Bonni Stachowiak [00:00:00]:
Today, on episode number 583 of the Teaching in Higher Ed podcast, I welcome back to the show James M. Lang to share about his latest book, Write Like You Teach: Taking Your Classroom Skills to a Bigger Audience. Production Credit: Produced by Innovate Learning Maximizing human potential. Welcome to this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. Hi, 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. The warmest of welcomes to today's guest, James M. Lang. Jim is an author, educator, and speaker whose work has transformed how so many of us think about teaching, learning, and, yes, writing.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:01:11]:
Jim is professor of practice at the Kaneb Center for Teaching Excellence at the University of Notre Dame and the author of six books, including Distracted, Small Teaching, and Cheating Lessons, and Write Like You Teach: Taking Your Classroom Skills to a Bigger Audience, Jim offers us a wonderful, authentic invitation to write the way we teach, rooted in curiosity, clarity and care for our learners, otherwise known as our readers. In this case, it's a guide not just to better writing, but also he includes a appendix that's a syllabus even for how to get our books published and get them out to wider audiences so that we can get what we have to share out to even more people. Jim Lang, welcome back to Teaching in Higher Ed.

James Lang [00:02:08]:
Thank you. I'm glad to be here again.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:02:10]:
I have felt for a while now that I must have missed the memo, and the memo is specifically, I don't know, I don't know. I'd be so fascinated to know why. I pretty much know practically nothing about Greek history. Greek mythology. Our kids are learning it in school and they got really into the Percy Jackson books and all that. So whenever I, whenever I come across something that has something to

do with Greek history, Greek anthology, I feel very intimidated. However, your book has started to get me on the road to healing and it has to do with a book that's meant a lot to you. So tell us about Edith Hamilton's the Greek Way and what it might tell us about writing like we teach.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:02:56]:
And if you can just douse it a little bit with Bonni, you could actually read this book and like, like sell me on it, I guess, is what.

James Lang [00:03:03]:
Is what I'm trying.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:03:04]:
Not sell me on it, but. But give me self that I seem to not have around the myth of mythology. Of Greek mythology.

James Lang [00:03:14]:
Yeah. So I'll take Edith Hamilton was a classical scholar, actually started her career as a teacher. And she was someone who grew up actually in the end of the 19th century, was given a sort of a classical education by her father, went to Germany to study classics, sort of there's a big connection between German scholarship and classical literature. And then she came home from Germany and this was a time it was sort of unusual for a woman to get her PhD and be able to become a college professor. And so she went instead and became a teacher at a, at a girls school, Bryn Mawr in Maryland. And over the course of many years she worked her way up to become the sort of, you know, the principal of the school. She was a longtime teacher, but in her 50s she, she actually retired from teaching in the school for various reasons, some health related. And then she started writing.

James Lang [00:04:09]:
And she had been interested in scholarship of classical literature for a long time. She started writing and for around 10 years she was doing that work. And then finally in her early 60s, she published her first book which was about an overview of Greek culture, ancient Greek culture and what it contributes to our understanding of ourselves today, why it's important for us to think about the contributions that the Greeks made to this contemporary civilization. And strangely enough, this book became like a bestseller. It was like a national book of the month club. And it's very well written, but still it's like a non fiction work for sort of like an educated reader. So it sort of tells you how times were a little bit different in terms of the reading and the books actually kind of shot to the top of

the bestseller list. But anyways, I discovered this book when I was sort of browsing around in a bookstore, like a used bookstore in Cape Cod.

James Lang [00:04:58]:
And I had a bitter interest in Greek history for most of my life. I actually took Greek language lessons when I was in high school and in college. I just was sort of always interested, fascinated by that world. So I was browsing around this bookstore, I spotted this book on the shelf, I took it down and brought it home and read it pretty quickly. And you know, it was a great book. I was very drawn to the writing itself. But then I started looking at stuff about Edith Hamilton, the author, and discovered this sort of really interesting history that she had, that she had been a teacher for a long time, then retired as a teacher and then found her way into being this really popular writer about ancient history. And she actually wrote multiple books actually about Greek history, Roman history, even history of the Hebrew Bible.

James Lang [00:05:46]:
So she became this sort of, this, she had this sort of Career transformation, coming from becoming a teacher to becoming a great writer on these sort of like cultural topics. And I was fascinated by this possibility that this was a time in my own life and I've been teaching for a long time. I was sort of turning more and more toward writing. And seeing how the strategies that she used to write her first book, I could really recognize these were the moves of a teacher. These were the things that a teacher would do to draw a reader in, to give them sort of like easy entry points to a difficult subject matter, tell good stories about the material, show how it's relevant to our lives. And so either Hamilton really started me on a journey to think about the things that we learn as teachers, how they can sort of transform our lives by helping us become better writers and find new readers for the people, for the things that we write, their research, our ideas, the things we want to say to people.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:06:47]:
The temptation in our teaching, the temptation in our writing is to think about what we have to say. And both in her work and also in so many of the other incredible writers that you share about in this book, you help us focus on the counter intuitive thing instead of what we want to say, what we want to ask. So tell us how questions can help us in our writing and in our teaching. Of course.

James Lang [00:07:16]:
Yeah, I think this is a big thing because I've been making the case for a long time that college courses should really have a driving question behind them. This notion that we can sort of walk into the room and say, okay, here, you know,

I've got this. I know a lot of stuff about this one subject matter. And now your job is sort of sit there and listen and I'm going to share it all with you. And you know, on the one hand, we know a lot of stuff and the stuff is important and we do want to share it. At the same time, that's not like a great way to sort of spark someone's curiosity. And learning often comes when people are curious. And so the way to sort of drive people into a subject matter, I think, is to find these deep questions that lead us to the answers that we have to offer.

James Lang [00:07:58]:
I like to always cite this work of Dan Willingham where he talks about this notion that, you know, answers on their own are not interesting. They become interesting when we know the questions behind them. And so I think, you know, I've been making this case for college courses for a long time. And again, as I'm thinking about how we move from teaching to writing, it was sort of easy for me to think about this notion of, okay, what drives great books? What drives great nonfiction writing? Well, actually, also, it becomes questions again. Questions are at the heart of a really good, successful nonfiction piece of writing, whether that's an essay or book. So what's the deep core question that we're trying to answer? We're trying to share information, ideas, or advice with people. And so that might be like, an immediate question, Something about some issue which has sort of popped up recently. For example, like, so many people are.

James Lang [00:08:48]:
Some of us. So many of us are asking about AI Right now, the impact that might have on the world. Like, what are we gaining with AI? What are we losing from AI So all those questions are sort of bumping up now, and people are writing potential answers to those questions. And we can think about this, though, with anything that we write. So what are the fundamental, deep, driving questions behind the answers that we have to share and how we sort of surface those for the reader? So I think the challenge for us is oftentimes, like, those questions are somewhere back behind there. Like anything that we sort of. We. We want to share with people, there's a question somewhere behind there.

James Lang [00:09:24]:
Because at some point we had a question about that subject matter. We sometimes lose a track. We lose track of those questions as we sort of become really fascinated by the answers themselves. And so I think one of the things that we have to do, both as teachers and writers, is sort of dig backwards and think about, okay, but what actually got me interested in the subject matter at first? How do I get back in touch with that and then really show the reader, hey, this is a really fascinating question I want to show to you. Now, let's talk about possible

answers. And then is that's the course or the piece of writing, the essays or book, whatever that might have been.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:09:58]:
So many of the books that I read, I start out wanting to read them because I'm interested in these kinds of deep questions that they explore. I'm going to admit to you, Jim, that pretty much, if you write a book, I'm already curious to want to read it before I even know what it's gonna be about. And it was so fun for me reading it. Cause I kept recognizing your writing strengths. And it was a joy then to also, with this one, get to see behind the curtain for some of these insights so I could better identify, oh, that's what it is that he does so well. And one of them is the role that being good company plays in nonfiction. So first tell us, what do you mean by being good company? And sources have you used to draw inspiration in your own writing and teaching and, and coming up with sort of your own definition of what it looks like to be good company.

James Lang [00:10:55]:
Yeah, so I mean, what I mean by that is, you know, when you take a reader on a journey, essentially like you're, you know, as the reader works through an essay or book that you've written, they spend a lot of time with you, they're spending a lot of time with that, that book. If you write a book that's 200, 300 pages long, the reader might be sitting with your words for 5, 10, 15, 20 hours. Right? So that's a lot of time a reader is spending with you. And as the author of that book, you're essentially become like a Persona that that person sort of feels like they get to know a little bit about. And sort of the argument here is pretty simple. Be a good company for that person. Right? If you take a journey with someone, like you take a road trip with someone or you know, spend a day with someone out on a hike or something like that, you want to be with a good person who has good company, who has interesting things to say, maybe will teach you a thing or two, but that also tells good stories, has a little bit of a sense of humor about them. And so having this notion of being attentive to the person that you are on the page, to the reader, so they feel like they're spending time with someone who is a pleasant person to be around, that has good capacity to tell stories and make a joke here and there, be willing to reveal something about themselves occasionally here and there.

James Lang [00:12:09]:
That's all I really mean by being good company. But I think it makes a difference. And if we actually think about again going back to teaching, when I think about my own undergraduate professors that I really remember, that made an impact on me. They were not just sort of like these abstract peoples on stages trying to give me lectures about things that were important to them. They sort of

revealed themselves to me a little bit. They were willing to sort of share things that were going on in their family, occasionally here and there. Not like over sharing, but just sort of showing me that they were real humans. They were dealing with sort of life stuff along the way over the course of the 15 week semester, and also showing me their passion.

James Lang [00:12:46]:
They really cared about these things. They cared about the things they were talking about, how they got into the discipline, what their journeys were like as students, themselves. So just being able to show me a little bit who they were, that was inspiring to Me to see, like, oh, yeah, I could become something like this. And so the thing that I want to sort of share with authors is be good company like that. Think about your role as a teacher. And oftentimes in the classroom, we sort of do this sort of naturally. Then we shift over to our writing. We're like, oh, no, no.

James Lang [00:13:16]:
I've got to be like, this abstract expert, just sort of putting my ideas onto the page. Well, we can still be good company for a reader in the same way we can be good company for students in our courses. I was sort of inspired by this, you know, some. Some great nonfiction writers. And I think. I think immediately it was Susan Orlean and her book the Orchid Thief. And just think about this notion of, you know, she. She wrote this great book about the passions and the obsession we have about how do we develop passions in our lives and how those passions can drive us and both give us purpose, but also unravel us.

James Lang [00:13:49]:
And she did that by sort of showing herself a little bit, and she's, you know, sought to track down this story. So I think about her as a. As a great writer. As a great writer in this respect. A lot of other folks, in terms of, like, who wrote great nonfiction works, but also we're willing to sort of give the reader a glimpse into who they were and what drove them into the writing or to the subject matter themselves.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:14:10]:
One of the most surprising discoveries that I had in reading write like you teach had to do with AI and because I wasn't expecting it from you, Jim, and you. You include AI tools as optional companions as we're working through our writing. And I'm so curious, what was either one of the most helpful or surprising way that you have now come to see as generative AI possibly being a support in the writing process?

James Lang [00:14:41]:
Well, I should sort of first acknowledge that a lot of things, I think, should not be, you know, sort of offloaded to AI for writers who want to kind of become more, I guess, expand their audiences, expand their readerships, I think it's really important for us to sort of still lean into the things that I think produce great writing. And so even the, you know, idea generation, drafting of prose, even the sort of core worker vision, I think those things are really important for us to still do as writers. At the same time, I think the research part of it can be really. AI can be very useful for that. I use it myself to sometimes to think about expanding the sort of. The place I might go initially for doing research on potential titles or that I might look at subject matter that might go push me beyond where I even might think to go. For example, like expanding the diversity of the sources I would use. That's been a helpful thing for me.

James Lang [00:15:32]:
I think sometimes it can be helpful also for like, you know, basic level editing. Give me a sense also, like, you know, give me, like, a reader's perspective on something that I've written and then give me some perspective, like, oh, yeah, a reader might be confused about this or that. I don't want the AI to then give me new phrasing. I want to do that work myself. But it's helpful sometimes for me to see, oh, someone might be confused about this. Or this is a phrase that might not land very well with a reader who doesn't know much on your subject matter. So those are things I think can be useful. And they could be, you know, in the same way, like education, there's potential useful tools, useful ways in which AI can support learning.

James Lang [00:16:08]:
I think the same is true on writing. But ultimately, at our core, I think that both as teachers and writers, it's really important for us to still do that work, human to human and coming from our own brains.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:16:19]:
One of the things that didn't necessarily surprise me as much, but it's been fun to know you now for more than a decade and watch your own, I guess, expansion or transformation. In terms of this whole idea of building a platform as part of a writer's work. What would be some of your suggestions if you were to put on your small teaching, or in this case, small building a platform, ideas that educators might want to try if this is somewhat of a new thing to them, without getting overwhelmed with the whole idea of trying to build a platform, the first.

James Lang [00:16:56]:

Principle, I would say, is start right now. That's the most important thing, right? This can be very intimidating when you go out to a publisher, you know, and you. If you have a great book idea or a great essay idea and you go to an editor, the first thing they're going to sort of note is, where are you? Like, where are you appearing already? Like, are you largely in academic journals? Do you have a social media presence? Do you have like some kind of, like a substack or like some kind of regular way to sort of share your ideas with other people. You might maybe have a podcast, whatever you have. That's the first thing they're going to sort of look for that first. And so I would say, don't, you know, because this notion is having a platform is really important for publishers to see that an Author has a potential platform they could build upon to help them reach more of an audience with the essay or the book they might write. And so you can think about, well, platform that. Well, that's like a big undertaking.

James Lang [00:17:50]:
That's for sort of folks who have a lot of resources to put into, I don't know, building like a website, all that kind of stuff. And potentially you might want to get there in the future. But I would say initially just start somewhere, create a social media account, start posting occasionally in your subject area, or even like it's not that difficult to put together a very simple basic website and started putting blog posts there, sharing your ideas. But I think there's two things about building a platform. One is it helps eventually get your name in front of other people. And so you start becoming part of a community of people who work on this stuff out beyond your normal disciplinary colleagues. That's part of it.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:18:28]:
And.

James Lang [00:18:29]:
But the other thing is the more that you do it, it helps you think about conceptualizing your ideas for different audiences. So the way I might share an idea in a full book is different from how I would do it in a social media post and also in a subset column or in a Chronicle column. So all these different ways of putting the same idea out, as I'm doing these different things in different formats, my ideas are actually developing. So I think this is not just something we just do to sort of, you know, this sort of crass way to get readers. Actually it's a quite helpful thing for me to do to help me putting my ideas in different frameworks, pitching them to different audiences. And as I do that, they evolve, they get better. So I'm the. I mean, sometimes the difficult thing about writing books is, you know, I wrote this book, the idea's out there now, and I could, I could just sort of say, okay, this idea just, I just want to keep repeating it.

James Lang [00:19:22]:
But actually, as I move forward with sort of my platform activity, for example, like writing essays or social media posts or giving talks about it, those ideas continue to grow and evolve, which is great, right? So the book itself, like if you publish a book and it gets a readership, when I sort of something I've noticed is the book itself becomes one plank in a platform. But the other stuff that you surround it with, the social media stuff, the talks, the lectures, whatever you might do, those things help your platform grow, but they also help your ideas grow. And oftentimes something you might do, like following the publication of a book, for example, like writing a follow up essay might lead you to the next thing. And so I think it's worthwhile just starting somewhere in activity and you'll get more and more uncomfortable with it. And it may help you evolve as a writer and a thinker.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:20:17]:
One thing that you didn't mention in your advice is I think maybe helpful for us to share with listeners. And I want to circle back to. You were talking about students wanting to see us as human beings. And that can really actually be more of a challenge than sometimes I am able to recall. Like, wait a second, you actually have to, you're not going to just come across as approachable just because you think of yourself as approachable. And so I've told students before, you know, that other professors, these are real human beings and what are things that you might do to help help them? Because a lot of times students don't realize that they could actually be helpful to professors. So I'll talk to them even, you know, if you took 5 minutes to write a little thank you Note or maybe LinkedIn, you write them a recommendation instead of asking them to write you one, et cetera, et cetera. And I was thinking about the people that maybe, if they're wanting to start small and it seems too overwhelming to start to create your own content, perhaps even just commenting or engaging with other people's platforms online, do you have any further guidance to think about? If I don't feel confident enough or I don't feel like I have the time to start my own platform, how I might be inadvertently building a platform by supporting other people's work?

James Lang [00:21:30]:
Absolutely. And I think, you know, whatever you choose to do with a platform, one of the best things you can do is just sort of acknowledge the things that have inspired, been inspiring to you. So, for example, if you're in social media, reposting things, sharing links to books, new resources or ideas, you know, I, in my own subset column, which I used actually to write about works of literature that have inspired me or works of literature, philosophy that have inspired me as, as a thinker, as a scholar, as, as a teacher and a writer, that essentially that's what I'm

trying to do is sort of share the things that have inspired me and hope that they're going to inspire other people as well. So thinking about how we got to where we are, both as scholars, as professionals, as thinkers, writers, teachers, that's the easy way to start. You know, just sort of sharing our own journeys or the things that have been important to us and hope they sort of other people might find the same kind of inspiration that we found in those. Those places as well. So it's not that difficult to sort of just take that sort of stance. Right.

James Lang [00:22:28]:
So my work here, in a social media account or as a. In a blog post or even like a piece of writing for like a, you know, like a more popular audience, those places are essentially to sort of surface the work of great people that you admire or surface the work of more diverse scholars or diverse folks who are trying to get their names out. Well, we can help support those folks and get their names out in front of other people. It also then helps us, again, get the habit of putting ourselves out in front of people in a more general way that can lead and support that kind of platform building that we're trying to accomplish.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:23:08]:
I think one other bit of advice we could invite you to share, Jim, has to do with your own work in editing a book series. So instead of thinking about it as individuals, what have you learned by doing this process collectively with other authors, getting the word out and reaching that broader audience as a collection of authors and thinkers and scholars?

James Lang [00:23:33]:
Yeah. I think one thing I've noticed definitely in the authors in the book series I edited, I co edited with Michelle Miller at the University of Oklahoma Press, how much they've leaned into the community of the authors that we have already. And so I see that every time, you know, someone else we have an author is sort of welcomed into a group of people that we have published, they sort of really start connecting by promoting the work of other. Other. Other books in the series. And I think the most. One of the most recent books that we published, the Opposite of Cheating by Tricia Bertram Gallant and Dave Reddinger, they really lean into this. They started a little podcast based on the book, but they've been interviewing people.

James Lang [00:24:07]:
And also I've seen how they've sort of shouted out other books in this series. And this is a good idea because in the area that the books are published in, Teaching and learning in higher education. No, it's a small community, but it's a vibrant community. And so I think that they're sort of both. Not only they're being

welcomed in, but then trying to sort of support other folks that they see in the group. And I also see how they're sort of learning from each other. Right. Like, you know, okay, I see, like, they might reach out to me or someone else in the group and we'll say, hey, how do you get, like, get started as a speaker or, like, giving workshops in other campuses? Or some of them will ask me like, how do you start writing for the Chronicle or for Inside Red? And so they're kind of reaching out to each other to help support each other.

James Lang [00:24:48]:
And likewise, this is, you know, whatever area you might be publishing in, this is a good idea, right? So reach out to people and think about, you know, ask them to think about how you could move forward in terms of getting your name out there, building a platform, making connections with editors. And I will say, when I look back at my own career, like, many times people did this for me. Sometimes people reach out to me, like, without me asking. But other times I went to people and said, listen, I see your work here or there. I would love to do that kind of work. Do you have any advice for me? And most of the time, people were very generous to me. When I look back at my own writing career, like, many people lift hands, lifted me up. And so I want to be able to do that same thing.

James Lang [00:25:28]:
And I want other. And I've seen the authors in our series do the same thing with the new authors. And as the new authors come in, I see them doing as, you know, even bringing new authors into us over the course of the time we'd be doing this book series.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:25:41]:
One of the final things for us to explore before we get to the recommendations segment has to do with revision, something that so many of us writers struggle with. What's one revision strategy in your own practice that's really been transformed, transformative for you?

James Lang [00:25:59]:
So I've tasted two things about revision I think are worth always noting. The first is you have to be willing to let go of anything. Like, I've actually worked in my, you know, I've been working on a Chronicle column for the last two days. And, you know, when I look at all the words I've trapped in that column, it ends up being like a 1500, 1500 word column. I probably drafted 3000 words for that. And that's just so common for me. And. But, you know, it's hard to let things go.

James Lang [00:26:25]:

You put something on the page, you're like, okay, this is the good, you know, I wrote it, it's there. I want to find some way to work with it. And I've gotten. Become such a friend of the delete button or the backspace button to just say, okay, you know what? Or the cut button. And sometimes, like, I'll cut it, I'll cut it. Because I'm like, okay, but wait, I might use it later, but I never use it again, you know, so that, so that I, you know, this is Like a little fiction. I take them. I'll tell myself, you know, just cut it for now and just, you know.

James Lang [00:26:51]:
But then I actually don't put it anywhere. So like, it's really. It definitely is gone. But you have to be willing, first of all, to acknowledge that you're right a lot of stuff, and you have to. Willing to let a lot of it go. So that's the first thing I would say. Second thing is be willing to sort of move things around. And we can do that in different ways.

James Lang [00:27:06]:
There's a like, analog way. I know, you know, Christine Tulley, who writes about. Has a podcast in writing and talks about this notion of, you know, printing out an essay, for example, and. And literally cutting it up and moving things around. Like the opening section. Well, maybe that could be the closing section and actually, you know, making a space for desk and moving parts of the essay around. You can do the same thing, of course, digitally and just, you know, having a clipboard or moving things around a document and just be like moving sections around. There's other actually things you can do, like Scrivener equipment or Quill that have these same tools in them.

James Lang [00:27:40]:
The notion here is that the bits of your piece, you can think about them as like this sort of linear unfolding of idea when you first draft it. But then you can also think about more of a mosaic, right? And the different parts might be put in different orders to produce a different kind of effect or have like a. Maybe that's the best way to read, to draw a reader in, is the great story you have in the middle of the essay. You want to put that in the beginning, and then the thesis comes a little bit later. So I think those two things are really important thinking about as we revise, be willing to let things go. You know, don't get too. To don't get tied to any particular phrase, sentence, or even paragraph. And secondly, be willing to move things around because that moving process, Moving around process not only might produce a better essay, but also, again, it might spur creative thinking.

James Lang [00:28:27]:

As you move things around, you see new connection, new way to think about this new pathway for the next thing that might come. So that'd be. Those are the two things for me that have been most important.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:28:37]:
Well, this is the time in the show where we each get to share our recommendations. And if it isn't obvious, please, yes, of course, go pick up a copy of Write like youe Teach, another incredible book by James Lang. And I also wanted to recommend a book that I privately recommended to Jim. It was so fun after, you know, getting back inside your writing voice, Jim, and seeing all these behind the scenes. I kept thinking of you while I was listening to this particular book. And in this case, it's called the Sirens Call How a Attention Became the World's Most Endangered Resource by Chris Hayes. And I really enjoyed it because Chris does so many of the things that Jim talks about in terms of being a good writer. He shows up as a human being.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:29:23]:
He talks about his own flaws as a human desiring attention from others and the ways in which fame can definitely mess us up. Various kinds of fame. You know, you might be famous in a particular context. You know you're not going to be recognized walking down the street. He talks about that. But in his case, you know, he went from being a person who was unrecognizable to someone who did. And just. He talks about it as a journalist, what the.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:29:51]:
How that can be a difficult thing to navigate. He talks about it as a human being, as a parent, as someone who wants to learn things and pay attention to the important things in life. And just this real reckoning with how attention has become. Become so commodified and bought and sold and how that is really hurting the fabric of our society. It's a great read, and I thought it would couple so nicely with the book that I've already recommended many times from Jim Lang about our attention as well, but specifically in a teaching context called Distracted. So if you've not picked up Distracted, you definitely gotta go pick that up. But it was fun, Jim, just to send you a quick email and say, I've, you know, I've read your stuff about attention. I know you're.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:30:37]:
You're paying attention to attention, and this was just a wonderful read. And again, I read it as an audiobook. It is read by Chris Hayes himself, and it was quite an enjoyable read. And I'm gonna pass it over to you, Jim, for whatever you'd like to recommend.

James Lang [00:30:52]:
All right. So actually, I bought that book after you recommended it to me. I haven't started it yet, but I'm really looking forward to it. Yeah, so, of course, I wrote a book about writing, and now I have to follow that up with a book about reading. And so my next book I'm working on is about reading and how reading has changed over time and what that means for us as teachers. And because of that research for that book, which I've just started to do, I'm going to recommend a great book by Marianne Wolf to a neuropsychologist At Tufts University, they've written multiple books about reading. And the first book that really caught the attention of the world for her was Proust and the Squid, the story and science of the Reading brain. It's a fantastic book and it actually exemplifies one of the things I read about in Write like you Teach, because she takes this idea of what happens when we read, and you might think about this person coming from neuropsychology, really focused on the brain stuff, and there's a lot of that.

James Lang [00:31:46]:
But she also pairs that with this notion of what reading does for us culturally and what was the history of reading, who are the first people to read, and the invention of writing and reading in the book. In Write like you Teach, I mentioned this notion that we sometimes have to step beyond sort of the areas that we're most comfortable with, like the traditions of evidence or data, and sort of expand our view of potential ways we might write about a subject matter. And Marianne Wolf does a great job of that, pairing science with history to culture. And ultimately she also writes about her own son who has dyslexia, and she talks about actually what goes wrong in the reading brain and sort of pairing that personal story with these other sort of perspectives as well. So it's a fantastic book. It's actually a more important book than it was. It is more important now than it was even when it came out, I don't know, 10 or 15 years ago as we think about the importance of reading and what drives reading and why reading is so important to us both individually and also as a culture.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:32:44]:
Thank you so much for that recommendation and for what has been more than a decade of you coming and investing your time in the teaching and higher ed community. What a joy it was to read this book, to know you and to get. To continue to learn from you and get to. To spread this out to so many of the listeners all these years.

James Lang [00:33:04]:
10 years. It's been a long time, Bonni.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:33:06]:
It's been a long time.

James Lang [00:33:08]:
I guess I have to keep reading, writing more books to make sure that I keep getting back, keep coming back here as much as possible.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:33:15]:
Thank you so much for today.

James Lang [00:33:17]:
Thanks, Bonni.

Bonni Stachowiak [00:33:20]:
Thanks once again to James Lang for joining me on today's episode of Teaching in High School Ed. Today's episode was produced by me, Bonni Stachowiak. It was edited by the ever talented Andrew Kroeger podcast. Production support was provided by the amazing Sierra Priest. If you've yet to sign up for the weekly emails from teaching in higher ed, you can get the most recent episodes show notes and not have to remember to go look everything up. But you could have a nice it all consolidated in one place, as well as some other resources that don't show up in those show notes. So head over to teachinginhighered.com/subscribe to start getting the weekly update. I'll see you next time on Teaching in Higher Ed.