

TRANSCRIPT

Learning Unboxed



Bonus Episode

Byron Sanders:

Annalies Corbin:

Welcome to the July edition of Learning Unboxed. Similar to previous years, we typically take the month of July off. However, we know our listeners enjoy engaging with Learning Unboxed during the summer break. This next four weeks, we will explore four featured learning sites, who are part of the Education Reimagined Ecosystem Lab. We will travel to Fab Newport, we will give a listen to Rock Tree Sky, we will experience the Norris School District, and we will have big conversations with Big Thought in Dallas, Texas. Education Reimagined's mission is to make learner-centered education available to every child in the United States, inclusive of race, background and circumstance. Tune in to discover how each learning site uniquely fosters learner-centered experiences for their students.

Byron Sanders:

I need somebody who knows how to connect. That's the part that has to be part of our frameworks that you and I are talking about, and that more people are starting to get hip to the game because that's what the moment is requiring from us with these young people and, honestly, for the rest of our lives too.

Annalies Corbin:

Welcome to Learning Unboxed, a conversation about teaching, learning, and 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 We know the current model for education is obsolete.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.

Welcome to today's episode of Learning Unboxed. As always, I'm excited to talk with another great innovator in the transformative education space. And joining us today is Byron Sanders, who's president and CEO of Big Thought. So, Byron, welcome to Learning Unboxed.

Byron Sanders:

Oh, it is an absolute pleasure to be here with you today, Annalies. I really appreciate the opportunity.

Annalies Corbin:

Absolutely. I'm looking forward to it. And let's set a little bit of context for our listeners. Big Thought is an impact nonprofit that closes the opportunity gap by equipping all youth in marginalized communities with the skills and tools they need to imagine and create their best lives in a better world.

Building on that strong foundation provided by family and caregivers, Big Thought are allies in young people's growth, helping to prepare them for further education, work, and life. Their most vital partners are the youth themselves. And that's the thing I love the most about our conversation is that you value the agency of our young people.

So, Byron, as we get started with all of this, I love the sort of final closing component that was sent over before our interview, the idea that the truth is greatness is in all of us and that that belief is the heart of the work at Big Thought. And that just gives me chills but also brings me joy.

So, Byron, talk to us about the sort of why Big Thought? Why this organization came to be in the first place? What was the need or the challenge that you're solving for?

Byron Sanders:

The gift is, you know, I've been CEO now for about six years. Before that, I was on the board. And the organization started back in 1987, actually, and its original purpose as founders, Edith O'Donnell and Mitch Jericho, they saw a need for the arts to be in the schools. And it was kind of around that time that we're starting to lose opportunities for young people. We were starting to standardize a little bit more. And they just knew that there was a vital thing that needed to happen.

The joy is that as we got to work on bringing the arts into schools - and at the time we were even called young audiences - every initiative that we were privileged to be a part of or privileged to lead, we get a new question. So, at the time it was like, "Okay. Can we build this massive ecosystem where we're bringing in artists and young people are getting access to these experiences who otherwise wouldn't have had them?" Yes. Boom. Okay. Cool. "I wonder if we could do this for afterschool more broadly, you know, beyond just the arts." Okay. Great. Get that. Then, it's like, "Oh, wow. This ecosystem is really showing a lot of benefits, can we do this for summer?" Okay. Summer. "Can we do it for social emotional learning?"

So, every initiative we get a new question and it led us to a really interesting spot. I'd taken over as CEO, and so I knew we were more than just the sum of our parts or whatever initiative we were leading. And we dug deep in our strategy to see what

was the elemental through line from all of those, all of those ways that we've been out serving the community and working alongside young people.

What we realized is that at its crux, we specialized in creating experiences that allowed young people to build the skills, build the muscles that allowed that greatness to shine through, that otherwise don't get a lot of space to breathe in traditional school and education spaces.

So, all of those skills we got to focus on were things like the creative muscle, critical thinking and problem solving, emotional intelligence, the ability to learn the skill of human, to learn humanity.

And what we realized is that the places we've been, out of school time, summer, non-traditional learning experiences and opportunities, they were a beautiful - we used to say supplement, but it was a core part of a young person's learning journey that's as important as reading, writing, and arithmetic. And we knew that we had found kind of our elemental purpose so we leaned into that and knew in different ways.

And the reason why we think this closed the opportunity gap is because kids who are growing up in low income communities, oftentimes these are kids of color, Black and Latino communities, particularly in urban settings, they don't have parents who can afford to go pay for a full-fledged summer camp or they don't have parents who can drive them to the other side of town to participate in some really awesome conservatory experience. So, how can we bring that to them?

And to your point earlier, it's not about inserting greatness into these young people. It's the acknowledgment that if we create the conditions, access to these experiences, systems that allow them to know the skills that they're building and then leverage them, then that will allow the young people to do what they had on the inside already. They just needed a gym, experiences to build a muscle, and then a place to go and leverage that work. And that's the work that we're doing here at Big Thought.

Annalies Corbin:

And that is incredible because that work is so absolutely necessary. And I know that at PAST Foundation and at the Innovation Lab, we see those exact same things. What you're talking about is that when we provide these opportunities and we understand all the circumstances and the dynamics that will either bring a child there or prohibit a child from being there or participating, and we can design experiences understanding the whole totality of a child's life and their aspirations and their potential, and the constraints that come from their family or their environment, take your pick because, honestly, it's a really, really diverse set of issues, of possibility, of positivity, of negativity that embroil every human, as you said, to get back to our humanness.

And it's one of the elements that, honestly, I really love about the way you think about this, and the fact that you've leveraged those out of school or non-traditional learning experiences and said we're going to take this and turn it on its head and make it core to who we are and what we're doing for kids, I love that. I love that.

Byron Sanders:

Really, it calls back to even in our language. You know, as we talk about turning that thing on its head, it's why we use opportunity gap language as opposed to achievement gap language. Achievement gap, it points at the individual. And, first of all, obviously we believe in individual agency. That's why we say youth agency is so core, it's one of the least tapped into forces of nature in the world. We believe in that.

And what we're saying is that if you're seeing systemic outcome, if you're seeing things writ large, whether we're talking about in Dallas, Texas; or Seattle, Washington; or Fargo, North Dakota, if you're seeing things that are very predictable and you're seeing them in like demographics across the country, then you have to assume or deduce that these are not individual, unique, human, that person's individual failings. You have to assume that there's a systemic force or systemic reasons or root causes at play here.

And our thing is go attack those. Swim upstream and change the conditions around these young people because but for those conditions, we will probably be seeing different outcomes. At least that was our hypothesis. That is our hypothesis backed up by a whole lot of evidence and research. And so, what we're saying is that the kids aren't lacking in achievement.

The young people are lacking in opportunity. And if we close the opportunity gaps, we're going to see different achievement for however that young person defines it in their life. We'll see a different set of outcomes there if we attack the root and structural causes that are driving that. That's what drives how we've decided to spend our time and even the framing of what our work is supposed to be about.

Annalies Corbin:

And, again, I love that. And I also love the fact that when you think about opportunity as an organization, you've also recognized the fact that there are many opportunities the students can have and get access to, but sometimes that access piece of it, there are barriers. We can provide opportunity, but we don't understand that a kid can't get there, then that is not truly an opportunity for that individual. So, I appreciate the thinking that you've been putting into that and thinking about the way you do your programming and the opportunities for those students to actually take them where the students are.

So, with that in mind, I'd like to dig in just a little bit for our listeners to have a better understanding of the actual programming that's happening. So, thank you for setting the bigger, broader stage. We understand the why, so now talk to us about the how.

Byron Sanders:

So, we come at this from a number of different angles. We're not going to program our way into a more equitable and just society in and of itself. And what I mean by that is that I think sometimes people will say, "Man, look at that organization over there, they've been doing this program for years and the problem is still not solved."

Because you know what? The program was never going to solve the problem. The program was going to serve the people who were there at the time. However, we see the work at the programmatic level helping to inform a bigger use case that can then inform policy and structural shifts.

So, basically, there's three big areas where we spend our time and our effort. We say Create, Convene, Consult. Create Big Thought programs that actually go deep on staying on the cutting edge on what are we learning from these young people. What are we learning from this theory of change in execution practically? Does it work? What are the nuances in the execution? If you leave this piece out, it's not going to work. We learned that because we were doing the work. We stay in that work programmatically to do it. That can be anything from our after school programs out on an elementary campus from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and how we do that with Thriving Minds, or it could be also the work that we do programmatically in the juvenile justice system with Creative Solutions where we're working with young people who have been formerly incarcerated since West, and they do a seven week arts as workforce trauma informed program that allows them to build those 21st century skills there. Programs.

But the insights go into the Convene part of our work that we actually call Learning System. That's where Big Thought is standing as a convener, a backbone agency, if you will, helping marshal, channel, support, and organize hundreds of other partners affecting work in maybe a geographic area.

An example would be something that we started back in 2014 called Dallas City of Learning. Over 400 organizations are part of this ecosystem. The goal was no matter where a young person is in the City of Dallas at the time, we do not want them to not have access to something that is high quality, something at the right dosage, the right amount of hours that research says. It's something that is free and easy to tap into at any place in the city. So, we actually have a heat map on where those experiences are. And it's not one organization that's going to be able to do that. It's lots of them.

But the way we're supporting is based off of practices from our own practices and research that we've been able to build.

The last part is Consult. In 2019, we established something called Big Thought Institute. Big Thought Institute is the vision of our work where we have practitioners, technicians, and team members whose job is to go out and ensure that our institutional partners, like school districts and state agencies; corporate partners, like we helped build the corporate social responsibility strategy for main event based on principles that we've learned over the last years; and even at policy levels, so we go and advocate for changing laws that affect the world, that we work in the strategies where we are. That Institute is designed to give us even more scale, and in some instances, actually change the playing field itself with policy and legal shifts that empower what we know needs to happen for young people to take place.

So, those are the big three areas. That's how we say we get to systemic change. As you can tell, they have increasing levels of scale the further along you go on that continuum. So, you take these really powerful things that we've learned at the ground level, and at the end of that line, at the end of that circle, we're helping inform policy based on what we've been able to do over these years.

And I'll give you a real quick example of what that's resulted in. It started off with an after school program. We then built a large ecosystem based on that after school work and principles and research that came from it. Then, that ecosystems research and evidence base ended up being the tool that we use to advocate for what ultimately became an over a billion dollar investment in summer learning and extended year for students now across Texas, the Senate bill from three sessions ago here in Texas. So, that's how that cycle works and that's how we move towards systemic change.

Annalies Corbin:

And that's an incredibly powerful impact. And, actually, the irony is you ran ahead of me and I'm thrilled by that because my next question was literally going to be, this is all awesome and how do we do all that awesomeness and actually change, effectively change or impact from a positive standpoint the system of education itself. And so, that's part of what you're talking about in terms of being able to do that.

But I do want to dig into that just a little bit more. Because we know as leaders of community-based nonprofits and the work that we do - I have no doubt that your work and my work, there's a lot of synergies in the experiences that we've had over time. I have no doubt. Ultimately, certainly I know and I suspect that you've seen this numerous times yourself - if we can't figure out how to take the bigger body of work

that we have and force a shift or a change on the bigger systemic issues that are driving the issues to begin with, we're ultimately beating our heads against the wall, if we will.

So, I'm really curious about that piece because the collective set of work that Big Thought is doing, I'm curious about how it is having a tangible impact in the day-to-day of educational lives of the students that are being served. What does that look like?

Byron Sanders:

So, the way it looks for us is we acknowledge the very thing that you just said a few years back. Because, honestly, we did, we got tired of beating our head up against a wall. And we work very closely with all of our school districts and school partners, and we hear educators say all the time "Man, I would love to do everything that you're talking about, but you know what? Testing is coming up in three weeks and it's all hands on deck."

Annalies Corbin:

"We just don't have time for this."

Byron Sanders:

We just don't have time. We don't have time. When in fact the world has been screaming at us that we are sorely misaligned with, one, the economic wherewithal of the world as it is. The young people are bored because they feel like it is not necessarily relevant to their lives. And even more recently, young people are being told literally you cannot talk about these things under threat of law for the adults in your lives. Meanwhile, they go outside and it's literally the only thing that everybody is talking about. So, we have all of these forces that have been pushing down on schools and in youth spaces, youth development spaces.

So, what we realized was, guys, we have to do something about that. And that something is saying out loud, and then saying with our budget and our allocation and people allocation, that the things that we learn don't serve society well if they stay within our house. We have to intentionally go and convert that into advocacy and policy voices, because that's the place where we're going to be able to live out one of our Big Thought values that we named. We have six key values. One of those values is create impact for youth we will never meet.

So, I'll give an example of what that looks like in a programmatic sense and I'll talk about how that actually has shifted and how we're creating tools for not just us, but

also for the community at large, of our partners to be able to use to do the same things.

So, going back to that Creative Solutions example, we're working with young people who are some of the least well served by the systems writ large. These are young people who have committed some kind of crime or been convicted of some kind of crime as a minor and most of them have served time in the juvenile detention facility, some of them have gone directly to probation, but everybody's been convicted of something. These are also the young people that have been expelled from their home school or might be in an alternative school or something of that nature.

And we are one of the rare organizations that we don't screen offenses. So, we will take aggravated assaults, we'll take sexual assaults, we'll take whatever comes because those young people are coming with something that happened to them before the thing that they did.

Research shows young people in the juvenile system have had on average 14 distinct traumatic experiences in their lives before they ever show up at a doorstep. And if you're familiar with Adverse Childhood Experiences' research, that evidence base says that young people carrying around trauma have actual brain molding that is different from people who have not experienced trauma, just like somebody who's come back from two tours of duty in Afghanistan, except they're nine years old.

So, we've designed this whole program, seven weeks come to us in the summer. We are paying them to be artists. They do either performing arts or visual arts. They're learning workforce skills, how to show up on time, how to talk with somebody, how to work and collaborate. We're doing all of that. They get through the experience. And at the end of that summer, they have a capstone deliverable. So, they're going to have to have an artifact that shows their work that they built over these last several weeks, where they built these distinct artistic and creative skills and they've been building these 21st century durable skills, skills we call creator skills.

All right. So then, they're on stage, they're speaking with all of the fluidity of someone who's been practiced in monologuing. They're dancing. They're painting. They have a gallery showing where they're standing with their chest out next to a ceramic sculpture that they built that looks like their face and they're talking about their face with pride. That happens and it's a life changing moment. Families have been reunited. They're doing all these different things.

But also we have the lowest recidivism rate serving Dallas County, seven years average of less than 10 percent re-offending. Given that we have the highest thing, a

normal young person without access to these resources is 60 to 80 percent likely to reoffend. So, from 60 to 80 to 10, that's a win. That's a win.

But the problem is that's one program. It's a few hundred kids over several years. How do we start to systematize that? How do we equip other people? So, what we did was we distilled what are the 21st century skills that are transferable that are coming through this experiences and many like them in the out of school time space and we built something called the Creator Archetype.

Creator Archetype is our framework for actually acknowledging and crediting 21st century skill development. So, those things that we used to kind of nod to and say, "Hey, this is really important." We're like, "Okay. But are you building them?" "I don't know. I hope so." What we can now say is we have a framework that helps you both, one, know; two, you're not going to build every 21st century skill in your experiences, so which ones do you specialize in program provider? And then, equip the young people with the language to know I didn't just go to a camp where I was stuck away somewhere from my mom while she was at work. I actually now am a public speaker.

Annalies Corbin:

I have skills. I can build a portfolio of myself.

Byron Sanders:

That's right. That's right. And now, we have created a means for those programmatic partners to issue badges and digital credentials conveying the building of those skills and young people are taking those and flipping those. It's a really cool next step along their journey, to your point, now they have a portfolio. Just the way we have transcripts, they now have a portfolio saying this is what I am, this is what I can do, and this is who I am that tells that bigger, broader story. That's where the future of education is going.

Annalies Corbin:

I hope you're right that that is where it's going, because like you, that's what we are also advocating for. So, I totally understand and agree with that because we are, in fact, advocating for those things.

I think that one of the other things that's really interesting about this conversation for me is I love the way that you've couched this work in an understanding that says it's not just Big Thought, and it's not even just this kid in this neighborhood with this family in this school, or this post-juvenile issue, however you want to couch it, that you've literally said it is the entire landscape or the ecosystem that is this individual child's life and world. And so, by intentionally creating an ecosystems approach, I would argue

that it has the potential to impact the very broad collective set of systems that are in play all together.

Byron Sanders:

You're nailing it. I couldn't have summed it up better, Annalies. Because to that point, it is the tacit acknowledgement that we are the ones who created "Okay. This is school day time. Now, this is after school time. Okay. Now, we're in summertime." These are false lines in a child's life. These meridians don't actually exist for a child.

Annalies Corbin:

They're artificial. They're completely artificial, yes, I agree.

Byron Sanders:

They're completely artificial, right? And so, this kid is one kid who's experiencing life all the time from the time they wake up to the time they go back to sleep and everything in between. And if we have these divisions and structure that don't allow us to work together, to collaborate, to share information, to make sure kids aren't falling between the cracks, the ones who suffer are the young people based on these false divisions that we put together for a lot of different reasons, structure, organization, money, whatever.

But if we create an ecosystem, if we look at everything as a network and a matrix, and we start operating with that truth and recognizing that learning absolutely has to happen within a classroom - of course, it does - and the learning that happens outside of a traditional classroom matters as much, then, all of a sudden, we have a whole new educational ecosystem. Then, all of a sudden, kids aren't going to be talking about I'm bored because what we're saying is that the things that you actually like doing --

Annalies Corbin:

You get to go do.

Byron Sanders:

You get to go do. It matters.

Annalies Corbin:

You get to go do. And as part of it, we're going to give you credit for it. It's going to count towards your future and everything that you aspire to be in life. It's going to matter.

Byron Sanders:

It matters. To this day I've asked this question, and I talk to a bunch of people, and I have never had anybody say, "You know what? That bell ringer that I did that one time before my math lesson in the middle of the year as we were getting ready for test prep, that changed my life."

Annalies Corbin:

I know. You are never going to hear a kid say that that changed their lives. I just promise you that.

Byron Sanders:

It's not going to happen. It's not going to happen.

Annalies Corbin:

No.

Byron Sanders:

So, why are we calibrating our entire system to prioritize the things that would come from what should, honestly, be one piece of a toolset that a young person has to go out and thrive? Why wouldn't we credit their time outside of the classroom doing really cool stuff like this?

Annalies Corbin:

One hundred percent. Literally, everything we do should count. It should matter. And when you talk to kids who are bored, you realize fundamentally, obviously it's not because they're bad kids - and I can't tell you how many times I've heard that - it's not because they're not interested. They might not be interested in that particular thing, but I can promise you they're interested humans. There's a thing out there that gets them jazzed. And the reality is when we grab a hold of the things that jazz a kid, whatever that happens to be, and we allow them to explore that thing with full passion, and compassion, and understanding, and knowledge that's fed at a rate that that child can then internalize and actually use, they're not bored. They're going to show up every single day. And more importantly, they're going to show you what that experience can truly mean.

Byron Sanders:

And you know what, Annalies? Sometimes people listen to us, they're like, "Oh. Y'all's heads are in the clouds." I'm going to tell you this is why I'm so excited that I've had multiple different experiences. So, before being CEO of Big Thought, I actually was in the finance sector. So, I was responsible for all the things that apparently people get a lot of money and respect for, which is knowing what to do with money. Okay. All right. Great. Fine. Cool. But you know what? That's actually what has informed and made

me an even deeper believer on the work that we're doing and the framing that we brought.

And I'll give you a perfect example of this. It even shows up at the macroeconomic level. So, in 1975, the S&P 500, they were looking at the valuation on what gives that its value. And they broke it down between hard assets, soft assets. Hard assets being the widgets, the gadgets, the hard stuff, the things you could touch that was bringing the value to the major companies in the world because I'm going to talk about trend. Soft assets was the inverse. And so, about 80 plus percent of the S&P 500 in 1975 was determined by hard assets. And that makes sense at the time. You could think about the major companies at the time, GM, Ford, Coca-Cola, they were really up there kind of moving the world, moving the market.

Fast forward to 2020, now it's the inverse, 90 percent of the S&P 500 value is derived from soft assets, innovation, intellectual property, brand equity, the expectation of success. That's why we have ESG reports and CSR reports because now, all of a sudden, this stuff has real market value. So, we're talking about billions of dollars here being built off of things that people would call creative or innovative or, wow, people feel really connected to this branding. We know that's the stuff that's even moving the macro economy and we still don't create space for it in our human development systems, because we're all of these innovators, creative and innovative thinkers are going to come from.

And when you talk to employers of the technology spaces out there, when they're thinking about people that they're wanting to hire, they're saying, yes, I need somebody who knows and understands coding. That's why digital fluency is still one of the parts of the Creator Archetype. But more importantly, I need a creative coder. I need one who understands human beings. I don't need somebody that I have to hire, stick in a cubicle, and say don't come outside because you're scaring all of the clients. I need somebody who knows how to connect. That's the part that has to be part of our frameworks that you and I are talking about, and that more people are starting to get hip to the game because that's what the moment is requiring from us with these young people, and honestly, for the rest of our lives too.

Annalies Corbin:

Yeah, absolutely. And it's really remarkable to me. And I will fully admit, I don't think I've ever had a guest on this program that was able to summarize in such a way based on what's going on in the S&P 500. And I love that you were able to do that for us because I think I have a better understanding of S&P 500 after that piece of conversation than I've ever had in my entire life. So, thank you for the gift that you gave to me and to others.

I always like to think about wrapping up the conversations by recognizing that folks are listening from all over the world and Big Thought is not in their backyard. But there are elements of the things that you talked about that, honestly, any community can actually choose to do, and I chose that word specifically. So, if you were to advise someone who sent an email, picked up the phone and said, "Byron, I don't have Big Thought and I'm in the middle of Tucson, or I am in the middle of Santiago, and I want to do some of these things. What would you tell me to do to get started?"

Byron Sanders:

Such a good question. There's a few things that I would say. If you are a parent or an educator or somebody who is front facing with young people, whether it's your own kids or whether it's a small group of children that you are charged, gifted, and commissioned to go out and help and support, create experiences that are experiences. Don't seek to just teach. Create experiences that allow young people to take on and embrace risk. Sometimes it doesn't take being plugged into an afterschool program with the best, latest, greatest tools, gadgets, and what in order to do that. Encourage young people to create, to build at age appropriate ways. If they're young as opposed to only using devices, encourage them to use things to build with their hands. If you have a child who enjoys playing with action figures, don't cut that off too soon. We shame some of our young people and we tell them to grow up. In fact, you need them to have active places where their imagination can be flexed and can run rampant. Allow them to play.

As we start to move into the teenage spaces, believe it or not, just like we've started, there was a big movement where people really paying attention to the brain science of early child development. The adolescent mind, I feel like is the next horizon is going to become very important for us to better understand.

Annalies Corbin:

Embrace middle school. Embrace it. It's awesome.

Byron Sanders:

Embrace middle school. Everybody's like, "Oh. That looks terrible."

Annalies Corbin:

I'm like, yes, yes, let's, let's grab those fifth to eighth graders, you know, the brain, the body, there's nothing about that that is the same from day one to day two. Let's grab that. Sorry. That was my digress.

Byron Sanders:

Oh. No, I love that digress because it fits perfectly. There must be risk involved. And here's what I mean by that, they have to go out and try something where they have the potential, in some instance, likelihood to fail, but to fail safely, and then to do it again. So, the punitive measures whereby we're saying pass or fail, what they need to have the opportunity to do is go learn by doing and do so in ways that are challenging, new, and engaging. It cannot be rote. It cannot be too predictable. And it cannot be overly redundant. So, creating those kinds of experiences.

If I'm a person who's a systems administrator or an educator or somebody who's responsible for a school district or state agency, I am saying with all due haste, create your definition of a portrait of a learner. For us, it's the Creative Archetype. We've seen other amazing models. Purdue Polytechnic High School has a great one. Iowa BIG has a great one. The school that I referenced in Fargo, Cass has a beautiful portrait of a learner.

With all due haste, shift the incentive structures from only and exclusively grades to being mapped to what are the skills that a person is building in order to be successful in the 21st century world. It is possible to move from the frameworks of number grades and letter grades to being mapped to skills that are being built and demonstrated.

We have these young people who are starting to use these portraits who are getting into great schools, getting into great four year colleges, getting into awesome career and technical pathways. They're thriving. We have this misbelief that if we don't only use the things that we've used with the ACT, SAT, AP scores, and getting a four or three, all of those things as the primary markers of success in high school, coming out of high school, that the kids are going to be hung out to dry because the world doesn't really understand. No. There are models where that's happening. Big picture learning. Big Thought. I'd say I am big.

There's a report that I would encourage everyone to go out and read, it was produced by Ed Reimagined and History Co:Lab. It was commissioned by the Carnegie Foundation. They were looking at the future of education ecosystems. Go pick up that report because there's some great examples of how people are moving to this competency-based model that's community connected and based on relationships that these young people build. It is possible. It can be done. But we have to advocate for it. We have to move within the intentionality, but we have to move with urgency.

That's what I'm saying, if there's not a Big Thought in our world, you can create it in yours. But the work's got to be done. We're here as an ally to help you do it, that's why

we created an institute. But at the end of the day, you've got to move because the young people are demanding it.

Annalies Corbin:

And they need us to do it. Absolutely. Byron, thank you so much. Thank you for making time out of your day having this conversation. I can talk to you for hours and I probably will at some point. But thank you, thank you for the work that you're doing with Big Thought and the work that you're doing to help others understand that there is a path forward. So, thank you for joining us today.

Byron Sanders:

Hey, Annalies, thank you so much for lifting up this conversation. It is critical. We're going to shift the Overton window and people are going to start to recognize that these things we're talking about are not so far out. That will become the norm and we'll all be better for it, so I really appreciate this conversation. Thank you.

Annalies Corbin:

Absolutely. Thank you.

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.