

# TRANSCRIPT

## Learning Unboxed



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Episode #300

Ashley Price:

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### **Ashley Price:**

Kids are afraid to try to do things 'cause they're afraid they're gonna fail. And so, helping them understand how to fail forward. And "Hey, you made a mistake. Let's figure out where the mistake happened and let's test it out again," I think is super, super important.

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### **Annalies Corbin:**

Welcome to Learning Unboxed, a conversation about teaching learning in the future of work. I'm your host and chief goddess of the PAST Foundation, Annalies Corbin. We know the current model for education is obsolete. It was designed to create fleets of assembly line workers, not the thinkers and problem solvers needed today. We've seen the innovations that are possible within education, and it's our goal to leave the box behind and reimagine what education can look like in your own backyard.

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### **Annalies Corbin:**

Welcome to today's episode of Learning Unboxed. As always, I'm super excited to talk with another great innovator in the transformative education space. And today, I am super excited because we are celebrating the 300th episode of Learning Unboxed. And because of that, just unbelievable when I think about when we first started recording Learning Unboxed that we would get to 300 episodes. It's just amazing to me. I wanted to make sure that the conversation we were gonna have is about something that's deeply meaningful to me personally, but also to PAST Foundation as an organization.

And so, joining us today is Ashley Price, who is the Director of Student Experiences and all things summer and outta school programming at the PAST Foundation. So, Ashley, welcome to Learning Unboxed.

### **Ashley Price:**

Thank you. Super excited to be on.

### **Annalies Corbin:**

I am just thrilled to be able to have the conversation because everything about

students, that's who and what we are. And it has been your really incredible work over many years now that has really been the highlight of what we do, what we think, and how we proceed into the future. So, again, super excited to have you here.

Let's set just a little bit of context for our listeners as we get started. The PAST Foundation Summer Programming is a diverse catalog of immersive learning experiences designed to help students explore real-world challenges in meaningful ways. Whether indoors at our state-of-the-art innovation lab or outdoors in the community, each program is designed to spark curiosity, build confidence, and develop future ready skills.

Ashley, that's a lot of ed you speak, which in my mind is really about learning can be so incredibly engaging-

**Ashley Price:**

Absolutely.

**Annalies Corbin:**

... and fun.

**Ashley Price:**

Yep. Absolutely.

**Annalies Corbin:**

So, let's start with when you first came to PAST in this capacity, if you will, you were a teacher who was looking to be able to have a meaningful work in the summer. You were fresh and bushytailed, if you will, right? So, talk to us a little bit about the way you initially engaged with an organization, like a PAST Foundation.

**Ashley Price:**

Yeah. So, like you said, my background is in education – middle school, math, science, and reading. So, I definitely came from that education background. I was a substitute teacher for a couple years, not really knowing what I wanted to do, where I really wanted to land. And I came across PAST Foundation through a family member. And it was something that I had never thought of before, something I've never done before.

And so, I started, actually, on Kelly's Island during a field school up there. And so, it was three months worth of new students coming every single week and getting to experience the outdoor space where they may not be able to where they are in their community. And then, they went back to their schools and they built soil labs. So, outdoor labs at their schools based on what they learned. And just that experience alone for me really opened up my eyes that there's so much more than just learning in a classroom. There's learning everywhere you go, every single day no matter what.

And so, that was really the start of my journey with PAST and into what is, now, an amazing job that I didn't know even existed until that moment.

**Annalies Corbin:**

Yeah, absolutely. And you know how fortunate for us. And I think that one of the things to me that's been remarkable to watch is as a founder of an organization and my background, and my listeners know, came from applied research scientist and, specifically, in anthropology and archeology, and you always start with what you know. So, PAST Foundation actually started with doing these really immersive field programs and experiences, and we did that originally in archeology, but then quickly added in other science. And we did it with adults as college students. We did high school students, in middle school, and elementary. And we had teachers and educators that would come on board in a variety of these different, sort of, field experiences.

So, it became this, sort of, natural iteration over time. But what I really love about that synergy and the connection is that we very, very quickly figured it out, and this was even pre-Ashley days, that those informal experiences were deeply engaging to the participants. I never once in a field experience was like, "Oh, my gosh. Those kids are bored. What?"

**Ashley Price:**

Exactly. Yes.

**Annalies Corbin:**

And I think that's a really powerful sort of place to reflect on.

**Ashley Price:**

Very much.

**Annalies Corbin:**

So, let's talk about that because I think that one of the things that you are so amazing at and over time, as we've seen the work and the impact of this out-of-school experience, especially in the STEM fields grow in our work, thanks to you, has really been that deep and meaningful impact around understanding student engagement. So, talk about why that matters so much to you. And then, how does it influence the way you think about designing experiences for students?

**Ashley Price:**

I think everything we do is very much student-driven. It's, "What are the kiddos interested in?" It's not, "You're gonna sit down, I'm gonna tell you exactly what to do and you're gonna go do it." Giving them the opportunity to explore in those spaces that maybe they never explored before to figure out that, "Hey, this is something I'm

really interested in," and that happens a lot, and it happens like, "Wait. This is a thing I can do? This is something that is a job? What?"

And so, it's a lot of fun. And so, even just like aha moments, right? So many aha moments, and they're small moments, but they're moments of joy from the kiddos because they're starting to understand, and they're starting to get it because it's something that they want to do. It connects to them, it connects to their life, it connects to their community, those kinds of things.

So, as we go through and actually create these programs, everything we're thinking about is through the kiddo's eyes and through their lenses. And we ask them because we're adults, we don't always know, right? And so, being able to have a conversation with those kids and say, "Hey, what are you interested in? Okay, here's how we can tie it back to what we're doing."

And so, really making it applicable for them I think is super important. And being able to see the field experience where I started, I think was really that moment of these kiddos are learning a ton of things and it's just in a different way. And I think that was really eyeopening for me. And I think that's part of why I love what I do, because I remember that moment and I get to see kiddos have that moment, which I think is really cool, and I get to be a part of that, which is a small part of their journey but it's so impactful for me to be able to see that aha moment or that, "I get to do this?" or "Wait, this is okay to do? I can do this?" "Yes, you can. Give it a try. Let's see what happens." And so, I think that's a really big part of why I love what I do and why I love what PAST does.

**Annalies Corbin:**

So, let's talk... and I do appreciate that so much, right? I wanna talk a little bit about the way that understanding. So, for you as a professional educator, and you straddle the formal and informal. So, I mean, just to be really clear with our listeners, Ashley still teaches in a formal setting as well. She's often an instructor that we put in traditional classrooms. We put her in co-teaching sometimes with educators that are like, "I wanna do this differently." We absolutely have her, me, lead a variety of meaningful programs. So, she really, truly does straddle both the formal and the informal.

So, I wanna talk a little bit more about the sort of impact on that student journey. And one of the pieces in particular, and folks hear me talk about it all the time, is the value of understanding and honoring student agency. Like you said, we ask the kids, right? And most educators do some form of that, but what you are talking about is a lot. It's deeper than a very cursory sort of, "These are who my kids are. These are their names. This is where they come from." What you're talking about from a design

standpoint that translates into an experience for kids is really having a pretty deep understanding of those kiddos, right?

**Ashley Price:**

Right. Yeah, definitely. And so, again, it's conversations. It's really getting to know those kiddos. And with our summer programming, they're very short. They're a week long. But we see a lot of those kiddos coming back again and again and again.

**Annalies Corbin:**

That was gonna be one of my next questions is, there's gotta be some repeat performance here, right?

**Ashley Price:**

Yes. So, we do have kiddos that come back again and again. And there are kiddos that we also see when we go into schools that have come to our summer programs that we see in that formal classroom. So, we see them multiple times in multiple different ways and things like that. But it's really from the get go, the very start, making sure that you're having conversations with the kiddos and understanding what they're coming in, and they're understanding when they come in.

And so, asking questions, just having conversations, having them talk to friends and within groups and things like that. And so, really finding out like you said, more than just their name and family and those kinds of things, but like what kind of things do you do outside of school? Do you play sports? What's your favorite sports team? Or even just like, what are your hobbies? What do you really enjoy doing? Or what do you wanna be when you grow up? And you don't have to know what you wanna be when you grow up, but just give us some things that you love to do. Like even if you don't know what you wanna be, what do you love to do? And helping drive what their project might be based on those conversations and things like that.

So, it's interesting to have those conversations too because, sometimes, some of the kiddos are a little nervous and they're like, "Wait, you're asking me just, like, you wanna know about me. Wait, I'm really confused. What?" And so, it's interesting to see from the first day going through the week and how they transform and how they open up because they're like, "I get to share about me, and I get to do something that's about me or that's gonna impact my family or my community," and those kinds of things.

So, lots of conversations and lots of talking and those kinds of things and just getting to know them outside of that surface level and really finding out what they love and enjoy and taking that and letting them use it and what they're doing.

**Annalies Corbin:**

Absolutely. Let's talk a little bit about how you actually do the design element. So, I think that one of the beauty and the success, and we have educators, especially new educators, one of the things that I really love is that we have teachers that are student teachers going through the program to get it all correct here, right? Or we also have relatively new teachers and we have seasoned teachers who also come back. But what we see more is teachers looking to really gain some meaningful hands-on experience outside of additional classroom will often come and spend their summer with us.

**Ashley Price:**

Yep.

**Annalies Corbin:**

And so, there's a lot of design work that you and your team do right behind the scenes, nobody really gets to see, that is all about the crafting of the experience for the participants overall. And the crafting of that experience is for the students, but it's also for those adults that are leading those experiences.

**Ashley Price:**

Yes.

**Annalies Corbin:**

So, talk with us a little bit. I'm really curious, if you had to say to a traditional educator that wants to bring more of this ideology into their day-to-day practice in their classroom, what are the three most important things that, as an example? Maybe it's three, maybe it's five, right? But what are the pieces from the design standpoint that you say, "If I don't have these, I'm not setting that experience up to be successful"?

**Ashley Price:**

Yeah. I think one of the things is real-world challenges. So, make it real to them. So, one of the things that we've done in the past is create a TikTok about a certain topic that you're interested in that you want to spread the word about or things like that. So, making it and connecting it for those kiddos and what they're interested in and what is the here and now. So, I definitely think real-world problems is a big one, like connected to them.

So, we also do student and parent surveys. And so, based on that feedback, a lot of what we implement in that is feedback from students but also parents. And so, I think that that's really important too because you can use past feedback that you've gotten to implement into... so feedback that we got last summer, we used to inform our programming this summer. And so, we adjust and build from there as well.

I think it's more so for someone who's interested in doing it is find someone who's passionate, and passionate about kids and their development I think is really important, which I think all educators are, and that's why we're in education because we want to see students succeed. And so, having that passion behind it definitely drives the kids to have that passion as well, which I think is really awesome.

**Annalies Corbin:**

Let's go back to that sort of research piece. I love that you brought that up because you do do surveys with kids and with families, but there's more to the way we conduct and understand what works and what doesn't work here than just a survey, right?

**Ashley Price:**

Correct.

**Annalies Corbin:**

So, talk with us a little bit about the, sort of ... and it's multifaceted.

**Ashley Price:**

Yes.

**Annalies Corbin:**

It's not one space or another. So, share with us sort of the research lens by which you do your work.

**Ashley Price:**

Yeah. So, like you said, there's a few different ways that we go about doing those things. So, we do have pre and post-surveys for every single program. So, we get the feedback from the kids in every single program around what worked well, what did you really enjoy, what would you like to add, those kinds of things. So, we get feedback there. But we also look at where their growth was. We look at-

**Annalies Corbin:**

So, you're doing an academic pre/post even in an informal setting.

**Ashley Price:**

Correct. Yes. Yeah. So-

**Annalies Corbin:**

But is it school? I mean, I didn't go to summer camp to be in school, Ms. Ashley. I mean, okay.

**Ashley Price:**

I know. I know, yes.

**Annalies Corbin:**

So, is it, or is it not?

**Ashley Price:**

So, it's not, right? So, we do it in a way that is fun and engaging for the kids because we don't want it to feel like, "Oh, I have to sit down and take a test," "Oh, I have to sit down and answer all these questions again." So, we find ways to make it engaging for the kiddos, so that they don't really realize that they're actually doing math or they're actually doing science but it's incorporated into those things.

And so, I think that's really important. It gives us great feedback, but we also get to see the growth not only maybe for a standard, like a math or a reading standard, but we also see growth within the kids themselves, within communication, collaboration, teamwork, critical thinking, all of those things that are so important in the workforce now. Even at K and first grade, we are still seeing those things as they're working through our program. So, we get to see the growth in that aspect as well, which is really, really great.

And then, with parents, we do a survey that we send out to parents but we also are... every Friday, we have presentations for families and community to come in and see what the kids have learned. So, that is a part of all of our programs, non-negotiable, always a good thing, right? We probably, the past two summers, have had every single parent or family member here to watch these presentations. And the kids blow you out of the water, the things that they learn, the things that they do, the things that they create. Every single summer, I am so surprised by all of it, and the parents even are shocked. They're like, "Wait, how did you do this? What are you doing? Explain it to me."

So, then you see kids teaching adults how to CAD and where the 3D printers are and how they work, or how to make an Arduino robot work, all of these things or, "Here's my Minecraft world and here's how I built it." And so, you get to see that multi-generational happening as well. And so, part of that research is seeing those things happening, but then also talking with the parents, and talking with the families and saying, "Hey, what'd you think? Like how did everything go?" And then, the really cool thing is the past few summers we've had parents say, "Hey, my kiddo made a really awesome friend in camp. Is there any way we can connect with them outside of that?"

So, those are things that we considered research because kids are making friends while they're here. They're being able to share out what they've created and teach someone else what they've created. So, lots of different pieces and parts to that.

**Annalies Corbin:**

So, let's talk about the non-negotiable piece, Ashley. You used that phrase, and it's one of the things that I've always loved about our work because it is non-negotiable in the sense that what we understood intuitively and from a research base over many years of doing this work is that when we have students stand up or present or talk to what we refer to as an authentic audience, so, you know, we can love our teacher, and lots of kids do, and as they get older, they might tolerate them, and then there'll come a point where I don't even want to. But the reality of it is that an audience of one is never authentic and we know that. And there's incredible research that really ties the sort of student perception to the understanding of their knowledge and the ability to spit that back out.

**Ashley Price:**

Yes.

**Annalies Corbin:**

And yes, we can test that with paper and pencil, if you will, but we know that if we have a student actually teach the thing, which is what our presentations of learning actually are, they're teaching the audience what I learned that it is fundamentally life altering within that experience.

**Ashley Price:**

Yep.

**Annalies Corbin:**

And I have had the privilege of watching kids who have come summer after summer or after school program over after school over many years, and I remember the first time a kid walks into this place, and it's new and it might be a little scary, especially for the kids that are a little more shy and the thought of having to stand up on Friday and tell anybody anything, we've had kids are just borderline shaking. And yet ...and yet, within a few weeks or a couple of tries, they're up there cheerleading everybody else in that process.

**Ashley Price:**

Yes they are.

**Annalies Corbin:**

Why does that happen?

**Ashley Price:**

Oh, that's a great question. I think because we build a space that is safe and that is somewhere that they are presenting what they created. It is their work. It's something they're super proud of and they want to share it with others. And so, I think that that is

super important. Again, back to student agencies, student facing, everything we do is for the kiddo, right? So, they're choosing what their CAD and 3D printing. They're choosing what they're building in Minecraft. They're choosing what their robot's gonna look like. So, all those choices and all the ability to be able to choose those things gives them the confidence to stand up and say, "I know how to do this. I'm an expert in this because I created it."

And that's a lot of what we tell them is when they get nervous or those kinds of things, we tell them, "You're the expert in this. You know what you're doing 'cause you built it. No one else knows what to do, so you get to share that. That's your talking point." And a lot of the time, again, back to that aha moment, they're like. "Oh, yeah, that's true. I am the expert in this." And as they come back week after week, they get more and more comfortable of being able to stand up and say, "I created this and I did this, and here's how I did it."

And so, I think that's super important. And understanding that kiddos get as they're here week to week to week, or even just one week, from day one to day five, that understanding-

**Annalies Corbin:**

Right. Oh, it's amazing.

**Ashley Price:**

Yeah.

**Annalies Corbin:**

It's absolutely amazing to watch that growth.

**Ashley Price:**

Yes.

**Annalies Corbin:**

And really that's what we're seeing. And I'm sure many adults, and I tell people all the time, it's like, even with my own children, your neighbors, your nieces and nephews, you know, how often as adults have we heard a kid say, "Why can't school be like summertime?"

**Ashley Price:**

Yep.

**Annalies Corbin:**

And the answer is it can. It's not all fun and games. There's so much that can be learned, but the reality is when we transfer the way we think about what teaching and learning has to be in our adult minds into an experience that says I am actually seeing

meaningful growth, academic growth, personal growth, social emotional growth and engagement, if we combine all of those things, then our traditional classrooms are gonna be doing all the things that we're hired as formal educators to do, but with all the engagement and the love for learning that we want in our kids.

**Ashley Price:**

Yep.

**Annalies Corbin:**

It's 100% doable. So, as we really think about, the reason I wanted to have this conversation today, how do you work with educators to understand, how do I go from, "Why can't school be like summer camp?" to "Ms. Ashley, what are we gonna learn today?" in a formal classroom, what does that piece of work look and feel like when you're engaging with incredible educators to make that transition.

**Ashley Price:**

Yeah, I think it's an understanding of it's not an overnight process. I think, like, we even had a journey here at PAST all across all of our summers. Every summer is a journey, right? It, always, is growing and always a little bit different. So, I think really having the understanding of it's not something that will happen overnight, but there are things that you can do that you can implement right away that can start making that change into that student-driven, student-facing space.

One of the things, for example, is like when they're creating a project or something like that, a lot of the times we say, "You have to have a paper written at the end," or "You have to have X, Y, Z written at the end." Give them options. Like you don't have to say they can choose. Choose whatever you want to do, right? But at least narrow it down at first and say, "Okay, you can do a paper, you can do a video, and you can video yourself and have a conversation with someone else. You can create a presentation or you can do this." And that's a great starting point for getting that student.

Like it's a student choice, right? A student choice, student voice. And it's not necessarily the kiddo saying, "Well, wanna do this," but it might be that you give them those four options and a kiddo says, "But I really would love to be able to do this." "Perfect. Awesome." That's something that they would be super passionate about doing. Allow them to do that.

**Annalies Corbin:**

Yeah.

**Ashley Price:**

Right? And so, those kinds of things, those small steps are what's really... as you're

going through this is what you need to think about. And I'm not thinking of, "I have to change everything that I'm doing right now and make sure that I'm doing X, Y, Z to make this work." It's gonna be a process. And I think that's super important.

And I have that conversation a lot with educators of understanding that because, again, like I said here, it's a process every single summer. It's always changing, always different. But there are small steps that you can take right away to get you to a point where you're starting out to look at that student voice and choice and those kinds of things.

**Annalies Corbin:**

All right. So, let's talk about scale, right? So, you know, I always come back to this. This is awesome but, right? How do you do this kind of work at scale?

**Ashley Price:**

Yeah. And I think when I started with PAST, I was in one program, right? I was just in the field school programming at Kelly's Island, but there was other programming happening in other locations that I didn't know about at the time. I was wee little baby Ashley. And so, as I became more aware of what was going on, as I was sticking my toes into the student programming a little bit more, really finding out what this looks like, really, a lot of it is building great relationships and rapport with educators, with industry experts, with your team within PAST itself.

I think one of the amazing things about PAST is that all of us have different backgrounds. Everyone comes from all over. Not everyone is from education, right? We have anthropologists. We have just so many different backgrounds and it lends so much to being able to create really amazing programming.

**Annalies Corbin:**

Right.

**Ashley Price:**

And so, as you're scaling, being able to bring those people in to say, "Hey, we would love to work with you. We would love to build out a program with you. What would that look like?" And then as we... for, like, industry experts and things like that. And then, with educators, working with them throughout the school year and starting with them, maybe going in and helping them run something in their classroom and things like that to start understanding really, like, what does this look like? And then saying, "Okay. Hey, would you love to run a week-long summer program with us? Please come run summer with us," and those kinds of things.

And it's a buildup, right? And again, like our journey, same thing, right? You really start talking to people when they come back year after year, but then you get the

pre-service teachers who come in, and you get to work with them, and they get to see what you do. And so, it's impacting not only here within the summer programs, but then those teachers and pre-service teachers get to go out and back to their students and take what they learn here and bring it back to the classroom.

**Annalies Corbin:**

And that's that exponential impact.

**Ashley Price:**

Yes.

**Annalies Corbin:**

That's the whole purpose.

**Ashley Price:**

Yes.

**Annalies Corbin:**

That's the why. That's the why, right?

**Ashley Price:**

Yeah.

**Annalies Corbin:**

Because we know that even though... and just full transparency, again, Ashley is amazing. Her crew is amazing, but it's not 10 kids. It's thousands of kids a summer.

**Ashley Price:**

Yes.

**Annalies Corbin:**

And it varies from summer to summer but the total impact is thousands of kids make it through around eight weeks of summer programming that goes on here. And that doesn't then include all the afterschool and weekend sort of stuff that can happen. So, literally thousands and thousands of kids every single year. But that exponential impact isn't coming from the kids going through those programs. It's from the teachers taking those programs and that transdisciplinary bit of work that you were alluding to there back into their classrooms because those educators are reaching so many more students than we will ever, on our own, be able to reach.

**Ashley Price:**

A hundred percent, yes.

**Annalies Corbin:**

So, that's truly that exponential scale and impact opportunity that exists.

**Ashley Price:**

Yes, a hundred percent. Yes.

**Annalies Corbin:**

So, if you are a school administrator and you are really contemplating, what should a reimagined teaching and learning environment look like in my building, in my district, in my community, what's the most critical piece for you to say, "I'm gonna put my stake in the ground around this."

**Ashley Price:**

Am I allowed to have more than one stake?

**Annalies Corbin:**

You are. You can have as many stakes as you want, Ashley. You've earned them.

**Ashley Price:**

So, definitely student voice and choice. Transdisciplinary for sure.

**Annalies Corbin:**

Help folks understand if that's a phrase that they're unfamiliar with.

**Ashley Price:**

Yeah. So, not working in silos. So, not working in a science silo, not working in a math silo, not working in an English silo. Coming together as a group, and how do we create something, a real-world situation or problem for kids to solve that includes science, math, reading, social studies, all of the things, right? It's not working in silos around those things. It's creating something that is so much bigger and it involves the kids processing and critically thinking through all of those things.

**Annalies Corbin:**

It's more.

**Ashley Price:**

Yes.

**Annalies Corbin:**

Right? It's more. It's not... it is so much more robust because kids have to have a deeper level of understanding to succeed in the environment than in a singular environment.

**Ashley Price:**

A hundred percent, yes. And then I would say my last stake would be helping kids be okay with failure. I think that's a really big thing. We see that a lot in our programs is kids are afraid to try to do things 'cause they're afraid they're gonna fail. And so, helping them understand how to fail forward. And "Hey, you made a mistake. Let's figure out where the mistake happened and let's test it out again" I think is super, super important. So, those would be, I think, my three stakes.

**Annalies Corbin:**

Yeah, I like those stakes. And I wanna just tap into the failure one a little bit more because we love failure here. We often say, "There's no wrong answer. There's just, 'Well, maybe. What about...?'" And those approaches, those are fair. But research tells us that kids learn more in the rebuild phase or the reimagine phase or the modification opportunity within a design cycle, for example, to use that language. Then, they learn in any other element of the learning journey.

**Ashley Price:**

Yes. A hundred percent.

**Annalies Corbin:**

And yet it's the space we traditionally leave the least amount of opportunity or time for students to explore.

**Ashley Price:**

Yeah. And so, that's a big part of our programming is "Hey, let's modify it. Let's change it. What can we do? Where do you see your mistake and how can we fix it, and how do you make it better?" And so, we find that a lot of the time, that is where those aha moments come from or the, "I did it. I did it myself. I can't believe I did it," moments come from which I mean, those are my favorite moments. I love seeing those in kiddos and being able to see...

And there's frustration with it too, right? There's that moment of like, "I can't do it. I can't do it. I don't understand." And so, it's taking a step back and really being like, "Okay, let's take a breath. You're good. Let's look at it from a different lens." And so, I think that has truly been really something that me coming from, again, an education background and seeing that is just... it was life changing for me. And so, I think for a kiddo, I can only imagine what that's like for them.

**Annalies Corbin:**

What... sort of, as we think about wrapping our conversation here. So, I mean, you've been at this more than a decade.

**Ashley Price:**

Yeah.

**Annalies Corbin:**

I had to stop and think.

**Ashley Price:**

I know.

**Annalies Corbin:**

Right?

**Ashley Price:**

Yeah.

**Annalies Corbin:**

So, what keeps you up at night as it relates to the next iteration of your thinking about teaching and learning and the bridge between informal and formal because you live and breathe this? So, what do you think about what is that we're collectively... not just us, what we're not doing that we could, or we should, or we should try?

**Ashley Price:**

Yeah. I think the thing that keeps me up the most is still the separation of each of the subject matters. And understanding... 'cause I coach high school volleyball too, and so when I go in before a game, all the girls are doing their homework and it's, "Oh, what are you working on right now?" "Uh, just chemistry." "Oh, just anything else?" "No, just chemistry." And so, it's still so siloed. And then, when we have conversations together, I'm like, "Okay, how does that tie back to... how does this work with math?" "Oh, I don't... what?" And I'm like, "There's math in this. Yes?" And they're like, "Yeah, but..." I'm like, "Okay, so what kind of math are you using?" "I don't know. Numbers." I'm like, "Okay, there's no connection happening." And so, especially in...

**Annalies Corbin:**

It's such a loss.

**Ashley Price:**

Yes.

**Annalies Corbin:**

It's such a loss.

**Ashley Price:**

Yes. Especially in our world now, being able to critically think and understand that I don't come into work and sit and I just do chemistry. That's all I do. No. Like every job

that you have, you're gonna be bouncing around doing a whole bunch of different things, and you need to understand that all of them connect in some form or fashion. And so, I think really that's the thing that keeps me up at night is that it's still so siloed.

**Annalies Corbin:**

Yeah, I don't disagree with you at all. It's sad, right? And when we see educational environments that have engineered that problem out of their system, it is truly magical.

**Ashley Price:**

It is.

**Annalies Corbin:**

It is magical. You go to those places as an educator, and you're like. "Wow."

**Ashley Price:**

Yeah.

**Annalies Corbin:**

Like, "This is amazing. I wish they had this when I was a kid."

**Ashley Price:**

The amount of times.

**Annalies Corbin:**

How often have we heard these things, right?

**Ashley Price:**

Absolutely.

**Annalies Corbin:**

So, I really, really appreciate that sort of perspective. So, my last question, then, for you, Ashley, is as we sort of step back from the collective set of work, so PAST this 26 years and you've spent actually probably half of those years with us or so, right? And so, as you think about your own personal growth as an educator, clearly, you're passionate about the things that you do, but I'm really curious, how do you, sort of, think about the, sort of, longer term gift, if you will? Your gift back. Your gift back to kids. I mean, they love what you do and I see this in all of the really incredible educators that I have been so fortunate to get to work with, to have conversations with, to interview, to study, to be part of their journeys. And I see some really intriguing commonalities in the way they view the thing that they do and that they give. And so, this is my, sort of, gotcha question to you is, so, Ashley, what is that for you?

**Ashley Price:**

Yeah. I think, everything that I do with what I do at PAST is for the kiddos and to make their experience the most it can be. And I think showing them what else is out there that they might not know about. I mean, I grew up always knowing that I wanted to be a teacher, but even if the other jobs that were out there, I knew doctor, I knew vet, I knew very broad jobs. And now, being here and working with kiddos and those kinds of things, I've been introduced to so many other paths and so many other journeys.

So, helping kids understand that not everyone's journey is the same. Everyone's journey is different and that's okay. It doesn't have to be linear. It doesn't have to be what you thought it was gonna be. And I think that what we do here helps show that.

**Annalies Corbin:**

Absolutely. I love that. Thank you Ashley, so much for spending time with us today, talking about your work at PAST and celebrating 300 episodes with us. We appreciate you so much.

**Ashley Price:**

Yeah, thank you for having me. I'm so glad I could be here.

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**Annalies Corbin:**

Thank you for joining us for Learning Unboxed, a conversation about teaching, learning, and the future of work. I want to thank my guests and encourage you all to be part of the conversation. Meet me on social media, @AnnaliesCorbin, and join me next time as we stand up, step back and lean in to reimagine education.