone listening has that stinking thinking that you

don't have time, I'm here to tell you that we can find that time. You know, we can find that consistent time. And it is something that builds upon itself. And so the other day for the first time, I actually did a 20 minute inside the same app.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:36:23]:
I had not done. I mostly had just done the shorter ones. And it is so fun that you're describing, Leslie. It resonated so much with me because it really does build upon itself. And then it just feels so good. There's and I'm sure that I probably don't even know the half of it. What's possible. It's really fun to be cultivating that habit and to have the motivation that I get by that reinforcement to where I literally just look forward to it.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:36:49]:
Oh, this is going to be such a special treat in my day as opposed to something that I will dread. And to that end, I've shared many times about there's a couple of people that teach and have yoga videos. I would would probably more call them stretching videos. I do not mean to offend them, but whatever you want to call it, a wonderful practice from yoga with Cassandra and It's just a 15 minute gentle morning yoga. Another wonderful. And this is a free available on YouTube. She has a wonderful channel, and I enjoy her gentle stretching routines as well. And Leslie, I'm going to pass it over to you for whatever you'd like to recommend.

Leslie Bayers [00:37:27]:
Thank you so much. Ambani, I want to highlight what you said because I'm all about embracing short opportunities to move, and I think that that is key to overcoming the sedentary lifestyle that we were talking about earlier. And I'm certainly not alone. There's lots of movement experts are talking about how can you just fit in five minutes here, 10 minutes there, that it doesn't have to be all or nothing. And that's the same is true in our classrooms. I'm so glad that you made that connection, that this can be 2 minutes of breathing or one activity where students have the opportunity to stand up or one assignment that maybe encourages them to engage with different environments. So I love that I have two books to recommend, so I love reading. Not so shocking for an academic, right? But I always have typically one work of fiction and one work of nonfiction going at the same time.

Leslie Bayers [00:38:20]:
And the last two books that I read in each of those genres I just loved so much. And so I wanted to recommend them to listeners. The first is titled Catalina, and the author is Karla Cornejo Villavicencio. This was published last summer, but I just happened upon it wandering around a bookstore, which is another

recommendation if you're fortunate enough to have one in your community. And I'm so glad I did. I absolutely loved this book. So it's narrated by Catalina, who is a very sharp and often very wry student in her senior year at Harvard. She's also an undocumented student, and so this is a very modern take on the classic campus novel.

Leslie Bayers [00:39:04]:
And the book largely focuses on her experiences navigating Harvard during the 20102011 academic year, which also happens to be when Congress was debating the DREAM Act. But it also flashes back to her very earliest years in Ecuador and then in Queens, where she lived for most of her life. So it hooked me from the very first page. It's funny, it's serious, it's incredibly moving, and I can't wait to go back and read her first book now, which is called the Undocumented Americans. That's not exactly a recommendation, but I can only imagine it's going to be as powerful as this novel was for me. And then the second book is nonfiction. It's titled on the Stuff that Moves Us and why It Matters by Bonnie Tsui. And this one was published very recently, and I stumbled upon it and of course, as somebody who teaches movement and is talking about embodied learning, I was immediately drawn to it.

Leslie Bayers [00:40:03]:
But what I loved about it is this, part memoir, part exploration of the physical and social meanings of muscle, and certainly looks at it through the lens of gender as well, women getting stronger, what that has meant historically. And it melds personal narratives, hers and others, with scientific, historical, and sociological perspectives in a very engaging read. I mean, muscle becomes a metaphor that goes so far beyond physical strength, and it also delves into questions of identity and belonging as an immigrant in the US as well. So that's a through line with my first recommendation. I read both of these books in like a day. They're both about 200 pages, which is also nice. So they're their longer form narrative. But also if you just have a weekend and want to dive into a really good read.

Leslie Bayers [00:40:57]:
I loved both of these books.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:40:59]:
Oh, they sound wonderful. I have two things to add to my reading list as soon as we hop off of the screen. Well, I am so grateful for you just getting connected with you both today, but also we got to meet up in person at a conference. How wonderful to get to learn from you today and through your writing in this book. And so grateful for you and your generosity to come and share with the listening community today.

Leslie Bayers [00:41:24]:
Thank you so much for the opportunity, Bonni. I've been a listener since the very beginning of the Teacher Teaching in Higher Ed podcast, and I've learned so much through your conversations with the many guests that you've had over the years. And so thank you for continuing to do this work and for the ways that you've enriched the teaching and learning conversations for all of us.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:41:47]:
I didn't realize you were listening since the beginning. That's a long time. Yeah, that's a long time. We've been talking for a long time.

Leslie Bayers [00:41:54]:
I did my faculty development role in 2015 and I was taking steps toward it, so the timing was perfect.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:42:01]:
That really was perfect. And I have learned so much through all the generous people such as yourself all these years. So really grateful for that. Thank you again for today's conversation.

Leslie Bayers [00:42:10]:
Thanks so much, Bonni.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:42:14]:
Thanks once again to Leslie Bayers for joining me on teaching and higher ed. Today's episode was produced by me, Bonne Stachowiak. It was edited by the ever talented Andrew Kroeger. Podcast production support was provided by the amazing Sierra Priest. Thank you so much for listening. And if you've yet to sign up for the weekly update from Teaching in Higher Ed, now is your moment. Head over to teachinginhighered.com/subscribe. You'll receive all the wonderful resources from the latest episodes Show Notes, and there's also some additional goodies that go beyond the Show Notes that will help enrich your teaching and learning.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:42:57]:
Thank you so much for listening and I'll see you next time on Teaching in Higher Ed.

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